

# Bin Laden Group to Construct Tallest building

**Kingdom Holding awards \$1.2b contract to Saudi company for Jeddah's Kingdom Tower.**



Dubai: Kingdom Holding Company, the Saudi Arabia-based developer, has awarded a \$1.2 billion (Dh4.41 billion) contract to the country's Bin Laden Group for constructing the one-kilometre tall tower in Jeddah that is set to break Burj Khalifa's record as the world's tallest building.

Five contractors were invited to offer proposals for the Kingdom Tower and a short list was made of three firms that submitted final offers.

"The Saudi Bin Laden Group [SBG], whose offer was the most attractive in terms of price, quality and schedule, was chosen for the project," the company said in a statement.

Kingdom Tower will be the centrepiece and the first construction phase of Kingdom City, Jeddah Economic Company's (JEC) new urban development of more than 5.3 million square metres of land in the north of Jeddah overlooking the Red Sea and Obhur Creek. The southeast portion of Kingdom Tower's base will be in a direct line with the Kaaba in Makkah, Islam's holiest site.

With a total construction area of over 500,000 square metres, the Kingdom Tower will be a mixed-use building featuring a Four Seasons hotel, Four Seasons serviced apartments, first class office space, luxury condominiums and an observatory that will be higher than the world's current highest observation deck.

The overall construction cost of the tower is 4.6 billion Saudi riyals (Dh4.4 billion) and the overall estimated cost of the entire Kingdom City project is anticipated to be \$20 billion.

"We intend Kingdom Tower to become both an economic engine and a proud symbol of the Kingdom's economic and cultural stature in the world community," said Talal Al Maiman, Executive Director of Development and Domestic Investments, a board member of Kingdom Holding Company and a board member of Jeddah Economic Company, which was formed in 2009 to develop Kingdom City in Jeddah.

"Kingdom Tower will be a landmark structure that will greatly increase the value of the hundreds of other properties around it in Kingdom City and indeed throughout North Jeddah."

American company Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture has been employed to design and oversee development of the project. Adrian Smith also designed the Burj Khalifa, the Jin Mao Tower in Shanghai and the Trump International Hotel and Tower in Chicago.

### **'Creative vision'**

"This tower symbolises the Kingdom as an important global business and cultural leader and demonstrates the strength and creative vision of its people," said Smith, who was working for Skidmore Owing and Merrill, architects of Burj Khalifa, when he worked on Dubai's iconic tower.

Kingdom Holding, which is owned by Saudi billionaire Prince Al Waleed, first unveiled its plans for the tower in 2008.

The streamlined form of the tower was inspired by the fronds of young desert plant growth said Gordon Gill, one of its architects.

"The way the fronds sprout upwards from the ground as a single form, then start separating from each other at the top, is an analogy of new growth fused with technology," said Gill.

The tapering wings produce an aerodynamic shape that helps reduce structural loading due to wind vortex shedding.

The Kingdom Tower complex will also contain 59 elevators, and 12 escalators. Elevators serving the observatory will travel at a rate of ten metres per second in both directions.

The tower will take five years to complete.

### **Tall Trivia**

- The height of the Kingdom Tower is estimated to reach more than 1,000 metres, surpassing the Burj Khalifa, which is 828 metres high.
- The five tallest buildings in the world are all located in Asia. Besides the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, they include the Taipei 101 at 508 metres, the Shanghai World Financial Centre at 492 metres, the International Commerce Centre in Hong Kong at 484 metres, and the Petronas Tower 1 in Kuala Lumpur at 452 metres