

### Dubai Maritime City Authority and DNV GL to invest in new maritime R&D

United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Dubai Maritime City Authority (DMCA) has signed a deal with Norway's DNV GL to collaborate on various maritime innovation initiatives to help make Dubai a well-equipped maritime gateway in the world. Under the collaboration, both the entities will invest in several research and development (R&D) programmes to help develop new maritime technologies. Besides, the companies will share their knowledge and experiences on the latest shipping technology, as well as developments in environmental, safety and quality concerns.

### Slow and steady growth outlook forecast for GCC in 2017

Economic growth across the GCC is expected to remain subdued but steady in 2017, according to a report by Emirates NBD's Economic research team. "Looking ahead to next year, we forecast average growth of 2.8 per cent in the GCC," said Khatija Haque, Head of MENA Research at Emirates NBD. The UAE GDP growth is expected to accelerate to 3.4 per cent next year from an estimated 3 per cent in 2016. Within the UAE, Dubai is expected to grow at a slightly faster rate than Abu Dhabi, given its infrastructure investment programme ahead of Expo 2020. Economic growth in Saudi Arabia is forecast to pick up slightly next year, but likely to remain relatively modest overall at 1.8 per cent. Qatar's growth rate is expected to be the fastest in the GCC next year at over 5 per cent.

### Container Corporation of India cuts rates on Ludhiana to Mundra/Pipavav routes

India's state-owned rail hauler Concor has cut rates for movement of containers from its Ludhiana inland container depot to Mundra and Pipavav ports, continuing its drive to wean away containers from road to rail. Hauling charges have been reduced to Rs. 37,500 (roughly \$550) for a 40-foot container weighing up to 20 metric tonnes (22 tons), from Rs. 42,500 previously on the Ludhiana ICD to Mundra section, Concor said in a notice to customers. For 40-foot boxes weighing more than 20 metric tons, the rate is now Rs. 49,000, compared with Rs. 52,500 before. On the Ludhiana to Pipavav route, the hauling rates have been revised downward to Rs. 40,000 (about \$590) for a 40-foot container weighing up to 20 metric tonnes from the earlier rate of Rs. 45,000, Concor said. For 40-foot containers weighing more than 20 metric tons, the new rate is Rs. 52,000, down from Rs. 55,500 previously.

### Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust steps up automation plans

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, which load more than half of India's containers passing through its ports, is stepping up its automation plans to standardize cargo procedures to ensure ease of doing business for customers and raise productivity levels. Last week, JNPT issued a customer advisory urging port users to stop individual systems for issuing of delivery orders and instead migrate to a common electronic application, named e-DO, to facilitate trade by eliminating manual interfaces. "All customs house agents are requested to ensure that the e-DO generated by the web-based application be used for all the three terminals and common procedures be adopted for convenience to the trade", JNPT said.

### Indian cabinet clears new merchant shipping bill

The Indian cabinet led by Narendra Modi has cleared a new Merchant Shipping bill that seeks to boost Indian tonnage and develop coastal shipping by allowing substantially-owned vessels and vessels on Bare Boat-Charter-Cum-Demise (BBCD) chartered by Indian entities to be registered as Indian flag vessels. The new Act when ratified by Parliament will include Indian controlled tonnage as a separate category besides dispensing with the requirement for issuing of licences to Indian flag vessels for coastal operation and for port clearance by the Customs authorities. It will also incorporate separate rules for coastal vessels to develop and promote coastal shipping. The new Act will have welfare measures for Indian seafarers hired by foreign carriers and held hostage by pirates. The new rules require foreign carriers or their recruitment agencies to deposit a bank guarantee of up to Rs 20 lakh with the Director General of Shipping for every seafarer they hire. The Director General will have the right to invoke this bank guarantee in case the ship is hijacked and the money will be used to secure the release and return of the Indian farer or pay wages till they are released from captivity.

### DMICDC logistics data bank service to be extended to other ports

Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (DMICDC) has commenced its logistic data bank service at the fourth terminal of the Jawaharlal Nehru Port and also plans to expand the facility to other ports in the country. "DMICDC's LDB service for tracking of container movement, which began operations at three terminals at JNPT, has been extended to a fourth terminal, with discussions now under way to expand the pioneering service to other ports in the country," DMICDC said in a statement. LDB, a system for real-time tracking of EXIM containers using RFID technology as they move across the western corridor of the country, was introduced in June at the JNPT, NSICT and GTI terminals of the port where it has collectively tagged and de-tagged over 1.2 million containers so far.

### Hyundai Merchant Marine not to join 2M alliance

South Korea's shipping firm Hyundai Merchant Marine (HMM) will not join the world's largest alliance 2M, the parties have confirmed adding that they have now decided "to look at other cooperation possibilities." Since July 2016, the alliance, comprising shipping giants Maersk Line and Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), have been in discussions with the Korean container carrier on HMM joining the 2M vessel sharing agreement (2M VSA). The parties are now looking at the possibility of HMM partnering with the 2M network through a slot exchange agreement. Hyundai Merchant Marine was looking to join the 2M alliance after their membership in the G6 alliance expires in 2017.

### Qatar Port Management Co shifting operations to Hamad port

Qatar Port Management Company is set to shift all container terminal operations from the Port of Doha to the new Port of Hamad. The Port of Hamad is expected to commence vessel operations, discharging and loading activities from December 1, 2016. The Container Terminal 1 at the Port of Hamad has been opened for export containers from November 23, 2016, and operations will run for 24 hours daily. The Port of Doha is expected to cease acceptance of all vessel discharge and loading operations on November 30, 2016. Located south of Doha, the Port of Hamad is part of the QAR 27 Billion New Port Project which also includes a new base for the Qatar Emiri Naval Forces and the Qatar Economic Zone 3, spanning a 26.5 square kilometer area.

### Pakistan allows Russia use of Gwadar Port under CPEC

Pakistan on Saturday decided to accord approval to a Russian request for using the Gwadar Port for its exports as Moscow has also showed its willingness to be part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Following Iran and Turkmenistan, Russia has decided to use the Gwadar Port for trade to have an access to warm waters, a top official privy to the development told Geo News. Russia also wants to join the CPEC to reap maximum dividends. In addition, Russia aspires to develop strategic defence ties with Pakistan, Geo News reported. Islamabad has moved forward with a green signal allowing Russia to use the Gwadar Port for trade. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said that many countries wanted to join CPEC as half of the world would benefit from the project.

### India to get six new mega ports under Ministry of Shipping's Sagarmala project

At least six new mega ports have been cleared to be built under the ambitious Sagarmala Project, taken up by the Ministry of Shipping. The National Perspective Plan (NPP) for the much talked about project envisions these new infrastructural facilities as part of its multi-pronged strategy to enhance India's cargo handling capacity. The Ministry of Shipping's project, that aims to modernise India's ports, is estimated to save up to Rs 40,000 crore per year spent on logistics by key industries. According to the NPP, the greenfield ports are likely to come up at Sagar in West Bengal, Paradip Outer Harbour in Odisha, Enayam in Tamil Nadu and Vadhavan in Maharashtra. As part of the Sagarmala Project, detailed masterplans are being developed for all the new major ports.

### Super-Wide Rail Cars Could Boost Port Transfers

The majority of maritime ports worldwide offer the option of intermodal transfer of containers between maritime and railway transportation, and at some ports, the port railway may serve as the means by which to undertake ship-to-ship transfers of containers. Railway technology, including parallel railway tracks, offers the possibility of developing super-wide railway cars that can carry large numbers of containers between ships at a transshipment terminal. One option could involve railway cars capable of carrying up to three levels of 40-foot containers placed three abreast and two lengthwise (6 x 3 = 18 containers).