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Container (A news analysis)

IMT-GT PROJECT TAKES OFF DESPITE REGIONAL CRISIS

By: Jamaluddin Muhammad

SADAO (Southern Thailand), July 22 (Bernama) -- The significance of the newly-launched Inland Container Depot (ICD) here lies in the foresight to put into place the mechanisms for economically beleaguered Malaysia and Thailand to benefit from a turnaround later.

The ICD, an initiative under the Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand-Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), was officially launched last Saturday.

"Although Thailand and Malaysia are now facing economic difficulties this should not be an excuse for us not to continue with beneficial projects," said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

The ICD is jointly developed by Malaysia's Konsortium Perkapalan Bhd and Puan Malee Wanasook and her family from Thailand.

"It is therefore heartening to see that the private sector is also taking the cue in forging closer transportation links between Malaysia and Thailand," said Ling.

Ling and Thai National Assembly President Wanmuhamadnoor Matha jointly officiated at the ICD's inauguration, symbolising the long institutionalised cooperation between Malaysia and Thailand in transportation.

"The project will help to generate economies in the region and benefit all the people," Ling said.

Wanmuhamadnoor said: "The project is important because it will help transport goods not only in the IMT-GT area but also Asean and Indochina."

The ICD, the fourth in Thailand, would boost the containerisation of goods and improve the efficiency of multi-modal transportation for importers and exporters in the region.

The Sadao ICD links Penang Port and Padang Besar to the south with Bangkok Port in the north.

"The Sadao ICD will boost the regionalisation drive opening up the markets and integrating the economies of Thailand and Malaysia," said KPB Group Executive Chairman Mirzan Mahathir.

It would also be a boon for bilateral trade in industrial components, food and consumer products between the two countries, he said.

To run the ICD, Mirzan's KPB and Malee set up a 40-60 joint venture company called KPB Sadao ICD Co Ltd with an authorised capital of 60 million Bath (about RM6 million).

Malee, who is KPB Sadao ICD Co Ltd chairman, said the project could promote closer bilateral cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia.

The current volume of containers moving between the two countries is estimated at 6,000 TEUs a month.

-- BERNAMA

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