

WITH WELL over 250 weekly mainline and feeder services covering nearly 300 ports worldwide, Northport is the second in the Asean region to offer the largest concentration of shipping services.

With such an extensive connectivity, it is only natural that it has developed a strong cargo base stemming from one of the largest spread of shippers coming not only from Malaysia, but also, now, increasingly from third countries who are trans-shipping via Northport to reach overseas markets.

The importance and significance of the strong and spreading cargo base at Northport is certainly not lost on the global shipping lines which not only continue to expand their network of services linking Northport to ports worldwide but have also started deploying some of the biggest container ships afloat. The deployment of the increasing mega-sized container ships – of sizes ranging 8,000 TEUs to 8,500 TEUs – is a mark of confidence that the global shipping industry continues to give to Northport as a global port.

The confidence that the global shipping industry has on Northport was recently given a timely boost by the government when the Ministry of Transport gave its greenlight to dredge the approach channel to Northport.

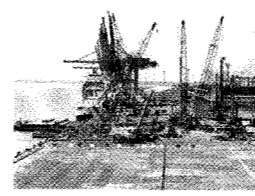
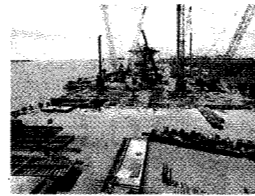
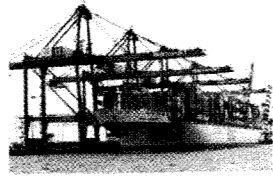
The deepening and widening of the approach channel at Port Klang will give wider berth and safer navigation passage to the growing body of mega-sized container ships as well as increasing vessel traffic now averaging 477 ships monthly.

Northport, on its part, has taken appropriate measures to respond to the market trend in shipping and the expectations from its customers. The major response in this regard by Northport is reflected in the development of Container Terminal 3 (CT3).

Work on CT3 began in early 2003. In August 2003, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi

Extensive Connectivity

Northport offers wider options to reach global market



commissioned the Phase One of the terminal.

CT3 is now the centre-piece of the container handling operations at Northport with its innovative approach to manage and operate a container terminal

that meets the specific requirements of the global market.

Driven by the need to benchmark itself against world ports, in line with its emerging status as an international trans-shipment hub that has attracted some of

the biggest container ships afloat in the world, Northport has decided on a new approach that would guarantee users world standards in cargo and ship handling.

The new container terminal is now benchmarked against world standards in

shore-side and land-side handling of containers and ships. World standards are important because Northport feels it is not dealing with minnows; its clients – comprising shippers and shipping lines – are global leaders in their respective fields and demand exacting international standards.

Northport serves the requirements of global players like Motorola, Matsushita, IKEA, Proton, Sony, and the likes as among the major shippers using the port while global shipping lines that serve it include P&O Nedlloyd, NYK, Mitsui OSK, Hapag Lloyd and Malaysia International Shipping Corporation Bhd.

Growing demand

The ability of Northport to meet the growing demand of the trade is not only to be measured in volumetric terms but also in its ability to respond to the requirements of faster and bigger ships.

Northport, which handled 2.54 million TEUs last year, will offer an installed capacity of 4.25 million TEUs when fully completed in March 2005, very much ahead of schedule. The total linear berth will be extended to 3.27 km and CT3 offer 15 metres depth alongside. It is able to meet the needs of the mega-sized container ships, which require deeper draft and longer berths.

Consistent with needs of the mega size carriers to turnaround faster, Northport has installed several new super post-panamax shoreside gantry cranes at the terminal to facilitate faster loading and unloading operations.

The port has ordered three super post-panamax cranes increasing the total fleet of shoreside cranes to eight. The shoreside cranes will be backed up by a fleet of RTGs to support the landside operations at Northport which is moving away from using Straddle Carriers (SKs) as the workhorse in view of rising volume of containers and to achieve a higher utilisation of space at the container yards.

Recently, Northport spent about RM10

million to develop a new gate system to ensure that the process flow of cargo at the port is as efficient as the process flow of the documents via the application of the electronic system.

The documentary flow at Northport is also enhanced with an extensive application of ICT on a community-based system. The pervasive application of information technology at Northport which has won the CIO 100 Honouree 2002 Award presented by the Hong Kong-based CIO publication, is the leading-edge technology that offers users one of the most efficient platforms in the logistics supply chain process at Northport.

Indeed the web-centric application, leveraging on the global outreach of the Internet, has transformed the port logistics environment at Northport with the highly integrated and interactive logistics system. This makes Northport a hub for distribution and re-distribution activities in the region.

Northport is linked by all modes – rail, road, air and, of course, shipping, offering shippers' wider options or a menu of services. It is in this regard that Northport differs from many – it provides shippers a wide choice. This is especially important in the context of the changing key functionalities of transport emphasising on the supply chain management system or approach in moving cargo from one point to another.

Northport views itself not merely as an interface but an essential link in the entire logistics supply chain, or process that increasingly focuses on an efficient and economical delivery system.

The emergence of the seamless and integrated logistics environment enables Northport to move up the value chain swiftly as it has all the necessary ingredients and the infrastructure to do so. This will further strengthen the confidence of importers and exporters in Malaysia and also shippers from neighbouring countries who view Northport as an attractive option to reach out to about 300 ports globally. **mb**

