

Westports undertakes technical study on expansion plan

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PORT KLANG: Westports Holdings Bhd, having obtained approval in principle from the government for an expansion plan aimed at doubling its container-handling capacity, is currently undertaking a technical study on the matter.

The study, focusing on a proposal to set up 10 new container terminals (CTs) at the group's wharf in Port Klang, will take nine to 12 months to be completed, said its chief executive officer Eddie Lee.

"The reason why the study takes a long time is because of environmental issues, terminal designs and the surrounding waters," Lee told reporters yesterday.

The operator of the busiest port terminal here said the 10 new CTs will boost capacity by 16 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), raising total capacity to about 30 million TEUs. Westports currently operates nine CTs — CT1 to CT9.

Lee declined to provide further details of the expansion plan, such as the total investment and the exact time frame involved.

"The CT10 to CT19 expansion is our long-term plan for the company," he said. "We have to look at the demand and supply. For now, we are conducting the technical study. After it's done, we'll make an announcement on it."

Earlier, Lee welcomed CMA CGM *Antoine de Saint Exupery*, the first container vessel with a ca-

capacity of twenty, 600 TEUs, to call at Westports.

"She is CMA CGM's newest and biggest flagship container vessel," said Lee. The 400m-long ultra large vessel, flying the French flag, can carry a total number of container boxes equivalent to 123km.

The vessel is calling at Westports on its "FAL 1" service, one of the longest sea routes in the world connecting Asia to Northern Europe.

After the current maiden call, the vessel would be making Westports one of its regular ports of call on its FAL 1 service, said Lee.

Westports' share price closed unchanged at RM3.34 yesterday, with a market capitalisation of RM11.36 billion. Over the past 12 months, the counter has fallen about 15.11%.

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Westports currently operates nine container terminals — CT1 to CT9. Photo by M.olid
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