

Prime Minister Launches Kuantan Port Expansion Project
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KUANTAN, Sept 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Saturday launched the Kuantan Port Expansion (KPE) project, which is expected to be a game changer in terms of East Coast Economic Region's (ECER) positioning as a key investment and trade destination.

Najib said the upgraded port will serve as the catalyst to achieve the overall investments and job growth for East Coast Economic Region Development Council (ECERDC) which were targeted at RM110 billion and 220,000 respectively by 2020.

"With the expansion, Kuantan Port's total throughput is expected to double to 52 million tonnes of cargo from the current 26 million tonnes.

"The construction of the breakwater by the ECERDC commenced in April 2013 and is scheduled for completion in 2015," he said at KPE's launching ceremony at Kuantan Port.

The expansion is a public-private partnership project which involves the construction of a new 4.7-kilometre breakwater, one of the longest in the world, using state-of-the-art technology.

"The federal government is investing over RM1 billion to build the breakwater, while the private sector, namely IJM Corp Bhd and Guangxi Beibu International Port Group (GBIPG), will invest RM3 billion for dredging, reclamation works equipment and machinery as well as internal infrastructure," he said.

He said the expanded port was well-positioned to serve as world class multi-purpose port for regional trade in ASEAN, the Far East and the rest of the Asia-Pacific.

"Kuantan Port offers the shortest, quickest and most direct route between Malaysia and the ports in the Far East. To the shipping community, this marks significant savings in cost, as well reduction in shipping time.

"We can also expect the KPE to unlock the true value of the resource-rich ECER hinterland by attracting more investors to the region," he said.

Najib said since the privatisation 12 years ago to the Kuantan Port Consortium, the Kuantan Port has expanded from the original six berths to 22.

"For Kuantan Port to emerge as a world class trading and logistics hub, it needs to attract and accommodate cape-sized bulk carriers and new generation post-Panamax container vessels of up to 200,000 deadweight tonnes," he said.

Najib said the Kuantan Port will be a catalyst in the development of the nearby Malaysia-China Industrial Park, the first industrial park in the country to be accorded national status and being developed by the sister park of the China-Malaysia Qinzhou Industrial Park in Guanxi, China.

At the event, Najib witnessed the exchange of share sale agreement between Guangxi Beibu International Port Group and Road Builder (M) Holdings Bhd, the subsidiary of IJM Corp.

He also witnessed the handover of the Panching Water Treatment Plant that was built by ECERDC for Pahang government.

The water treatment plant will produce 160 million litres of treated water daily which will cater to the needs of KPE project.

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