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Bintulu Port gets nod for extension of concession

Its cargo throughput soared to 45.4 million tonnes last year

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KUCHING: Bintulu Port Holdings Bhd (BPHB) has obtained approval in-principle from the Federal Government to extend the concession period for the operation of the Bintulu Port to 2052.

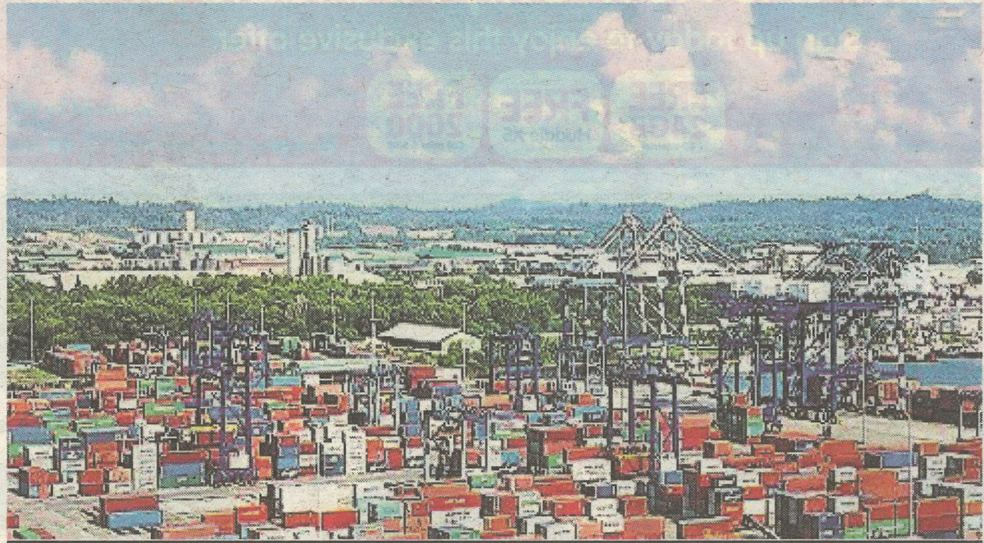
According to BPHB chairman Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa, detailed terms and conditions for the extension of the concession agreement for Bintulu Port Sdn Bhd (BPSS) are subject to the concurrence of all parties concerned.

BPSS was licensed as the operator of the Bintulu Port when it was privatised in 1993. Reputed to be one of South-East Asia's most efficient and profitable ports, Bintulu Port has grown by leaps and bounds over the past three decades, with its total cargo throughput soaring to 45.4 million tonnes last year from less than five million tonnes in 1983 when it started operations.

In 2014, the port handled 270,495 twenty-foot equivalent units and recorded 8,478 vessel calls. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) remains as its most important cargo.

Ali said the port's anchor customer, Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas), was expected to complete its new LNG train by this year to increase production capacity by another 3.6 million tonnes from the current 25.7 million tonnes per annum in early 2016.

However, he said, BPHB had made efforts to reduce its dependency on LNG cargo to 60% in the next few years by developing the non-LNG cargo sector.



Bintule port handled 270,495 twenty-foot equivalent units and recorded 8,478 vessel calls last year.

"Specific focus will be given to the development of the container sector, dry bulk and palm oil, as well as the oil and gas sector," he added, in reviewing the company's yearly performance in the 2014 annual report released on April 2.

According to Ali, the company has identified several new projects for implementation in the next five years.

These are the conversion of a 300m general cargo wharf for container operations, the proposed 300m bulk fertiliser wharf at Second Inner Harbour, the proposed 150m small barge berth project at the edible oil terminal, the proposed LNG berth No 4, the proposed 400m general cargo wharf at Second Inner Harbour, including the warehouse and the open yard for paper products, acacia logs and other general cargoes, as well as the proposed development of a supply base terminal at Second Inner Harbour.

Updating on the progress of the development of the RM1.8bil new Samalaju Port project to serve the energy-intensive industries in the Samalaju Industrial Park within the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy, he said the commencement of the interim port facilities a year ago had enabled industries to import their raw materials or project cargo using barges or smaller-sized vessels.

The interim facilities, which include two wharves and a roll-on/roll-off ramp, are capable of handling up to four million tonnes of cargo a year. The new port is located within the Samalaju Park.

Ali said the construction of the main port (Phase 1) facilities was progressing as planned for scheduled completion by the third quarter 2016. By then, the new deep-sea port will cater to handymax and handy-sized vessels.

Ongoing packages in various stages of implementation are capital dredging and reclamation (RM437mil), breakwater and associated works (RM306mil), wharf and associated works (RM311mil), electrical works and navigation aids system (RM47.5mil), conveyor system facilities (RM157mil), and administrative building and associated works (RM40.4mil).