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China ports catching up fast

By EDWARD RAJENDRA

PORT KLANG: Malaysian ports must increase business in the non-container freight sector and obtain higher ranking in international standards as emerging new Chinese ports are posing tough competition.

"We must review our competitiveness with some of these ports and learn their strategies to improve our standing in the international standards," said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat.



Special gift: Ong giving an ang pow to the 'lion' after a performance at the Port Klang Authority Chinese New Year open house yesterday. With him (right) is authority chairman Datuk Lee Hwa Beng.

He added there were new Chinese ports making their way to the top 20 in the international standards.

"For example, Tianjin seaport ranked 17 in 2007 and we ranked 16; but this time around Tianjin has made it to 14 for 2008," he said at the Chinese New Year celebrations at the Port Klang Authority office.

Ong added that even though Port Klang was ranked 15 for 2008, it could not rest on its laurels. Los Angeles ranked 16 and Long Beach in California ranked 17.

He said Port Klang recorded 7.1 million twenty-foot equivalent container (teus) traffic in 2007 while in 2008 it increased to an encouraging 7.9 million teus.

He also called on the Port Klang Authority to work closely with terminal operators Northport and Westport to increase its competitiveness.

"Both the port regulator and the terminal operators must understand and execute their duties in an industrious method but within their jurisdiction.

On another issue, he also called the terminal operators to promote Malaysia in their advertisements.

"It is good to have a branding exercise for the ports but at the same time it must focus on Malaysia. I wish to see a comprehensive international branding for the country. This is still lacking," he said.

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