

Abu Dhabi, Belgium ports collaborate on Blockchain trade pilot

A subsidiary of Abu Dhabi Ports has partnered with Belgium's Port of Antwerp for a blockchain pilot aimed to facilitate international trade. The proof-of-concept (PoC) trial will be conducted by Maqta Gateway using its own blockchain platform, Silsal, which was launched in June to address inefficiencies in the shipping industry and better connect importers and exporters. According to a press release, the trial is expected to help the companies handle trade documentation between the United Arab Emirates and Belgium, "providing full cargo visibility and streamlining trade flows and supply chains." The pilot is aimed to investigate how to best to scale up blockchain systems in world trade, as well as provide transaction security and lower integration costs. The effort is expected to be completed by the Q4 2018. Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, CEO of Abu Dhabi Ports, said: "This is an important moment for us as we prepare to implement the first applied blockchain solution of its kind between Abu Dhabi and the world. Our technology experts at Maqta Gateway are working with world-class international partners, such as the Port of Antwerp, to deliver fast, reliable, and secure trade transactions through rigorous development and testing programs."

China and Greece using shipping industry to strengthen bilateral ties

China and Greece intend to use the shipping industry to expand relations between the two with China's Transport Minister, Li Xiaopeng saying his country made the geo-strategic choice to strengthen bilateral economic and trade cooperation with Greece. During a visit to Greece this week, Li said the relationship will be built on the extensive institutional framework for maritime cooperation already existing between Greece and China. This framework includes agreements on maritime transport, the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of tax evasion with regard to risky taxes and MoU on co-operation in the fields of maritime transport and maritime technologies, as well as on cooperation in the field of wider maritime affairs including working together at the IMO. During a meeting, 15 October, at the initiative of the Chinese, with Greece's Shipping and Island Policy Minister Fotis Kouvelis, Li welcomed the signing of cooperation protocols in the areas of maritime safety, environment protection, maritime training and marine traffic facilitation" between the Shipping Safety department of China's Transport ministry and the Hellenic Coast Guard.

Rolls-Royce to use Intel processing power of autonomous shipping

Rolls-Royce is to use Intel processing power in its continued to drive to develop autonomous shipping. Rolls-Royce has signed an agreement with Intel to collaborate on bringing together advanced ship technology from Rolls-Royce with components and systems engineering from Intel. This will require new shipping intelligence centres that will have data centre and AI capabilities to manage autonomous navigation and communication. The collaboration will include the use of Intel Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA) technology, Intel Xeon Scalable Processors optimised for high performance computing, and memory and storage, including Intel Optane DC Persistent Memory and Intel Optane SSD, and Intel 3D NAND SSD. Kevin Daffey, Rolls-Royce, Director, Engineering & Technology and Ship Intelligence, said "This collaboration can help us to support ship owners in the automation of their navigation and operations, reducing the opportunity for human error and allowing crews to focus on more valuable tasks. "Simply said, this project would not be possible without the leading-edge technology Intel brings to the table. Together, we'll blend the best of the best, Intel and Rolls-Royce to change the world of shipping."

Abu Dhabi's NMDC wins Khalifa Port expansion contract

Abu Dhabi's National Marine Dredging Company (NMDC) said it has been awarded a Dh985.17-million (\$268 million) contract for the expansion of Khalifa Port in the UAE capital. On completion, its total annual capacity will reach 5.6 million vessels. The Khalifa Port's free zone includes around 40 companies in different business segments, such as industrial and commercial businesses. The expansion at Khalifa Port, one of the world's fastest growing container, bulk cargo and roll-on roll-off vehicle transport ports, will add 1,000 m of quay wall to the port and deepen its main channel and basin to 18 m from the current 16 m. The new quay wall will add a further 600,000 sq m for cargo handling, said the company in a statement. In another development, The Abu Dhabi Ports had last week received automated rail-mounted gantry (ARMG) ship-to-shore quay cranes for deployment at Khalifa Port. Shipped from Shanghai, the 10 state-of-the-art ARMG cranes and four STS cranes are the initial batches of equipment to be installed at Cosco Shipping Abu Dhabi Terminal, the second container terminal being built at Khalifa Port due for completion at the end of this year.

APM Terminals invests US\$110M in the Port

The managing director (MD) of APM Terminals Liberia, George G. Adjei, said the company has invested US\$110 million as part of its concession agreement with the government of Liberia, noting that the company is committed to offering reliable customer service and supporting Liberia's economic development. It can be recalled that the government and APM Terminals signed a 25-year agreement in August of 2010, and commenced operations in February of 2011. Mr. Adjei made the remarks at a news conference at the offices of APM Terminals in Monrovia, which he indicated that the company has actively met some of its obligations under the concession agreement, and will continue to work in line with international standards. Mr. Adjei said the investments were quickly needed to make the port more efficient, noting that the investments were made in key areas of the port. According to him, the company has fulfilled some key commitments within the agreement, including 50 percent Liberian staffers and 50 percent experts. Adjei said the company spent US\$50 million on the "marginal wharf" and US\$60 million on equipment, tools and "access needed to help in the operations of the terminals."

Shreyas Shipping calls its first coastal service at Bharat Mumbai Container Terminal

Bharat Mumbai Container Terminals (BMCT) welcomed Shreyas Shipping and Logistics Ltd's "M.V. SSL Mumbai", marking the first call of Shreyas's PIX 1 (Pan India Express 1) service at the terminal. The 1,613 TEU "M.V. SSL Mumbai" operates the PIX1 service with a sister vessel on the following rotation: BMCT, Cochin, Tuticorin, Mangalore, Mundra, Hazira and BMCT on a fortnightly basis. The call at BMCT offers options for both domestic shipments and international transshipment. CEO of Shreyas Shipping, Captain VK Singh stated, "Shreyas is pleased to commence its coastal service calls at BMCT in JNPT. We are targeting both EXIM and domestic trades and see these markets as having great potential which, with BMCT's new capacity, we are now able to capture. Shreyas is also playing its part in the Sagarmala initiative by promoting coastal shipping in this way." BMCT's General Manager Sivakumar Kaliannan said, "We are very pleased to welcome PIX1 to Bharat Mumbai Container Terminals. Before BMCT's startup, capacity limitations at Nhava Sheva meant there were very few regular coastal service calls. With Shreyas' PIX 1, domestic shippers now have the option of moving their shipments from truck to ship and can enjoy a cheaper and more environmentally-friendly transport option".

Kazakhstan to increase rail cargo transit between China and Finland

On October 16, during the visit of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Finland, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) national railways company and Finland's Kouvola Innovation Oy (Kouvola city) and Nurminen Logistics Services signed an agreement on the development of container traffic, the press office of KTZ said. The agreement aims to increase the volume of cargo transportation, the development of supply chains and services along the China-Finland route through Kazakhstan. Sending a container train along the new regular route Helsinki (Finland) - Hefei (China) was timed to the visit of the Kazakh president to Finland. The planned volume of traffic on this route is up to 8 container trains per month. Last year the first container train on the route Kouvola - Xian was sent. Thus, there is a growth in traffic on the market of Finland and Scandinavia with China in transit through Kazakhstan. "Last year, more than 30 container trains were sent along the route China-Kazakhstan-Finland. Since the beginning of this year, 46 container trains have been sent on this route. By the end of the year, we expect an increase in cargo traffic. We have great potential for the joint realization of transportation potential between the countries of Asia and Finland," said Kanat Alpybayev, the head of KTZ.

Total S A, Adani group to jointly develop LNG regasification terminals in Odisha, India

French energy giant Total S A and Adani Group will jointly develop liquefied natural gas (LNG) regasification terminals at Dhamra in Odisha and fuel the retail network of 1,500 service stations over 10 years. Both the companies have signed an agreement, but terms of the deal were not disclosed. Total is the world's second largest LNG private player. The partnership has set a target of developing various regasification terminals, including Dhamra LNG, on the east coast of India. Most essentially it would be a big stride towards India's vision of achieving a healthier energy mix through promotion of LNG. Total and Adani will create a joint venture to build a retail network of 1,500 service stations over a period of 10 years, on the main roads of the country, such as highways and intercity connections. The joint venture will strive to take advantage of a market growing at 4 per cent per year driven by the development of road infrastructure and the emergence of middle class. The planned service stations, in line with international standards, will offer Indian customers Total's full line-up of fuels, lubricants, as well as a broad range of other products and services.

Bangladesh's India port external trade ban to continue

Bangladesh will not allow its shippers to use India's Kolkata and Haldia ports to export and import goods to and from western countries, a key Bangladesh shipping official said. Currently, ships are allowed to transport bilateral cargo from Kolkata and Haldia ports, but they cannot carry international cargo, which is banned under a coastal shipping agreement. Both Kolkata and Haldia have ample capacity to handle the volume. Bangladesh Shipping Secretary Abdus Samad told the decision was made with the interests of Bangladesh's Chittagong and Mongla ports in mind; their capacity is rising, given new equipment and the construction of jetties and terminals. "We have to think about our ports first," Samad said. Samad said the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) is constructing several terminals to enhance its capacity. The Bay Terminal alone will have 13 jetties, which will improve cargo handling capability significantly. "We have already invested 3.52 billion taka (\$42 million) to acquire land for the port," Samad said. "Several global port manufacturers have queued up to finance and construct the port." In addition, construction of Patenga Container Terminal (PCT), with a 250,000-TEU annual capacity, is proceeding at full pace.

India, Iran working on rupee-rial facility for Chabahar port to sidestep US sanctions

India is weighing a rupee-rial payment mechanism for the Chabahar project in Iran as it weaves a way around the impending sanctions imposed by the US on the Persian Gulf nation from 4 November, to kickstart the port that is considered critical to the country's geopolitical and trade interests. "We are trying for a rupee-rial payment mechanism for Chabahar port project," Shipping Secretary Gopal Krishna told. "Basically, the guarantees will have to be given in rupees now instead of in dollars or euros," Gopal Krishna added. The issue was discussed with a high-level delegation led by Mohammad Rastad, Deputy Minister and Managing Director for Ports and Maritime Organization, Islamic Republic of Iran, during its visit to India earlier this week. The plan to set up an alternative payment mechanism reveals that India is willing to go ahead with the project even if the diplomatic lobbying for a waiver from the US on Chabahar port project fails to yield results. India's bid to start commercial operations at the port has been held up due to banking challenges arising from the fresh round of sanctions imposed by the US. India has picked Bandar Abbas-based Kaveh Port and Marine Services company to run the port as a stop-gap arrangement for 18 months till a full-fledged manage, operate contractor.

DP World sees key role for once-isolated state in ports plan

The Red Sea state of Eritrea may play a key role in DP World Ltd.'s plans in the Horn of Africa, where a dozen ports could be needed to service the region, Chief Executive Officer Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem said. The Dubai-based state-controlled harbor operator is evaluating its strategy in the region after having its stake in a port in Djibouti -- the main trade route for Ethiopia, Africa's fastest-growing economy -- nationalized by the government. Developing more ports in the Horn, including one it's already building at Berbera in the self-declared republic of Somaliland, will help boost trade flows to Dubai, Bin Sulayem said in an interview. Eritrea's strategic location near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a key shipping lane used by oil tankers and other cargo vessels en route to the Suez Canal, makes it an attractive investment destination for logistics companies. It's also a gateway to other nations in the region, the CEO said. "Eritrea is going to have a major role," Bin Sulayem said. "We believe that the way we should look at the Horn of Africa is not at Eritrea alone, but add to the equation South Sudan, other parts of Sudan, and Eritrea's needs, and then the Ethiopian population." The company has been carrying out assessments throughout the region, Bin Sulayem said.

Tugs boost Middle East container terminal operations

Two tugs have been ordered to support container ships using two expanded terminals in the United Arab Emirates. Abu Dhabi Ports has contracted Damen Shipyards Group to deliver two azimuth stern drive (ASD) tugs to escort and manoeuvre the larger ships expected to use these terminals in the UAE. The ASD 2411 design tugs will be operated by Abu Dhabi Marine Services (Safeen) once they are completed at the Albwardy Damen shipyard in the UAE. This contract was signed by Safeen acting chief marine services officer Adil Ahmed Banihammad and Damen Shipyards regional sales director Pascal Slingerland. The tugs will be delivered to Safeen within the next three months. These 24-m tugs will have bollard pulls of around 70 tonnes, sufficient to manoeuvre the 20,000-TEU container ships expected to be using the terminals in Abu Dhabi from next year. Safeen intends to operate the tugs at container terminals, managed by ADT/MSC and COSCO Shipping Port, in Khalifa Port from 2019 where they will also assist ships full of bauxite cargo berthing at an aluminium smelter in Al Taweelah. They will join 12 other harbour tugs already in service with Safeen, which is responsible for pilotage, mooring, vessel handling and towage at Abu Dhabi Ports.