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A bright future in transshipment sector

PASIR GUDANG, Thurs. - Malaysia has a bright future in the transshipment sector as its ports hold great potential, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the progress made by the ports in recent years had lent credence to the country's capabilities in expanding the cargo handling industry.

"Not that long ago, that is about eight years ago, the country only had about a million containers (per year to handle).

"Now, Johor Port alone handles about 700,000 containers and the combination of Johor Port, PTP (Port of Tanjung Pelepas) and Port Klang handles about eight million containers," he told reporters after a working visit to Johor Port here today.

Dr Mahathir was happy to find that the Johor Port was handling about 700,000 containers today compared to less than 300,000 containers.

"We are definitely moving forward and I think there is a lot of room for growth."

On the fast growth rate of PTP in Gelang Patah, Dr Mahathir said the port was on course to become the country's biggest in 2005.

"PTP, of course, has got to expand. They have to increase their wharfage and that they will be doing (in stages).

"Works (on the expansion) will start next month and by 2005, we would have sufficient new capacity there of up to six million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units)."