

## Yangshan port to boost capacity of container terminal

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The Yangshan deepwater port in Shanghai aims to expand the handling capacity of its automated container terminal in a bid to reduce the waiting time of vessels and the operating costs of ocean carriers as the world's second-largest economy grapples with shrinking exports and imports.

Jin Jian, general manager of Shandong Container Terminal, the operator of the Yangshan Port's fourth phase, which is the world's largest automated container terminal, told the Post the 2,350-metre harbour was expected to handle 6.6 million TEU (20-foot equivalent units) this year, surpassing the design capacity of 6.5 million TEU.

"We are looking to make the

terminal more intelligent and environmentally friendly as we increase its capacity to better serve the container liners," he said yesterday. "An annual capacity of more than 7 million TEU is targeted as we expand computing power and make proper logistical arrangements."

Shandong Container Terminal is a subsidiary of state-owned Shanghai International Port Group, which has made a 12.8 billion yuan (HK\$13.7 billion) investment in the fourth phase of the expansion.

The terminal, which began operations in late 2017, handled about 2 million TEU in 2018. At present, 145 automated guided vehicles, the largest fleet of any container terminal worldwide, were used to handle loading, discharging and transport of containers round the clock, Jin said.

He said a quickened pace of handling containers could add lustre to the automated terminal, drawing more global container traffic.

The annual throughput of 6.6 million TEU amounts to more than a quarter of the total volume of 24 million TEU handled at the port last year.

Shanghai's ports reported a total container throughput of 47.3 million TEU last year as the financial hub retained the title of the world's largest port for the 13th consecutive year.

Yangshan Port is linked with the 120 sq km Lingang free-trade zone, a coastal area by the 32km Donghai Bridge. The Lingang free-trade area was developed under instructions from President Xi Jinping in 2019 and is expected to evolve into a Hong Kong-style free port with unhindered

cross-border flow of capital, cargo and talent.

Yangshan is also part of Shanghai's free-trade zone.

Construction of the port began in 2002 following China's entry into the World Trade Organization, which led to thriving trade emanating from the Yangtze River Delta around Shanghai.

China's tensions with the United States and other developed economies have dented its exports and imports this year, exacerbating a bearish outlook for the domestic economy.

Exports dropped for the fourth consecutive month in August, down by 8.8 per cent from a year earlier to US\$284.9 billion.

The decline, however, narrowed from a fall of 14.5 per cent in July and was above the forecast by financial data provider Wind for a drop of 9.5 per cent.