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Sohar Port 'over the worst' of its cargo gridlock

Traffic woes are easing at the logistics hub, according to its CEO.

by **ASC Staff** | September 09, 2014 10:03 AM GST SHARE

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Sohar Port and Freezone has said it is pleased with progress made in its efforts to deal with disruptions in the flow of container cargo in and out of the port during the past month, while the port’s other terminal operations have remained largely unaffected by the delays.

Sohar Port is gradually expected to reach full international container terminal standards by the year-end, according to Andre Toet, CEO, Sohar Port and Freezone, said he confident “the worse is now behind us”.

The problems arose after the Eid holiday last month, in the run up to the August 31 deadline for the relocation of all commercial shipping and cargo from Muscat’s Port Sultan Qaboos to Sohar, partly due to a large backlog of empty containers for export.

Consignees and shippers complained of long delays in loading and discharging containers.

Speaking to the *Oman Daily Observer*, Toet cited mismatching working patterns as well as breakdowns in the logistics chain that led to delays in the handling of containers at Sohar Port’s Oman International Container Terminal (OICT).

The CEO added that problems are inevtable when a large-scale migration of shipping and commercial cargo takes place from one port to another, despite preparations beind made.

Toet told the newspaper: “OICT had laid on facilities for a capacity of 500,000 twenty-foot containers (TEUs), representing not only its own volumes but also traffic migrating from Muscat. Adequate resources were deployed in the form of staff, equipment and berths, but when the logistics chain started to break down, all of these efforts were in vain.”

He added that there was a record 40 percent increase in the influx of empties from Muscat to Sohar Port.

OICT is ramping up its terminal capabilities and working to improve communication to help clear the backlog of containers.

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