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KPB-SADAO

NEWLY-OPENED KPB SADAO ICD WILL BOOST M'SIA-THAI TRADE

By: Leslean Arshad

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- The RM26 million KPB Sadao Inland Clearance Depot (ICD) Terminal which was opened recently, is all set to boost trade between Thailand and Malaysia.

The terminal, a joint venture project between Konsortium Perkapalan Bhd and some Thai investors, offered strategic location and custom facilities for cargo movements which are plus factors for the enhancement of bilateral trade between the two countries.

The full-service inland port is located in southern Thailand, about 11km from Bukit Kayu Hitam in Kedah, 14km from Padang Besar in Perlis and 40km from Haadyai in Thailand.

Konsortium Perkapalan Bhd group executive chairman Mirzan Mahathir said the joint Thai-Malaysian efforts, one of the pioneer projects promoted by the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT GT) joint business council, could churn in many benefits to importers and exporters.

"It would help to boost bilateral trade in industrial components, food and consumer products between Malaysia and Thailand," he told reporters in Sadao recently.

Mirzan, who is also vice chairman of KPB Sadao ICD Terminal Co Ltd, projected a RM7 million in turnover for the terminal this year.

The terminal, the first public bonded storage facility in southern Thailand, is owned and managed by KPB Sadao ICD, a 40:60 partnership capitalised at 60 million baht (about (RM6 million) between KPB and Malee Wanasook and her family.

The IMT-GT covers northern Sumatra in Indonesia, northern Malaysia and southern Thailand. The area has a population of 23 million half of whom are living in the southern Thailand provinces of Yala, Songkhla, Narathiwat, Pattani and Satun.

Malaysia-Thai trade in 1997 totalled RM16.6 billion with Malaysia's exports to Thailand stood at RM7.9 billion while imports from Thailand amounted to RM8.7 billion.

Malaysia's Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and Chairman of Thailand Parliament Wan Mohamad Noor Matha had jointly officiated the terminal symbolising the long institutionalised co-operation between both countries.

With the Thai customs checkpoint located within the facility, both containerised and conventional cargo, moving between Thailand and Malaysia, could be processed efficiently through the ICD.

Dr Ling had said that the availability of the new ICD will further enhance the movement of cargo and trade between the two countries and would act as a catalyst for the socio-economic development of the region.

He anticipated more companies to take advantage of the ICD's strategic location as it has good transportation links to the highway network and ports in Thailand and Malaysia.

Dr Ling also said that although the region is facing economic difficulties, economic co-operation should continue and the current situation "should not be an excuse for us to discontinue with beneficial projects."

"The terminal will boost the regionalisation drive, opening up markets and integrating the economies of Thailand and Malaysia," he said.

The current traffic at the terminal is about 6,000 TEUs (twenty foot equivalent units) per month and estimated volume of trucks is 6,000 a

month.

Generally, the joint-venture project would be perceived to have an equal traffic flow between both parties, but a container haulier official said, the southern Thailand traders had much more advantages with the establishment of the ICD.

The terminal, ranked fourth in Thailand, would mainly facilitate exports from southern Thailand due to its proximity to Malaysian ports.

The ICD terminal is well served by developed network of roads and rail to the major ports of entry and exit in Thailand and Malaysia. The facilities effectively linked Penang Port and Padang Besar in the south and Bangkok Port in the northern side.

Mirzan said the terminal enabled containers cleared at the facilities to be exported through Butterworth in Pulau Pinang and Port Klang in Selangor, speedily.

He said the Penang Port is the nearest to the ICD and that the export route by road from the terminal to Butterworth would only take about three hours.

Based on observations, majority of the traders from southern Thailand used the terminal for rubber products, Mirzan added.

On the other hand, goods coming in from Malaysia by road and Singapore ports, could be stored at the terminal in transit or consolidated and ungrouped for transfer to bonded facilities in other parts of Thailand. --  
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