

# Kuantan Port to spend RM550m on expansion

By MUZZI CHAZMI

KUANTAN Port operator, Kuantan Port Corporation Sdn Bhd, plans to invest some RM550 million in the next 13 years to further expand facilities.

Kuantan Port Corporation, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Rina Buloh Belayut Holdings Sdn Bhd, took over the management of the port from the Government in 1998.

The privatisation agreement was signed on November 22 1997. The agreement allows Kuantan Port Corporation to seek a two-year extension period.

General manager Datuk Fakhri Hassanain said the company has spent RM200 million since the privatisation to improve the

port's services and existing facilities.

The additional investment within the next 13 years will allow the port to keep up with changes in the country's economic structure.

"We are in position to adjust our capability accordingly," he told participants of the Malaysian Timber Industry Board's timber trade localisation programme in Kuantan.

He said the port expects to be the leading maritime trade and logistics service centre in the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia and the Asia-Pacific region by the year 2020.

He said the port is an ideal gateway to Thailand, Indonesia, the Far East and the West Coast of the US.

At present, Kuantan Port is quite small in terms of container trade compared to Port Klang and Port of Tanjung Pelepas.

"We are mainly catering for petrochemical trade. The trend has been increasing since we took over in 1998. We are experiencing 18 per cent growth per annum," he added.

Last year, the port handled a total of 9.8 million tonnes of cargo throughput compared with some 7 million tonnes in 2002.

Kuantan Port's initial expansion exercise had seen the port deepening further its existing berths and the existing factor berths. This began in 1999 and was completed two years ago.

Some 18 million cu m of soil were excavated and dumped to a nearby site,

giving the port an additional 500m for other activities.

Kuantan Port has 60-65m which has been identified for specific activities. Of the total, operational area comprises 40.4m; water berths 149.2m; industrial 218.7m; commercial 11.4m; harbour basin expansion 71.7m; recreational and housing 12.5m; and road and drainage reserve 106.4m.

Other expansion projects completed after the privatisation exercise were the second and third Rapid chemical berths and the new container berth.

The port's current equipment are seven units of gantries, three units each of container and multipurpose cranes and two units of tugboats.