

# **Westports Handling Capacity To Increase To 11 Million TEU By Year-End**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 21 (Bernama) -- Westports Holdings Bhd expects its overall handling capacity to increase to 11 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) containers by year-end with the completion of its Container Terminal 7 (CT7) soon.

Chief Executive Officer, Ruben Emir Gnanalingam, said currently, the port could handle about 9.5 million TEUs and last year it handled 7.4 million TEUs.

"The CT7 is right on schedule. The first phase was delivered earlier than expected and second phase would come in the middle of the year.

"We have also ordered 50 cranes from Japan, which will come in batches throughout the year," Ruben told reporters after the Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Bhd's Luncheon Talk here Tuesday.

Westports invested RM800 million over two years to develop the CT7, said Ruben, adding that there was no plan for CT8 at the moment as the port would develop its capacity growth in tandem with its clients' needs.

The completion of CT7 would take the port's overall container berth length to 4,600 metres, supported by the seven new quay cranes, which will be the tallest of such in the world, to handle the 18,000-TEU class vessels.

With the berth depth of 17.5 metres, Westports would stand out as one of the few ports in the world with the deepest berth depth to accommodate the biggest vessels in the world.

With capacity utilisation of about 75 per cent, Westports expects its container volume to grow by five to 10 per cent this year after recording eight per cent growth in 2013.

"For the time being, as we grow, we're looking at maintaining 70 to 80 per cent capacity utilisation. We do not want to overpopulate with too much productivity that can cause delay, but we don't want to be underutilised as well," he said.

Ruben said last year, a lot of growth came from China, Africa, Australia, inter-Asia and Middle East.

"Overall, Europe and US are also stabilising," he said.

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