

## Klang ports facing a standstill

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PORT KLANG: Trouble is looming at the ports here following a planned move by over 1,000 container truck drivers to stop transporting goods on Wednesday to protest against depot operators.

The drivers plan to hold a three-hour gathering from 9am outside Northport to express their frustrations over long-standing issues on delays and increases in depot gate charges, which they claim are affecting their earnings.

The planned demonstration is worrying Northport and West Port as their action may affect operations.

According to a driver who declined to be named, the service level at the depots had resulted in them having to wait for three to four hours to pick a box and transport it to the customer's premises.

"We are only able to do one or two trips a day and this has reduced our earnings. Some of us are paid monthly wages of RM300 and our main income is from our daily trips. Some drivers are not paid monthly wages.

"We will be able to do six or more trips if the depot operators are more efficient," he said, adding that previously it would only take them 45 minutes to pick a container.

A haulage company executive said the depot operators had introduced gate charges of between RM10 and RM16 per container so that they could invest in new equipment to improve service. Previously, it was RM5.

"But, until now, nothing has changed and it has severely impacted the livelihood of these much needed professional drivers," he said, adding that attempts to resolve the issue had been unsuccessful.

Depot operators are paid by shipping lines to store their containers while haulage operators work on behalf of the shippers to move the containers.

An Association of Malaysian Hauliers official said he hoped that the drivers would not go ahead with the stop-work action because this would adversely affect the ports.

In an interview with StarBiz on Feb 20, association president Datuk Che Azizuddin Che Ismail had admitted that haulage operators were still having problems with container depot operators, suggesting that depots should be placed inside port areas rather than outside.

“It’s easier and cheaper if all containers go back to the port. It’s not productive to have a container 10km away from the port,” he said, adding that although some ports in Malaysia had on-dock depots, it was still not efficient as there was only one gate for trucks to collect and send the boxes.

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*Source: <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2012/04/30/Klang-ports-facing-a-standstill/>*

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