

APM Terminals Bahrain opens its gates

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APM Terminals Bahrain opens its truck gates at Bahrain Gateway at Khalifa bin Salman Port, ushering in a new era for the region, and offering ocean carriers new ways to optimize their Upper Gulf route network to serve the growing regional market.

The facility features four new post-Panamax cranes with an 18 stack outreach, 1800 metres of quaywall and a channel depth of 12.8 meters.

Channel dredging is ongoing and will reach 14 metres this year and then 15 meters in early 2010 to match the 15 meter draft alongside and in the turning basin.

Managing Director of APM Terminals Bahrain, Steen Davidsen stated

'This is an exciting day for the Kingdom of Bahrain, our customers and APM Terminals. The Government's vision to create a port with the growth capacity to serve Bahrain's global aspirations becomes a reality today. With this port, Bahrain is clearly establishing itself as the ideal port hub for the Upper Gulf markets of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Northern Iran, Kuwait and Qatar. These next few weeks will be a busy time for everyone and the entire team at APM Terminals Bahrain is focused on managing a smooth transition to the new port.'

Chief Executive of the Bahrain Economic Development Board, Sheikh Mohammed bin Essa Al Khalifa stated 'We welcome the opening of the gates to this new facility which brings Bahrain one step closer to becoming a major shipping hub for the northern Gulf and further strengthens the Kingdom's position as an excellent location from which businesses can access markets across the Middle East.'

'We congratulate APM Terminals on this important milestone, offering world-class infrastructure that will enhance efficiency and productivity in Bahrain and the region.'

The existing infrastructure-including Bahrain International Airport and King Fahad Causeway to Saudi-and the planned construction of the causeway linking Bahrain to Qatar provide an excellent transport network to reinforce Bahrain's strategic location at the heart of the Gulf.

Furthermore, adjacent to new port is the Bahrain Logistics Zone (BLZ), which is the Middle East's first multi-modal logistics hub focusing on re-export and value-adding activities.

Chairman of the General Organisation of Sea Ports, Sheikh Daij bin Salman Al Khalifa stated 'The General Organisation of Sea Ports has been coordinating closely with APM Terminals and the various Government entities to ensure that everything is ready for the opening of the gate at Bahrain Gateway at Khalifa Bin Salman Port.'

'We are looking forward with great anticipation to the first vessel calls at the new port, and to the new era for shipping and logistics in Bahrain which the start of operations at Khalifa Bin Salman Port will usher in.'

APM Terminals Bahrain is transitioning between the old port of Mina Salman and Khalifa Bin Salman Port. Both ports will be operational for one month during the phase out of Mina

Salman.

The first container vessel is scheduled to call at Khalifa Bin Salman Port on 15th April 2009. For the first two weeks, containers entering Khalifa Bin Salman Port will be empty containers and export containers booked to load on container vessels after 15th April 2009. Mina Salman will continue to receive aluminium, containers and general cargo up to the last vessel call.

Project Timeline

The decision to build the new port was initially proposed in 1995. Five years later it was approved by the government and design studies started. In 2002, work started on the infrastructure, including the reclamation of 900,000 square meters of sea, which was completed in 2004. The request for initial bids to operate Bahrain Gateway at Khalifa Bin Salman Port was issued by the Government in August 2004.

In the summer of 2005 APM Terminals were awarded the contract to operate Mina Salman and thereafter Khalifa Bin Salman Port for 25 years from commencement of operations at KBSP.

The total project cost was in the region of \$500m, which in addition to the above includes new buildings, handling equipment, marine equipment and IT infrastructure. APM Terminals Bahrain took over operation of Mina Salman on 9th December 2006.

The migration of operations to Bahrain Gateway at Khalifa Bin Salman Port will commence on 1st April 2009, and the port is set to be fully operational by 15th April 2009, and Mina Salman will cease to operate as a commercial port from 1st May 2009.

(AME Info)