



## GOP News

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### **BAHRAIN'S GENERAL ORGANISATION OF SEA PORTS LAUNCHES MAJOR INITIATIVE TO CELEBRATE WORLD MARITIME DAY 2010**

*Week of Maritime-themed activities to celebrate the Year of the Seafarer*

**Manama, 29 August 2010:** The GOP has today announced a strategic initiative that will further boost Bahrain's standing in the global maritime landscape. In support of World Maritime Day, the international celebration of the maritime industry, the Kingdom of Bahrain will host the first annual Bahrain Maritime Festival on September 20-24, 2010. Under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)'s 2010 theme of the 'Year of the Seafarer', this year's launch event will include activities specifically geared to past, current and future generations of Bahraini sea-goers.

The United Nations (UN), via the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), initiated World Maritime Day to commemorate the international maritime industry's contribution towards the global economy, specifically in the shipping and logistics sectors.

Each year, WMD is held under a different theme. This year's theme, 'The *Year of the Seafarer*' aims to spread greater awareness of the maritime industry and focus attention on the importance of shipping safety, maritime security and the marine environment, paying tribute to the 1.5 million seafarers all over the globe for their unique contribution to society and in recognition of the risks they shoulder in the execution of their duties in an often hostile environment.

IMO member countries normally hold celebratory programmes on a day of their choice during the specified week. Bahrain's initiative has been designed to spread out the festivities over a longer period in order to increase accessibility and allow for more activities to be held.



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Commenting on the launch of Bahrain Maritime Festival (BMF), Shaikh Daij bin Salman Al Khalifa, Chairman of GOP said: “We are proud to announce our plans for the launch of the GOP’s first maritime-themed festival to mark World Maritime Day 2010 and join the global initiative celebrating the ‘Year of the Seafarer.

Our aspiration is to hold BMF annually, each year customising the programme to fit the IMO’s chosen theme for that year. While this year we have developed the activity line-up to target seafarers, we hope to build upon the event in the future and engage as broad an audience as possible.”

“One of our key strategic objectives as laid out in our five-year plan is to position Bahrain as a global maritime centre, and BMF is an embodiment of an initiative which will aim to achieve this. Our ongoing commitment and dedication to being an active supporter of the maritime industry on an international level have helped us take a proactive approach to planning new initiatives and activities locally that will help boost our global standings”, Shaikh Daij added.

BMF 2010 will consist of four main activities spanning the week. These activities have been designed to generate greater awareness of Bahrain’s growing maritime industry among students, business executives and the general public, all of whom can rightly take pride in the Kingdom’s achievements and developments in the shipping and logistics industry.

The activities will include the ‘Year of the Seafarer’ Awards ceremony which will be held under the patronage of Shaikh Daij. Long-serving Bahraini seafarers who have served for twenty years and above in the maritime industry will be honoured and presented with an award during a dedicated reception. A public campaign has been launched to call for nominations with the intention to honour all eligible Bahraini seafarers, whether current or retired.



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Another unique aspect of this initiative will be the “Careers in Maritime” drive, complementing the International Maritime Organisation’s ongoing ‘Go to Sea’ campaign. This will include a tour of universities conducted jointly by GOP and APM Terminals Bahrain, the operator of Khalifa Bin Salman Port (KBSP). Featuring a series of lectures, this tour will enable students to learn from the maritime industry practitioners who will share their experience and knowledge. The tour will aim to encourage more Bahraini students to pursue careers in the maritime industry, thereby strengthening Bahrain’s international position as a maritime centre in the long-run.

Additionally, a Maritime Photography Exhibition will be held throughout the week which will be open to the public and will feature historic and contemporary sea-related images that will serve to capture the life of the seafarers at sea, and Bahrain’s ever-evolving maritime landscape.

Finally, a Seafarers’ Welfare Day is being organised by APMT, to be held at KBSP especially for seafarers visiting the port. A special service offering free medical check-ups for all incoming seafarers will be provided, and a blood donation campaign will be held for APMT and GOP staff members.

The GOP joins many countries worldwide, including Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States to celebrate World Maritime Day. The event’s date varies by year and country but it is always celebrated during the last week of September.



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### **About General Organisation of Sea Ports**

The General Organisation of Sea Ports (GOP) was established on 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.

### **World Maritime Day (WMD)**

Every year IMO celebrates World Maritime Day. The exact date is left to individual Governments but is usually celebrated during the last week in September. The day is used to focus attention on the importance of shipping safety, maritime security and the marine environment and to emphasize a particular aspect of IMO's work.

To mark the occasion, the Secretary-General of IMO always prepares a special message and this is backed up by a paper which discusses the selected subject in greater depth.

### **About International Maritime Organisation**

International Maritime Organization (IMO) is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

Web site: [www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)