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Container growth unaffected by nation's slowdown

THE downturn has not hampered container growth in Port Klang, which went up by three per cent in the first eight months of this year compared with the corresponding period last year, said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

He said container growth clearly indicated that Malaysians now fully supported using local ports for transshipment from Penang, Pasir Gudang, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching.

"Load centering has also increased," said the Minister to reporters after visiting Samsung Electronics Malaysia Sdn Bhd at North Port.

He said the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for Malaysians to use local ports was having effect.

Many importers and exporters were now using the facilities in Port Klang.

"The three privatised port operators provide one of the best services in the region and the Just In Time (JIT) companies do not have problems shipping their consignments to their consignees on time overseas."

He said if the JIT companies found the port efficient, then the non-JIT companies should not have any problem moving their consignments.

"I hope more and more companies will start using the local ports and help the nation recover from its economic problems sooner," said Dr Ling who is now visiting some of the JIT companies in Malaysia to get feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of local ports.

To date, Dr Ling said all the companies that he had visited had commended the services at Port Klang.

As far as Samsung was concerned, Dr Ling said the company had not encountered any problem.

"The company which is using 84 per cent of local materials from 60 companies for the production of microwave ovens hopes to make the product a 100 per cent local one by the year 2000," he added.

Kelang Port Management Sdn Bhd, a leading port operator in Malaysia's growing seaport industry, manages two gateways - North Port and South Port.

With containerisation being given priority, the Klang Port Container Terminal has five berths with a total quay length of almost 1,100 metres. Currently, the container terminal has 10 quay cranes, 30 rubber-tyred gantry cranes, 20 straddle carriers and an imposing fleet of support equipment.

Storage facilities include a 41ha container yard with annual capacity of 1.2 million TEUs and three container freight stations with a total covered area of 20,090 square metres.

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