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Sharjah signs port agreement with Delaware state

The Department of Seaports & Customs of the Government of Sharjah on Wednesday signed a sister port agreement with the Diamond State Port Corporation of the state of Delaware in the US to cooperate in the development of international trade and logistics, exchange information, and build mutually beneficial commercial, technological and cultural synergies. The agreement also enables private companies within the catchment area of the respective port authorities to collaborate on trade and investment prospects, according to a statement. "The agreement is a highly significant step in boosting economic ties between the UAE and the USA. We see this as a great opportunity to bolster the overall economy of Delaware through productive partnerships and the sharing of industry best practices," said Jeffrey Bullock, Secretary of State of Delaware after signing the agreement at the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce. The signing took place following the official handover of the Delaware-based Port of Wilmington from the Diamond State Port Corporation to Gulftainer to operate and develop the port over a 50-year concession period. The deal represents the largest investment ever by a private UAE company in the USA.

DP World breaks ground on Berbera port development in Somaliland

DP World has broken ground on a multi-purpose port development in Berbera in Somaliland. President of the Republic of Somaliland, Muse Bihi Abdi and DP World Group chairman and ceo Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem launched work on the phase of the port project on Thursday. The first phase of DP World Berbera will consist of building a 400-metre quay and 250,000 square metre yard extension as well as the development of a free zone. According to The National investment in the first phase will be $101m, with a total investment of $442m in two phases. DP World Berbera is a joint venture and includes neighbouring countries such as land-locked Ethiopia, which has a 19% stake. The port is being constructed by Shafa Al Nahda Contracting. President of Somaliland Muse Bihi Abdi, said: "Today is a historic day as we mark another major milestone in the development of our economy and by investing in our infrastructure we will be able to grow for the benefit of our people, the region and beyond. Connecting to landlocked countries such as Ethiopia and the rest of the region will reinforce the firm relationships that now exist and make Somaliland an important player in regional economic integration and growth."

India asks Bangladesh to use Kolkata, Haldia as transhipment ports

India has urged Bangladesh to use Kolkata and Haldia ports for transhipment purposes. The initiative can make coastal shipping more cost effective for bilateral trade, thereby shifting cargo from the costly land route, and create an opportunity for Bangladeshi garment exporters to reach European and American markets avoiding congestion at the Chittagong port. Indian customs authorities have already cleared the deck for Bangladesh to use Haldia as a transhipment port. However, Bangladesh is yet to approve the same. The proposal was reiterated at a ministerial meeting in Dhaka earlier this week. At the crux of the proposal is the growing need to augment handling capacities on either side, keeping in tune with growing trade volumes. India-Bangladesh trade grew 38 per cent to $9.1 billion over the last four years. On a year-on-year basis, the trade grew 24 per cent in 2017-18. This was followed by nearly 22 per cent growth in April-July 2018. Keeping in tune with the trend, movement of bilateral cargo through coastal shipping is also rising. During the first six months of FY19, the port handled approximately 4,000 containers traded between the two nations. This is higher than 3,700 boxes handled in the full year of 2017-18.

Krishnapatnam port targets handling 30% more cargo in Fy19

The Krishnapatnam port in Andhra Pradesh hopes to end the financial year handling nearly 60 million tonnes (MT) of cargo, which will be nearly 33 per cent more than the previous year's 45 MT. According to the port's CEO and Director, Anil Yendluri, for the first six months of the current financial year, the facility, which competes with Chennai, Kamarajar and Katuppalli ports in Tamil Nadu, for cargo saw a 25 per cent increase in traffic over the same period last year. There was growth across all major cargoes, including coal, edible oil and containers, he told. Yendluri said that the port has chalked out expansion plans for the next 18 months that include construction of a liquid cargo terminal at nearly 500 crore, and three more berths for general cargo and containers. "The port could be the preferred gateway for liquid cargo. The dedicated berth with no draft restriction will be able to handle Panamax-size vessels. Out of the total 6,800 acres of port area, 873 acres has been earmarked for liquid business. However, additional land will be allotted for liquid storage based on the demand," he said. The port has planned two dedicated rail sidings for liquid cargo, in addition to the 16 existing full length rail sidings.

Panama Canal sees record annual cargo tonnage

The Panama Canal closed its 2018 fiscal year (FY 2018) with a record tonnage of 442.1m Panama Canal tonnes (PC/UMS), a 9.5% increase from the previous year. With this tonnage, the Panama Canal surpasses the cargo projections of 429.4m PC/UMS tonnes for FY 2018, as well as the 403.8 PC/UMS tonnes registered in FY 2017, Canal authorities said. "The Panama Canal continues to exceed our expectations, reinforcing every day the importance of the waterway's expansion and its impact on global maritime trade," said Panama Canal administrator Jorge Quijano. "This is the results of the efforts of our committed workforce who made this an extraordinary year." The increase was driven by the transit of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and natural liquefied gas (LNG) carriers, containerships, chemical tankers and vehicle carriers. The container segment continued to serve as the leading market segment for tonnage through the Canal, accounting for 159m PC/UMS tonnes of the total cargo, of which 112.6m PC/UMS tonnes transited the expanded Canal. Tankers - which include liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers - represented the following market segment with 130.3m PC/UMS tonnes.

APM Terminals installs new weighbridges at Bahrain port

APM Terminals Bahrain, the operator of Khalifa Bin Salman Port (KBSP), has installed three new weighbridges at the kingdom's prime port at Hidd, as part of its plans to streamlining its operations. The company's investment in the three new weighbridges is aimed at enhancing its VGM (Verified Gross Mass) service offerings. It comes as part of APM Terminals Bahrain's continued efforts to upgrade the KBSP infrastructure and provide increased efficiency and sufficient capacity for future export growth. The new pit-mounted weighbridges, includes a combination of fully and semi-automated weighbridges which will be located at three different points i.e 2 In weighbridges at the entry gate and one Out weighbridge inside the container terminal. This will be in addition to the two manually-operated Weighbridges currently operational at the terminal. The new weighbridges are expected to ensure uninterrupted truck flows with streamlined operations. This will also enable container trucks to have smooth and safer access to the Weighbridge at road-level. They will be linked with the KBSP's terminal operating system to automatically provide a VGM record for the container thereby reducing costs, risks and delays for customers.

Cargo traffic at major Indian ports rises 5% in April-September

Major ports in the country witnessed 5.12 per cent rise in cargo traffic to 343.26 million tonne (MT) in the April-September period of the ongoing financial year. "The major ports in India have recorded a growth of 5.12 per cent and together handled 343.26 MT of cargo during April-September, 2018 as against 326.54 MT handled during the corresponding period of previous year," the shipping ministry said in a statement Thursday.Nine ports, including Paradip, Visakhapatnam and Kamarajar, registered positive growth in traffic during the reported period, the statement added. The highest growth of 19.66 per cent was registered by Kamarajar Port, followed by Cochin at 11.51 per cent, Paradip at 11.12 per cent, Haldia at 10.07 per cent and Deendayal at 10.03 per cent, it said. During the period under review, Deendayal (Kandla) Port handled the highest volume of traffic at 58.63 MT, followed by Paradip, JNPT and Visakhapatnam, among others. Meanwhile, diversified port sector players will experience moderate growth in cargo in the near term amid growing container volumes as well as the impetus for coastal shipping, an Icra report said.

ONE, Hapag-Lloyd join forces in feeder operations

Ocean Network Express and Hapag-Lloyd have concluded a Bilateral Strategic Feeder Network Cooperation Agreement, which has already started on the first trades. The collaboration, which aims to provide the market with a superior feeder network, would see the parties share space on their feeder services. Ocean Network Express and Hapag-Lloyd have already ushered in a new Intra-Asia service, the Bohai Feeder (BHX) in August and will further introduce a new Intra-Europe service, the North Sea Poland Express (NPX), in mid-October to enhance their existing feeder network. The cooperation will cover specific Intra-Europe (BAX, NBS, NPX, REX, SDX, ADX, LEX) and Intra-Asia (BHX, HAS, PID) feeder trade lanes. The duo informed that the collaboration is to be "further expanded into other key areas in due course." "This new cooperation is another strong footnote to the existing bilateral partnership…Looking ahead, we are confident that the scope of this cooperation will be further broadened," Jeremy Nixon, Chief Executive Officer of Ocean Network Express, said. Ocean Network Express and Hapag-Lloyd operate together within THE Alliance and cooperate on their Latin America, Africa and Indian Subcontinent trades.

Port operator Gulftainer to invest as much as $3bn to expand portfolio

UAE port operator Gulftainer plans to invest as much as $3 billion (Dh11bn) over the next five years with financing from investors and banks as it seeks to double its container capacity and acquire assets, its chief executive said. The operator wants to reach 10 million twenty-foot equivalent units - a measurement of a ship's container-carrying capacity - in five years, increase its cargo shipment handling and engage investors to help fund its $2 to $3bn expansion, Peter Richards told The National. "We should not to be restricted to TEUs and containers because a lot of the entities that we're looking at now are not just containers but a lot of them are breakbulk and general cargoes," said Mr Richards. "We hope to continue our growth in the US market and at the same time we are looking at east and west Africa, and we are looking at Asia." Gulftainer's main operations are located in the Middle East, where countries are looking to expand their maritime transport capacity to cater to increased trade and higher economic growth. Ports in the Middle East have announced plans to add capacity totalling about 57 million TEU by 2030, almost doubling the current level, according to the Boston Consulting Group.

China opens new shipping line to Tripoli

A vast container ship called CMA CGM Congo arrived October 9 in Tripoli, said Xinhua, China's state media agency. This is the latest overture by Beijing to debt-ridden Lebanon and a follow-up on promises made at the China Arab States Cooperation Forum in July, when China pledged more than $23 billion in credit, loans and humanitarian assistance to the Arab world. It is no secret that China is interested in Lebanese infrastructure. In 2009, the China Harbour Engineering Company won a contract to build a 600-metre quay extension at Tripoli, with a view to rebuilding the disused railway to Homs. Tripoli has strategic importance as the only deep-water port in the region that is not controlled by the Russian military. "China sees Lebanon as part of one package, including Syria, Iraq and central Asia," said Neil Quilliam, senior research fellow with the MENA Programme at Chatham House, an independent policy institute in London. Quilliam leads a project mapping China's Belt and Road Initiative and specialises in relations between Arab countries and China, India and Japan. "China recently appointed a special envoy to Syria and a special envoy to the Middle East peace process," he said.

India Govt set to dump direct port delivery scheme

The direct port delivery (DPD) scheme that was introduced as a panacea to cut cargo dwell time and costs is set to be dumped, with the government working on a plan to restore the role of container freight stations (CFS) in the evacuation system, a top ministry official said last week. DPD scheme, which was implemented by the government last year with great vigour to promote the ease of doing business and improve India's ranking in the logistics performance index of the World Bank, had started to hurt the business of CFSs servicing Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust. Some of the CFSs, including listed entities, have started shedding staff to deal with the decline in business with one of them even shutting shop last week following an attack on buses carrying employees by a group that were retrenched. DPD essentially means import containers are delivered directly to pre-approved clients at the port itself instead of waiting in a CFS located outside for clearance, which reduces the cargo dwell time and cost for shippers. "We are now trying to re-model our cargo evacuation system placing the CFS as the fulcrum of the entire planning," Shipping Secretary Gopal Krishna said.

India: Multimodal logistics park policy on the anvil

The government is formulating a policy for the integrated development of multimodal logistics parks with a view to promoting movement of goods for domestic as well as global trade, an official said. Currently, there is no specific definition, specification and standardisation of multimodal logistics parks. Due to this, different ministries including railways, shipping and the department of industrial policy and promotion are developing these parks. "There are cases where two different departments are developing these parks at the same location. So duplication is happening on account of lack of a comprehensive policy. So, there is a need to have a common policy on this subject," the official said. As many as 35 such parks have been proposed by different ministries including railways. A 50-acre park requires Rs 200-300 crore for development. The policy would help set up one authority for the approval of these parks, setting up common standards, fixing time frames, and areas where they can be constructed. The move is part of several measures being considered by the commerce ministry to cut the logistic cost of both domestic and global traders.

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