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# 500% traffic growth in port seen by 2011

By Lotte Chow

HONGKONG'S port traffic was expected to remain brisk this year and was likely to expand by five times by the year 2011, Marine officials predicted yesterday.

And despite the events in China, the territory's cargo throughput would continue to increase in 1990, they said.

"The port is the heart of Hongkong's economy and a key factor in our development and prosperity," said Michael Sze, director of Marine.

"As one of the most efficient in the world, our port should continue to not only provide efficient services but at reasonable prices."

For the third consecutive year, the port of Hongkong last year was ranked first in the world in terms of container throughput.

The 4.46 million TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units) handled last year was a 10 per cent increase over 1988.

However, Singapore, with 4.3 million TEUs, was a close second.

"But our goal is not so much being No 1 as making sure we meet our industries' requirements and satisfy shippers' demand," Mr Sze said.

Government policy was to meet demands and not to over-provide, he said.

Because of the territory's manufacturing base, its port played an important role for local industries besides serving as an entrepot for other countries, he said.

And the Marine Department, through its Port and Airport Development Strategy Study, which will be used to help build the new airport and port facilities, predicts the territory's port cargo throughput will increase from last year's 85 million tonnes to 450 million tonnes by 2011.

The forecast is based on the territory's annual 8 per cent port growth rate.

To catch up with the increasing cargo throughput, the study suggests, additional port facilities are being considered at the Western Harbour - through reclamation of new land, dredging of the harbour, construction of a breakwater and typhoon shelters, and building of navigation channels.

Later this year, the Marine Department also will establish a shipping register for Hongkong.

The computerised register will consolidate ship information into one source, permitting easy updating and cross-referencing.

Following the earlier announcement of additions of Terminals 8 and 9, Tim Frawley, assistant director of Marine, planning and local services, revealed yesterday that a feasibility study for Terminals 8 was under way and that a report would be ready by the end of this month.

The first berth of Terminal 8, located at Stonecutters Island, will be available in May, 1993, while the first berth of Terminal 9 on Tsing Yi Island will be ready by November, 1994.

Two multi-purpose berths also will be sited in Junk Bay, while more will be built in northeast Lantau.

Marine Department statistics show 18,999 ocean-going vessels entered Hongkong last year, loading 26 million tonnes of cargo and discharging 49 million tonnes.

In the same period, 5.5 million tonnes of cargo were discharged and 3.5 million tonnes were loaded by river-trade vessels through Hongkong.