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**EXPANSION**  
**BY** : YASMIN RAMLAN

MALAYSIKINI ONLINE/ NEWS  
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## Malaysia talking to China about possible Port Klang expansion

By Yasmin Ramlan

Discussions are ongoing between Malaysia and China over the possibility of port expansion plans, said Transport Minister Anthony Loke today.

He said the government had identified Port Klang as its focus for expansion, given its status as the country's primary port.

"This is still in discussion. Our focus is on Port Klang. It is our country's main port and there is a need to increase its capacity as it has a large potential," said Loke.

Port Klang is located strategically in the middle of the Straits of Melaka and is currently ranked the world's 12th best container port.

"We are working to develop Port Klang as the premier port not only in Malaysia, but also in the South East Asian region."

"That is why we welcome any parties that wants to work together with us to expand our ports," he told a press conference in Putrajaya after launching a Road Safety Module for primary school children.

He said last October that the government was looking at introducing a single agency to handle the cargo management system of the entire port, thus improving its efficiency.

During his courtesy visit to China's Transport Minister Li Xiaopeng in Beijing last month, Loke said he met several key port industry players.

He invited them to consider participating and investing in various upcoming port expansion projects, particularly in Port Klang.

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: THE STAR/ NATION/ PG 8  
: CUSTOMS TO REVOKE FREIGHT LICENSES OVER FALSE



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: THE SUN/ PG 4

TITLE

: CUSTOMS SEIZE ALMOST RM100 MILLION IN ILLEGAL

CIGARETTES, ALCOHOL

BY

: AMAR SHAH MOHSEN

## Customs seize almost RM100 million in illegal cigarettes, alcohol

THE SUN / PG 4

■ BY AMAR SHAH MOHSEN  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Close to 100 million cigarettes and 228,000 litres of alcoholic drinks have been confiscated by the Customs Department in the first two months of 2019.

These were from a record 325 cases of smuggling and selling of contraband cigarettes and alcoholic drinks, according to Customs director-general Datuk Seri Subromaniam Tholasy.

The total haul was valued at almost RM100 million, he told a press conference yesterday.

Subromaniam attributed the success to more stringent enforcement.

Of the 325 cases, 148 people have been brought to court and 74 of them pleaded guilty.

The Customs Act 1967 and Excise Act 1976, amended last year with heavier penalties, came into force on Jan 2. With the amendments, offenders can now be fined up to RM100,000 or jailed up to five years, or both, up from a RM1,000 fine or a day's jail.

In addition, forwarding agents will have

their licences revoked under a new policy introduced last month. Five agents have already lost their licences since the policy came into force, one of whom was involved in smuggling cigarettes.

Subromaniam said the new policy was aimed at curbing smuggling activities, especially those that involved cigarettes, liquor, plastic waste, tiles and tyres.

Previously, errant forwarding agents only faced a six-month suspension.

"Now, we don't even have to take them to court because licences for forwarding agents are under our purview."

He added that the Customs Department would intensify raids in the coming months.

Subromaniam said with the stiffer penalties, the country should see a 27% increase in tax and duties collection for cigarettes and liquor - from RM5.5 billion in 2018 to RM7 billion this year.

"In the first two months of this year alone, we have collected 30% more in duties than we did in the same period last year just from

alcoholic drinks," he said.

However, he added the successes achieved in stamping out the smuggling of cigarettes was "not yet visible". He said tax and duty collection on cigarettes also rose but not as much as liquor. Nonetheless, a rise is expected in the coming months.

On the case of a Malaysian who was jailed for five years in Australia for smuggling more than six million cigarettes into the country, Subromaniam said Customs was working together with the Australian Border Force to obtain more details on the matter.

"This is an international syndicate involving a Malaysian. I can't divulge more information."

Australian authorities said on Feb 23 the cigarettes, concealed in "sophisticated cover loads", originated from Malaysia. The duty payable on the consignment was more than US\$2.86 million (RM11.62 million).

