



GOP HOSTS TWO-DAY REGIONAL EXECUTIVE SEMINAR ON SAFETY OF MARITIME NAVIGATION

Leading International Maritime Experts highlight latest techniques which comply with international best practices to bolster maritime safety and navigation

Manama, Bahrain; 1 February 2012: The General Organisation of Sea Ports (GOP) held a two-day regional executive seminar entitled “Safety of Navigation and the Obligations of a Competent Authority with respect to Aids to Navigation.” The seminar was held under the patronage of H E Shaikh Daij bin Salman Al Khalifa, Chairman of the General Organisation of Sea Ports, in collaboration with the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) and Middle East Navigation Aids Services (MENAS). More than 30 maritime professionals from the 6-GCC member states attended the seminar which was held at the Gulf Hotel on 30th and 31st January 2012.

The sessions were led by international experts, Rear Admiral Jean-Charles Leclair (rtd) consultant for International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and Dean of the IALA World-Wide Academy and Omar Frits Eriksson, Manager Maritime Technology at the Danish Maritime Authority (DMA) and chair of the IALA Engineering Committee.

Highlighting the importance of the regional executive seminar, Mr Hassan Al Majed, Director General of GOP said: “We are pleased to have distinguished international maritime experts to share their wealth of knowledge with our stakeholders on the latest navigation requirements of port authorities as per international maritime conventions. As the regulatory authority for maritime affairs in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the GOP is committed to adhere to best international practices and standards for promoting maritime safety.

“Holding such a regional seminar reinforces GOP’s efforts to continuously improve the overall safety standards on vessels, employ the latest cutting edge technology and provide the adequate training to our personnel in order to achieve safe, secure and efficient shipping in maritime jurisdictions in the Gulf region.”

During the seminar several aspects related to increasing safety of life and property at sea and the latest aids to navigation were discussed. Some of the topics on maritime safety included AIS which helps in efficient navigation of ships, real time shipping movements and port arrivals data, Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) operation for marine traffic monitoring, routing measures, pilotage to provide safe, reliable and efficient services wherever navigation is considered hazardous, management and maintenance of vessels and protection of environment.

The aids to navigation session focused on e-Navigation, an innovative concept which was developed by IMO and is being implemented this year to bring about increased safety and security in commercial shipping. In addition, topics such as visual aids and sound signals to navigation, radio, and satellite navigation systems were also discussed.

Bahrain is a member of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the GOP is committed and dedicated to fully and effectively implementing IMO sanctioned systems and standards to help further develop the global maritime industry. Bahrain is the first Arab country in the region to fully implement the Long Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT) system. The GOP takes its role as the regulator of Bahrain's maritime sector very seriously, and has signed a number of agreements (SOLAS - International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, MARPOL International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution From Ships, STCW- International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers) to adopt international regulatory standards for safety, marine environment and others.

“At GOP, our efforts are focused on establishing a benchmark for excellence in the maritime industry, this effort is furthered by conducting seminars such as this one, which help to progressively strengthen our maritime capabilities and position Bahrain as a leading player in the maritime industry,” concluded Mr. Al Majed.

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About General Organisation of Sea Ports

The General Organisation of Sea Ports (GOP) was established in September 2006 with a mission to develop Bahrain's maritime industry and infrastructure and regulate its operation in line with the Kingdom's Economic Vision 2030 development strategy. The GOP's overarching responsibility lies in guiding the development of strategies to position Bahrain as a global leader in the maritime industry.

As a regulator, the GOP is responsible for supervising all maritime safety and environmental matters and ensuring adequate infrastructure is in place to serve the needs of the Kingdom's seaports, including the region's newest state-of-the-art port Khalifa Bin Salman Port. The GOP is also responsible for operating and developing the Bahrain Logistics zone.

Adhering to the highest international quality standards of safety, environment and security, the GOP aims to position the Kingdom as the strategic gateway and trans shipment hub to the northern Gulf.

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