

## Colossal container ship sails safely into berth in Vietnam

By *thuongmai.vn*, 10 May 2011



The colossal container ship Mathilda Maersk of Maersk Lines carrying 6,000 TEUs sailed smoothly into SP-PSA International Port in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, marking the first-ever time in Vietnam's shipping history a Vietnamese port received a ship as large as 116,000 DWT, 367 metres long and 43 metres broad with an installed capacity of 9,000 TEUs. Marking the occasion, the Maersk Lines Group inaugurated a new direct sea route to the US.

In order for this special event to take place, all related specialists and technicians had been toiling day and night during more than a year's time over the study of how to use most advanced scientific achievements to assert the capacity of the ports in the Cai Mep-Thi Vai area to receive heavy-tonnage ships of over 100,000 DWT.

Vietnam's port system has been for many years seen as obsolete and in poor condition with a large number of ports but very few of them being capable of large-scale operations. Even ports that are considered Vietnam's main ports such as Haiphong, Quy Nhon, Saigon are able to accommodate only 30,000 DWT ships.

In recent years, Vietnam's port system has begun to receive investments and have opportunities for development. But, according to statistics, at the end of 2007, the number of wharves for ships of over 50,000 DWT accounted for only 37% of the total number of wharves and they were only bulk cargo wharves. In mid-2009, two ports SP-PSA and Tan Cang (New Port) brought phase 1 into operation, and the sea route linking Vietnam with the US was officially established. This was an important event because it was the first time 6,000 TEU container ships were able to enter and leave Vietnam's ports and sail direct to America and Africa.

*The event of the Albert Maersk and Mathilde Maersk ships of Maersk Line being berthed at a Vietnamese port in February and May 2010 has produced a remunerative result in helping to curtail spending on sea freight. The most evident instances of freightage saved was that direct freightage between Vietnam and other continents in the world can take place without calling at Singapore Port or Hong Kong as was the case earlier*

*Examples:*

*- Sea freightage saved from Vietnam to Singapore*

*+ Container exports from Ho Chi Minh City to Singapore: \$30-60/TEU*

*+ Container imports from Singapore to Ho Chi Minh City: \$160-180/TEU*

*- Unloading charges saved at Singapore port (for transshipment): \$57/TEU.*

*According to statistics, the quantity of container exports and imports via Port Group 5 (Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai and Ba Ria-Vung Tau) in 2009 was about over 4 million TEUs, the projected quantity for 2010 will be about 4.5 million TEUs, and about 15 million TEUs for 2020. Of which the quantity of goods that must be transshipped at Singapore and Hong Kong Ports account for 50 per cent.*

However, in comparison with the development of the world's shipping fleets, the "feats" achieved by Vietnam's ports' infrastructure were no brilliant. In recent years, large shipping lines in the world brought into operation hundreds of ships with a carrying capacity of upwards of 6,000 TEUs including ships of various sizes such as 8,000 TEUs, 9,000 TEUs, and 12,000 TEUs to 15,000 TEUs. At present, large entrepot ports in the region such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Busan and Kaohsiung are able to receive 8,000 TEU container ships. This actually affects Vietnamese port system's competitiveness on its way to becoming a port of call for large shipping fleets in the world



*Mr Peter Smidt Nielsen, director general of Maersk Line Vietnam and Cambodia, said: "We worked hard for more than a year to meet customers' needs for direct shipment to the West Coast. The challenge we face entails calculating the size of the ship and the Plimsoll line so as to guarantee safety and security when entering the Cai Mep-Thi Vai River. Through close cooperation between Vietnamese authorities and SP-PSA International Port, we now can bring large ships in here.*

*For our customers throughout the world trading with Vietnam, the TP6 service will serve them better than ever.*

*Mr Peter Smidt-Nielsen, born in 1964, has been working for the A.P. Moller-Maersk Group since 1985. In 2009, he worked in Ho Chi Minh City as director general of Maersk Line in Vietnam & Cambodia. He is in charge of planning and implementing Maersk Line strategy for trade, operation and customer service in the two countries.*

*Peter Smidt-Nielsen has earlier been in charge of management in Europe, Denmark, the US, Ghana and Argentina. Before coming to Vietnam, Peter Smidt-Nielsen was director general of Maersk Logistics (now Damco) from 2005 to 2009.*

Vietnam has more than 3,200 kilometres of coast with bays of ideal depths able to receive heavy-tonnage ships. But as the development of ports in such locations requires large investments in the ports themselves, port protective structures and port infrastructure, it does not interest investors. In such a situation, deep rivers near the sea and close to sources of goods and consumer markets are of choice for developing ports. So, the Thi Vai-cai Mep port system has been the first to be chosen for development.

Developing river ports means depending much on inland waterways. Over the past twenty years, Portcoast, a port construction consultancy, has been surveying the Cai Mep Thi Vai area to develop a modern port system able to receive large cargo ships. Over time, the objective of bringing ships of 30,000 DWT, 50,000 DWT and then 80,000DWT into the ports in the Cai Mep-Thi Vai river area has gradually been achieved. In 2009, ocean-going ships of Maersk Lines , APL and MOL with carrying capacities of up to 80,000DWT started their journeys direct from the West Coast.

However, more work was to be done as it was still possible to bring larger ships into the ports via this river. A very challenging yet significant mission was assigned to the consultants: to carry out a study of how to let ships of over 100,000 DWT, and actually a ship of 109,000 DWT, 352 metres long, enter and exit SP-PSA Port. Step by step, careful scientific study and

calculations were made, and conditions on the river simulated on the SHIPMA software gave satisfactory results.



The simulator results were sufficient conditions for the Vietnam National Maritime Bureau to decide to actually permit ships to enter and leave the ports sailing on the river. And on February 11, 2010, the 109,000 DWT Albert Maersk, 352 metres long successfully entered SP-PSA International Port.

This first success was a great encouragement to managers, enterprises, and scientists. And on May 11, 2010, the Mathilda Maersk of Maersk Lines was guided into SP-PSA International Port by Vietnamese pilots safely.

For the first time, a container ship of 116,000DWT, 367 metres long, with an installed capacity of 9,000 TEUs, entered Vietnam and came into berth safely. This will be a milestone in the development of Vietnam's shipping industry. A new page of Vietnam's shipping industry development history will commence here.



*Talking with us about this event, Mr Pham Anh Tuan, port project manager of Portcoast, remarked "This is the first time in its consulting service history, Portcoast coordinated work with SP-PSA and Maersk Lines to simulate a ship entering and leaving SP-PSA Port at the Simulator Star Cruises (Malaysia). At this centre, the entire Thi Vai River and its surroundings and weather conditions were simulated exactly the same as in Vung Tau. Vietnam's excellent pilots practiced steering the ship into and out of the port. Two types of ship of up to 109,000 DWT and 116,000 DWT (367 m long) were experimented on in a virtual reality. Tens of times of guiding ships in and out of port under different weather scenarios were simulated and were witnessed by officials from the Ministry of Transport, Vinamarine, organisations concerned and Portcoast consultants. Pilots performed the guiding of ships successfully.*





At a press conference on May 11, 2010, Jesper Praestensgaard, managing director of Maersk Line in The Asia Pacific region, pointed out the strong points of the Trans-Pacific service (TP6) of Maersk Line from the south of Vietnam to the West Coast of the US. This service is one of seven Trans-Pacific routes of Maersk Line's global network. Its birth is aimed at supplementing other trans-Pacific services, and serving Maersk purposes of serving customers better. He made interesting points, showing that: Container shipping is the main solution in global trade. Jesper Praestensgaard expressed his wish to see Maersk Line's business in Vietnam, especially the TP6 service, develop strongly. He also expressed his joy of improving Vietnam's connection to his market and the world's.

Jesper Praestensgaard, born in 1964, has been working for the Maersk Group since 1986. He is now Managing Director of Maersk Line for Asia-Pacific, and chairman of the board of directors of Maersk Singapore, member of the board of directors of A.P.Moller Singapore and member of the governing body of the Maersk shipping fleet.

His present responsibility is to implement Maersk Line's global policy in Southeast Asia and South Pacific, with concentration in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.

Jesper Praestensgaard has held important positions in the A.P. Moller-Maersk Group in Denmark, Singapore, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong and China.

He is an MBA (honorary) at IMD, Switzerland.

### About the TP6 service

The TP6 service from Vietnam to the West Coast of the US with the Mathilde Maersk takes only 21 days, counting from the day of containers loading at ICD in Ho Chi Minh City to the day the ship arrived at Los Angeles, US.

Exports from Cambodia will be carried by barge to the South of Vietnam to connect with the TP6 service. Total sailing time from Phnom Penh Port to Los Angeles will be 22 days, the fastest on the shipping market today.

### Measures to deal with climate Change

Facing the global climate change, the A.P.Moller-Maersk Group has pledged to implement its action plan to cope with the climate change by setting the target of reducing the glass house effect, increasing energy control by improvements in the process of operation as well as attracting investments into carbon dioxide reduction technologies. The group has plans to cope with climate change by obeying basic rules: optimum use and control of energy for the entire shipping fleet, observing international rules in a synchronous manner, limiting the use of fuel to reduce CO2 and challenging people concerned to find a new way of producing oil and gas that is environmentally friendly.



Lê Mr Le Cong Minh, Director General of SaigonPort and chairman of the board of directors of SP-PSA Terminal, remarked: "After the successful trial

shipment of the Albert Maersk in February 2010, we are pleased to see Maersk Line's confidence in the TP6 Service. We solemnly express our gratitude to Maersk and offices concerned for their assistance and strong cooperation in preparing this service.

SP-PSA has displayed the highest ability to handle ships in Vietnam and it is expected there will be more such business late this month, SP-PSA is quickly becoming the leading deep-water port in Vietnam."

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