



Shovels spread the sand discharged onto the platform by jumbo dredgers connected to a pipeline system. Right: Square-wheeled compactors level the reclaimed land.

Airport project crosses new milestone

Staff Reporter

THE New Doha International Airport (NDIA) project yesterday crossed another milestone when the dredging company handed over 3km of runway on reclaimed land to the joint venture working on the showcase project.

As part of the first phase of the development, a platform of 22sq km is to be constructed - half of which is reclaimed from the sea - requiring in total a movement of 62mn cubic metres of rock and sand.

The airport, which is designed to receive 48mn passengers a year, is scheduled to receive the first aircraft in November 2008, when the first two phases will be completed.

The airport, which can accommodate the next generation of Airbus A380, is located 4km east from the existing airport.

The work is being supervised by the New Doha International Airport Steering Committee.

The construction of the platform is on schedule, thanks to

the vital groundwork laid by the reclamation joint venture under the leadership of the Qatar Dredging Company (QDC), officials told a press conference yesterday.

The execution time for this enormous platform reclamation project is 24 months, with a completion date set at December 1, 2006.

The QR1.559bn platform reclamation contract was awarded in December 2004 by the NDIA Steering Committee to a consortium under the lead of QDC, a Qatar-registered firm with shareholders that include United Development Company (UDC), the government of Qatar and DEME (Belgium).

Other consortium partners are Dredging International (Belgium), Great Lakes Dredging & Dock Company (USA), and Boskalis Westminster Middle East (the Netherlands).

"In order to allow large, high capacity dredging vessels to approach the project site it



Abdulaziz al-Noalmi (third left) speaks at the press conference. Others (from left) are Peter Pappas, Abdullah al-Subaey, Abdulrahman A Abdulghani, Marc Stordiau and Bernardo Gogna.

necessitated a 6km access channel to be cut by the QDC-owned Al-Mahaar. It is among the 10 most powerful rock cutter dredgers in the world," Marc Stordiau, vice chairman of QDC and chairman of the consortium board, told a press conference.

Since then, an extensive fleet of vessels have been deployed to create and deepen the channel. The capacity of the fleet was increased to 11 dredgers. Four heavy duty rock cutter dredgers,

a number of medium-size hopper dredgers and four booster stations at a time have been deployed to widen and deepen the channel over the full length to the required depth of -13.9m.

QDC is deploying its own fleet as well as vessels chartered from the joint venture partners.

Four jumbo-size hopper dredgers have been positioned at the project. After dredging sand at offshore areas up to 40km out at sea, they transport

a cargo of between 13,000 cubic metres to 15,000 cubic metres of sand for a single load (the equivalent of some 750 trucks).

Peter C Pappas, vice president and project director of Bechtel, said the new airport will have 87 passenger loading bridges, 70 elevators, 66 escalators, 40 moving walkways and six fuel jet tanks.

It will have roadways and runways equivalent to a length of 1,140km and 70 buildings. "It

will be a township in itself, equal to three-quarters of the city."

The peak workforce headcount was 23,000, he said.

Abdulaziz al-Noalmi, chairman of NDIA Steering Committee, said the panel is closely monitoring the work and the progress had been remarkable. He hoped the entire work would finish in time.

Abdulrahman A Abdulghani, chairman, Qatar Dredging Company, said work on the

landmark project was a challenge. The rest of the work would be seen as a new challenge and would be completed before time.

Augustijn Kenis, general manager, QDC, pointed out that large ships could now approach the work site because of the two new channels. One channel starts at 6km from the outer sea and comes to 300m near the project site.

The new channels increase the productivity by three times compared to four weeks ago, said QDC vice chairman Marc Stordiau.

Despite the massive work at sea, there is no environmental damage to marine life, said Eric Bosschem, project director of Joint Venture NDIA. The work is audited by inspectors of both the Supreme Council for Environment and Natural Reserves and Bechtel.

The press team was later taken to the work site where work is underway round-the-clock.

Jumbo dredgers are connect-

ed to a pipeline system, which discharges the sand onto the platform at the designated phasing section, the east runway.

On the first area handed over, the piling works to create a firm foundation for both a passenger terminal and concourse building are underway.

Overall the project is 23% complete while the engineering work is 98% over, the officials said. Of the contracts, 71% is complete, 13 of 24 awarded, and two are under evaluation. Of the actual construction, 9.6% is complete.

The press conference was also attended by Abdullah al-Subaey, head of administration and finance at the Civil Aviation Authority, and Bernardo Gogna, acting director of the steering committee.

Also present were Yassin el-Khachab, project manager, Aerodrome Engineering, other Bechtel and QDC officials including Chris Reynolds, Bill Clowes, Pierre Potvliege, Stijn Kenis and Rae'd Mahfouz.