

## BUSINESS

# Expansion plans for Kuantan Port

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*File photo shows a container ship anchored at North Port in Port Klang outside Kuala Lumpur January 8, 2009. There are plans to deepen the Kuantan Port which faces the South China Sea as the proposed Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park gears up. – Reuters pic*

***NANNING, Sept 22 – Plans are underway to deepen the Kuantan Port as the proposed Malaysia–China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) in Gebeng, Kuantan, gears up to become a strategic gateway to the vast Asean, Far East and Asia Pacific market.***

East Coast Economic Region Development Council (ECERDC) Chief Executive Officer Datuk Jebasingam Issace John said the government had recently approved the expansion of the Kuantan Port to a deep water port with a 18-metre draught, which would be able to cater to vessels of more than 40,000 dead weight tonnes (DWT).

Speaking at the ‘Invest in Asean: Promotion Conference on Asean Industrial Park’, Issace said the Kuantan Port expansion exercise was expected to be completed in 2016.

The port expansion exercise, he said, would help strengthen MCKIP's position as the strategic gateway to Asean, Far East and Asia Pacific market, with a total population of about four billion people and a combined Gross Domestic Product of US\$17 trillion (RM51.83 trillion).

The MCKIP is strategically located in Kuantan, which has a port facing the South China Sea, the most direct link to the deepwater Qinzhou Port in China and other ports in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

It will only take three days shipping time between Kuantan and Qinzhou.

The MCKIP is the first industrial park in Malaysia to be developed jointly with China and the first bilateral project in the country that will be accorded national status.

The 607-hectare MCKIP site is not only located within the ECER Special Economic Zone but also within the vicinity of another four cluster industrial parks which offer vast investment opportunities in the sectors of halal food and non-food, petrochemical, automotive and downstream palm-oil processing.

Industries targeted for MCKIP will be involved in the manufacture of equipment for plastics and metals, automotive components, fibre cement boards, stainless steel products, food processing, carbon fibre, electrical and electronics products, information and communications technology and consumer products.

The MCKIP is a government-to-government initiative to reciprocate the China-Malaysia Qinzhou Industrial Park launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on April 1.

"Kuantan Port and Qinzhou Port would be able to create synergies among each other which would encourage greater movement of goods between Malaysia and China," Issace said.

He added the port expansion exercise would involve collaboration between the Federal government and the private sector.

AirAsia is scheduled to commence flight service between Nanning and Kuala Lumpur by year-end. –  
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