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Port-Channel

PORT KLANG'S NORTH CHANNEL MAY BE DEEPENED

PORT KLANG, July 30 (Bernama) -- The government is looking into the possibility of deepening Port Klang's North Channel to enable bigger ships to call at the port, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today.

A consultant had been engaged to conduct a feasibility study which was expected to be ready in two months, he said.

"We are looking into the possibility of deepening the 11.3 metre North Channel by at least another five to six metres to cater for fourth and fifth generation ships," he told reporters after launching a dialogue between the West Port Management and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Malaysia (Jactim) here.

Present were Hauliers Association of Malaysia (Cham) president Mirzan Mahathir, Klang Port Authority Chairman Datuk Micheal Chen, state Customs Director Haji Ramli Mohamed Salleh and Jactim president Ikuo Miyamoto.

The dialogue is to further enhance the rapport between the operator of the West Port, Klang Multi Terminal Sdn Bhd, and the relevant parties to make the West Port and Port Klang the loading and transshipment mega hub of the region.

The government is already deepening the South Channel from 11.2 metres to 15 metres to facilitate the sailing of larger ships into the port.

While addressing the dialogue participants, Dr Ling expressed dissatisfaction with Jactim members who still transport their manufactured goods to a neighbouring port to be shipped out.

"We can understand if the goods are from the Southern part of the country like Pasir Gudang but it is unacceptable if goods from the north are still being transported to the neighbouring port," he said.

Jactim's members comprise about 1,200 Japanese companies which have invested in Malaysia.

Miyamoto said Jactim would give its fullest support to Port Klang, especially the West Port, to realise the government's aspiration to make it a mega economic hub in the region.

Mirzan said the haulier community in the country would give its total commitment to realising the government's vision to transform Port Klang into the busiest port in the region.

He also gave an assurance that Cham members would transport at least 90 per cent of the goods handled through Port Klang within 24 hours.

Ramli said that since the implementation of the Free Trade Zone in June this year, the customs department only conducted physical checks on three to five per cent of the goods from the port, thus enabling goods to be cleared faster.

He said the department also provided pre-clearance service, operating round-the clock, and by year end all document clearance would be handled through the Electronic Data Interchange, making for paperless transactions.

The department had also approved 20 public warehousing licences to facilitate smoother implementation of the Free Trade Zone, he added. --

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