

# PM satisfied with progress at new port

PORT KLANG, Thurs. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is satisfied with the progress of the new West Port here, which is being developed by the Klang Port Authority.

He said the new RM1.5 billion port at Pulau Indah (formerly Pulau Lumut) was necessary because of the increasing demand for port facilities in the country.

Dr Mahathir said the country needed better and bigger ports to handle a bigger volume of cargo to further boost its economic growth.

"With this new port, I am confident that more ships

will call at Port Klang and thus make it one of the major ports in the region," he told reporters after getting a first-hand look at the development of the port, here.

The Prime Minister, who was accompanied by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, was earlier briefed by the general manager of KPA Mr M. Rajasingam.

The first phase of the West Port, consisting of three container and cargo terminals and two liquid bulk terminals is expected to be operational by October this year.

By the middle of next year, six more berths will be

completed to provide additional break bulk, liquid bulk, dry bulk and container terminals.

When ready, the port will be able to provide the best port facilities in the country, including direct transshipment, consolidation of cargo for subsequent reshipment, regional distribution, storage and deferment of duty on import cargo and other value-added services, such as packing, labelling, packaging and grading.

The West Port, which is designed to cater for the shipping needs of the 21st century, will have over seven kilometres of berths in keeping with KPA's objec-

tive of ensuring a berth for every ship on arrival in Port Klang.

Access to the new port is through an 18-km dual carriageway consisting of three bridges linking it to Jalan Langat in Klang.

The whole project spanning an area of 428ha in Pulau Indah is situated right next door to the industrial and commercial heartland of the country.

The volume of cargo handled by Port Klang which rose by 8.6 per cent last year to 30.83 tonnes and is projected to jump almost three-fold to 89.7 tonnes by the year 2010.