

## Press Clipping

# Huge potential as No.1 halal hub

## Westports 'selling' PKFZ to China as gateway to halal mart

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THE Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) can emerge as the world's No 1 halal hub owing to value-added services and distribution park facilities it offers.

Westports Malaysia, which is spearheading the marketing of the multi-million ringgit facility, views the development as a new wave at its corridor over the next five years.

Its executive chairman Tan Sri G. Gnanalingam said although Westports did not have any share in the facility, PKFZ's existence in Pulau Indah was an excellent gateway for countries like China to penetrate Muslim dominated countries.

"We are not looking at this year or 2007 but beyond when AFTA and WTO become more meaningful, there will be tremendous opportunities," he said in an interview after promoting PKFZ and Westports' facilities to Chinese businessmen in Shanghai and Shenzhen last week.

The promotion themed "Logistics Opportunities in Port Klang" was led by Transport Minister Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy.

Also in the delegation were Port Klang Authority (PKA) chairman Datuk Yap Pian Hon, PKA general manager Datin Paduka O.C. Phang, Transport Minister deputy secretary general Datuk Jamilah Md Jan and PKFZ managing director Noel William Gulliver.

Gnanalingam said Malaysia was already recognised with Islamic standards worldwide and the halal-approved food acceptance would eventually become the international standard for all races.

"This is because the halal stan-



(From right) Chan, Gnanalingam, Yantian International Container Terminal director and general manager Kenneth Tse and Hutchison Port Holding executive director Kimmy Tsien having a discussion during the port promotion in Shenzhen last week. - Picture by T. SELVA

dards (MS 1500:2004) meet both the requirements of the Muslim community and the international health and safety standards," he said, adding that they were the gold sponsors of the World Halal Forum scheduled to be held in Kuala Lumpur from May 8-10.

Gnanalingam said the Muslim population was two billion worldwide and China alone had 80 million Muslims.

He said the world halal food consumption was US\$500bil and the halal food market was worth US\$150bil.

"The Malaysian halal food market was US\$10bil and there is tremendous potential for busi-

nessmen using Port Klang's PKFZ the gateway to repack and export such goods to Muslim countries," he said.

PKFZ is owned by PKA and is managed by JAFZA International, which operates the world's leading free zone Jebel Ali in Dubai.

Gnanalingam said they were excited on the prospect of engaging more Chinese main line operators to call at Westports.

"I had a meeting with our anchor client China Shipping Container Lines which has grown from 100,000 TEUs in the year 2000 to more than 500,000 boxes last year.

"This year they have forecasted

to do 650,000 TEUs. They ply to 35 ports around the world and view us as their favourite port due to the efficiency and productivity we provide," he said.

He said Westports' strategy was berth on arrival, average crane productivity of 35 moves and ability to deploy eight cranes on big vessels.

"This assurance has become an attraction to main line operators who are impressed with our approach.

"Currently, Westports' capacity is six million TEUs and it has the capacity to handle up to 10 million TEUs within the next five years," said Gnanalingam.