

Transworld Group launches WhatsApp service for their customers

Transworld Group becomes one of the first companies in the Shipping & logistics industry in India to provide quick and efficient services to their customers on WhatsApp. The features include (1) Real time push notifications of shipment journey and (2) Two way communication - AI enabled Chatbot, where user can interact with bot and get real time details on their mobile. Mr. Ritesh S. Ramakrishnan - Joint Managing Director of Transworld Group, highlights "We are very excited to announce that to serve our customer more efficiently, we have officially launched our WhatsApp for Business services. Transworld in its journey of digital transformation, is constantly looking at enhancing its customers' experiences, and modernize our touchpoints with the customers digitally. We are focusing on a simple and reliable communication channel but at the same time quick, rich conversational customer experiences, which we are offering through WhatsApp and AI based two way communication - Chatbot. This will include an on-demand, real time and personalized customer interaction for notifications related to Booking, Container release, Shipment status right from pickup to delivery, an end to end update on your shipment digitally and at any time."

India, UAE trade to expand on initiatives like e2e: DP World

Global trade leader DP World said that, it has launched initiatives such as end-to-end (e2e) trade solutions, which may boost trade and investment between India and the UAE. India is one of the UAE's largest trade partners with bilateral trade amounting to over USD 60 billion and annual growth topping 11 per cent. "The trade and investment flow between India and the UAE are poised to expand rapidly with the launch of a major initiative by DP World, UAE Region," DP World said in a statement. The statement said the recent launch of the India-UAE Bridge initiatives are set to attract trade and investments for both India and the UAE, as DP World offers technology-driven e2e smarter trade solutions to Indian trade fraternity. It said DP World remains committed to India's vision of "Make in India", and Dubai's ambition to remain the regions top trading hub and India's gateway to global markets. The e2e solutions delivered under the India-UAE Bridge will support investors through value propositions by leveraging assets and capabilities in both countries, it said. The company aims to enhance access to larger consumer markets through Jebel Ali's network connectivity being 150 direct ports of call, more than 80 weekly services and a global portfolio of over 150 operations in over 40 countries across six continents.

Hutchison ports Sohar launches "Green Terminal" campaign

Hutchison Ports Sohar, the container terminal operator within Sohar Port, last week launched a 'Green Terminal' campaign as part of its CSR programme. The first lot of 6.970 tonnes of paper was picked up by the Recycling Services company on the launch day. The first phase of the initiative is aimed at reducing and/or avoiding the generation of non-biodegradable waste in the office premises and reusing the materials. The company has replaced the plastic water bottles with insulated stainless-steel water bottles for 200-plus staff working at the yard under the sun. These bottles keep the water cool for the staff working outside as well as reduce the usage of disposable plastic bottles. The usage of paper and plastic cups, plastic cutlery are stopped as well. Segregation of waste is the most important factor to carry out smooth recycling; non-segregation leads to wastage of valuable resources. Thus, to successfully achieve zero solid waste disposal, Hutchison Ports Sohar will be installing segregated recycling bins all over the terminal yard as well as the office premises, and necessary awareness sessions will be carried out for all the staff. The staff have joined in the efforts towards environmental conservation.

ICTSI Americas wins bid for Libra Terminal Rio

International Container Terminal Services' subsidiary ICTSI Americas has secured the bid to acquire all Libra Terminal Rio (Libra Rio) shares from Boreal Empreendimentos e Participacoes. The companies will work together to confirm a share purchase agreement. Libra Rio holds the concession rights for the operations, management and development of the container facility Terminal de Contêineres 1 (T1Rio) in the port of Rio de Janeiro City in Brazil. The concession of T1Rio started in 1998. This was extended in 2011 and will run until 2048. The operational, development and other responsibilities will be assumed by ICTSI under the current concession contract. After securing all conditions precedent and necessary regulatory approvals, the transfer of the facilities to ICTSI management will happen. Last year, T1Rio recorded approximately 135,000 TEUs passing through the facility and an estimated total capacity of 530,000 TEUs. The terminal has container terminal assets, including five ship-to-shore gantry cranes and a range of yard handling equipment, including more than 16 rubber-tired-gantry cranes. It occupies a land area of 18.8ha and has 715m of quay wall, with a design water depth down to 16m. Furthermore, it is capable of receiving large container vessels of global shipping lines.

Haifa Port builds bridges with neighbouring Arab countries

Haifa Port has launched a new website that combines six microsites, covering the Port's activities in three languages: Hebrew, Arabic and English. Real time information on the cruise sector, tourism and cargo shipping is available on the site. The website covers the port's activities in the Arab countries, neighbouring Israel and Jordan and the progress of the port's Waterfront Plans. To improve local tourism to Israel the Valley Railway project running from the Port of Haifa to the Jordanian border and beyond has gone underway. Eshel Armony, chairman of the Haifa Port is pleased with the new website as it 'expresses the company's strategy for the coming years'. 'The fact that the site is also available in Arabic fits perfectly with our intention to open transport channels eastward to improve our shipping relationship with the Middle East', Armony added. Zohar Rom, port spokesman and manager of communications and the cruise sector spoke of the website development: 'We have learned a lot from technologically leading ports like the Ports of Rotterdam and Hamburg, particularly in all matters concerning development of real time technological tools. We now bring to our customers and the public a sleek website, which is fun to browse and efficient to use – whether on a computer or on a mobile phone.'

Fujairah port says 'flexible approach' needed for IMO 2020

The Middle East marine bunkering hub of Fujairah said a "flexible approach" will be required in the run-up to the International Maritime Organization's new sulfur fuel cap as it allocated four berths to compliant fuels. The port's initial step is dedicating berths 3A, 3B, 3E and 3W to load and discharge compliant fuels — with 0.5% and 0.1% sulfur content, the port's managing director Mousa Murad said in a letter, dated July 11, to all general managers at the port. This means that berth 3 main will not be available for the "majority of the time," he wrote. According to the letter, the changes at the port will happen "in due course". The changes in the IMO rules, effective January 1, 2020, limit sulfur content in marine fuel to 0.5%, compared with 3.5% currently. Barges handling 3.5% fuel oil will be allowed on all other wing berths as is the current practice, Murad said in the letter. "Further changes to the infrastructure and berth configuration may be required as we progress through 2020," Murad wrote. Leading up to IMO2020, there is a "lack of clarity surrounding market fundamentals such as supply, demand, product availability, pricing, etc., which means a flexible approach to the segregation of products is required."

Shipping lines, ports pledge support to blockchain group

Four of the largest shipping lines and five ports operators committed to support a blockchain development platform for the shipping industry. Hong Kong-based CargoSmart said the agreement with CMA CGM, Cosco Shipping Lines (HKEX: 1919), Orient Overseas Container Line (HKEX: 316), Hapag-Lloyd (FSE: HLAG), along with Cosco Shipping Ports, Hutchison Ports, Port of Qingdao, PSA International and Shanghai International Port Group will help establish the Global Shipping Business Network (GSBN). Under the deal, each company said it will work toward obtaining the regulatory, competition and antitrust approvals for establishing the GSBN. Once it is set up, the GSBN participants plan to "work collaboratively to accelerate technology innovation and develop solutions through trusted and secure data exchange platforms." The not-for-profit joint venture will allow shipping and port operators to work together on software and other services that leverages artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and blockchain. GSBN said it "will provide shipment visibility and transparency through a trusted data source." The GSBN efforts to help establish a new blockchain group comes as a number of technology start-ups address the maritime industry.

APM Terminals to streamline cargo operations using MOST platform

APM Terminals Callao has invested in MOST, a customer platform that logs, streamlines and coordinates general cargo operations in the Port of Callao, Peru. Developed in partnership with maritime and customs agents, the application received about \$1m investment and can be used by maritime agents, customs agencies, carriers and others. During the pilot phase, users made transactions 67% faster and operations were completed 12% more quickly using MOST. MOST can be used to register cargo and view real-time information. It can generate authorisations for the loading and unloading of all types of general cargo from any place, as well as allowing for online payments to be made. The platform minimises face-to-face procedures while improving security. Users of the platform will be able to plan equipment and personnel accurately. Furthermore, the terminal can properly allocate yard and quay resources for each shift. MOST also streamlines and simplifies the automatic billing process, which is carried out using information logged in the system. MOST provides a clear graphical interface to monitor operative movements in the port, warehouses and on board vessels while displaying the cargo status.

India mulls giving Bangladesh access to ports on west coast

At a time when Nepal is bracing for a multi-billion dollar bill for rail connectivity to Chinese ports located over 4,000 km away, India is discussing the possibility of giving Bangladesh access to the west coast ports of JNPT or Mundra, which can receive large mother vessels and are located a little over 2,000 km away from Dhaka. The connectivity will come at no extra cost, as a series of India-sponsored rail-link projects are under implementation between India and Bangladesh. And, Dhaka is building a bridge over the Padma river. The proposal, which is in initial stages, is a win-win for both the countries. Bangladesh now ships its exports, mostly garments, by daughter vessels through the congested Chittagong port to Colombo, Singapore or Port of Klang for transshipment to mother vessels. The entire process is time-consuming with cost implications. Bangladesh aspires to have deep-sea ports. However, considering its limited cargo potential, there is a question mark over the viability of such facilities, which involve substantial investments. Also, there is no guarantee that shipping lines will send mother vessels to Bangladesh. India has already offered Bangladesh the right to use Kolkata port (in exchange for Bangladesh granting the North-East region access to Chittagong port).

China retains liner shipping connectivity lead

UNCTAD has released its liner shipping connectivity index (LSCI) for 2019, showing China retains its lead as the country best connected to others by sea, the index shows. The country's LSCI has increased by 51 percent since 2006. Five of the top 10 best connected economies in 2019 are in Asia, with Singapore, Korea, Hong Kong and Malaysia rounding out the top-five list, each with a score of more than 100, according to the index's metrics. At the other end of the table, small islands developing states have hardly seen any improvement, and trade in shipped goods remains problematic in those countries, with knock-on economic effects. The LSCI covers 178 countries and shows maritime connectivity trends from 2006 to 2019. It is calculated from data on the world's container ship deployment and released annually. The index's components include: the number of companies that provide shipping services, the number of services, the number of ships that call per month, the total deployed container-carrying capacity and the size of the largest vessel. This year UNCTAD has expanded the time series in collaboration with MDS Transmodal to cover more countries. The 2019 index also includes a new component covering countries that can be reached without the need for transshipment.

New China-Europe intermodal route opened

Marking the opening of a new China-Europe freight train route a freight train left Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, heading for Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan. According to a report in Xinhua, the train consists of 42 containers loaded with laptops, LED panels, green tea and other products manufactured in Hunan province. With this service, Zhuzhou has become the third city in Hunan Province to open international freight train route to Europe after Changsha and Huaihua. The train will leave China through the Horgos Pass in Xinjiang and pass Kazakhstan before reaching its destination. The whole trip will take seven days, compared to the previous 10 days when there was no direct freight train from Xi'an to Bishkek, said Yuan Xiaojun, general manager of Xi'an Free Trade Port Construction and Operation Co., Ltd. The new freight route will serve as a fast and efficient logistics corridor between China and Kyrgyzstan and will bring new opportunities for the two countries in various fields such as trade, culture and scientific and technological exchanges, said Sun Yimin, director of the administrative committee of Xi'an International Trade and Logistics Park.

India government to increase the use of Inland Waterways and Coastal Shipping for greater cargo shipment

The government of India has informed that 111 waterways are being developed in phased manner as National Waterways (NWs) in the country for the purpose of shipping and navigation. The Minister of State for Shipping Mansukh Mandaviya that various initiatives have been taken by the Government to increase the use of Inland Waterways and Coastal Shipping for greater cargo shipment. These include providing assured depth of water in the channels, navigation aids like GPS and River Information System, terminals at regular intervals, facilities for mechanized handling of cargo handling etc. The Minister also informed that cargo transportation on waterways rose to 72.31 Million Tonnes in the year 2018-19, from 55.20 MT in 2016-17 and 55.03 MT in 2017-18. According to government agencies, National Waterways are the cheapest mode of transporting goods as compared to other ways of freight transportation. A minimum 40 % discount and priority in berthing is being given to coastal vessels at major ports. Ministry of Fertilizers and Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade have respectively agreed to provide subsidy for transportation of fertilizers and for transportation of raw materials and finished goods for new industrial units in North Eastern Region through IWT.