

### Saudi Arabia Becomes 55th State to Ratify BWM Treaty

Saudi Arabia has ratified the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention, which is scheduled to enter into force on September 8, 2017. Saudi Arabia deposited its instrument of accession with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) on April 27. The accession brings the number of contracting parties to the convention to 55, representing 53.67% of world's merchant shipping tonnage. Adopted in 2004, the treaty aims to counter the threat to marine ecosystems by potentially invasive species transported in ships' ballast water. Under the convention's terms, ships will be required to manage their ballast water to remove, render harmless, or avoid the uptake or discharge of aquatic organisms and pathogens within ballast water and sediments.

### Oman Post partners with Fetchr for customer delivery solutions

Fetchr, a delivery-business and customer technology application using its patented mobile technology solutions, is partnering with Oman Post to deliver the technology-backed delivery solutions. Fetchr is currently operational in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain, with plans to expand its footprint in Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region and beyond, said a press release. "Fetchr has demonstrated impressive growth since our initial investment in 2015," said Scott Sandell, managing general partner at NEA and Fetchr board member. "They are revolutionising global e-commerce by enabling delivery access via mobile (in contrast to the traditional requirement of a physical address)." Fetchr's innovative and technological edge in an antiquated industry comes at a time when e-commerce is growing in the Mena region and there has been a lot of focus on the delivery industry to enable the growth of ecommerce.

### Saqr Port Invests in Its Future

Saqr Port Authority, which manages the largest bulk-handling port in the Middle East, has signed a deal with German machinery manufacturer Liebherr Maritime for two LHM 800 mobile harbour cranes. The deal has been struck in support of Saqr Port Authority's plans to establish new berths which will significantly increase the capacity of Saqr Port. The additional capacity is required as demand for import / export movements through the Port has steadily grown in recent years. Captain Cliff Brand, RAK Ports general manager, commented, "The new mobile harbour cranes will help Saqr Port further improve our bulk handling efficiency and contribute to the expansion of our service portfolio to include Capesize class vessels, which is very important for the future strategy and development of our port." RAK Ports in total handles in excess of 60 million tonnes of cargo annually, the majority of which is moved through Saqr Port.

### US welcomes largest cargo ship to ever visit ports

The largest cargo ship ever to visit ports on the US East Coast arrived earlier this month at the Port of Savanna. The COSCO Development is so long the Statue of Liberty and Washington Monument could fit end-to-end along its deck and still leave room for Big Ben. The giant ship cruised past dozens of onlookers who cheered and took photos from the riverfront. Its first East Coast voyage marks a new era for US ports. Many ports will struggle to accommodate the supersized ships without major infrastructure improvements. At 366m bow-to-stern, the COSCO Development is longer than the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford. It can carry 13,000 cargo containers measuring 20 feet long. That's 30 percent more capacity than the last record-breaking ship that sailed into Savannah last summer. The big ship, flagged out of Hong Kong and owned by China-based COSCO Shipping Lines, is also the largest to pass through the Panama Canal following a major expansion last year.

### Port of Fujairah plans LNG ship-to-ship transfers, new infrastructure

The Port of Fujairah is gearing up for its next phase of growth, as it seeks to retain its position as the world's second-largest bunkering port by strengthening infrastructure and introducing LNG ship-to-ship transfers, trading and operations, Port of Fujairah General Manager Mousa Murad told. "We are working on regulations, safety procedures and towage for this [LNG ship-to-ship transfer] operation," he said in an e-mail on Thursday. "As far as energy to the country is concerned, we will liaise with Emirates LNG ... second option is that we will liaise with private players for LNG trading and bunkering activities," said Murad, without elaborating further. His comments come at a time when LNG is becoming a key alternative for shippers to comply with the 2020 global sulfur cap. Most LNG variants have no detectable sulfur, and emission of particles and nitrogen oxide by LNG-fueled vessels are considerably lower than that of vessels using other marine fuels.

### Busan Port Authority plans to build new integrated data centre

South Korea's Busan Port Authority (BPA) is planning to build an integrated data centre aimed at making the port become more competitive with the use of logistics data analysis, reports said. The proposed new integrated data centre is planned to be able to systematically accumulate and analyse information while study latest trends among shipping companies, thereby generating container traffic information and identifying areas to raise productivity, the local media cited BPA as announcing. BPA is expected to commence construction of the data centre later this year, with the first phase of development due for completion by August, and the last two phases scheduled to be completed by 2019. The first phase of work will allow Busan port officials to identify any change or shift in exports and imports in the shipping market, while keeping an eye on the quantity of goods transported in South Korea.

### Northport signs cooperation deal with Sime Darby Weifang unit

Malaysia's north port is set to boost its connections in China after signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the China unit of fellow Malaysian conglomerate Sime Darby's Weifang Sime Darby Port to develop a sister port relationship, local media reported. The agreement will see both ports cooperate in port management and help in bilateral halal trade shipments. Weifang and Northport will share experience, capabilities and resources in the fields of port management and related activities and will also carry out joint commercial and promotional activities. Sime Darby president and group CEO Mohd Bakke Salleh, said the partnership has great potential to capture a slice of the fast-growing halal market. "Halal is big business and this partnership aims to capture a market that is growing by 10% annually. "Weifang Port is strategically located in the prime region of the Bohai Sea economic belt, offering a major access into China's hinterland," he said.

### China Sparks World Container Traffic Boom

Preliminary data from Drewry's Container Trades Statistics (CTS) indicates that world container traffic surged by 10% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2017, fuelled mainly by spikes in imports and exports from China. The CTS numbers point to intra-regional trade as the primary driver of growth with volumes up by 17%, versus 7% for deep-sea traffic. Nearly half of the extra 2.6 million TEU volumes handled in the first three months of 2017 came from trade with its neighboring Intra-Asia partners, while domestic cabotage and trade with North America each contributed another two-tenths of the additional volumes. The CTS data also confirms the large tilt towards Chinese imports, with traffic from Drewry's sample of trading regions increasing by staggering 28%. Exports to the same regions increased by 11%. While the rebound in container volumes appears to be broad-based it is clear from its well above-average growth that China is very much at the epicenter, Drewry said.

### Iran, India stress implementation of Chabahar agreement

In a consultative-political session in Tehran, Iran and India called for implementation of cooperation in energy, trade and development of Chabahar port infrastructure. The session was headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on the Indian side, and Deputy FM for Asia and Oceania Affairs, Ebrahim Rahimpour on the Iranian side. Representatives from ministries of energy and natural resources, economy, industries, commerce and ports organization were present at the meeting, where the sides voiced firm resolve to double efforts for increasing trade transactions and implementing the Chabahar trilateral agreement that was signed with the Afghan side in Tehran last May. The deal aims at developing infrastructures of Chabahar port city in far south east of the country in Makran coasts. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had hailed the agreement as a transformative element in the region in terms of economy and trade routes, setting new trends and eliminating huge barriers to regional trade.

### Hapag Lloyd-UASC tie-up nearing completion

Hapag Lloyd is close to completing a merger with United Arab Shipping Company (UASC) after UASC's shareholders agreed terms to repay outstanding debts, sources familiar with the talks told *Reuters*. The deal to create the world's fifth-biggest shipping company, valued at about seven billion euros to eight billion euros (\$7.8-\$8.9 billion), had been scheduled to complete at the end of last year. It would give Hapag Lloyd access to bigger ships on the major Asia-to-Europe trade route. The Hamburg, Germany-based company reported deepening losses in the first quarter as fuel costs grew and freight rates fell. But Hapag Lloyd and Gulf-based banks involved in the talks demanded that UASC shareholders stump up more funds to help the combined company through an unprecedented downturn in the container shipping industry, according to people familiar with the talks. In March that some of the syndicate banks and Hapag Lloyd also wanted a commitment that UASC's top shareholder Qatar would remain committed to the deal in the long term and not lower its stake in the combined group.

### OOCL Hong Kong takes the world's largest containership crown

The record for the world's largest containership has fallen for the third time in just two months with Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL) smashing the 21,000 teu barrier. The 21,413 teu OOCL Hong Kong was named last Friday at Samsung Heavy Industries (SHI). The OOCL Hong Kong is the first ship to surpass the 21,000 teu barrier with the 20,000 teu level only broken two months earlier. In mid-March Mitsui OSK Lines named the 20,150 teu MOL Triumph, but was knocked from the top slot as the world's largest containership within weeks by Maersk Line's 20,568 teu Madrid Maersk. "This is a very exciting time for all of us because today marks the first time that OOCL is receiving new buildings in the 21,000 teu size. In fact, the OOCL Hong Kong will be a titan among containerships at sea, with a carrying capacity at 21,413 teu. An important milestone for us at OOCL indeed," said. The OOCL Hong Kong is the first in a series of six 21,413 teu vessels ordered by the Hong Kong container line.