

DP World sees mixed performance in H1

DP World saw a mixed bag of operating results from its operations around the world in the first half, with the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region still making up the lion's share of its volumes with a 3.1% rise in consolidated throughput to 11.54m teu from 11.18m teu in the first half of 2017. "Market conditions in the Middle East, Europe and Africa region have been mixed," DP World said in a press release. While its Europe terminals saw strong performances, UAE volumes have remained broadly flat. Markets conditions in the Asia Pacific and Indian Subcontinent region were stable, DP World said and the 1.0% growth in volume to 5.05m teu made up the next largest component of global container terminal operator's overall throughput. In Australia and the Americas, DP World's smallest market segment by volume, market conditions have been mixed, it said. Although volumes spiked 18.2% to 2.0m teu, they remained broadly flat after normalization for the consolidation of the massive DP World Santos in Brazil which the group took full control of at the end of 2017. The region has also done very well for DP World on a financial basis, with revenues growing by 18.7% to \$431m as they were boosted by the acquisition of Cosmos Agencia Marítima in Peru and the consolidation of DP World Santos.

Uncertain times ahead with Iran sanctions

The concerns of the shipping industry regarding the latest Iran sanctions have become further complicated this time by the fact that the EU has a contrary regime in place as well. In trying to provide some guidance on the emerging situation, Watson Farley & Williams (WFW) in a recent briefing suggested that while the shipping industry still relies primarily on US dollar-denominated transactions, the EU's Blocking Statute is also a directly applicable law. WFW acknowledged that shipping banks and insurers have understandably been cautious about Iran business since news broke that the US was about to re-impose sanctions lifted under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). "The default position, therefore, is that compliance with US sanctions law will continue to be required by financiers and – as a consequence – the wider shipping industry," WFW said. "Against that, the Blocking Statute – for all the questions it raises – is directly applicable EU law which is backed, in principle, by an enforcement and authorisation regime. It cannot be ignored or dismissed," the law firm reiterated. From the previous round of US sanctions, the shipping industry has substantial experience of compliance, mainly due to the dominance of US dollar financing.

ISCD: Dubai among top 5 shipping centers in the world

With a number of initiatives focused on the maritime sector, innovative free zones, infrastructure and high maritime and logistics capabilities, Dubai aims to become a major global maritime destination. "We are working hard to create a vibrant maritime center to attract industry leaders and to promote Dubai's status as a global shipping center supported by a series of leading quality initiatives," Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman of the Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation (PCFC) and Chairman of Dubai Maritime City Authority (DMCA), commented. According to a recent report by the London-based Baltic Exchange and the Xinhua News Agency, Dubai has overtaken Hamburg, which fell from fourth to seventh place. Reflecting on the new achievement, Bin Sulayem added: "This is in part the result of our fruitful partnership with the public and private sectors forged to enhance the confidence of regional and international investors in the competitiveness of the local maritime sector and promote its components based on the pillars of research and development, innovation, and smart transformation. The components include shipping and ports, engineering and training, maritime support services and ports, and the operation and maintenance of giant maritime vessels."

India: VOC Port weaning mainline vessels off Colombo

Taiwan's Wan Hai Lines Ltd will start calling at VO Chidambaranar Port instead of Colombo on its C12 service connecting China with Europe as the port located in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi district is being primed to attract mainline vessel services after cabotage restriction was lifted in May. The C12 service will be the first mainline vessel service to call at a major port owned by the Centre after cabotage was eased, allowing foreign-flagged container ships to carry export-import (exim) containers for transshipment and empty containers for repositioning on local routes. Wan Hai's head office in Taiwan has approved the proposal to call at VOC Port Trust (VOCPT) while other partners in the C12 service are being pursued for their internal approvals, according to McKinsey & Company, the consultant hired by the Shipping Ministry to prepare a strategy for transshipment and mainline calls at major ports. "Geographically, VOCPT is the best-suited Indian port that can compete with Colombo for transshipment, but it needs better infrastructure and draft to allow bigger mainline ships to dock," said a shipping industry official. VOCPT has two container terminals, run separately by PSA Sical Terminals Ltd and Dakshin Bharat Gateway Terminal Pvt Ltd.

PSA's Bharat Mumbai Container Terminals increases service levels with nine more rubber tyre gantry cranes

Bharat Mumbai Container Terminals Private Limited ("BMCT"), a subsidiary of PSA International, has received nine Rubber Tyre Gantry Cranes ("RTGs") on 3 August 2018, adding to its current fleet of 18 RTGs. An additional batch of nine RTGs are expected to arrive in early October 2018, bringing the total number of RTGs to 36. Commissioning of the new RTGs is ongoing and the RTGs will be progressively ready for operations from end August 2018. With the latest arrivals, BMCT now has nine Quay Cranes and 27 RTGs to support the 1000 metres of contiguous quay length and four DFC ("Dedicated Freight Corridor") -enabled rail lines at the terminal. The arrival of the new equipment coincides with the steady volume growth of BMCT. The terminal has handled over 150,000 TEUs to date, with productivity averaging in excess of 100 moves per vessel hour and reaching peaks of over 140 moves per hour. Mr Sivakumar K, General Manager, BMCT commented on the new arrivals, "This new equipment underscores our commitment to be a game-changer to support the trade's requirements for premium service, flexibility and room to grow. To date, 11 different vessel operators have now called at BMCT and we look forward to welcoming new services in the future".

JNPT terminals working well with customs import reform

In a response to a container freight association's concern that it has received no incremental direct port delivery (DPD) volume gains from DP World facilities, DP World Subcontinent told that its terminals at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust - India's busiest container port — remain fully consistent with customs' guidelines regarding DPD operations. The Dubai-headquartered company operates two facilities - Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal and Nhava Sheva (India) Gateway Terminal - in India's busiest public container harbor. "Both our terminals, NSICT and NS(I)GT, are compliant to the processes set by the Jawaharlal Nehru Customs House to facilitate ease-of-doing-business," the company told. "At DP World, it is our constant endeavor to eliminate inefficiencies in our customers logistics supply chain." Last week, the Container Freight Station Association of India expressed concern that its members have had no incremental DPD volume gains from DP World Nhava Sheva, after customs authorities adopted an "inclusive" policy for DPD freight handling. The issue is centered on storage of DPD containers that remain at the wharf beyond the declared 48-hour clearance deadline, which, in line with a previous customs diktat, were to be shifted to a single, port-designated container freight station.

Concor to run trains with EXIM containers to KICT

Container Corporation of India (Concor) will run regular or weekly trains between Kandla International Container Terminal (KICT) and its inland container depots (ICDs), according to a memorandum of understanding signed between the two sides on Tuesday. Concor has been running trains between its ICD at Jodhpur and KICT carrying boxes meant for coastal movement since February. "With this agreement, the partnership has been extended to the export-import (EXIM) sphere as well, covering leading ICDs of Ludhiana, Tuglakabad, Khodiyar and Khanaj, among many others," a KICT spokesman told. KICT is a unit of Mumbai-based logistics firm JM Baxi Group. "The container train services by Concor shall run regular or weekly between KICT and various ICDs with an assured arrangement of prompt reception by KICT of the incoming Concor trains at the rail yard from the serving station and returning to the serving station for onward movement with the import loads meant for various ICDs within 48 hours. This will now help the trade to book import shipments ex-Kandla to various ICDs and send export shipments from the hinterlands of India to different parts of the world," the KICT spokesman said.

Indian govt developing National Logistics Portal

To ensure ease of trading in the international and domestic markets, the ministry of commerce and industry, Government of India, is developing a National Logistics Portal. The portal, to be implemented in phases, will link all the stakeholders of export-import (EXIM), domestic trade and movement and all trade activities on a single platform. The portal "will fulfil the commitment of the Government of India to enhance trade competitiveness, create jobs, boost India's performance in global rankings and pave the way for India to become a logistics hub," the ministry said in a statement. In this year's budget speech, finance minister Arun Jaitley had announced that the Department of Commerce will create a portal which will be a single window online market place for trade and will connect business, create opportunities and bring together various ministries, departments and the private sector. Stakeholders like traders, manufacturers, logistics service providers, infrastructure providers, financial services, government departments and groups and associations will all be on one platform. India's logistics sector is highly fragmented, and the aim is to reduce the logistics cost from the present 14 per cent of GDP to less than 10 per cent by 2022.

Georgia's new inland port terminal opens for business

The Georgia Ports Authority celebrated the official opening of the Appalachian Regional Port in northwest Georgia on Aug. 22. Gov. Nathan Deal, state officials and more than 350 business and civic leaders attended the inland port event, GPA officials said. Located in Murray County, the facility will provide logistics solutions for customers in a four-state region and remove an estimated 50,000 trucks and 15 million truck miles from local highways every year, GPA officials said. "The ARP is part of our Network Georgia initiative that brings services from the coast to communities around the state," GPA Executive Director Griff Lynch said. "The new inland terminal will provide the same superior quality services our customers have come to rely on: congestion-free, easy access, expedited handling and reliability." Through intermodal rail service from CSX, the ARP offers customers across north Georgia, northeast Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky a more efficient option to move cargo to and from Savannah's container port. "The Appalachian Regional Port is a powerful new gateway to the Port of Savannah that extends the efficiencies of Georgia's superior port operations to new markets," Deal said.

Tokyo International Container Terminal marks 20 million teus handled

Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL) announced that the MOL-operated Tokyo International Container Terminal (TICT) reached a major milestone on August 21—a cumulative total of 20 million TEUs handled. The terminal started operations in November 1971, and in December of that year, the full containership Kamakura Maru, serving the Asia-Europe route, was the first vessel to call at TICT. After 47 years of successful operations, TICT becomes the first terminal in the Port of Tokyo to handle 20 million TEUs. A ceremony to celebrate the occasion drew distinguished guests from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Port and Harbor and Tokyo Port Terminal Co., Ltd., which operate and manage the port and harbor and the wharf at Tokyo Port, executives from Ocean Network Express (Japan), Ltd., the cargo owner whose containers put TICT over the 20 million mark. A press release said that TICT strives to enhance and expand its container terminal capacities through measures such as the introduction of an aseismically designed wharf and a series of high-capacity gantry cranes, establishing stable operations with cargo volumes increasing and successively larger vessels calling at the port.

Maersk to sail first container ship over top of Russia

Maersk Line will this week launch the first container ship on an Arctic route over the top of Russia as the world's biggest carrier of seaborne freight experiments with an alternative to the Suez Canal. The Venta Maersk, a 3,600-container new ice-class ship belonging to the Danish group, will leave Vladivostok in the next few days bound for St Petersburg, which it will reach by the end of September. The Northern Sea Route, which stretches from the Bering Strait between Russia and the US along the far north of Russia to its exit close to Norway, has been touted as a potential long-term rival to the Suez Canal for Asia-Europe trade as ice in the Arctic continues to melt. This summer temperatures in the Arctic Circle have been unusually high, soaring above 30C in some parts. The Northern Sea Route can cut the journey time between Asia and Europe by one to two weeks depending on the destination but is more costly, still requires nuclear icebreakers to accompany vessels and can only take smaller vessels than the Suez Canal. "The trial passage will enable us to explore the operational feasibility of container shipping through the Northern Sea Route and to collect data." Maersk said in a statement.

German shipping company starts operation in Kenya

Hapag-Lloyd, the world's fifth largest container shipping company, has made its way into the Kenyan shipping industry. The German-owned company is eyeing more business in the East African hinterland, where landlocked markets of Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia and DR Congo mostly carry their import and export business through the port of Mombasa. The firm's Managing Director for Africa and the Middle East Dheeraj Bhatia said Hapag-Lloyd aims to ship Kenyan fresh exports of horticulture and tea. The company specialises in refrigerated containers that transport such kind of fresh products. The Hamburg-based company will make weekly trips from the port of Mombasa to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia before coming back through the port of Dar Es Salaam and again to Mombasa. According to Mr Bhatia, Hapag-Lloyd's shipping activities in Kenya will be managed by the Kenyan firm Diamond Shipping services. Besides making entry into Kenya, the firm operates in 19 other African ports especially in countries on the Atlantic coast such as Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Angola. Hapag-Lloyd also has a major presence in South African ports. "We looked at Kenya and saw it as a major point of entry if we had to access East Africa and its hinterland," said Bhatia.