

Robust outlook for Kuantan Port

By Ong Han Sean

KUANTAN: The suspension of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project has no effect on Kuantan Port, says Transport Minister Anthony Loke.

He said there was still demand at the port despite the current status of the ECRL project, which is under review.

"I am sure that even without the ECRL, Kuantan Port will not be affected. As far as Kuantan Port is concerned, we will continue its development with or without the ECRL.

"I am confident that the port has its own niche," he said after visiting the New Deep Water Terminal (NDWT) at the Kuantan Port here.

On outstanding issues surrounding the NDWT, Loke said the tariff was expected to be finalised in a month's time.

He said Kuantan Port made suggestions which were now under the ministry's consideration.



Loke (fifth from left) during his visit to the Phase 1 of the New Deep Water Terminal, with him are Kuantan Port Authority chairman Tan Sri Tengku Azlan Sultan Abu Bakar (fourth from left) and East Coast Economic Region Development Council chief executive officer Datuk Seri Jebasingam Issace John (fourth from right).

"Consultations with port users have been done. When we make the decision, we want to make sure it is reasonable and competitive without raising costs," he said.

The NDWT was a major expansion project in collaboration with the Government. Its completion would double Kuantan Port's capacity to 52 million freight weight tonnes.

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Loke also said an application for Kuantan Port to be made a free commercial zone had been put in for consideration by the Finance Ministry and Customs Department.

“On the Transport Ministry’s side, we will surely support this application since a free commercial zone will attract more shipping companies to invest in Kuantan Port. We can also develop the terminal and the port as a transshipment hub for cargoes and containers.

“We view investments as an engine in developing our country, especially in the east coast that has the Kuantan Port as an important infrastructure,” said Loke, adding that potential for development was very high as there was still land in the area for industrial use.

Loke said Phase 1A of the NDWT was now operational and could be open anytime. Phase 1B is scheduled to be completed by mid-2019.

He said the berth section was reserved for Alliance Steel but Kuantan Port was in the process of studying the potential for another expansion.