



Ms Lin Ming Ling, an operations trainee at Oldendorff Carriers Singapore, received 50 per cent funding under MPA's scholarship scheme to enrol in a \$25,000 four-month programme in the Netherlands in 2012. ST PHOTO: LIM SIN THAI

Port expansion at Pasir Panjang being accelerated

Container handling capacity will be increased by more than 40%

By **KARAMJIT KAUR**

EXPANSION plans for the Pasir Panjang container port are being accelerated to cater for growth at the port.

Phases 3 and 4 will be fully operational by the end of 2017, two years ahead of the original plan, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said during the debate on his ministry's budget yesterday.

Last year, the port recorded a 4 per cent increase in container throughput to 33.9 million 20ft equivalent container units (TEUs).

And growth is expected to continue in tandem with regional demand, Mr Lui said.

The Pasir Panjang expansion will add new handling capacity of

15 million container units per annum, increasing total capacity by more than 40 per cent to 50 million container units.

Port operator PSA will invest about \$3.5 billion in these new facilities, which will enable Singapore to handle more of the largest container ships, which are about 400m long.

"This expansion will provide sufficient capacity while development work on Tuas Port is under way," Mr Lui said.

Apart from infrastructure works, the maritime sector is getting a \$65 million boost to attract, develop and retain talent to grow Singapore as a global hub port and international maritime centre.

The money will go into the Maritime Cluster Fund for Manpower

Development. This brings the total amount put into the kitty since 2007 to \$115 million.

Another \$6 million will be spent over the next five years by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) under an existing scholarship programme to support more students who aspire to become captains and chief engineers.

The schemes will encourage more maritime businesses to improve employees' skills and allow more Singaporeans to take up seafaring careers, Mr Lui said.

Ms Lin Ming Ling, 26, an operations trainee at Oldendorff Carriers Singapore, is one such beneficiary who received 50 per cent funding for a \$25,000 four-month programme in the Netherlands in 2012.

"The grant helped to lessen my financial burden and helped me progress in my career," she said.

Apart from financial backing,

MPA is working with companies to develop management associate programmes to groom local talent for leadership positions and develop structured career progression pathways, Mr Lui said.

Responding to Mr Seng Han Thong (Ang Mo Kio GRC), who asked about maritime safety, Mr Lui said the number of incidents has dipped from 1.7 incidents per 100,000 vessel movements in 2010 to 0.5 last year.

This year, the industry will be paying special attention to enhancing safety for small harbour and pleasure craft by installing enhanced transponders.

"The prospects for the maritime sector are bright and the Government will continue to ensure that the industry is future-ready so that Singapore and Singaporeans can take advantage of the many opportunities available," Mr Lui said.

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