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SHIPPING TRAFFIC SOARS AT LUMUT PORT

LUMUT, July 11 (Bernama) -- Lumut Maritime Terminal (LMT) has handled 176 ships carrying 384,692 tonnes of cargo since it began operations on June 30 last year.

Its general manager Kwek Chee Wah said there was a 230 percent increase in cargo throughput from 89,522 tonnes in the second-half of 1995 to 295,170 tonnes as at the end of June 1996.

From July to December 1995, the port handled 34,713 tonnes of imports, 54,909 tonnes of exports and 60 vessel calls and from January to June 1996, it recorded a total of 110,918 tonnes of imports, 184,252 tonnes of exports and 116 vessel calls.

Announcing the port's performance here today, Kwek said import cargo grew by 220 percent totalling 110,918 tonnes as compared to 34,713 tonnes, while export cargo rose by 236 percent to 184,252 tonnes as compared to 54,909 tonnes in the previous year.

LMT is owned by Maritime Terminal Sdn Bhd, in which the Perak State Economic Development Corporation and Halim Rasip Holdings, a Bumiputera company with interests in shipping, petroleum and gas industries, have a 30 percent stake each.

The remaining 40 percent is owned by Ipco International Ltd, an international company involved in infrastructural development.

The first phase of the RM57 million terminal, which is developed and managed by LMT Sdn Bhd, can handle dry bulk cargo from ships weighing up to 35,000 dwt (deadweight tonnes), while its wharf can accommodate two ships at any one time.

This year, Kwek said the port handled its largest single shipment of containers when the MV Bunga Mas arrived and discharged 220 laden containers.

"The terminal's biggest success was when MV Timber Trader, a 51,672 dwt vessel with an overall length of 199.98 metres, call at the main berth of the port.

"This meant that the LMT, which was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on July 24 last year, is capable of handling heavy cargo like other major ports in the country," he said.

He said LMT, a feeder port to Port Kelang and Pulau Pinang Port, is being used to bring in project cargo for industries starting up operations in Perak, including areas around the Segari power plants.

Previously, equipment and heavy machinery for the industrial sector in Perak were imported, via Port Kelang and Pulau Pinang Port, before being transported to inland destinations.

"Clients would find that it is cheaper, safer and faster to bring in heavy equipment through the terminal, compared to other major ports in the country," he said.

Kwek said dry bulk cargo, which grew by 228 percent over the previous year, remained the principal cargo type handled at 190,010 tonnes or 64 percent of total cargo volume.

Major dry bulk cargo commodities were sand, limestone chips, salt and titanium dioxide, while palm kernel expellers, sulphur and ilmenite ore were new traffic handled by the port.

General breakbulk cargo, consisting of iron and steel, project cargo, asbestos and hydrated lime, totalled at 99,760 tonnes or 34 per cent of total cargo tonnage.

Shipping traffic at the port grew by 93 percent to 116 vessels in 1996, compared to 60 vessels in 1995.

Kwek said Lumut Port is poised to grow further in line with the industrial growth and economic development of its hinterland.

Under the second phase, he said the port's development plans include construction of a 4,000 dwt liquid berth with related tank farm facilities on a 24ha site.

For the third phase, the port's main berth, presently at 200 metres, will be extended by another 400 metres and in the pipeline will be construction of two additional warehouses with a total floor area of 162,000 sq feet. -- BERNAMA

LAT KM