

# A proud moment for host country

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is proud to become the first Asian country to host the International Harbour Masters' Association (IHMA) Congress, says Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong.

He said the conference underscored Malaysia's strong collaboration with international maritime and logistics bodies, such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), a specialised agency under the United Nations.

During his keynote speech at the event yesterday, Dr Wee said the country's ports achieved reasonable growth in 2021 following a slump in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

He said Port Klang and Port of Tanjung Pelepas were among the busiest in the world, ranked 12th and 15th respectively, in 2021.

He added that both ports served as gateways and transshipment hubs, and frequently handled the largest container vessels of 24,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs).

"Other main ports including Penang, Pasir Gudang, Kuantan, Bintulu, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu serve as important regional ports providing direct shipping links to various parts of the country.

"Ports such as Pengerang, Sungai Udang and Kertih provide facilities for oil and gas cargo and are actively involved in petrochemical industries, refineries and liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage," he said, before officiating the 13th biennial event at a hotel here.

He said the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine had led to a rise in oil prices and shortage of commodities, and this had dampened global hopes for trade recovery this year.

"It is our hope that a speedy resolution is negotiated in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and hopefully, accelerate the recovery of the global economy which is still reeling from the effects of Covid-19," he said.