

# PTP off to a good start

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By OUR REPORTER

THE Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) is off to a good start in terms of cargo-handling totalling 36,686 TEUs (20-foot equivalent units) during January-April this year.

During its three-month trial run from October 10 1999 to December 31 1999, the port handled 20,471 TEUs.

PTP, located at the southwestern tip of Johor, is positioning itself as the alternative regional transshipment hub.

The port was officially opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on March 13 this year.

With 130 ship calls made until April 30 this year, including three of the world's S-Class vessels with a 347 metre length, (Skagen Maersk, Clifford Maersk and Cornelius Maersk), PTP is fairly satisfied with the January-April throughput.

Gross productivity levels in the four-month period averaged 27 moves per hour per crane, PTP said in a statement.

Shipping lines that called in this period were Hub Line with its regular services to Indochina and Indian sub

continent and Maersk Sealand which has been calling at PTP as an empty repositioning centre.

Of the total containers handled during the four months, about 50 per cent of that or 17,899 TEUs were transshipment cargo. The remaining throughput was local export and import cargo.

PTP positively views this balance as an indication that the Johor hinterland potential is still largely untapped and significantly feedered to other regional ports.

PTP believes that with Mitsui OSK Lines secured with a fixed weekly calling which began from April 30,

the second quarter will see even increased local cargo movement.

Nevertheless, PTP is still focused on main line transshipment and is confident that once it builds the connectivity in Intra Asia routes, other back-support services will also follow suit.

A contributing factor at PTP for shippers is PTP's fully integrated IT system where all pre-clearance of cargo is done through the IT system thereby ensuring seamless import and export flow through the main gate.

Vessels are also worked on immediately on arrival without delay due to clearance.

Global cruise operator Star Cruises has also begun daily calls at PTP thereby contributing towards PTP's long-term goal as a complete maritime centre serving all industries.

Although the focus is on container transshipment, PTP believes that Star Cruises, by attracting customers from Singapore, Johor and Malacca, will help towards PTP's brand building efforts.

On the land side, the first four months were largely spent on ensuring that the first distribution warehouse was completed on time.

PTP had also outsourced the management and operations of this warehouse in an ongoing tender.

PTP's Distripark Phase One, as a result of this, is currently a focus with parties interested to use PTP's distribution warehouse as a nucleus point to build up cargo at the port.

The port is currently also holding talks with several main line operators and international terminal operators, including Dubai Ports Authority, where discussions on possible collaboration in free zone development and other areas are ongoing.