

Going the extra mile in logistics

Concerted efforts from Govt and industry players needed to achieve competitiveness

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PETALING JAYA: There is a need for concerted efforts from the players of the logistics industry and the Government to ensure that the level of logistics services in the country is competitive regionally.

The Association of Bumiputra Logistics Services Providers (PPLB) chairman Datuk Samsuddin Abdul Rahman said this was because Malaysia's strategic location in South-East Asia should be used as a catalyst to be a regional hub.

"Since we are already blessed with this advantage, we should work harder to be more competitive. Logistics players should not be complacent as neighbouring countries such as Thailand and Indonesia are fast catching up."

"We must ensure that the level of our services meet the expectations of our customers. This will attract more investments into the country, especially in manufacturing that will benefit the logistics industry at large."

Shamsuddin said the Government should control the issuance of licence to new logistics companies as the industry had been overcrowded with too many players.

"We have the quantity but the quality of services is not comparable with foreign logistics companies," he told StarBiz recently.

Samsuddin added that most logistics activities involve high capital investment such as to acquire land for warehousing at strategic locations and purchase of lorries, trailer and primemovers.

Currently, there are no facilities in terms of soft loan provided by any financial institutions.

On the Government's role, Samsuddin said the Economic Transformation Programme should also focus on providing business opportunities to the local logistics player.

"For example, we have a programme called 'Buy Malaysian Products' but there is none on 'Buy Malaysian Services.' Local logistics players should also be given the opportunity to participate in the government and private sector's infrastructure projects."

"By doing so, we will have a local logistics company with experience in handling high-end projects and this will give us an avenue to export our expertise to the world market," he said.

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— PPLB'S DATUK SAMSUDDIN ABDUL RAHMAN

Samsuddin said the Government had already done its part in terms of developing world-class ports throughout the country as entry and exit points for commercial transportation.

"We already have terminals like Northport, Westports and Port of Tanjung Pelepas, to name a few. But, more could be done beyond the port operations in terms of developing a world-class logistics service provider," he said.

On the association, Samsuddin said it would act as a platform for Bumiputra to voice out their concerns and raise issues of the industry.

He said PPLB members were mostly from the SME category and they needed a lot of support especially from the government-linked corporations (GLCs) in creating new opportunities by considering the range of services offered by them.

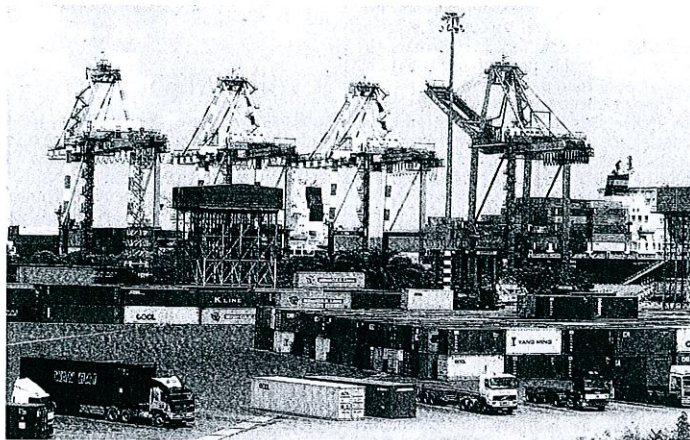
"The GLCs must have the awareness on their roles to uphold the Government's vision."

"We have mega projects awarded by the Government to them with zero participation of bumiputra logistics companies. Whereas we require that experience to enable us to penetrate global market."

"Furthermore, it will also be the growth catalyst for the players. Concerted effort from the Government and the GLCs are required to realise the development of bumiputra players in this industry."

Samsuddin added that the Government had set a target that the service industry should contribute to about 30% of the country's gross domestic product in 2013. "From the 30%, the logistics industry should take up between 10% and 12%."

PPLB currently has about 100 member companies.



A container yard in Port Klang. Shamsuddin says more could be done beyond the port operations in terms of developing world-class logistics service provider.

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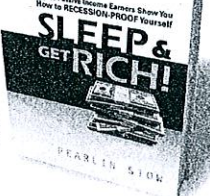
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