

UAE Marine Environment Protection Association formed

The Director General of HELMEPA, Dimitris C. Mitsatsos and the Chairman of Dubai Council for Marine & Maritime Industries (DCMMI), Mr. Khamis Juma Buamim, signed the Inaugural Declaration to the formation of UAEMEPA, the United Arab Emirates Marine Environment Protection Association. The signing ceremony took place at the beginning of the 9th Offshore Arabia Conference at Dubai in the presence of the Secretary General of IMO, Mr. Kitack Lim, UAE high standing functionaries and representatives of organizations and companies from within world shipping. The new MEPA is the 7th consecutive association, to the creation of which HELMEPA contributed, following relevant request of the interested parties. Mr. Kitack Lim congratulated HELMEPA for spreading the volunteer spirit of MEPAs, whose Members sustain the financial operation of the associations. Apart from HELMEPA in Greece, these entities are today: CYMEPA (Cyprus), TURMEPA (Turkey), URUMEPA (Uruguay), AUSMEPA (Australia), NAMEPA (USA), UKRMEPA (Ukraine) and UAEMEPA. HELMEPA offers the expertise it has gained during the 35 years of its existence to UAEMEPA, together with the wish to succeed in its mission for the protection of the environment in the fragile sea area of the Gulf.

DP World, Suez Canal Authority push on with integrated zone project

Dubai-based ports operator DP World has inked an agreement with the Suez Canal Authority and the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZone) to launch the first phase of an integrated industrial and residential zone in Sokhna. The framework agreement, which establishes a clear timetable of actions required to execute the first phase of the project spanning 30 square kilometres, was signed by Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and CEO of DP World and Admiral Mohab Mamish, Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority and the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZone). This follows the signing of a partnership agreement at a ceremony in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt on the sidelines of the World Youth Forum in November last year. The joint venture between SCZone (51%) and DP World (49%) with DP World managing the zone, will result in the development a comprehensive industrial zone in Sokhna spanning 75 square kilometres, as well as increasing the capacity of Sokhna port and linking it to the industrial zone to fuel foreign investment and trade growth. Both parties aim to sign agreements with companies that wish to establish facilities within the zone by March this year.

Duqm container terminal to be ready by 2019-end

A new container terminal at Duqm port, which will have an annual capacity to handle two million twenty-foot equivalent units (TUEs), will be ready by the end of 2019, according to a top-level port official. "We are now building the platform, rail, and warehouses. By the end of 2018, we will order the big equipment, including cranes, for the port," Reggy Vermeulen, chief executive officer of the Port of Duqm, told. Turkey's Serka Taahhut Insaat is building the container terminal, which will have a length of 1.6 km. "The master plan for the Port of Duqm has been slightly changed. We have added capacity in mineral and roll on/roll off terminals. So, the container terminal will be 1.6 km long, extendable to 2.2 km," Vermeulen remarked. He said three major shipping lines, MSC, CMA CGM, and Balaji Shipping have listed Duqm as a final destination. Most of them use Duqm as the last leg of Oman Shipping's feeder lines. Vermeulen further explained that the port would focus on Sebatic Oman, which is expected to start commercial operations for the containerised export business soon. "There will be a big requirement for containerised shipment for the planned refinery as well," he added.

Ethiopia buys stake in Dubai-managed Somaliland port

Ethiopia acquired a stake in a port in the breakaway state of Somaliland, its operator DP World said, as a legal dispute rages over another major Horn of Africa shipping hub. Dubai-based DP World last week accused Djibouti of illegally seizing a port that is the main transit route to landlocked Ethiopia, the second most populous African nation. More than 90 percent of Ethiopia's trade passes through Djibouti, located on the Bab al-Mandab strait, the key shipping lane to Europe from the Gulf and Asia beyond. Under the agreement signed Thursday in Dubai, Ethiopia will own 19 percent of Somaliland Berbera port, according to a statement released by DP World, which will hold a majority 51-percent stake. Representatives from Somaliland were in Dubai for the signing of the deal, which will leave their self-declared state with a 30 percent stake in Berbera port. Somaliland is not recognised by the international community despite 25 years of de facto independence from the rest of war-torn Somalia. Ethiopia will invest in developing infrastructure at the Berbera corridor as a trade gateway for the inland country, the statement said. DP World has also pledged to invest \$442 million (360 million euros) to develop Berbera, strategically located on the Gulf of Aden coast near the entrance to the Red Sea.

DP World may develop \$1.2 billion port at Banana on Congo Coast

DP World Ltd. may develop a \$1.2 billion deep-water port in the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to documents published by a Senegalese whistle-blowing organization. DP World signed an agreement with the Transport Ministry in February 2017 giving the Nasdaq Dubai-listed company exclusive rights to negotiate a contract to build and operate a deep-water harbor at Banana on Congo's Atlantic coast. The accord, released by the Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa on Friday, calls for the creation of a company majority-held by DP World. DP World is "willing to offer a minority equity stake in the port-operating company" to Congo's government, according to a letter sent by DP World Chairman Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem to President Joseph Kabila on Oct. 4, 2016, and made public by the organization, known by the French acronym PPLAAF. The country's existing ports at Matadi and Boma are inland up the Congo River and are incapable of handling traffic from conventional ocean-going cargo liners because of a lack of capacity and draught, according to a PricewaterhouseCoopers study of the country's infrastructure. As a result, the nation relies on transshipments of cargo from Pointe Noire in neighboring Republic of Congo.

Malaysian domestic lines weather impact of lifting of cabotage

The strongest remnants of Malaysia's domestic shipping sector seem to have taken the impact of the relaxation of cabotage rules in June in their stride and have seen good performances from their container shipping operations. Shin Yang Shipping Corporation (Syscorp), part of the diversified Miri-based conglomerate Shin Yang Group, saw revenue from its shipping business decline 16% to MYR121.2m (\$30.9m) in the fourth quarter mainly due to the lower volume carried from its UAE operations in the Middle East. The other Sarawak-based line Harbour-Link Group meanwhile saw revenue from the shipping and marine segment grow by almost half to MYR113.4m in the final quarter of 2017, driven by a higher volume of cargo handled. It would appear that these were done on not as lucrative margins as Syscorp however, as segmental profit rose by a slower 54% to MYR4.3m. In contrast, Syscorp's segmental profit jumped more than 2.5 times to MYR17.1m in the same quarter. Syscorp attributed the increase in profit before tax in shipping segment mainly due to the improvement of shipping profit margin in container shipping and international shipping operations segments.

India; APSEZ-owned Dhamra port to develop industrial park over 2,000 acres

Dhamra Port Company Ltd (DPCL), a fully owned subsidiary of Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone (APSEZ), has asked for 2,000 acres from the Odisha government to develop an industrial park. DPCL has volunteered to be the anchor tenant for the industrial park. "They (DPCL authorities) have asked for land within 20-25 km radius of the port site. The park would help attract investments in port-based, agro-based and food processing industries," said a source close to the development. It might be noted that the Odisha government had earlier announced its plan to develop a Special Investment Region (SIR) around Dhamra over 7,500 acres. But, acquiring such a large patch of contiguous land was not feasible. The cost of developing infrastructure for the proposed zone was pegged at Rs 31 billion. Of this, the Centre is set to contribute Rs 18.44 billion, and the remaining Rs 12.56 billion will be borne by the state government. Dhamra is identified as one of the three key manufacturing hubs by the state industries department, aside from Kalinganagar and Paradeep. Separately, DPCL is pursuing its next phase of expansion. The massive expansion plan would see the port capacity going up to a staggering 300 million tonnes per annum (mtpa), making it the largest port in the country.

UAE railway law sets stage for private investment

The UAE's new federal railway law will provides a regulatory framework to reassure private rail investors, a senior federal minister said recently. Abdullah Belhaif Al Nuaimi, UAE Minister of Infrastructure Development and Chairman of the Federal Transport Agency - Land & Maritime (FTA-LM), said the law, approved by the UAE cabinet, would allow future development of railways. Speaking at a press conference to outline the agenda for the Middle East Railway Conference, due to take place at Dubai International Conference Centre on March 12 and March 13, Al Nuaimi said: "The future is for the private sector. Any successful development will definitely have the private sector as an important partner in the business. And maybe 60, 70 per cent of the legal framework of the law is to comfort the private sector to get in. "The private sector will not get in unless there is a comfortable regulatory framework that makes business doable." Dr Abdullah Salem Al Katheeri, Director-General of the FTA-LM, said developing the GCC rail network was, by definition, a megaproject. "There is a technical part and there is a legal part. The technical part is almost done — the last meeting was two days ago for the GCC. We are working closely to ensure the alignment, the axle load, all these things are already done."

Port of Antwerp intensifies cooperation with coast of West Africa

Antwerp and Dakar port authorities are to collaborate more closely in the next few years. In this way Antwerp, the second-largest port in Europe, seeks to reinforce its historic position as leader on the coast of West Africa. The Senegalese port of Dakar for its part views the collaboration as a way to position itself as the main regional hub for freight. In order to put an official seal on the future collaboration, the respective port authorities signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Friday this week. Mr. Aboubacar Sedikh Beye signed for the Port Autonome de Dakar, while Kristof Waterschoot, CEO of two subsidiaries of Antwerp Port Authority (PAI and APEC), represented the Antwerp side. The signing ceremony was attended by the Belgian first minister Charles Michel and deputy first minister and minister of Development Cooperation Alexander De Croo, both on a working visit to Senegal. The MoU also contains a number of commitments in the area of marketing, developing trade relations, organising joint commercial events and exchanging information on subjects such as customs & excise, security and sustainability. The agreement has been signed for a period of five years.

India: Karaikal Port integrates container services through coastal movement

Karaikal Port berthed a container vessel through coastal movement on February 26, 2018 from Chennai Port. A formal ceremony was held to celebrate the occasion of receiving container shipment at the port, said a release. The containers will be loaded on MV Chowgule 8 River Sea Vessel, Class 4 for coastal movement at the port. MV Chowgule 8, operated by Sai Ramnarayan Enterprises Pvt. Ltd, with capacity of 106 TEUs, is expected to handle traffic of 80 TEUs per voyage from Karaikal to Chennai, roundtrip basis. The port is all set to encourage coastal cargo movement as it is an economical and eco-friendly method of transportation, in addition to saving logistics cost and facilitating timely delivery of goods. The port's container terminal has a deep draught of 13.5 m alongside, the release pointed out. The port is expected to initiate regular feeder services to Colombo in the coming months. The vessel will facilitate roundtrip traffic of 600 containers. With dedicated infrastructure facilities, the Karaikal Port terminal looks forward to sustain regular feeder service connecting Colombo for Sri Lanka-bound shipments and global destinations through Colombo.