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Mahathir-Port

PTP WILL BE COUNTRY'S LARGEST PORT IN 2005, SAYS MAHATHIR

PASIR GUDANG, July 25 (Bernama) -- The Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) in Gelang Patah, some 40km from Johor Baharu, will become the country's largest port in 2005, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

It would have a capacity to handle more than 10 million TEUs (twenty equivalent units) of containers annually, said the prime minister.

He said PTP, which currently handles more than 2.5 million TEUs, was capable of reaching the target once all the relevant facilities and infrastructure for the port were put in place.

"PTP would have sufficient new capacity of handling up to six million TEUs plus the present 4.5 million TEUs (full capacity). PTP will become the biggest port with 10 million over capacity," he said.

Speaking to reporters after visiting Johor Port here, Dr Mahathir said this smaller port too had registered remarkable growth with its cargo capacity now standing at 700,000 TEUs from only 300,000 TEUs eight years ago.

"Previously our ports handled less than one million containers.. but now the Johor Port alone handles 700,000 TEUs and if all the figures are added including that of Johor Port, PTP and Port Klang, it is almost eight million," he said.

The prime minister said the country's ports could be further expanded to be on par with other international ports.

Asked if Johor Port would be affected by the land reclamation work being carried out by the Singapore government, he said: "We are not happy as their reclamation has further narrowed the (Tebrau) straits."

This would make it difficult for the ships passing through Johor Port, particularly the navy ships, he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir was briefed on the progress of Johor Port by the Johor Port Bhd chairman Datuk Mohd Taufik Abdullah.

Also present were Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, his deputy Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman.

-- BERNAMA

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