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*Alvin Chua Seng Wah
Federation of Malaysia Freight
Forwarders president*



Call for rethink of third port plan

SUFFICIENT CAPACITY: Addition should 'complement, not compete with, Northport and Westports'

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PORT Klang's tightly-knit port community are against the idea of building of a third container port in the area, suggesting the government build a port for niche trade instead.

Westports executive director Ruben Emir Gnanalingam believed that there was no need for a third container terminal.

"The official Port Klang Masterplan shows that the full capacity of Northport and Westports is 16.5 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs). We are only at nine million TEUs this year and it took us 15 years to get there from two million in 1996," he wrote in an email reply to Business Times.

Westports also has 2km of unbuilt berth space.

Ruben said there was instead a clear need for bulk (non-container) related facilities.

"My personal opinion is that there is no need for a third container terminal until 2020."

Recently, reports of a proposal made by private company, Glen Marine Ports, surfaced in the media. The company was reported to have

proposed to convert the Port Klang Cruise Centre (PKCC) into a third container port.

Ruben said this year was going to be a tough year for cargo growth, especially if the crisis in Europe continued.

He felt that growth (in cargo volume) would only return in 2013.

The Federation of Malaysia Freight Forwarders believed that there was no need for an interim port.

"The third port shouldn't just be an interim port. It shouldn't be competing with Northport and Westports but rather complementing them.

It should be a niche business, like barging, which would be suitable for the kind of depth that PKCC (Port Klang Cruise Centre) has," Federation of Malaysia Freight Forwarders president Alvin Chua Seng Wah told Business Times late November.

He had floated the idea of a low-cost cargo terminal that would be able to cater to cargoes for Sabah and Sarawak, which should help in reducing logistics costs.

When asked at a press conference recently, Northport (M) Sdn Bhd chairman Tun Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid was non-committal about the plans for the third port, saying details on the venture were sketchy.