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Friday, May 25, 2007

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Sea trials said to brighten prospects for container monitor

TRIALS of a satellite-based container tracker and monitor, verified by the ST Education and Training Pte Ltd (STET) Maritime Bureau, showed a high success rate according to a CargoTrax company statement.

The black boxes were "interrogated" several thousand times during the trials on the South China Sea in March, where they were

nto a ThermoKing Reefer containers. @FAXTEXT = CargoTrax says its device "adds less than 2 per cent to the cost of container rental, when the insurance premium discounts are taken into consideration". It will be commercially available later this year.

The device was developed jointly by CargoTrax Oy of Finland and TriaGnoSys GmbH of Germany and is based global-positioning-system technology, allowing 24/7 real-time security monitoring of containers, particularly reefers, to ensure that critical conditions are met throughout voyages.

Said Markus Werner, managing director of TriaGnoSys: "I am pleased that all the test messages sent from various monitoring boxes were captured and correctly logged. Forwarding of messages worked perfectly, and all information was correctly delivered to the remote monitoring application server."



Carriers oppose container shift to Port of Tanjung Pelepas

OCEAN carriers have expressed their unwillingness to support a plan to move all container operations from Malaysia's Johor Port to the neighbouring Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP).

Shipping lines calling at Johor feel that cargo volume will be reduced which will also cut into the trade with its hinterland, resulting in an overall reduction of throughput for both ports.

Johor Port Shipping and Forwarding Association president Alvin Tan said the plan may well have a negative impact on overall performance with the two ports which are both owned by MMC Corp Bhd.

"As Johor Port has been efficient as one of the most cost-effective points of entry to a number of manufacturers dealing in imports and exports in this vicinity, this niche market needs to be protected and it is only viable that ports like Johor Port continue to offer their competitiveness to meet both demand and supply of liners and manufacturers at large," said Mr Tan in the Business Times of Malaysia.

Amasis Shipping general manager Quek Boon Chew agreed, saying that one cannot ignore the fact that the surrounding area of Pasir Gudang has a large export-oriented community and most industries such as palm oil are firmly rooted in the industrial area.

"Diverting the exporters to a gateway that is further than their present location will only add to their costs," said Mr Quek.



Port Klang retains top ranking among Malaysia's ports

MALAYSIA's Port Klang remains the nation's busiest container port, after handling 1.60 million TEU in the first quarter of the year, an increase of 8.7 per cent compared to the same period in 2006 when it handled 1.47 million TEU.

Port authorities attributed the rise to an overall increase in trade and the efforts by terminal operators Northport and Westport to attract more cargo, as well as to encouraging existing customers to move greater volumes through the port, said a report by the Business Times of Malaysia.

Of the total TEU throughput, Westport handled 60.9 per cent while Northport accounted for the remaining 39.1 per cent.

Total transshipment volume for the first three months of the year amounted to

934,287 TEU, up 13.3 per cent over the same quarter a year ago, comprising 58.2 per cent of Port Klang's total throughput.

Export volume rose 6.5 per cent year on year to 334,524 TEU, while import volume fell 0.3 per cent compared to the first quarter in 2006 to 334,554 TEU.

"Container throughput for the whole year is expected to reach seven million TEU, from 6.3 million TEU in 2006," Port Klang Authority chairman Yap Pian Hon told The Business Times.

In second place, after Port Klang, came the Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) in Johor, with a total of 1.34 million TEU for the first quarter, representing an increase of 32.8 per cent over the same quarter a year ago when it handled 1.01 million TEU.



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