

NATION

KPA ships equipment to Lamu port ahead of commissioning

Monday, April 26, 2021



A barge with first batch of equipment to be used at the multi-billion Lamu Port left Mombasa Port over the weekend ahead of the port's commissioning in June.

Assorted equipment ranging from low load trailers, extension cargo handlers, trailers and other cargo handling equipment were loaded from berth number 20 and they are expected in Lamu on Tuesday.

Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) assistant training and equipment operations officer in charge of Lamu Port Ernest Mbalanya said the second batch of equipment will leave Port of Mombasa on May 15 for assembling ready for the opening of the port.

"The first consignment involves more of movable vehicles and transporting trailers but the second cargo to be evacuated will be gantry cranes which will be the last to be installed before the first ship docks early June," said Mr Mbalanya.

He added, "Already adequate staff have been posted to ensure the port operates fully." Some of equipment expected to be evacuated in the coming weeks to be used in berth number one include seven terminal tractors, 14 trailers, two-rubber tyred gantries (RTG), four forklift (ECH) and two utility vans.

Others include two tugboats, a pilot boat, a mooring boat, fire engine and an ambulance.

Mr Mbalanya said more equipment are expected to be procured during 2021/2022 fiscal year as other two more berths get ready for use.

Before the port is officially opened, KPA will compensate all those affected by the port and from Monday this week, consolidation of the final list of compensation.

Hundreds of Lamu residents affected by Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) have also been assured they will receive compensation before the port starts its operations.

Last week, Cabinet Secretary Treasury Ukur Yatani visited the Lamu Port to access the project and assured locals of their compensation which is estimated to cost Sh1.76 billion.

According to KPA, consolidation of final list has begun and public meeting will be held starting this week to verify the beneficiaries before funds are released.

"We are compliant and we have to work with local community and compensation issue is our priority which will be done after consolidation is complete," said KPA head of corporate affairs Benard Osero.

KPA has also formed a special team to market Lamu Port to Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan business communities ahead of its full operationalization slated 15th June this year.

The team with enticing tariffs is already contacting different port stakeholders, to induce them to start using the second Kenyan port, which will first focus on transshipment for the first two months after starting its operations.

The port agency has already offered promotional tariffs to different port users, where shipping lines and agents have been offered free 30-day storage period for transshipment, and transit cargo compared to the current 14 days in the Mombasa port.

Domestic cargo has been offered 14-days storage free period, while cargo-based charges were slashed by 40 per cent.

Coasters carrying transshipment cargo from Lamu to Mombasa will be offered a 40 per cent discount on the cargo handling charges, while light dues, port and harbour dues shall be charged once at the first port call in the country, either Lamu or Mombasa.

On the issue of securing the port, KPA has developed the Port and Cargo Security Plan, aimed at securing Lamu Port against threats such as piracy, armed robbery, contrabands, seaborne illegal immigrants and terror. The agency has also secured the first berth for operations even as construction of the remaining two terminal yards are in progress.

A fully fledged police station has been built to ensure internal security as the Kenya Coast Guard Service is set to operate in the high seas to protect Kenya's territorial waters against terrorism, piracy, illegal fishing, human and drug trafficking among other maritime crimes.