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Maersk Sealand to start weekly calls to PTP

MAERSK-Sealand, the world's largest main line operator will be starting five weekly services to the Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) from next Thursday (June 8).

The services include weekly calls to/from the US, weekly calls to/from Middle East and weekly calls to/from Northern Europe.

PTP's chief executive officer, Mohd Sidik Shaik Osman said: "We are proud to announce the direct fixed weekly calls of Maersk Sealand services at PTP. This demonstrates that direct calls to PTP will grow from now on.

"It is also a great start to the new millennium after only three months of operations since the official opening."

The services will certainly be a boom to local Johor hinterland shippers who will now have the option to load their cargo out directly via PTP and avoid the more expensive feeder and trucking option to Singapore, he said in statement.

This service by Maersk-Sealand come shortly after the port secured its first mainliner, Mitsui OSK Lines which started calling the port on the Japan-Hong Kong Straits service.

In a recent interview with Business Times, Sidik indicated more line are expected to start calling the port soon. PTP is gearing itself as the alternative hub in the region and with Maersk-Sealand starting their services to PTP, several more giant liner operators will follow suit soon.

Maersk-Sealand is understood to be a strong proponent of PTP as a transshipment hub.

The Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) is located at the confluence of international shipping lanes at the southwest of Johor, Peninsular Malaysia and was officially launched by Malaysia's Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on March 13.

Phase One development consists of six container berths totalling 2,160 metres of wharf length, an area of 1.2 million sq metres reserved for container handling and storage activities.

The port will also be equipped with 18 Super Post Panamax quay side cranes with an outreach of 53 metres and 58 Rubber Tyred Gantry cranes with stacking capability of 1 over 5 high and 7 across. Infrastructure support include an access Road of 5.4km linking PTP to the Malaysia-Singapore Second link expressway currently operational and a rail link measuring 31.5km to the National rail grid at Kempas with completion in January 2002.

With the completion of phase one, PTP will have a handling capacity of 3.8 million TEUs (20-foot equivalent units) per annum.

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