



The maritime industry is key to Singapore's economy, contributing about 7 per cent to GDP. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

# Maritime industry posts another record year

*Container throughput grew by 2.9 per cent as S'pore remains one of world's busiest ports by vessel arrival tonnage*

WONG WEI HAN  
 wongweihan@mediacorp.com.sg

**SINGAPORE** – Singapore's maritime industry sailed into another record year in 2013, despite battling a challenging economic environment and high energy costs, and the Government is committed to supporting the industry long-term by raising awareness and grooming quality talent.

This is according to Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew, who shared the latest industry figures yesterday at a Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF) event.

"Our advance estimates show that Singapore's container throughput for 2013 grew by 2.9 per cent to reach a record high of 32.6 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent)," he said.

"We maintained our position as one of the world's busiest ports by vessel arrival tonnage with 2.33 billion gross tonnes, an increase of 3.2 per cent from 2012."

Last year, Singapore also came on top as the world's leading bunkering port, with more than 42 million tonnes in total bunker sales, Mr Lui added.

The maritime industry is a key pillar for the Republic's economy, contributing about 7 per cent to gross domestic product and employing more than 170,000 people. To bolster the sector, new port infrastructures are being put in place, with the first berths

of Pasir Panjang Terminal's Phase 3 expansion opening later this year.

With its quality workforce and robust infrastructure, Singapore has attracted about 130 global operators and 5,000 service providers — including last year's arrivals Diamond Bulk Carriers, a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Corp, and Louis Dreyfus Commodities Freight Asia.

However, as the government pushes for economic restructuring and tightens labour policies, the industry

has had to grapple with manpower constraints at a time when global trade and shipping demand are declining amid an economic slowdown.

The Government is aware of these challenges and is committed to supporting the industry long-term by sharpening maritime policies to keep them competitive, Mr Lui said.

"Most importantly, we will ensure that our maritime workforce is well prepared to meet the industry's current and future needs," he added.

"We will continue working with schools and industry partners to grow local maritime talent and prepare them to take on exciting and rewarding maritime careers."

These initiatives include the Maritime Economics Concentration, a talent programme partnership between the Maritime and Port Authority and Singapore Management University. The SMF plays a key role in raising awareness and grooming quality talent for the industry, Mr Lui noted.

“The industry has had to grapple with manpower constraints at a time when global trade and shipping demand are declining amid an economic slowdown.”