

Mohammad Bin Rashid launches Dh394m Shindagha bridge project

His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has launched the construction of the Dh394 million Shindagha Bridge Project, which features an iconic design based on the concept of the infinity sign. The Shindagha Bridge is part of the Dh5.035 billion Shindagha Corridor Project extending 13-km along Shaikh Rashid Street as well as Al Mina, Al Khaleej and Cairo Streets. On arrival at the launch venue, Shaikh Mohammad accompanied by Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, were received by Mattar Al Tayer, Director General and Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of the RTA, along with several senior officials of the RTA. The launch of the project was attended by Shaikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Chief Executive of Emirates Group, Shaikh Ahmad Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, and Shaikh Mansour Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. Briefing Shaikh Mohammad, Mattar Al Tayer said that the new bridge is being developed under the third phase of the Shindagha Corridor Project, following the completion of the first two phases.

Sri Lanka ports rise to 13th in port connectivity index

Sri Lanka's Colombo port has been ranked the 13th best connected port in the world in 2017, moving up five places from 18, a year earlier. In an index compiled by Drewry, a UK based shipping and maritime consultancy. Sri Lanka Ports Authority, a state agency that owns Colombo port and is landlord to two private container terminals said Colombo has also been ranked the best connected port in South Asia. Colombo had scored 28.6 points in the Drewry Connectivity Index in 2017, with 59 mainline services calling each week, putting it head of Savannah port in the US with 53 calls and Jebel Ali in the UAE with 52 calls. Colombo was just behind Antwerp in Belgium with 61 calls. Shanghai was the best connected port with 172 mainline calls a week and a score of 100 points, followed by Ningbo with 163 calls and 94.8 points. Singapore was third with 158 mainline calls and a score of 91.9 points. Drewry in developing the index said the some of the smaller ports in the world offered better connectivity than the biggest ports. "For shippers, port connectivity is as important as port size or scale," the consultancy said. "Having the widest possible range of direct services is a significant competitive advantage for all ports." Based on 2016 data Colombo was the 25th busiest port in world terms of volumes.

Total to develop LNG bunkering hub at the Port of Sohar, Oman

Total is to develop a liquefied natural gas (LNG) bunkering service at the port of Sohar in Oman. The plan comes after Total signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Oman to develop natural gas resources in the country. Total and Shell as operator will develop several natural gas discoveries located in the Greater Barik area on onshore Block 6 with respective shares of 25% and 75%. Total then plans to use its equity gas entitlement to develop Oman as a regional LNG bunkering hub with a new small-scale liquefaction plant to be built at Sohar Port. The plant will provide a train of around 1m tonnes per year. Arnaud Breuillac, president exploration & production for Total said: "We will bring our expertise in LNG and will introduce access to a new gas market for the Sultanate. Developing an LNG bunkering service will generate in-country value and job opportunities, and will support industry diversification through fostering the shipping activity in Oman." LNG as a marine fuel is one of the alternatives available to shipping companies to comply with the IMO's global 0.5% sulphur regulation from 2020. French line CMA CGM has made the largest commitment to date ordering nine 22,000 teu capacity, LNG-powered containerships, and has inked a deal with Total for fuel supply.

Australian port authority readies clean shipping incentive

NSW Ports has become Australia's first port organization to plan to introduce an environmental incentive to shipping. The move, expected to be effective from January 1 next year, will see vessel-related charges reduced at Port Botany and Port Kembla. NSW Ports will develop the details of the program in consultation with relevant shipping lines, and expects it to be consistent with approaches taken internationally. Similar incentives exist at 53 ports globally, including the Port of Rotterdam, the Port of Los Angeles and the Port of New York and New Jersey. NSW Ports CEO Marika Calfas said the environmental incentive will be applied to vessels that perform better in reducing their emissions than the levels required by current emission standards of the IMO. It will apply to vessels registered with the Environmental Ship Index - a scoring system that gives a numerical representation of the environmental performance of seagoing ships regarding air pollutants. The Index is a project within the World Ports Sustainability Program that evaluates the amount of nitrogen oxide and sulfur oxide that is emitted by a ship and includes a reporting scheme on the greenhouse gas emissions of the ship. Port Botany is Australia's premier container port and has two bulk liquid berths.

India, Indonesia to promote bilateral cooperation in maritime

General (Retd.) Pandjaitan, who is on a 2-day visit to India met Shri Gadkari to discuss bilateral cooperation in the maritime sector between the two countries. The bilateral talks covered a wide range of topics including river rejuvenation, wastewater treatment, generating revenue streams from waste, enhancing shipping linkages between the two countries, developing ports and airports, training on light house technology and development of navigational aids. Developing a cruise tourism circuit between Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Indonesia and thus implementing Govt of India's vision to put India on the global cruise market both for ocean & river cruises under its Sagarmala programme was highlighted. Cooperation for developing alternative fuels such as natural gas and methanol for ships also featured in the talks. For developing collaboration in Maritime Training & Education between India & Indonesia, both the ministers were keen to draw up an MOU between Indian Maritime University & Indonesian institutes for maritime studies. It was decided by both Ministers to take up these areas of work in a proactive manner by arranging for exchange of information soon and establishing contact between technical teams on both sides.

Wave of new ULCV capacity will put more pressure on Asia-Europe trades

Firm delivery dates for next month have been agreed for around 225,000 teu of additional container capacity on the Asia-Europe trades, according to new research by Alphaliner. The consultant said more than half would consist of ships of 12,000 teu and above. It said earlier predictions of as much as 400,000 teu of the 1.4m teu capacity due to be delivered this year being pushed back to 2019 appear to have been "incorrect". "Unlike in previous years, when some owners sought to defer ship deliveries due to poor vessel earnings, today's buoyant demand and comparatively low idle fleet provide little incentive for such moves." Indeed, Hapag-Lloyd and other carriers are reporting that their ships are "running full"; and the number of containerships in lay-up is now just 80, or 1% of the total global fleet, causing a halt to demolition sales. Nevertheless, the flood of large container vessel deliveries of 10,000 teu and over – around 750,000 teu is stemmed for May-December – will need to be promptly deployed onto the major trades, which Alphaliner said could "exert pressure on the container shipping market". It notes that COSCO's seven remaining 19,000-21,000 teu ULCVs are stemmed for delivery by the end of October and will be phased into the Ocean Alliance's NE3 Asia to North Europe loop.

UAE commits to protecting Seafarers in signing of historic memorandum with ITF

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Federal Transport Authority (FTA) have signed a ground-breaking Memorandum of Understanding to work together to protect the rights of all seafarers operating in UAE waters. On signing the MoU at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in London, ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton said: "We at the ITF are committed to ensuring seafarers are protected all around the world. This is a significant opportunity to work with our partners in the UAE to bring seafarers and workers' safety to forefront of the conversation. "This agreement is just the beginning and will hopefully pave the way for similar agreements in other territories. We are keen to work for greater cooperation, in all areas of transportation." Dr. Abdullah Belheif Al Nuaimi, minister of infrastructure development and chairman of the FTA board of directors, spoke at the event: "This agreement allows us to consult, cooperate and coordinate jointly and continuously to find legal solutions regarding the abandonment of seafarers aboard ships, by ship owners and operators, and to work together to combat and prevent the occurrence of this phenomenon in the future." This is the first agreement of its kind between a government authority and the ITF.

Carnival, Meraas partner up on future Dubai cruise terminal

Miami-based cruise liner conglomerate Carnival Corporation and Dubai's holding company Meraas have partnered up on the future Dubai Cruise Terminal to be built at Dubai Harbour. The duo has signed a strategic partnership agreement "that aims to transform Dubai into a major regional maritime tourism hub." Under the deal, Carnival and Meraas intend to collaborate across several strategic areas including port development, terminal management and new cruise development opportunities at Dubai Harbour and the broader region. As informed, Carnival will assist Meraas in ensuring the cruise terminal meets the highest international standards of the cruise industry, while the relevant authorities will be responsible for security, immigration and customs. The Terminal are scheduled to commence operation in October 2020. The terminal will become the main cruise terminal in Dubai and all cruise ships visiting Port Rashid will be redirected gradually from its opening date, according to Meraas. Abdulla Al Habbai, Group Chairman of Meraas, said: "Dubai Harbour is a new and unique addition to the city's infrastructure and our alignment with DP World to make Dubai Cruise Terminal the main cruise terminal in the emirate will drive the transformation of Dubai into a fully integrated maritime tourism hub."

Industry majors put their Iranian businesses under review

The announced reinstating of nuclear-related sanctions against Iran is already starting to kick in as the shipping industry giants led by Maersk Line and MSC start to scrutinize their business operations with Iran. Donald Trump's decision to unilaterally pull out from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and begin reimposing the sanctions was announced on May 8. Companies that trade in U.S. dollars or have operations there cannot afford themselves to lose a share of the U.S. market, hence, they are likely to end their ties to Iran as a consequence. A Maersk Line spokesperson told that, "Our presence in Iran is limited. We will monitor the developments to assess any impact on our activities and keep our customers directly informed in case of any changes," the company statement reads. Maersk Line serves the Iranian market via a feeder service using 3rd party vessels, ensured through slot purchase agreements from Jebel Ali (UAE) to Bandar Abbas and Bushehr. Maersk Line has offices in Tehran, Bandar Abbas and Bushehr, employing a total staff of 12. Swiss shipping major MSC is also reviewing its business to check the impact of the sanctions.

Haiphong container terminal opens for business

The new Haiphong International Container Terminal (HICT), the first terminal in Northern Vietnam with a capability to handle 14,000 TEU ships, was opened on May 13 at Lach Huyen Port. The terminal is operated by a joint venture company Haiphong International Container Terminal Co, owned by Japanese Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (17.5 pct), Vietnam-based Saigon Newport Company (51 pct), Wan Hai Lines from Taiwan (16.5 pct) and ITOCHU Corporation (15 pct). The opening of the terminal marks the opening of Lach Huyen Port itself. The Lach Huyen Port construction project is the first Public Private Partnership (PPP) between the government of Japan and Vietnam. "With the newly opened terminal, MOL group has further expanded its presence in Northern Vietnam, which is expected to show significant development and growth in the future," MOL said. The terminal has two berths of 16 meters depth and its maximum annual trade volume stands at about 1.1 million TEU. The company added that the terminal will offer shorter transit times and lower transport costs, while contributing to economic growth in Northern Vietnam, since large-size container vessels, which offer direct links to Asia and North America/Europe, can call at the port.

Pakistan prime minister inaugurates first deep-water container terminal

Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi inaugurated the initial phase of the country's \$1.4 billion first high-tech deep-water container terminal on last Friday. Hutchison Ports Pakistan is a public-private partnership of Karachi Port Trust (KPT) and Hong Kong-based Hutchison Ports Holdings. The terminal is one of the most advanced in the region, having broken its own productivity record four times and serviced some of the largest container ships in the world since test operations began on December 9, 2016. Its high performance is expected to raise Pakistan's global trade competitiveness and set a strong foundation for further economic growth. "The state-of-the-art new container terminal at KPT will be a key component to become part of the overall CPEC system, assisting and facilitating CPEC development in Pakistan, which the government of both Pakistan and China are pursuing so vigorously," Abbasi said. "The CPEC is the initiative of BRI, which is the project of not only regional but global connectivity." As the incumbent government of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) is about to complete its five-year tenure, the prime minister highlighted the achievements of his government, claiming that it had undertaken major development projects that had not been done in the past 65 years.