

Resolve Labuan containers issue: Rozman

Sohan Das

LABUAN: Member of Parliament Datuk Rozman Isli (pic) sympathised with local importers whose containers with alcoholic drinks had been held-up at the port since February due to problems related to import licence.



Rozman said the Covid-19 pandemic impacted all segments of businesses.

"This is not the time to stick to the book but use of discretion wherever possible to resolve issues arising," he said, adding that not helping SMEs would be akin to rubbing salt to their injuries.

He said the situation is different now and different approaches had to be made to solve problems arising for the business community.

"As such the Customs Department should hold discussions with the Labuan Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the importers to find the best solutions."

He further noted that the affected importers were not new. They were merely seeking renewal of the import licence. "Therefore, there should not be any heavy penalty if there were delays in submissions for renewals."

He also pointed out that the duty-free status of the island was an important com-

ponent of the local economy as it helps attract visitors, provides employment to salesmen, shop assistants, clerks, drivers and logistic support staff. It also helps to increase the volume of business in coffee shops, among others.

Rozman said it was for these reasons that he supported the Labuan Chinese Chamber of Commerce's call for better consideration from the Customs on the matter.

The containers, said to be about 40, arrived from Port Klang but were not discharged from the port as the importers did not have valid import licence when the goods landed. The licences had expired.

On a letter written by the Chamber, the Customs headquarters had explained if the importers had applied three months in advance it would not have been an issue.

The importers claimed that they did apply early but due to additional requirements to support the renewal, it was delayed. This would have been avoided if the importers had been told of the new information in advance.

The Chamber had written a second letter of appeal to the Customs Headquarters last week and it was copied to the Federal Territories Ministry, Finance Ministry, Rozman, Dato Labuan Corporation (LC) Chairman Datuk Seri Amir Hussien, LC CEO Dr Fary Akmal Osman and Labuan Customs Department.