

'No containing' Singapore's shipping capacity

MPA's growth plans may leave rivals trailing in its wake: HK shipping boss

By JACQUELINE WOO

SINGAPORE'S plans to expand its container shipping capacity could allow it to "pull away" from its competitors, said shipping magnate Tung Chee Chen yesterday.

Mr Tung pointed to the trend of mega-vessels and added: "If Singapore is actually looking into the future and thinking that the big ships are here to stay, then its transshipment operations could be the key to success."

Singapore's port authorities have already announced long-term plans to increase container handling capacity - there will be a new port in Tuas as well as new facilities at the Pasir Panjang Terminal to accommodate up to 65 million twenty-foot equivalent units

from 2027.

This will be almost double the current handling capacity.

"Relatively speaking, no other country, or no other neighbouring port, is actually contemplating investing or trying to catch up," said Mr Tung, who is chairman of Hong Kong shipping group Orient Overseas International.

He noted that more shipping companies are turning to bigger vessels, which also require "a new set of facilities to take care of them".

"The terminal must know how to manage without any hiccups. If you have congestion and delays, you create dislocation in the system, which is not good for the customer (or for yourself as an operator).

"Terminals have to continue with investments and keep pace with the changes."

Mr Tung, who was delivering the Singapore Maritime Lecture at the Fullerton Hotel, said firms may need to "look beyond our usual industry parameters" given the challenging conditions still facing global shippers.

This could involve extending a business' operations to land activity or ensuring the co-existence and cooperation of carriers, both big and small.

Mr Tung noted that China's new "Silk Road" strategy could boost close cooperation among nations and bring "new energy" to global maritime trade.

"The word cooperation seems to be really hitting home as the common denominator," he pointed out.

"It is becoming an increasing necessity in the global village that we have built. As a villager, we



Mr Tung Chee Chen, chairman of Hong Kong's Orient Overseas International, yesterday said shipping firms may need to "look beyond our usual industry parameters" given the challenging conditions facing global shippers. PHOTO: MPA

must focus more of our efforts on cultivating success."

The lecture, which was organ-

ised by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), is a key feature of Singapore Maritime

Week, which ends tomorrow. About 450 maritime industry delegates attended yesterday's lecture, the ninth such.

Meanwhile, the MPA Academy - the training arm of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore - inked an agreement with the World Maritime University (WMU) yesterday to cooperate in the grooming of talent.

The WMU is a post-graduate university founded by the International Maritime Organisation, a United Nations agency.

The memorandum of understanding involves the two organisations collaborating on leadership development programmes and exchanging faculty members.

MPA said in a statement that the agreement was in line with MPA Academy's efforts to reposition itself as a centre of excellence in global maritime leadership training.

✉ tsjwoo@sph.com.sg