

NBCT's new status to spur Penang Port activities

KUALA LUMPUR: Penang Port Sdn Bhd will be a focal point for shipping and transshipment activities following the gazetting of North Butterworth Container Terminal (NBCT) as a free commercial zone (FCZ) on Feb 1.

The port operator said in a statement yesterday FCZ operations would commence next month and this would put Penang on the world map as the NBCT would be able to cater to high-tech warehousing and logistics facilities.

"This will spearhead positive economic growth in the northern region. With the establishment of the FCZ in NBCT, foreign companies will be able to use the facilities before exporting their product overseas," said Penang Port.

Penang Port, which is a member of the MMC Group, will also benefit in the long run through Customs and excise duties.

The workforce and port operations will be more efficient once the facilities are upgraded with new technologies.

The process of obtaining the FCZ status for Penang Port was an uphill task as the gazetting of the NBCT involved 10 lots covering 83.57ha.

Penang Port Commission and Penang Port revisited the plan to gazette the NBCT in 2018 by requesting for approval and support from the State Economic Planning Unit.

NBCT is one of the main terminals of Penang Port with a core container operation service dating back to 1974.

Penang Port will capitalise on the newly-found status by under-



Penang Port Sdn Bhd says free commercial zone operations will commence at the North Butterworth Container Terminal next month, which will put Penang on the world map.

taking transshipment activities for containers moving between the Bay of Bengal and the Far East.

Penang Port also plans to link up feeder operators in the Bay of Bengal with mainline operators in the near future.

"The FCZ will attract more traffic to NBCT and this will increase job opportunities which are very

much needed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The port could leverage the FCZ status to attract investors around the world to conduct value-added activities such as break-bulking, grading, repackaging, relabelling transit and re-export."

Penang Port has grown steadily

to achieve a throughput of more than 1.5 million twenty-foot equivalent units as of this year from 516 TEUs back when it started in 1973.

It is one of the oldest and established ports in Malaysia, and serves as the primary gateway to the northern region of Malaysia and southern Thailand.