

UAE introducing classification restriction for vessels from 25 flag states

The UAE is introducing a new classification requirement for vessels from 25 flag states calling or anchoring in its waters from 1 January 2019. A circular from the Federal Transport Authority (FTA) of the UAE said that vessels from 25 flag states calling at UAE ports or anchoring in its waters up to its EEZ would be required to either be classed with an IACS classification society or the UAE classification society Tasneef. The new regulation impacts owners mainly flagged with smaller, open registries and comes into force from 1 January. The London P&I Club said in a circular, "It is reported that the aim of the new regulation is to try to ensure that all tonnage trading in UAE waters is compliant with accepted safety and quality standards." The 25 flag states affected are: Albania, Belize, Cook Islands, North Korea, Sao Tome and Principe, Tonga, Congo, Cambodia, Georgia, Sierra Leone, Equatorial Guinea, Vanuatu, Maldives, Mauritius, Republic of Moldova, Palau, Honduras, Costa Rica, Ghana, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Bolivia, Togo, Tanzania and Comoros.

DP World, SMS Aim to Revolutionize Global Port Logistics

An international joint-venture formed by Dubai-based port and terminal operator DP World and industrial engineering specialists SMS group will revolutionize the way that containers are handled in ports. A new and intelligent storing system will be applied for the first time ever at Jebel Ali Terminal 4, in time for the Dubai Expo 2020 world fair. The High Bay Storage system was originally developed by SMS group subsidiary AMOVA for round the clock handling of metal coils that weigh as much as 50 tons each in racks as high as 50 metres. Instead of stacking containers directly on top of each other, which has been global standard practice for decades, the system places each container in an individual rack compartment. Containers are stored in an eleven-story rack, creating 200 percent more capacity than a conventional container terminal, or creating the same capacity in less than a third of the space. DP World explained that the rack's design allows each container to be accessed without having to move another one, enabling 100 percent utilization in a terminal yard, while at the same time cutting costs by as much as 30 percent.

THE Alliance to deploy over 249 ships in 2019

Members of THE Alliance, Hapag-Lloyd, Ocean Network Express, and Yang Ming have revamped their service network for 2019. THE Alliance revealed that it would deploy a fleet of more than 249 ships connecting 76 ports throughout Asia, North Europe, the Mediterranean, North America, Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, Indian Subcontinent, the Middle East and Red Sea. "The major enhancement of THE Alliance product includes a newly designed pendulum service, to replace Far East Europe 1 service (Fe1), Pacific Southwest 1 service (PS1) and Pacific Southwest 2 service (PS2), and a new Pacific Northwest 4 service (PN4), offering a wider range of direct calls across North America West Coast, Europe and Asia," the container alliance said. "Moving forward, a necessary capacity upgrade to the existing Asia-Europe network and overall optimized port-pair connections will be implemented to accommodate customers' needs of greater reliability and stability in service quality."

Shell Oman to develop bunkering facilities at Port of Duqm

Port of Duqm has reached an agreement with downstream oil marketing firm, Shell Oman Marketing Company, for the development of fuel bunkering facilities and services. Under the deal, the parties would establish a bunkering terminal to provide different grades of quality fuels and lubricants as well as other ancillary facilities to marine liners calling at the Port of Duqm. "This new agreement with Shell Oman underlines the clear ambition of Port of Duqm to become a future bunker hub serving the entire region," Reggy Vermeulen, CEO of Port of Duqm, added. With new global bunker regulations coming into effect as from 2020, Port of Duqm said it plans "to take full advantage of its prime location as well as the availability of the right fuel specs and offer prime bunker services accordingly." Port of Duqm Company SAOC (PDC), a 50:50 joint venture between the Oman Government and Port of Antwerp Consortium, currently has a capacity of 100,000 to 200,000 TEUs, 4 million tonnes of dry bulk, and 1 million tonnes of project, break bulk and heavy lift cargos.

Hamburg port looks forward to Elbe widening in New Year

Next year will see work begin on an important widening and deepening of the 120 km stretch of the River Elbe between the estuary and the boundary of the Port of Hamburg, reports the port authority. Once works are completed, expected by year end, this will allow easier access by ultra large vessels – dubbed AGF class in German – of over 330 m in length and 45 m breadth, it said. A 20 m widening of the fairway between Störbogen and Wedel will create a zone 7 km long and 385 m wide between where AGFs will be able to pass each other, as opposed to being obliged to observe 'one-way traffic' as is currently the case for ships with a combined width of more than 90 m. Deepening of the fairway by around 1 m will also allow such vessels to carry around 1,300 teu more cargo in and out of the port. "Wishing to carry over that positive momentum into the New Year, Port of Hamburg encourages all parties who since 2015 have been successfully running the Hamburg Vessel Coordination Centre, which offers optimised passage planning for vessels calling the port, to continue their coordinated efforts in order to be able to introduce improved access to the port just as soon as it becomes feasible.

24-hour Customs clearance a big step in making Saudi Arabia a logistics hub

If only to exploit its unique location at the mouth of the Red Sea, Saudi Arabia, under a new liberal and progressive regime, is making a concerted effort to be a logistics hub for three continents – Asia, Europe and Africa. This plan forms the fulcrum of Vision 2030, an ambitious programme that seeks to completely transform the economy of the country, and drastically reduce its dependence on crude oil exports. Arguably the most important measure taken by the Saudi authorities to facilitate trade is the promise of a 24-hour Customs clearance for incoming cargo, a process that used to take anything from ten to 14 days, and result in uncertainty and angst for both shippers and consignees. "The two pillars of Saudi Customs have always been security and revenue; we introduced the term 'trade facilitation' two years ago," says Faisal S Albedah, Deputy Governor for Trade Facilitation at Saudi Customs, a government arm that has been revitalised by its youthful governor, Ahmed Alhakbani. "We convinced our people to accept the concept of e-filing of documents for Customs clearance even before the docking of the vessel. We cleared their major doubt: 'How can I clear something I cannot see?' Today, they are proud of what they have been able to achieve in such a short time."

ONE and PSA in joint venture container terminal in Singapore

Ocean Network Express (ONE) is forming a joint venture with PSA in Singapore for a 4m teu capacity container terminal. Singapore-headquartered and Japanese-owned ONE, has formed a joint venture with PSA Singapore for a four mega-container ship berth terminal at Pasir Panjang Terminal. The joint venture terminal is scheduled to begin operations in the first half of next year subject to regulatory approvals. The terminal will have an annual capacity of 4m teu. Jeremy Nixon ceo of ONE said: "Through this joint venture in Singapore, ONE will be enabled to further enhance its terminal and vessel planning operations in an even closer co-operation with PSA. This will improve our service reliability and benefit our customers through better service levels." Ong Kim Pong, regional ceo Southeast Asia for PSA International said: "Recently, PSA has developed many enhanced products including data analytics tools to boost port efficiency and initiatives for cargo solutions to address market needs. We look forward to working alongside with ONE to grow its value, strengthen its position as a major global player, and at the same time, enhance the status of the Port of Singapore as a premier global container and cargo orchestration hub."

2M partners revamp Asia-Europe networks

Targeting improved schedule reliability, A.P. Moller – Maersk has overhauled its services connecting Asia and Europe by cutting eight ports calls in the network. The improvements are expected to result in prolonged, but competitive transit times, the company explained. "To meet our customer's increasing need for reliable cargo delivery, we have reviewed our service network and identified additional time to recover from the potential delays we continue to face from bad weather and other external factors," says Johan Sigsgaard, Head of Europe Trade, A.P. Moller – Maersk. Maersk said that the enhancements build on the Asia-Europe network changes in May 2018 which enabled it to regain "a market leading position on schedule reliability." As disclosed, the changes include a net reduction of eight port calls in the network enabling "extra operational buffer time." Further, six extra vessels are added across the ten service strings in the network, with weekly deployed capacity remaining unchanged due to slower vessel speeds. The integrated logistics company said that reductions were achieved with minimal impact to product offerings. Maersk's 2M Alliance partner Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), said in a separate release that it has also revised its ocean network between Asia and Europe.

Iran sees \$95M worth of investments made in Chabahar port

Three MOU and two investment contracts were recently signed at Iran's Chabahar Shahid Beheshti port, Trend reports via ILNA. The Director General of Ports and Maritime Affairs of Sistan and Baluchestan province in Iran announced that with the signing of these memoranda of understanding and investment contracts, about \$95 million will be invested in the Shahid Beheshti port. "These investment projects are aimed at exploiting the transit status of the region, increasing regional exchanges and realizing the development goals of the eastern axis and the coast of Makran in the field of grain silos construction, exploitation of storage tanks of various types of edible oils and oil products," the Director General of Ports and Maritime Affairs of Sistan and Baluchestan province Behrouz Aghaie said. Referring to the trilateral agreements of Iran, India and Afghanistan, on Chabahar port's development plans he said that these investments were significant to the Chabahar port, and could play an important role in completing road infrastructure in the port in the future. He stated that connecting the Chabahar port to the ring road is one of the priorities of the Ports and Maritime Organization, and the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development must put the Chabahar-Zahedan Freeway on the agenda.

KIZAD develops best-in-class warehousing and logistics ecosystem

Due to its multimodal connectivity and outward-looking vision, the UAE has evolved into the undisputed logistics hub of the region, resulting in steady economic growth. KIZAD, the integrated trade, logistics, industrial free zone of Abu Dhabi, is driving this economic growth by developing an ecosystem with best-in-class connectivity and efficiencies. KIZAD's combination of quality soft and hard infrastructure, together with Khalifa Port, ensures industrial strength and transformation to attract global companies. To date, KIZAD — part of Abu Dhabi Ports — has attracted major logistics players that include Agility Logistics, Al Mazroui International Cargo Company (MICCO), Schmidt Middle East and more recently, the Gulf Agency Company (GAC) and Sri Lanka-based Hayleys Advantis. Our customers operate here to serve the regional and global market, which includes Africa, the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East and CIS. Helping our partners become more efficient continues to be one of our key focus areas. The successful combination of technology, infrastructure and connectivity positions KIZAD as an excellent base for manufacturing, trading and logistics industries across a host of sectors including metals, food processing, polymers, automotive, logistics, construction and more. said CEO of KIZAD.

A new container terminal for Venice

A new multipurpose terminal for handling containers and petroleum products near Venice, Italy, has been designed by the Italian company VGate Srl and submitted to the Italian Environment Ministry for evaluation, writes InforMare. The project outlines a facility 2.3 km offshore the port of Chioggia in the North Adriatic Sea, connected with the land by a bridge. According to VGate, the project seeks to take advantage of the potential of the port location just outside the boundaries of the Venice Lagoon and to provide a logistic solution for the highly congested city. The project implies constructing a platform 2,3 km away from the coast (in front of Isola Verde), where the natural depth is 17m, as well as a breakwater 3,84 km long. Protected by the breakwater, a container terminal will be constructed, that will be linked by the 2.3 km bridge directly to the national road and rail network. The bridge will be used for circulation of cars, trucks as well as trains. The projected container terminal will be able to accommodate simultaneously two vessels of last generation, with the capacity of over 18,000 TEU. The construction is to be realized in three stages with the start expected in 2022. At Phase 1 the facility will be able to handle 500,000 TEU per year.

Sri Lankan freight forwarders see margin pressure from liner consolidation

Consolidation among container shipping lines trying to revive profitability is likely to squeeze profit margins of freight forwarders, especially smaller players, an industry official said. Jagath Pathirana, chief executive, Expolanka Freight (Pvt) Ltd., said big freight forwarders have long term contracts with shipping lines which give them leverage to ensure rates are maintained. "But it will be a challenge for smaller players," he told a forum held by the Asia Securities brokerage where its new study on the logistics sector was presented. "When GRIs (general rate increases) by shipping lines come and when there is a consolidated effort by shipping lines – then it will be a challenge." Pathirana said although shipping lines have been consolidating and trying to contract capacity, cargo volumes were not growing as expected and there was still overcapacity which meant there was a limit to rate hikes. "As freight forwarders, we get into long term contracts and need stability in rates which has been a challenge. Of course, margins have eroded. But we have not seen a challenge in sustaining the business we have," Pathirana said. "You can't shy away from the fact shipping lines will consolidate to bring in scale to minimise costs and regain profits they have been losing," he said.