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Minister: Blacklist suppliers who provide sub-standard equipment

BUTTERWORTH, Thurs. - Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik today directed all port operators to blacklist suppliers who provide sub-standard port equipment.

He said the port operators should exclude all errant suppliers from their future tender exercises.

"It does not matter if they are local or foreign suppliers.

"Exclude them from your tender list," he said after visiting the North Butterworth Container Terminal today.

Accompanying him were Datuk Mohd Zahrain Hashim, the executive chairman of Penang Port Sdn Bhd - the operator of the terminal - and its managing director Alias Abdullah.

Dr Ling was speaking to reporters after attending a closed door briefing on the terminal's activities and after being informed of frequent breakdowns of three gantry cranes, worth RM36 million, at the port.

According to him, the frequent breakdowns of the cranes, purchased from Australia in 1995, had affected the terminal's activities.

"I have instructed PPSB to identify the errant suppliers. I also want other local port operators to do the same so that the problem would not happen at their ports," he said.

Asked on the progress of the proposed 5,153km Trans-Asia railway network, Dr Ling said tenders for the project would be called for in the middle of next year.

"All parties involved in preparing several studies, including those on engineering and costs will be ready next year.

"Tenders for the proposed network, which was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, may be called in mid-1998."

(END)