

Top industry players join UAE-based green container shipping consortium

Innovative new UAE-based maritime company Zaitoun Green Shipping has formed a consortium with world leading companies in smart technology and solutions to collaborate on radically improving performance of container ships and forming a new business model for this market. The consortium consists of the top industry names such as MacGregor, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Marine Machinery & Equipment, Wärtsilä, Winterthur Gas & Diesel (WinGD), Gaztransport & Technigaz (GTT), CargoTech and Carinafour. The company said an increasingly innovative and demanding maritime industry called out for a new initiative such as this which takes into consideration ship efficiency, environmental protection whilst also prioritizing technological capabilities, safe operations and a commitment to profits. With the global container shipping business suffering from weak economic and green performance, there is a need to identify new concepts. Alongside Zaitoun Green Shipping's mission to protect the marine environment and drive business growth with innovative and smart approaches, the new consortium is committed to drive for new business models that will lower the investment risk and boost clean and profitable shipping.

Albwardy Damen expands afloat repairs business to Sohar Port and Freezone

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 Dubai-based shipyard Albwardy Damen is expanding its afloat repairs business into Sohar Port and Freezone in Oman. The expansion of Albwardy Damen's a full range of afloat, workshop, and diving services at Sohar adds to the yard's Afloat Repairs Division's workshop facilities in Dubai, Sharjah, and Fujairah. "Our strategic expansion into Sohar has been driven by demand from customers and other stakeholders. Albwardy Damen is the first ship repair company to have a presence in Oman's rapidly growing logistics hub," said Willem Moelker, sales and marketing director, Albwardy Damen. "By establishing this new venture, vessels in Sohar which require repairs and maintenance will be able to get on their way as soon as possible. Our engineers can be on board within hours, reducing mobilisation and repair times dramatically," he added. Vessels calling at Sohar can also benefit from nearby Albwardy Damen Diving, which has been serving the marine industry since 1995. Albwardy Damen is a joint venture between Albwardy Investment, Dubai and the Damen Shipyards Group, the Netherlands.

Cosco aims to make Piraeus top container port in the Med

Cosco Shipping Ports (CSP) has set its sights on making Greece's largest port Piraeus the number one container handling port in the Mediterranean within 18 months. Presently it is third. Under its Greek subsidiary, Piraeus Container Terminal (PCT), the Greek port has become Cosco's outstanding overseas performer in less than two years, receiving recognition earlier this month when CSP reported its first half 2018 results. CSP highlighted the performance of Piraeus, while warning of a "year full of challenges" lies ahead. CSP announced container throughput at its Piraeus piers II and III increased 18.4% to 2.075m teu in the first half of 2018 compared to 2017. Further, with a new berth added in January 2018, throughput at the separately run Cosco PPA terminal I surged 63.3% to 1.6m teu giving Piraeus a 3.675m teu for the first half. Throwing more light on the achievement PCT said its net profits from terminals II and III in the first half of 2018 jumped 25.8% year-on-year to \$13.64m, due to increased traffic and the appreciation of the Euro against the dollar. Turnover rose 31% year-on-year, to \$111.45m, as a result of increased container flow from calls from members of the Ocean Alliance. In July, container traffic reached a record 415,000 teu, up 34.3% compared to July 2017.

Hong Kong planning tax incentives for marine insurers

Hong Kong is planning a number of tax incentives to promote marine insurance, reinsurance and specialty insurance as the city tries to make up lost ground in the fight with Singapore for regional business. "We are also exploring further tax incentives and regulatory changes to spur the development of marine insurance, specialty insurance and reinsurance in Hong Kong. We will soon consult the industry on these new measures," financial secretary Paul Chan was quoted by local media as saying at an insurance industry event. No further specific details were provided. There have long been complaints from the maritime industry in the city about the lack of government financial incentives in comparison to Hong Kong's southern competitor. A report by Hong Kong's Financial Services Development Council (FSDC) had as recently as last year recommended that the city could follow Singapore's example of offering a 10% tax rate to insurers for writing both onshore and offshore marine hull and liability cover to help build up market volume. FSDC pointedly said: "Hong Kong should consider introducing tax incentives to encourage direct insurers, reinsurers and brokers to establish or expand their presence in Hong Kong, and to place itself in a level playing field with other competitors in this region."

Dubai wealth fund ICD launches new logistics firm

The Investment Corporation of Dubai, the principal investment arm of the Government of Dubai, has announced the launch of ISS Global Forwarding, a wholly-owned subsidiary focused on supply chain logistics. Headquartered in Dubai and operating out of the Dubai Airport Free Zone, ISS Global Forwarding will focus on core activities of global freight forwarding, contract logistics and projects/oil and gas, a statement said. It added that ISS Global Forwarding will initially be present in 18 countries across the Middle East, Africa, Europe, India and Turkey but will expand its footprint to Asia Pacific, mainland China and Singapore. ISS Global Forwarding will be led by industry veteran Enver Moretti who said: "We are establishing ourselves as a regional powerhouse and our aspiration is to be recognised within the supply chain logistics industry as a customer centric organisation." "We are confident in the future global growth opportunities presented by the supply chain logistics industry. We see particular value at this time in the long-term growth opportunities afforded within the emerging markets region where ISS Global Forwarding enjoys a strong presence," added Mohammed Ibrahim Al Shaibani, CEO and executive director of the Investment Corporation of Dubai.

More Indian ports cutting dwell times via efficiency programs

India's efforts to replicate the success Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) achieved with its two, key supply chain reforms — direct port delivery (DPD) and direct port entry (DPE) — at other, smaller ports appears to have worked to a considerable degree. Conceptually and in objective, DPD and DPE are akin to each other — speed up cargo flows, reduce cargo dwell times, and decrease logistics costs. Under DPD, pre-approved importers can clear their cargo directly from the wharf within 48 hours of landing at the port, whereas DPE allows shippers to gate-in their factory-stuffed goods without the otherwise mandatory "let export order" issued by customs. A study reveals that besides reform frontrunner JNPT, the ports of Chennai, Kolkata, Haldia, Tuticorin (V.O. Chidambaram), Cochin, Visakhapatnam, and New Mangalore have been able to generate considerable shippers' interest toward these ease-of-doing-business programs, following intense government pressure to increase productivity. The April-to-July DPD percentage at top performers among these ports is as follows: Haldia, 55.64 percent; Chennai, 46.3 percent; Kolkata, 37.12 percent; Cochin, 20 percent; and Visakhapatnam, 14.3 percent.

Transshipment facility from India's Vizag Port begins

Transshipment facility for Nepal-bound cargo containers has begun from Vishakhapatnam (Vizag) Port from today, with the inauguration of a direct container train service between Vizag Port and Birgunj for transit cargo. With 61 containers on board and shipped under a completely revolutionary customs procedure, traders were jubilant as they will no longer have to file a customs declaration in India, or hire a customs house agent (CHA) or run after transporters and Container Corporation (CONCOR) — subsidiary of Indian Railways that is authorised to ferry Nepal-bound cargo. "It is a well-known fact that transporters, CHAs and shipping lines in Kolkata have formed a strong cartel and take unforeseen charges from hapless Nepali traders," said Ravi Shanker Sainju, joint secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS). Speaking to The Himalayan Times, Joint Secretary Sainju said that the seeds of this development were laid by both the governments with the signing of a memorandum of intent on June 6, 2017 to pilot the use of an electronic cargo tracking system (ECTS) to facilitate traffic-in-transit between Nepal and India on selected routes. It is a result of the collaborated efforts of the senior officials of both sides. They have put in tireless efforts for over a year to make this possible.

Indian Port Rail Corporation to begin new railway line project

Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT), Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Railways and state governments of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra will enter into a pact tomorrow for implementing a new Indore- Manmad Railway Line Project. The project will be implemented through Indian Port Rail Corporation Limited on joint venture special purpose vehicle (SPV) model. "An MoU will be signed tomorrow between JNPT- Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Railways, Govt of Maharashtra and Govt of Madhya Pradesh for implementation of 362 km Indore- Manmad New Railway Line Project," the shipping ministry said in a statement. The project will reduce the distance from Mumbai/Pune to key central India locations by 171 kilometers. The project passes through the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor nodes Igatpuri, Nashik and Sinnar; Pune and Khed; and Dhule and Nardana. The project is estimated to result in cumulative net economic benefits of Rs 15,000 crore in the first ten years of operations. Its Logistics advantages include providing a shorter route for passenger as well as the freight traffic originating from / terminating or crossing through the region. The project will reduce the logistics cost for the cargo centres located in Northern India to the gateway ports JNPT and Mumbai.

Halifax reveals mega capacity expansion plans

The Halifax Port Authority has revealed a plan to expand its South End container terminal to accommodate more mega ships and remain competitive as ships get bigger. Capacity is needed to berth at least two ultra-class ships, so the port will work with Halterm Container Terminal Ltd from the first quarter of 2019 to temporarily expand its capacity at the South End terminal to berth and service a second ultra-class vessel, said Lane Fergusson, communications advisor at the port. Phase one is due to be completed in 2020 and will be paid for by the port, which expects the expansion to cost CAD\$35m. Phase two of the South End development will see expansion to the north as the port explained: "Expanding our infrastructure at the South End Container Terminal will provide the space we need to accommodate the biggest ships, with room for equipment and connections to road and rail. "By expanding the South End Container Terminal to the north we will be able to limit construction to our existing property and minimize disruption to our neighbors (sic)." To handle any increased truck traffic the port plans to work with its partners to explore potential short-term solutions including collecting data through its port operations centre to map container truck flows to avoid peak congestion times.

DPR on Colachel Port at advanced stage

The Detailed Project Report for the setting up Colachel Port in Kanniyakumari was at an advanced stage of preparation, Minister of State for Shipping Pon. Radhakrishnan said. Radhakrishnan, who hails from Kanniyakumari district, said the government was also mulling floating a separate Special Purpose Vehicle for the project. "The DPR is at an advanced stage of preparation," he said. In 2016, the Government cleared the proposal to set up the project at Enayam in Kanyakumari at an investment of Rs 25,000 crore. However following opposition from a section of villagers, the Shipping Ministry identified Colachel to set up a port. Radhakrishnan was here to take part in the welcoming ceremony of very large cargo carrier M V Blue Diamond at the Chennai Port Trust. To a query on the status of the Ennore Manali Road Improvement Project, he told reporters that some land needs to be acquired from the Navy, for which discussions were on with the Defence Ministry. "We need some more land. There is a bottleneck as the land is owned by the Navy. We are in discussions with the Defence Ministry for that", he said. The Ennore-Manali Road Improvement project, conceived in 1998 at a cost of Rs 600 crore, aims to link four major roads in the suburbs of Chennai.

Kazakh port in decline bids for slice of China trade

With the outlines of its six idle cranes obscured by thick fog and pouring rain, Kazakhstan's Caspian seaport Aktau seems an unlikely stop on China's much-hyped new silk road. But the sleepy port, which has been badly hit in recent years by new oil routes, is vying for a slice of the pie as competition for Chinese trade warms up on the shores of the world's largest inland sea. China's trillion dollar Belt and Road initiative has been a buzz-phrase in Kazakhstan ever since Chinese leader Xi Jinping unveiled the overland trade and infrastructure vision during a 2013 visit to the capital Astana. For the moment, evidence of Beijing's economic might is light on the ground at Aktau, more than 2,300 kilometres (1,400 miles) from the China-Kazakhstan border crossing that is a key entry point for goods bound for Europe overland. "This used to be an old port in poor condition with old equipment," said Oraz Koptleuov, a native of Turkmenistan who began working at the port of Aktau as a machinist in 1995. During a recent visit, an AFP correspondent saw a corrugated steel container marked China Shipping being unloaded on an otherwise deserted dock. The container had carried a shipment of engine oil from Turkey to Kazakhstan via Azerbaijan's capital Baku, Koptleuov said, but would make the return journey empty.

Total to exit from Hazira LNG venture; to sell 26% stake to Shell

International oil & gas company Total will fully exit from its Hazira Liquefied natural gas (LNG) venture, through a sale of its 26% stake to Shell, its partner for the venture. "Shell Gas B.V., a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell plc ("Shell"), announced on Monday that it has signed a binding Letter of Intent (LoI) with Total Gaz Electricité Holdings France ("Total") to acquire its 26% equity in the Hazira LNG and Port venture in India, subject to regulatory approvals," Shell said in a press statement on Monday. Shell already holds 74% interest in the project. The Hazira LNG and Port venture comprises two companies - Hazira LNG (HLPL) and Hazira Port (HPPL). HLPL operates a LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) regasification terminal in the State of Gujarat and HPPL manages a direct berthing multi-cargo port at Hazira. Total's full exit will allow Shell commercial and operational flexibility over Hazira to maximise integrated value and offer creative customer value propositions. "This portfolio action is consistent with Shell's strategy to deepen its presence in the gas value chain in India, the fourth largest LNG consumer in the world. Shell aims to contribute in bridging the energy deficit and further augment gas supplies in India," Shell said in its statement.