

Customs office at POIC a boon

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Fredian (third left) handing over keys to Mohd Yunus for the Customs office at the POIC Port in Lahad Datu.

LAHAD DATU: The setting up of a full-fledge Customs office at the Palm Oil Industrial Cluster (POIC) Port here has cemented the port's status as a Legal Landing Place, further facilitating its growth and development.

The Chief Executive Officer of POIC Sabah Sdn Bhd which owns and operates POIC Lahad Datu Port, Datuk Fredian Gan said it was a significant development towards playing a role in turning Sabah's east coast, particularly Lahad Datu, into the regional logistics hub and a gateway to the BIMP-EAGA.

He was speaking at a ceremony on Thursday at POIC's Container Terminal near here where he handed over an office to be used as the operations base of the Royal Malaysian Customs Department.

The permanent office will oversee customs matters at all terminals at POIC Lahad Datu. Besides the container terminal, the port also operates a dedicated terminal for dry bulk and liquid cargo, as well as a barge landing.

Legal Landing Place is a declaration of a status required of all ports. It was granted by the Customs.

The Customs Deputy Director-General (Management) Datuk Mohd Yunus Charlie Charington, who led a delegation of senior officers, received the key to the office from Gan at the same event here on Thursday.

Also present were the Board of Directors of POIC Sabah Sdn Bhd, and Senior Managers of the company.

Gan emphasised that connectivity is crucial in realising the full economic potential of eastern Sabah, which lies strategically within resource-rich BIMP-EAGA and the untapped opportunities of the 13-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which came into effect just this month.

He said RCEP, which counts China, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and the Asean nations as members, represents a massive economic and population bloc of the world.

"Sea ports are vital in the whole scheme of logistics and POIC is keen to play a part in bringing out the potentials of the logistics industry in Malaysia which is even bigger than oil palm in terms of contribution to the national GDP," he added.

He also alluded to the fact that POIC Port has combined infrastructure worth over RM1 billion built to drive growth in Sabah whilst capitalising on the logistics potentials of the region.