

Béjaïa gears up

Béjaïa Mediterranean Terminal (BMT), a joint venture between Entreprise Portuaire de Béjaïa and Portek of Singapore, has taken delivery of two new Kalmar E-One² RTGs, bringing to 10 the total number of RTGs at the terminal. The new RTGs span 6+1, with a highly unusual height of 1-over-7, and have an SWL of 41t.

BMT has also acquired a Liebherr LHM 420 mobile harbour crane (MHC) with an outreach of 48m and a maximum lifting capacity (under hook) of 124t, capable of serving a wide range of vessels, from Handy-size to post-Panamax class. Existing quayside equipment at BMT includes two STS gantry

cranes and a Gottwald MHC.

The new equipment at BMT will play a significant role in boosting berth and yard productivity, said Portek, and BMT's director general Nassib Bar-chiche commented: "BMT has seen significant year-on-year increases in annual throughput since it commenced full operations. Annual throughput has grown from around 40,000 TEU in 2004 to some 250,000 TEU in 2014. We are fully committed to increasing the productivity of operations at our terminal and we have been investing heavily in order to achieve this."

He added that the new equipment will allow BMT's engi-



New Kalmar RTGs en route to Béjaïa

neering department to improve the preventive maintenance programme. This is a simple, but important, point, particularly relevant when a terminal is busy and equipment is clocking up

the hours. The extra equipment means that operations executives have a bigger pool of machinery to call on, so are less reluctant to release particular pieces to the engineers.

ABP to invest £12M in car handling

Associated British Ports (ABP) will invest more than £12M in its vehicle handling facilities in the Port of Southampton, creating more than 5,700 new storage spaces for vehicles. Southampton is already the UK's leading port for new cars, and the number moved over the ro-ro berths last year rose 11% on 2013 to 834,000 units.

A five-storey facility capable of handling 3,200 vehicles will be erected in the Eastern Docks, along with a dedicated inspection area. Work is due to start in May

and finish in March 2016. In the Western Docks, more than £3M is being invested in creating a 12-acre open air car handling facility with 2,500 spaces for cars.

Nick Ridehalgh, ABP director at Southampton, said: "The Port of Southampton is a key part of the supply chain for some of Britain's biggest export success stories. Our investment is proof both of the international appetite for British-made vehicles and of our commitment to support that growth with premier class facilities."

Penang's growth plan

Malaysia's Penang Port has outlined a strategy for growth based on "sweating its assets" and making more of its geography.

A key part of its strategy is a new and modern liquid bulk facility, but the port is also looking to Penang region's role as a manufacturing centre for the automotive industry. "In line with the government's initiatives of promoting the automotive sector in the north of Malaysia by developing an automotive hub, we believe that there is prospect for the development of ro-ro facilities here at the port," a port official told *WorldCargo News*.

Penang also aims to make more of its proximity to southern Thailand, which already generates 40% of the ports laden container traffic. "We will continue to promote this sector and work

closely with all stakeholders to develop a cost-effective and seamless cross-border movement of cargo from south Thailand to Penang Port. We are working with others within the logistics chain in order to provide higher capacity and service efficiency to the south Thai business community," the official added.

Elsewhere in Malaysia, Bintulu has, in-principle, obtained approval from Malaysia's federal government to extend its concession period through until 2052, an official with the port confirmed.

Bintulu is largely regarded as an LNG port, but it is also in the container business, last year handling 270,495 TEU. Going forward, the plan is to develop the non-LNG sector with special focus on containers, dry bulk and palm oil.

NZ feeder

The Port of Timaru on New Zealand's South Island has started its role as a feeder to the Port of Tauranga. Previously Timaru lost all its direct call container series as lines consolidated volume at Lyttelton, around 200 km away. However, in late 2013, Port of Tauranga acquired Timaru's container terminal and signed a 10-year deal with logistics company Kotahi, and Maersk to consolidate regional meat and dairy cargo at Timaru, with transhipment to international services in Tauranga. Timaru now has four container services, including a feeder link provided by NZ's Pacifica, using its 444 TEU SPIRIT OF ENDURANCE to connect Timaru and Lyttelton on the return leg.

Funding agreed for Lekki

A consortium of six banks has now finalised the remaining funding for the US\$1.5B Lekki port project in Nigeria. The African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Finance Corporation (AFC), the European Investment Bank (EIB), Standard Chartered Bank, Rand Merchant Bank and Standard Bank have concluded financing arrangements. The federal government of Nigeria has also sanctioned US\$118M investment in the project by the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), plus additional funding by Lagos State Government and Tolaram Group of Singapore.

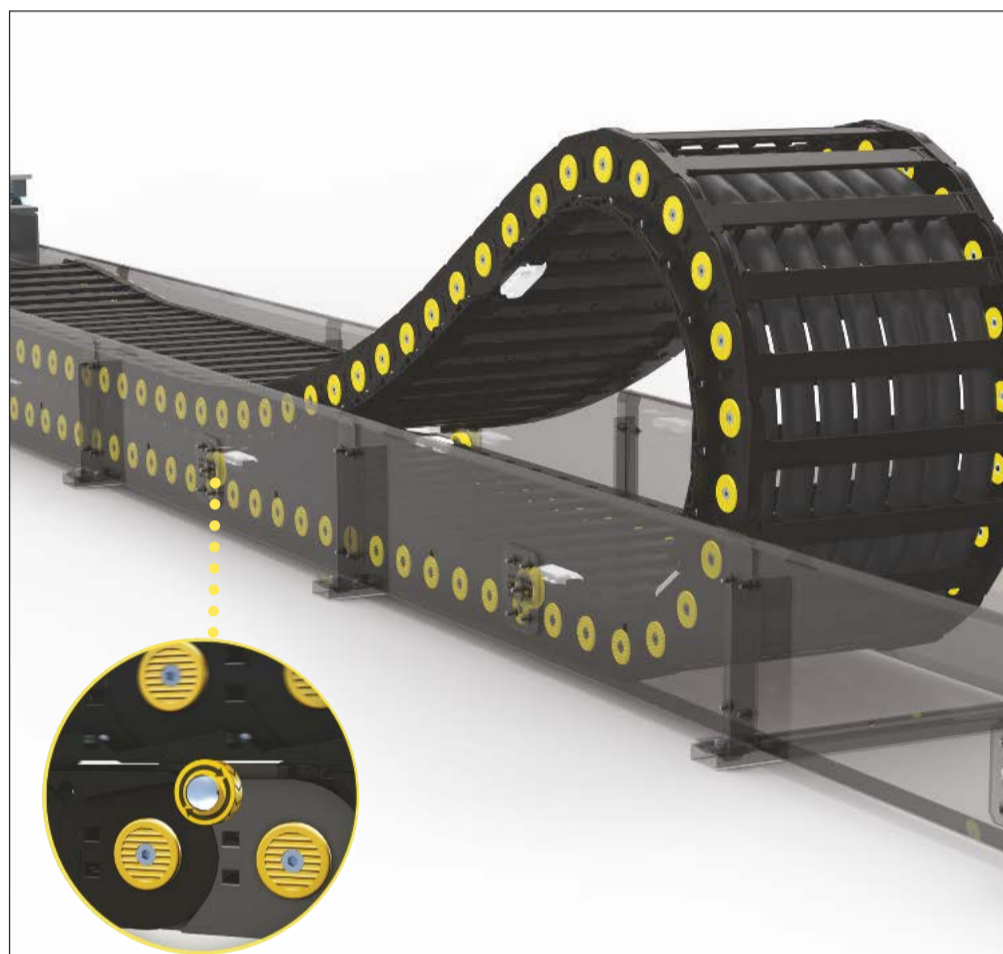
Lekki, which is located some 50 km east of Lagos, will have initial annual handling capacity of 1M TEU, increasing to

2.5M TEU in Phase 2. It is being developed by Lekki Port LFTZ Enterprise (LPLE), which is owned by Tolaram Group (61.8%), Lagos State government (20%) and the NPA (18.2%). LPLE holds a concession to build and then operate it for 45 years. Apart from the container terminal, the investors hope to generate income from the liquid bulk terminal and the planned free trade zone that will be developed around the port.

Difficulties in securing finance had delayed development until the AfDB agreed to provide a loan of US\$150M in October. The EIB has agreed in principle to provide a further €160M. AfDB participation is crucial, as it signals that

the scheme is being developed in accordance with World Bank environmental and social rules, which will encourage private banks to lend to the project. The scheme has attracted some criticism in the Nigerian press over the lack of a planned rail link.

The executive secretary of the Nigeria Shippers' Council, Hassan Bello, said: "We will want the government to be mindful of how to access these ports because a modern port must be accessed by rail, road, inland water and by pipeline because these are the modes of modern transportation. Those structures must be in place at the new ports otherwise we will be repeating what is obtainable in Apapa."



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