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PORT Klang Authority (PKA), the regulator of Northport and Westports, is still looking for someone to fill the position of managing director at the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ), left vacant by Noel Gulliver William's return to Dubai in April.

Gulliver was seconded by Jafza International, the international arm of Dubai's Jebel Ali Free Zone Authority (Jafza), to PKFZ last year to establish its mega distribution park in Pulau Indah, Selangor.

PKA general manager Datin O. C. Phang said the authority has decided not to replace the position with another Jafza International appointee. Instead, it will be taking out an advertisement for the position soon.

"We are open (to candidates interested in the position). We will not limit ourselves to local applicants, but also those from abroad," she told a news conference in Port Klang yesterday.

"However, I am confident that we have good Malaysians who are capable of taking up the position. So let's wait for the results," she added.

Newly-appointed PKA chairman Datuk Chor Chee Heung had told Business Times last week that PKA was in talks with Jafza International over who will replace Gulliver.

New Port Klang Free Zone MD won't come from Jafza



Phang (right) with Chor at the news conference in Port Klang yesterday

PKA, which owns PKFZ, signed a 15-year contract with Jafza International on October 24 2004 to manage and market its free zone.

Phang said the arrangement

between PKA and Jafza International has not changed and the latter will continue to help market and render its services to make PKFZ a success.

"We would like to use the marketing expertise of Jafza International to help make PKFZ better known (internationally) and to attract international businesses, but that doesn't stop our own team from working hard and that's why we have focused on getting additional marketing staff for this," she said.

It is understood that PKA has hired two former Northport (Malaysia) Bhd senior executives to help drive the free zone's growth.

It has appointed Chia Kon Leong, former assistant general manager of marketing and corporate communications at Northport, as general manager of business development and Helen How Mei Leng, former commercial manager of Northport, as general manager of marketing and corporate communications at PKFZ.

The Government, through PKA, is spending some RM4 billion to develop the 405ha PKFZ, which is

slated for completion by April 2008.

In another development, Chor said PKA is leasing another 8ha to Northport to develop Southpoint, which serves as Northport's centre for coastal trade.

He said the authority will terminate lease agreements with four parties to accommodate Northport.

Chor also said the dredging works on Port Klang's north channel is expected to be completed by the end of this year at a cost of more than RM300 million.

The north channel is set to be deepened to 15.5m, similar to that in the south channel and enabling large vessels to go in and out both ways.

The dredging of the north channel is set to benefit Northport as well as other players in the shipping community as it will cut sailing time by three hours.