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PTP-GROWTH

PTP EXPECTS FURTHER GROWTH IN CONTAINER HANDLING AND SHIPPING LINE

By: Wan Nurzila Abdul Rahman

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 25 (Bernama) -- The Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP), one of the fastest growing transshipment hubs in the region, expects to up its container handling and shipping lines in the near future.

Its chief executive officer of Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP), Mohd Sidik Shaik Osman said for this year alone, PTP expected to handle close to 2.8 million twenty equivalent units (TEUs), which represented a 40 percent growth compared with last year's performance.

"PTP's performance for last year alone has surpassed our earlier expectations and targets both in terms of volumes and productivity. This is a good development for a port which is just over three years old," he told Bernama in an interview recently.

Tanjung Pelepas, which also means "Departure Bay", is located on the southwestern tip of Peninsular Malaysia at the mouth of the Pulai River, some 40km away from Johor Baharu.

Up to the end of October this year, PTP has handled approximately 2.1 million TEUs compared with year 2001 throughput of 2.05 million TEUs.

Seeing better prospect ahead, PTP is also eyeing 40 percent in its container handling for next year, with 3.5 million TEUs, said Mohd Sidik.

"With Evergreen's shift to PTP in the last quarter of this year, we are confident of surpassing year 2002's target of 2.5 million TEUs," he said.

He said with a focus on efficiency inculcated at every level of the company, PTP had also surpassed most established ports standard of 25 gross moves per hour per crane.

PTP's average productivity is now between 30-31 gross moves per hour per crane.

Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, earlier this year had expressed his wish to see PTP emerging as the country's largest port in 2005, handling more than 10 million TEUs annually.

To this, Mohd Sidik said, PTP was always aware of such target given to the port.

"Dr Mahathir is the driving force behind the setting up of the PTP. Expectations are high and we will try our best to meet the challenge and to work hard to achieve the desirable results," he said.

Since operations started on Oct 10, 1999, PTP has surged ahead in attracting regular main line services. The port was officially launched by Dr Mahathir on March 13, 2000.

Among the major and important milestone for PTP in year 2002 was when shipping giant from Taiwan, Evergreen Marine Corp shifted its operations from Singapore to PTP.

Other shipping companies using PTP include the world's largest shipping company, Maersk Sealand, which had also transferred its operations to PTP from Singapore.

Mohd Sidik said with the presence of the world's largest two container shipping lines, PTP had established a more comprehensive feeder network in the hope of attracting new shipping companies to use its facilities.

"We will not rest (in our effort) to acquire and influence more shipping lines to call at our port. In fact we are in the midst of dealing and negotiating with some of them," he said.

Mohd Sidik, who declined to elaborate on the matter, said PTP had increased its customers base and shipping lines.

In year 2002, Mohd Sidik said PTP's focus would be on further

developing the area.

"The spin off from the terminal will directly provide warehousing bay for consolidators, international procurement centres and regional distribution centres.

"This base cargo from within the port will in turn ensure PTP's growth as a major transshipment hub," he said.

At the same time, he said, working equipments were adequate at its six berths.

PTP has 24 Super Post Panamax quay cranes, 10 of which are the largest and modern in the world with a 22 box outreach and twinlift.

"The investment that we have put in is to make sure that the productivity level at PTP will be sustained at very high level," he said.

PTP was awarded the "Best Emerging Container Terminal Award" by Lloyd's in October 2000.

Touching on the competition particularly with the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA), Mohd Sidik said that port industry was highly competitive as this was unavoidable.

"Though PSA might be a competitive port, but in our view, we are still the best as we offer the best facilities and price," he said.

On whether PTP is willing to work with PSA to make ports in SIJORI (Singapore-Johore-Riau) Growth Triangle a major hub for the shipment and transshipment of goods in this region, Mohd Sidik explained that the cargo growth in the South East Asian region was significant enough to see all major ports expanding especially with the growing markets in India and China.

With the growth and positive outlook of the port industry, Mohd Sidik said Malaysia now needed to move forward to the next level from a manufacturing base to offering value-added services.

"PTP is driving this forward in the south west of Johor by developing its own distribution hub and working with other developers to fast track industrial growth.

He said expectations for next year would be encouraging as the government had presented an up-beat positive budget, which key sectors should take full advantage of. -- BERNAMA

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