

Sabah Ports increases capacity at Sapangar

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KOTA KINABALU: Sabah Ports Sdn Bhd will increase the handling capacity of Sapangar Bay Container Port (SBCP) to half a million TEUs (20ft equivalent units) per annum with the launching of its two additional ship-to-shore cranes, here, Wednesday.

Over just 10 years, SBCP has gone from handling a volume of containers of 105,239 TEUs using mobile harbour cranes in 2007, to 241,466 TEUs last year with two units of ship-to-shore cranes commissioned in 2011.

With the arrival of the two additional units of ship-to-shore cranes which was handed over by Konecranes, the manufacturer in Dec 26, last year, they hope to increase the volume to 500,000 TEU.

These two new cranes comes with enhanced feature - with maximum outreach of 45 metres from the centre line of sea-side rail and maximum height of lift of 36 metres above quay level.

These features will enable SBCP to handle bigger vessels than using the existing cranes.

"SBCP is now capable of handling more volume including some transshipment containers," said Sabah Ports Sdn Bhd Managing Director Ng Kiat Min at the official launching ceremony of the

two new cranes.

The ceremony was officiated by Sabah Ports Sdn Bhd Chairman Datuk Karim Bujang, witnessed by Suria Capital Holdings Berhad Chairman Datuk Faisyal Datuk Yusof Hamdain Diego.

Ng went on to say this will complement the effort of the Federal Government to make SBCP to be the transshipment hub for the BIMP-EAGA region.

She further said that to further boost the handling efficiency and capacity of SBCP, Sabah Ports implemented a new Terminal Operating System for container operation last year.

"The system which included improvement to the Wifi system and the use of tablets cost about RM7 million.

"In addition, a further RM80 million was invested on eight sets of prime movers with trailers, four units of rubber-tired gantries and two units of ship-to-shore cranes for SBCP," she said.

She said the equipment were delivered in stages last year, with the two units of ship-to-shore arriving at SBCP from Xiamen, China on Nov 26 and handed over to SBCP by Konecranes a month later that same year.

On another note, she said as it has been announced, the Federal Govern-

ment has approved a grant of RM1.027 billion for the expansion of SBCP.

"I am pleased to inform that the surveyor and soil investigation consultants have recently been appointed and works have commenced," she said.

She said Sabah Ports is expected to invest a further RM200 to 300 million on equipment to raise the total handling capacity of SBCP to 1.25 million TEU per annum.

The expansion project, which involves the extension of the SBCP jetty from the existing length of 500 metres to 1 kilometre, the reclamation of about 20 hectares for container yard and the construction of other ancillary facilities will take about four to five years to complete.

Meanwhile, Karim said they have been receiving complaints from customers regarding slow handling of containers at SBCP, thus he hoped the additional cranes will boost customers confidence.

"This is in line with the policy to enhance performance of the port, but this jetty would not be able to accommodate more ship-to-shore cranes, four is the maximum.

"Nevertheless, we hope plans to expand the jetty will be implemented and help us move towards making SBCP a preferred port in the region," he said.