

Global Container Terminals joins IBM-Maersk blockchain group

Global Container Terminals Inc. (GCT) said it will take part in the TradeLens blockchain platform developed by Maersk and IBM. GCT, which operates two marine terminals on the U.S. East Coast and two on Canada's west coast, said TradeLens will be rolled out "in phases" at all four of GCT's terminals. TradeLens uses a blockchain-based distributed ledger to record transactions and events along a supply chain, allowing participants a single shared view of a transaction. TradeLens has said the platform allows shippers, ocean carriers, freight forwarders, port and terminal operators, inland transportation and customs authorities to interact more efficiently through real-time access to shipping data and shipping documents. TradeLens will facilitate "seamless data sharing, collaboration and improved trade flows" with ocean carriers, beneficial cargo owners and railways, GCT said in a statement, adding that 10 of its ocean carrier customers have committed to using the TradeLens platform. GCT Chief Executive Doron Grosman said the company has looked at some of the other maritime blockchain initiatives that are taking shape. But given the number of major ocean carriers that have already signed on to TradeLens, "it's natural for us to be aligned with our customers. TradeLens is an early stage platform, and we may join other platforms. But this is an important first step."

Hambantota International Port partners with NYK Japan

The Hambantota International Port Group (HIPG) has entered into a Terminal Service Agreement (TSA) with Japanese Shipping Conglomerate NYK, the first RoRo specific TSA entered into by the shipping line with a Sri Lankan Port. Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK), whose 130-year history runs parallel to that of its maritime nation, is Japan's largest shipping company and world's no 1 RoRo fleet operator. Under the TSA, NYK will bring RORO, machinery and equipment cargo to the Hambantota International Port (HIP), for transshipment to the various parts of the world. It is significant that NYK entered into the TSA with HIPG, after a hiatus of 4 years during which they did not bring any transshipment cargo to Sri Lanka. The upgraded services at HIP including the latest in equipment, increase in productivity and zero accident policy, combined with the benefits and concessions offered by the port encouraged NYK to enter into the agreement and renew their operations with Sri Lanka. The TSA will be instrumental in increasing volumes of transshipment cargo to the Hambantota Port, from Japan and Thailand with the possibility of India joining the equation in the future. Tissa Wickramasinghe, COO of HIPG says that the TSA with NYK is a considerable boost to the port and proof of its international status.

Samskip to connect Portugal and the UK direct

Samskip has launched a new, direct weekly service connecting Portugal and the UK, introducing its own vessel to sustain links between Tilbury, Lisbon and Leixões and its multimodal hub port of Rotterdam. The Netherlands-based group introduced a 1,000TEU container ship on charter from November 1. It will sustain a UK-Portugal transit times of five days, while continuing to offer four-times weekly services from Rotterdam to Leixões and weekly to Lisbon via space booked with other carriers. The upgrade will allow Samskip to grow its Portugal-UK volumes by 30-40%, according to Lisa Westerhuis, Samskip Trade Manager Iberia. "We have been building our multimodal presence in Portugal for over a decade through shortsea, rail and last mile road services," said Westerhuis. "Now, Samskip is responding to growing UK-Portugal demand with its own ship: when new capacity is required, we seek solutions where reliability and efficiency is in our own hands." Luis Paz da Silva, International Commercial Managing Director of Noatum Maritime Services, Samskip's agency in Portugal, said 45ft length containers were proving key in persuading Portuguese importers and exporters to switch away from road haulage.

Japan to send its own forces to protect Middle East shipping

Japan will send its own ships and planes to protect its merchant vessels in the Arabian Gulf, an official said on Friday, rejecting calls to join a US coalition formed to safeguard shipping in the region. "We won't join the United States, but will co-operate closely with them," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a news briefing. "Self Defence Force assets will ensure the safety of vessels related to Japan." Military assets Japan sends to the Middle East are likely to include warships and aircraft that will patrol the Gulf of Oman, the Northern Arabian Sea and other waters in the area, the Japanese government's chief spokesman said. The US efforts to set up the security coalition followed increasing tensions with Iran over its sanctions on Tehran's oil exports and a series of unclaimed attacks on ships in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman – waterways used by oil tankers supplying much of the world's oil. The US has blamed Iran for the attacks. Several countries including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Britain and Australia have joined the US coalition, known as the International Maritime Security Construct. Its members have committed troops, planes and ships to accompany and track vessels passing through the Gulf.

Terminal operator GCT signs on to TradeLens

Global Container Terminals (GCT) will deploy the IBM-Maersk TradeLens platform at its four North American terminals. GCT operates four strategically located, big ship ready terminals on the west and east coast of North America. A leader in technologically advanced terminal operations, no company is more prepared to keep pace with the changing needs of global supply chains than GCT. In the Port of Vancouver, GCT Canada is the heart of the Asia-Pacific Gateway. GCT Deltaport is Canada's largest marine terminal, providing the most efficient ship-to-rail discharge facility worldwide, and GCT Vanterm is among the most productive terminals on the continent. In the Port of New York and New Jersey, GCT USA boasts the fastest truck processing and vessel productivity in the harbor. GCT New York is a full service facility offering near-dock CES operations, on-terminal warehousing, and unique customer solutions. GCT Bayonne pioneered truck appointments on the East Coast using the latest technology, providing consistent and reliable turn-times. Both USA terminals offer first and last port-of-call intermodal advantage with their on-dock rail facilities. By joining TradeLens, GCT is ready to securely connect with supply chain partners including ocean carriers, beneficial cargo owners, and railways.

APM to double intermodal volumes at Gothenburg

APM Terminals Gothenburg plans to double the volume of containers transported by rail to and from Gothenburg by 2022. APM Terminals Gothenburg is connected to more than 300 inland destinations in Sweden via rail. With more than 60 rail shuttles per week, Gothenburg has an unprecedented rail coverage in Sweden. Insjön in Dalarna, some 460 kilometers from Gothenburg, showcases how rail can offer the best transport solution. Six weekly shuttles by Vänerepressen, connect the center of Dalarna with the biggest container shipping network in Scandinavia via APM Terminals Gothenburg. With a short lead time of only 8 hours, cargo is loaded onto rail during the day in Insjön, and is off-loaded late in the evening in Gothenburg. Lead times are greatly superior to trucking, but as many customers in the area highlight, it is also the impact on the environment that makes this solution so attractive. From a cost perspective, it also offers significant cost savings. The solution offered via The Gothenburg Gateway is so competitive that plans to expand the rail terminal in Insjön are underway. More space is needed to cope with the demand from more cargo and customers connecting to Gothenburg, an initiative that is strongly supported by APM Terminals.

Panama Canal posts 6.2% increase to hit record tonnage in FY 2019

Panama Canal ended the 2019 fiscal year (FY19) with a record tonnage of 469m Panama Canal tonnes (PC/UMS), a 6.2% increase compared to FY2018. The volume exceeded the 450.7m PC/UMS tonnes projected for FY2019, as well as the record tonnage of 442m PC/UMS tonnes registered in the previous fiscal year. During FY19, transits for the liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) segments rose by 37.6% and 6.9% respectively, representing the largest gain across all segments. Additional segments with significant transit increases included crude product tankers with a 5.6% increase and vehicle carrier/ro-ro with a 5.5% increase, compared to 2018. In terms of tonnage, the container segment continued to dominate with 164.87m PC/UMS tonnes during FY 2019, of which 126.2m PC/UMS tonnes transited through the neo-panamax Locks. Leading segments also include bulk carriers at 76.5m PC/UMS tonnes, vehicle carrier ro-ro at 53.1m PC/UMS tonnes, chemical tankers at 44.3m PC/UMS tonnes, LNG vessels at 43m PC/UMS tonnes, LPG vessels at 37.8m PC/UMS tonnes, crude product tankers at 22.6m PC/UMS tonnes and passenger's vessels at 9.9m PC/UMS tonnes.

MSC joins major lines in rejecting the use of Arctic routes

Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) has joined two other major lines, CMA CGM and Hapag Lloyd, in saying no to the use of the Arctic route as a new short cut between northern Europe and Asia. Labelled the Northern Sea Route (NSR), the passage lies entirely in Arctic waters and has been trialed by other shipping lines seeking to take advantage of melting ice from global warming. MSC said it is convinced that the 21 million containers moved each year for its customers can be transported around the world without passing through this Arctic corridor. The company affirmed that it will not explore or use the NSR between Europe and Asia for container shipping. "As a responsible company with a longstanding nautical heritage and passion for the sea, MSC finds the disappearance of Arctic ice to be profoundly disturbing. Every drop in the oceans is precious and our industry should focus its efforts on limiting environmental emissions and protecting the marine environment across existing trade routes," said Diego Aponte, president and ceo of MSC Group. A surge in container shipping traffic in the Arctic could damage air quality and endanger the biodiversity of untouched marine habitats – a risk MSC said it is not willing to take.

India to develop 204 minor ports

The government of India will put in place a comprehensive plan to develop 204 minor ports in the country in the next six months to boost coastal shipping and inland waterways, Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said. These minor ports will be developed so that it can support 12 major ports in India. Small cargo will reach to major port from minor ports and boost EXIM cargo, the minister said. All these ports have been centers of maritime activity in the past, and if revived, they can once again become important centers of sea trade. Mandaviya said that the Government is looking at developing synergy between the Major and Minor ports so that together they can bring port led development in the country. Mandaviya said that a development plan for ports and National Port Grid will be ready within six months. Extensive study will be done for revival of each port, identifying the specific cargo linked to it and the downstream industry. Indian government will share the study findings with the states so that the non-functional minor ports can be developed and made functional. The Minister called for greater cooperation between the center and the states to develop the maritime sector.

Rotterdam port strengthens presence in India

The Port of Rotterdam Authority is intensifying its joint activities with parties in India. 'As one of the fastest growing economies in the world, India is investing heavily in the development of seaports, industrial areas and hinterland connections. The largest port in Europe will sign two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with India, appointed an office and also supported the establishment of a maritime university that will partner with Rotterdam's institutions, marking the port's joint initiatives with Indian parties. It has appointed Broekman Logistics India as its representative team in the country, as the port looks to strengthen its activities in the region. The Port of Rotterdam Authority has been active in India for a number of years, and its activities include consultancy assignments and attracting cargo. "As one of the fastest growing economies in the world, India is investing heavily in the development of seaports, industrial areas and hinterland connections. That makes India an interesting partner in the field of trade, maritime industry and education but also in the field of digital developments and innovations," is the analysis from Rene van der Plas, the head of Port of Rotterdam International.

"K" LINE, MOL, & NYK Share Data with ONE through the Common Data Platform "IoS-OP"

Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, Ltd. ("K" LINE), Mitsui O.S.K Lines, Ltd. (MOL), and Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha (NYK) have begun sharing of operational data acquired from the monitoring system installed in their container ships with their charter, Ocean Network Express Pte. Ltd. (ONE), through the IoS-Open Platform (IoS-OP) promoted by Ship Data Center Ltd. (ShipDC). As "K" LINE, MOL, and NYK have managed the data by different frameworks, ONE needed to carry out data conversion. With the IoS-OP's automatic conversion function to the standard names in line with ISO19848, which is provided by ShipDC, data conversion burden is mitigated resulting in simplifying analysis and management of integrated operational data of ONE's fleet. ONE aims to use this data to improve the accuracy of performance evaluations of individual vessel and machinery, and to achieve safer and more efficient vessel operations. This data sharing will significantly increase the volume of ship operational data distributed through IoS-OP, and further contribute to acceleration of data collection, distribution, and utilization through IoS-OP within the maritime industry.

Hong Kong-based company to invest in Pakistan's Karachi port to boost trade

Hong Kong-based port operator Hutchison Port Holdings has committed investment of 240 million U.S. dollars for the development of Pakistan's Karachi port, the Prime Minister Office said recently. The investment will make available a significant amount of new container terminal capacity at the Karachi port, and increase the port operator's total investment in Pakistan to 1 billion U.S. dollars and employees to 3,000, the office said in a statement. Group Managing Director Eric Ip, who led a delegation of Hutchison Port Holdings, apprised Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan about the fresh investment in a meeting. During the meeting, the prime minister was also briefed about the group's commitment to play its role in facilitating the economic growth of Pakistan, as well as supporting the development of Karachi port into a major hub for trade in Asia. Welcoming the investment into Pakistan, Khan reiterated the commitment and focus of his government to facilitate investment and ease-of-doing-business that would ultimately result in economic growth of the country. Ambassador at Large for Foreign Investment Siddiqui said the investment would support the country's export competitiveness and also result in greater revenue for both the federal exchequer and the Karachi Port Trust.