

A GLOBAL CONVERSATION FOR THE MARITIME SECTOR

Singapore Maritime Week 2015 will provide industry leaders with thought leadership events and networking opportunities. BY FRANCIS KAN

TO reinforce its position as one of the region's leading maritime centres, it is important for Singapore to stay on top of the changes affecting the fast-evolving global industry.

This is one of the aims of the annual Singapore Maritime Week (SMW), which sees delegates representing port authorities, industry leaders, as well as maritime professionals from around the world gather in Singapore to discuss key trends, opportunities and challenges facing the sector.

"Singapore Maritime Week brings together stakeholders from around the world to exchange views on key issues of the day. Over the years, SMW has grown in size and significance, and is now one of the largest maritime events in the region. The expansion of SMW reflects the growing role that Singapore plays as an international hub port and maritime centre," said Minister of Transport and Second Minister for Defence Lui Tuck Yew, who officially opened the event on Sunday.

Themed "People, Ideas and Opportunities", this year's instalment features 30 events covering topics including shipping, offshore, maritime security and oil spill response.

About 54,000 public participants and high-level delegates are expected to attend these events which run until April 24. This year, SMW celebrates its 10th anniversary, coinciding with independent Singapore's 50th anniversary.

"With the evolving maritime landscape, it is critical that we keep abreast of industry trends and work closely with partners to remain relevant for the next 50 years," said Andrew Tan, chief executive of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA).

SMW is organised by the MPA in partnership with the Singapore Maritime Foundation, Singapore Shipping Association and the Association of Singapore Marine Industries.

New elements have been added to this year's line-up, such as the first maritime heritage exhibition, held at the Marina Bay Sands Event Plaza; the Port Authorities Roundtable;



Mr Lui (third from right) opening Singapore Maritime Week on Sunday. Also present were (from left) Freddie Woo, vice-president of the Association of Singapore Marine Industries; Michael Chia, chairman of the Singapore Maritime Foundation; Tan Beng Tee, assistant chief executive (Development), MPA; and Patrick Phoon, president of the Singapore Shipping Association.

the Singapore Maritime Technology Conference as well as the Advanced Maritime Leadership Programme.

"SMW aims to prepare maritime leaders with new thought leadership events and networking opportunities so that they can collaborate and better address new and complex challenges ahead. At the same time, we want to better and more closely engage the public to raise the profile of the maritime industry," said Mr Tan.

SMW is also an opportunity to showcase the evolution of Singapore as an international maritime centre. Among its achievements, the sector has developed an ecosystem that features a variety of maritime businesses, including shipowners and operators and maritime services providers such as shipbrokers,

marine insurers, maritime law firms and shipping banks.

Singapore is also a key transshipment hub at the crossroads of major East-West trades. With Asia expected to be the next area of growth, the Republic is well positioned as a gateway to the region's dynamic emerging markets.

The sector has grown in recent years despite a challenging economic climate. Last year, the Port of Singapore maintained its position as the top bunkering port in the world. The Singapore Registry of Ships also grew in size and continued to be ranked among the top 10 registries in the world.

In particular, the prospects for tanker operations are significant here, as companies leverage on Singapore's position as one of the world's largest petrochemical refiner and an

oil trading hub for the region. The offshore shipping sector here has also grown beyond just being an important rig building and conversion centre.

Today, Singapore's maritime industry is home to more than 5,000 companies – from key sectors such as port operations and shipping to maritime services and offshore engineering – supported by some 170,000 employees. MPA has put in place schemes to support the industry in education and training, as well as to assist in the various areas of development, like Green Shipping and Maritime Research and Technology.

The biennial Singapore International Maritime Awards (IMA), which honours individuals and companies for their outstanding contributions to Singapore's maritime sector, was held at a gala dinner on Tuesday. Some 10 in-

Full speed ahead

THE Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) lists some of the key initiatives ahead for nation's maritime sector.

■ Growing port capacity

Investing in port infrastructure to cater to the growth in container shipping and the trend towards mega vessels. The expanded capacity will come from the development of Pasir Panjang Terminal phases 3 and 4, and further in the future, the Tuas Terminal.

■ Going green

Pursuing growth in a sustainable and responsible manner to mitigate the environmental impact of shipping. MPA's Maritime Singapore Green Initiative encourages shipping companies to undertake environmentally-friendly shipping practices over and above what is mandated by the International Maritime Organization.

■ Grooming talent

Growing a quality workforce to support the expanding maritime cluster with the recent injection of another S\$65 million to the Maritime Cluster Fund-Manpower Development programme.

dustry awards were given out at the ceremony. This year's IMA will also recognise the immense contributions made by maritime pioneers for the first time.

"These award winners have joined and strengthened the diverse maritime cluster in Singapore. Their contributions to Maritime Singapore are testament to Singapore's pro-business environment through factors such as ease of doing business, transparency of rules and availability of a pool of competent workforce," said Mr Tan.

He added: "The winners' commitment to growing their businesses in Singapore also signals Singapore's position as a potential gateway to emerging markets in Asia and a springboard for investments in the region from which maritime businesses can drive regional growth."