Jebel Ali Port – Dubai’s gateway to the world

**DP World, Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

Jebel Ali Port is DP World’s flagship port, the world’s largest man-made harbour and the largest container port between Rotterdam and Singapore.

Located 35 kilometres to the southwest of Dubai, the Port is situated at the gateway between the East and the West, and strategically positioned to be a natural hub for the global shipping industry that provides access to a market of 1.5 billion people.

The port’s strategic geographic location has enabled it to act as a maritime link between the Far East and the western part of the globe. The port is one of the most modern in the region and is fully equipped to meet the needs of local and international land transportation. It is a technologically advanced facility and employs state-of-the-art equipment, including the world’s largest gantry cranes, capable of lifting four 20 foot containers or two 40 foot containers simultaneously.

**Historic breakthrough**

Jebel Ali Port was built between 1976 and 1979, at the time when the newly established United Arab Emirates was still struggling to make its mark on the world’s economic map. The idea of building this port was considered by many at the time as an adventurous and unnecessary project that would not add any vital value to Dubai’s nascent economy. Despite the cynicism, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, who was the ruler of Dubai then, had a clear vision of a booming Dubai that could survive the end of its oil boom. The result was the largest ever man-made port. With 67 berths and a size of 134.68 square kilometre (52 square miles), Jebel Ali Port has proven to be essential for the transformation of Dubai into a modern port city and commercial hub.

**Into the 21st Century**

The ongoing boom in Dubai’s economy has led to a noticeably sharp increase in demand for logistics and shipping services in the region. This in turn led to a need to add more capacity to Jebel Ali Port to cope with the growth in the shipping sector across the region. An extensive strategic plan was put in place that would allow DP World to expand the capacity of Jebel Ali Port to around 50 million TEU (twenty foot equivalent container units) by 2030 over 14 stages, as market demand dictates.

Construction work at the first stage of this plan started in 2005 to build a new container terminal (Terminal 2) at Jebel Ali Port.

In August 2007, DP World officially launched operations at Phase 1 of Terminal 2, which added three more berths and increased the port’s total handling capacity by two million TEUs to around 11 million TEUs.

Phase 2 of the expansion is underway and completion is expected by the end of the first quarter this year, bringing around three million TEUs online. When this extension is finished, Jebel Ali Port will have an additional 2,500 metres of quay length with a draft of 17 metres. DP World has so far equipped Jebel Ali Port (Terminal 2) with 24 giant tandem lift gantry cranes, the biggest of their kind in the world, and 50 rail mounted gantry (RMG) cranes. An additional five gantry cranes and 10 RMGs will be added to the terminal in the coming months, completing the project.

The tandem lift cranes are capable of lifting four 20-foot containers or two 40-foot containers simultaneously – a total capacity of 80 tonnes, which is twice that of traditional cranes. This will enable the port to cater to the new generation of mega ships (12,000 + TEU).

The whole T2 expansion will cost around US$1.5b and will be spread over more than 1,400,000 square metres. With seven berths and a total capacity of five million TEUs, Jebel Ali Port will see capacity rise to 14-15 million TEUs. Similar to Terminal 1, Terminal 2 is used for both import and export cargo and transshipment business.

**Achievements**

The Port’s achievements have been consistently recognised over the decades. Most recently, in November 2008, Jebel Ali Port won the Lloyd’s List Middle East Award 2008 for the Best Container Terminal of the Year, in recognition of its “vision and commitment to port operations on the domestic and international stages.”

The prestigious award honours DP World’s performance in providing safe, reliable, cost-effective and environmentally friendly service to customers at the terminal and offshore. This is the third time in four years DP World Jebel Ali has been awarded the Lloyd’s List Award.

**Figure 1. Satellite image of Jebel Ali Terminals, July 2007.**
A significant benefit for Jebel Ali Port is its location within Jebel Ali free zone, which was established in 1985, and houses more than 6,000 companies covering manufacturing, trade, logistics and a range of industrial and service-orientated units. Companies located there enjoy the first class facilities of the port and the privileges of the free zone, which include exemption from corporate tax for 15 years, no personal income tax, no import or export duties, no currency restrictions, superb communication and easy labour recruitment.

In coming years the free zone will grow into a huge new city centred around the efficient provision of supply chain services. It will include Al Maktoum International Airport and the Dubai Logistics City in the world’s first integrated logistics and multi-modal transport platform. Spread over 25 square kilometres, it is designed to eventually handle more than 12 million tonnes of air cargo annually in up to 16 air cargo terminals and allow cargo to be moved from ship to aircraft in less than 20 minutes.

DP World is one of the largest marine terminal operators in the world, with 48 terminals (two terminals in Algeria will join the portfolio in the first half of 2009) and 13 new developments across 31 countries (as of November 2008). Its dedicated, experienced and professional team of nearly 30,000 people serves customers in some of the most dynamic economies in the world.

DP World aims to enhance customers’ supply chain efficiency by effectively managing container, bulk and other terminal cargo. The company constantly invests in terminal infrastructure, facilities and people, working closely with customers and business partners to provide quality services today and tomorrow, when and where customers need them. In taking this customer-centric approach, DP World is building on the established relationships and superior level of service demonstrated at its flagship Jebel Ali facility in Dubai, which has been voted “Best Seaport in the Middle East” for 14 consecutive years.

In 2008, DP World handled more than 46.8 million TEU (twenty-foot equivalent container units) across its portfolio from the Americas to Asia – an increase of eight per cent on 2007. With a pipeline of expansion and development projects in key growth markets, including India, China and the Middle East capacity is expected to rise to around 95 million TEU over the next ten years.

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