

UAE port giant partners with Indian fund for infrastructure investment in India

Dubai Ports (DP) World, the top port operator in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), announced Monday it has partnered with India's national fund to invest in India's infrastructure projects. DP, the world's third largest port operator in capacity, said in a statement that it joined hands with India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) to create an investment platform to invest in ports, terminals, transportation and logistics businesses in India. This platform will invest up to 3 billion U. S. dollars to acquire assets and develop projects in the sector. The partnership was set up under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in May 2017. It also came after the visit to India by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi, and by DP World Group Chairman and CEO Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem in February 2016. "The platform will also look at opportunities beyond sea ports such as river ports and transportation, freight corridors, port-led special economic zones, inland container terminals, and logistics infrastructure including cold storage," said the statement. "DP World has been a part of India's growth story for nearly two decades and we are delighted to continue our success by joining forces with a strong strategic partner, the NIIF" Sulayem said.

Dubai logistics corridor to boost up global transport and logistics sector

Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza)-the flagship free zone subsidiary of global trade enabler DP World has recently commenced the 'Jafza Bridge' for traffic, linking Jafza North and Jafza South across Sheikh Zayed road. The bridge, built in collaboration with the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) will facilitate the flow of traffic between Jebel Ali Port and Free Zone, and Al Maktoum International Airport. It will further enhance the efficacy of the Dubai Logistics Corridor, which links the port, free zone and airport under a unified customs bond, creating one of the most efficient sea-air logistics link in the world. DP World Group chairman and CEO, Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem said: "Jebel Ali Port and Free Zone continues to invest in infrastructure in line with the vision of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice president and Prime Minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai, the Dubai Plan 2021 and the 'Emirate After Oil' strategy to diversify sources of income and build a sustainable economy based on knowledge and innovation." Additionally it will also reduce the cost of logistics and transport, and play a significant role in enhancing trade movement, linking Dubai with the world and facilitate DP World customers' easy access to their target markets.

India's largest sea port project at JNPT sails on time

Situated within kilometres of the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMA) that faced several hurdles, the Rs 7,935-crore Fourth Container Terminal (FCT) project, done by Bharat Mumbai Container Terminals (BMCT) at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) had a smooth sailing. After phase I work done as planned, the completion of phase II scheduled in 2021. The country's largest sea port infrastructure project involving the government and foreign investors, the BMCT was commissioned on December 22. The first phase of the project is being built with the partnership of an arm of PSA International of Singapore. It has a kilometre-long jetty into the sea. In the ongoing second phase that will extend the jetty by another kilometre which will allow larger vessels in international waters to also dock at the port. Once completed, this will be the largest container terminal in India. JNPT expects that with the commissioning of the Mumbai-Delhi dedicated freight corridor in 2019 the volume of export-import trade would double and the terminal will be fully equipped to handle such volumes. BMCT is India's largest foreign direct investment (FDI) in the public-private partnership port project and a subsidiary of the Singapore firm.

ICTSI starts operations at Papua New Guinea Terminal

ICTSI South Pacific International Container Terminal (SPICT) has commenced operations at the Lae Tidal Basin (LTB) in Lae, Papua New Guinea. SPICT, a subsidiary of terminal operator International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI), recently received an approval from the PNG Government to start operations. As part of its concession agreement, SPICT will begin the transition by rolling out the terminal's new operating system, Navis N4. The system, the first of its kind in PNG, is expected to quickly streamline the flow of information at Lae's international container terminal and increase seaside and landside productivity levels. ICTSI South Pacific's investment in IT systems and infrastructure is expected to exceed PGK 3 million (around USD 930,000) this year, the terminal operator said. As part of its operational ramp up, SPICT will be rolling out the system's modules and orienting port users at Lae while handling all international cargo at the LTB and the dedicated second berth in Lae old wharf. It is expected that a full suite of modules will be operational and ready in time for the arrival of SPICT's mobile harbor cranes (MHCs) in April. The MHCs will further boost productivity levels at Lae and deliver improved vessel handling capabilities, according to the company.

UAE: FTA praises shipping, logistics sectors on VAT

The shipping, customs clearance and logistics sectors showed a high level of responsiveness and cooperation in the implementation of value-added tax (VAT), Federal Tax Authority (FTA) officials said in a statement on Wednesday. Officials made the comments in VAT awareness workshop attended by nearly 670 stakeholders from companies in the sectors. The workshop talked the anticipated effects of VAT on internal and external trade in the UAE, and looked at ways to ensure smooth implementation of the new tax, which came into force on January 1. The FTA's team gave a detailed presentation outlining the mechanisms of implementing VAT, as well as the approach to cooperation and coordination between the Authority and its strategic partners from the public and private sectors. All companies with an annual turnover have been required to register for VAT. More than 360,000 firms have done so, the FTA reported last week. Earlier this month, the FTA issued detailed guidelines on how VAT would apply on trade between tax-exempt "designated zones" — 20 trading areas located within the UAE, but considered outside it for tax purposes — and the rest of the UAE.

Malaysian ports left out as container shipping lines consolidate

The recent round of container shipping line consolidation and alliance reshuffling leaves Malaysian ports out of the race for transshipment volumes, as bigger groups opt to maintain or move their services to Singapore rather than to Port Klang or Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP). The consolidation has claimed its first casualty among Malaysian ports, with Westports Holdings Bhd's transshipment throughput dropping by as much as 16% last year. That dragged Westports' total container throughput down by more than 9% last year. This is despite gateway container volume — containers carrying import and export goods — at the port increasing by 10% to 2.8 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs) last year. Meanwhile, the acquisition of Hamburg Sud by Maersk Line recently does not seem to benefit PTP as much as it does Singapore, with the Danish company's chief commercial officer saying transshipment volume from the group passing through the Lion City will increase as a result of it. Note that APM Terminals, the port operating arm of the AP Moller-Maersk group, has a 29.99% stake in Pelabuhan Tanjung Pelepas Sdn Bhd, the operator of PTP. Maersk Line has a dedicated berth in PTP.

World's first electric container barges to sail from European ports this summer

The world's first fully electric, emission-free and potentially crewless container barges are to operate from the ports of Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam from this summer. The vessels, designed to fit beneath bridges as they transport their goods around the inland waterways of Belgium and the Netherlands, are expected to vastly reduce the use of diesel-powered trucks for moving freight. Dubbed the "Tesla of the canals", their electric motors will be driven by 20-foot batteries, charged on shore by the carbon-free energy provider Eneco. The barges are designed to operate without any crew, although the vessels will be manned in their first period of operation as new infrastructure is erected around some of the busiest inland waterways in Europe. In August, five barges - 52 metres long and 6.7m wide, and able to carry 24 20ft containers weighing up to 425 tonnes - will be in operation. They will be fitted with a power box giving them 15 hours of power. As there is no need for a traditional engine room, the boats have up to 8% extra space, according to their Dutch manufacturer, Port Liner. About 23,000 trucks, mainly running on diesel, are expected to be removed from the roads as a result.

DP World still seeking for investment opportunities in Russia

DP World continues to seek investment opportunities in Russia, but there have been no concrete transactions made so far, the port operator said in a statement addressing the recent press speculation. Namely, DP World has been tied to the acquisition of a 35-40 percent stake in Russian transport group FESCO, which has been struggling with restructuring and reduction of outstanding debt estimated at around USD 885 million. Via the deal, if approved by Russian antitrust regulator, DP World would gain control of the Vladivostok seaport which is part of FESCO. Under the plan, UAE's port operator is said to be seeking a controlling stake in FESCO shareholder structure, currently held by Summa Group (32.5 percent stake). FESCO's remaining shareholders include GHP Group, TPG, and East Capital. FESCO managed to achieve a breakthrough in its liquidity bolstering efforts in November 2017 with the signing of a USD 680 million debt financing deal with VTB Bank, which will be used to repay debt. PJSC Commercial Port of Vladivostok, a member of the group, is acting as the borrower under the facility agreement. In January 2016, DP World established a joint venture company with the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) targeting ports, transportation and logistics infrastructure in Russia.

21 intl. shipping lines return Iran in post-JCOA era

After a landmark nuclear deal signed between Iran and six world's major powers, rosy and bright future was opened for the Islamic Republic of Iran in a way that a number of 21 shipping lines resumed their activities in Shahid Rajaei Port. Director General of Hormozgan Province Ports and Maritime Organization Allah-Morad Afifi made the above remarks on late Tuesday. Speaking in a get-together meeting in the presence of deputies of Ports and Maritime Organization for Planning and Management Affairs in Shahid Rajaei Special Economic Zone, he added, "Shahid Rajaei Port is the golden gateway for Iran's economy in a way that 53 percent of country's total imports and exports volume is done via this port." Shahid Rajaei Port also accounts for 70 percent total loading and unloading operations in the country, he maintained. He pointed to the salient activities taken after the implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCOA), the official title of nuclear deal which include: purchasing 12 equipped gantry cranes and 15 transistor units, costing over €175 million, construction operation of three 100,000-ton piers special of export of oil products, costing 1,650 billion rials.

Dubai DP World reinforces commitment to Canada

The importance of Canada to DP World's global operations and the global trade enabler's commitment to the country were a focus of discussions between DP World group chairman and CEO Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in a bilateral meeting at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland. Bin Sulayem presented an update of the global trade enabler's activities in all its locations and conveyed the importance of the country in its growth strategy. He underlined DP World's commitment to Canada and continuing appreciation of the support of the Canadian government. He also detailed how DP World supports the national economy through its range of operations, community engagement and investment commitments including terminals in Vancouver and Prince Rupert on the west coast and Saint John, New Brunswick, on the east. Bin Sulayem stressed the employment opportunities and ongoing partnership with First Nation communities as evidence of how DP World works closely with local people. This was particularly evident in Prince Rupert where DP World operates the Fairview Container Terminal.