

Kandla port to soon be linked with Iran's Chabahar: Narendra Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday said the Kandla port in Gujarat will soon be connected with Iran's Chabahar port, which will give a boost to India's international trade and place the Indian port firmly on the global map. Modi said this on the first of a two-day visit to Gujarat at Kandla in Kutch district where he laid the foundation stone for a dozen projects worth Rs 993 crore. India Ports Global Pvt. Ltd (IPGPL), a joint venture between Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) and Kandla Port Trust (KPT) for development of ports overseas will develop and operate the Chabahar port. IPGPL is in the process of setting up two container berths and three multi-cargo berths. Chabahar port, located in the Sistan-Baluchistan Province on Iran's southern coast is of strategic utility for India. It lies outside the Persian Gulf and is easily accessed from India's western coast. It is located on the Gulf of Oman, near Iran's border with Pakistan.

Pacific Radiance in jv with Allianz Offshore Middle East

Singapore-based OSV owner Pacific Radiance has formed a joint venture with Allianz Offshore Middle East (AOME). Pacific Radiance will hold a 51% stake in the joint venture, Allianz Radiance Pte Ltd (ARPL), and AOME 49%, which will target business in the Middle East. "ARPL shall be principally engaged in owning, managing, chartering and leasing offshore support vessels particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council and Egypt offshore oil and gas segment," Pacific Radiance. Given the highly depressed state of Southeast Asian offshore marine markets Singapore OSVs owners have been targeting the Middle East market which remains relatively buoyant in terms of utilisation levels if not day rates.

DP World in talks to acquire stake in Russian ports operator

Summa Group, the holding company of Russian billionaire Ziyavudin Magomedov, is in talks to sell a stake in transport operator Fesco to a consortium headed by DP World, Dubai's ports company, and the state-run Russian Direct Investment Fund. The consortium is in talks to pay several hundred million dollars to acquire a minority stake in Fesco, which could come with special corporate governance rights that would allow control of the business, two of the people said. Fesco is Russia's largest ports and rail transport operator. Mr Magomedov, Summa's chairman, owns about a third of the company through Summa alongside other investors, but plans to issue new shares to the consortium that would dilute existing shareholders. Fesco operates a fleet of vessels, manages the port in Vladivostok and the terminal Dalrefrans, and runs shipping on the Trans-Siberian railway.

New port boosts Djibouti's dream of becoming 'new Dubai'

East Africa's smallest country Djibouti took a step towards realising its dream of becoming a continental maritime cargo hub with the inauguration of its newest and largest port on Wednesday. The \$590 million facility is part of an infrastructure blitz by the country, sandwiched between Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, that includes three other ports and a railroad to the capital of landlocked Ethiopia. The Doraleh Multipurpose Port (DMP) can handle thousands of automobiles and millions of tonnes of bulk commodities every year, according to a statement from the Djibouti Ports and Free Zones Authority (DPFZA). "With this new world-class infrastructure, Djibouti confirms its position as a major trading hub for the continent," said Aboubaker Omar Hadi, chairman of the DPFZA, which split the cost of the port with Hong Kong-based China Merchant Holding.

To counter China's OBOR, US revives two infrastructure projects in Asia

The US has revived two major infrastructure projects in South and Southeast Asia in which India will be a vital player. The move could potentially act as a counter to China's ambitious One Belt and One Road initiative. The Trump administration has resuscitated the 'New Silk Road' initiative, first announced by then secretary of state Hillary Clinton in July 2011 in a speech in Chennai and the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor linking South and Southeast Asia. A brief outline of the two projects was made available in the administration's maiden annual budget on Tuesday (May 25), which indicated that the 'New Silk Road' project would be a public-private initiative in which India would be an important player. The state department said the budgetary request of its South and Central Asia will support the two initiatives: the New Silk Road (NSR) focused on Afghanistan and its neighbours, and the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor linking South Asia with Southeast Asia.

India to fund river dredging in Bangladesh to ease cargo movement to North-East

As part of the India-Bangladesh cooperation for inland water transport, India will finance 80 per cent of the estimated 220 crore required for dredging to maintain navigability in the Sirajganj-Daikhawa on the Jamuna Ashugunj-Karimgunj stretch of the Kushiara river in Bangladesh. The Jamuna is the local name of the Brahmaputra in Bangladesh. The Kushiara is known as the Barak river in India. Both the stretches are part of the India-Bangladesh protocol routes. Dredging will help improve cargo movement from Kolkata to North-East through Bangladesh. According to Pravir Pandey, vice-chairman of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), the tender for dredging will be floated by Bangladesh Inland Waterway Transport Authority (BIWTA) and only Indian and Bangladeshi companies can take part in the tender. India signed an MoU for fairway development across the stretches with Bangladesh during the visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Delhi last month.

Adani Ports breaks 4 million TEU for first time

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) broke 4 million TEU for the first time in the fiscal year that ended in March, as India's largest private port infrastructure conglomerate benefited from its aggressive shipper outreach and capacity expansion efforts. APSEZ handled 4.24 million TEU through its various terminals in the last fiscal year, a 27 percent increase year over year, vastly outpacing the 10 percent rise at major public ports, according to a company press announcement. The company, however, did not provide details of volumes handled at its individual terminals, including flagship Mundra Port, which accounts for the majority of APSEZ's container business. Total tonnage during the year was up 11 percent to 169 million metric tonnes (about 186 million tons) from 152 million metric tonnes in fiscal 2015 to 2016. "This is our best all-round performance. Our strategy to diversify our cargo mix and focus on high value cargo continues to yield positive results," APSEZ CEO Karan Adani said in a statement.

India Government wants Cochin Shipyard to revive seven repair facilities

The Union government is trying to revive seven sea-going ship repair facilities in the country and has asked Cochin Shipyard to construct a model for cooperation with the ports in this regard. "We were so long promoting ship-building and breaking. Now, we want to embark on ship repair as well. In this regard there was a meeting in Goa last week where it was decided that PSU Cochin Shipyard will sign MoUs with respective ports for rejuvenating seven repair facilities," Union Shipping ministry joint secretary R K Agarwal said. Speaking on the sidelines of the ICC-organised coastal shipping seminar, he said that the seven ship-repair sites identified in existing ports include Pandu in Assam, Mumbai, Khandla and Goa. The government aims to have modern ship-repair facilities in ports which are either defunct or do not have adequate infrastructure to carry out such activity properly.

India's first maritime cluster to come up at GIFT City in Gandhinagar

Mansukh Mandaviya, Union minister of state for road transport, highways and shipping on Friday announced that India's first maritime cluster will be developed at GIFT City in Gandhinagar to boost port-led industrial growth in the country under the Union government's Sagar Mala scheme. Mandaviya had reviewed various port-related activities in the state. He said that a shipping and ancillary maritime cluster will be developed at Bhavnagar. He also said a broad gauge railway line will be laid at Bedi port and the Bhavnagar-Alang-Shoshiya road will be developed as a national highway. A new shipyard skill development centre will be opened soon. The minister said that as part of the Sagar Mala project, the government plans to open an underwater gallery and restaurant at Dwarka for tourists. A maritime museum, theme park and a national maritime heritage complex near Lothal will also be developed.

Throughput rises at Port of Hamburg as bulk cargo shines

Total throughput at Germany's busiest port, the Port of Hamburg, increased by 1.7 percent in the first quarter of 2017 and reached 35.4 million tons. The throughput growth in Germany's largest universal port was therefore slightly above the average 1.6 percent for the other major North Range ports of Rotterdam, Antwerp and Bremen/Bremerhaven, the port authority said. Contributing to the Hamburg total, bulk cargo throughput was 6.7 percent higher at 12.2 million tons. The 12-million-ton mark in the bulk cargo segment has been exceeded for the first time since record keeping began, the authority said. General cargo handling at 23.1 million tons was 0.7 percent lower. On the export side, general cargo throughput at 11.9 million tons represented growth of 3.4 percent. At 11.2 million tons, general cargo imports were somewhat lower, being down by 4.7 percent.

Hapag-Lloyd and UASC complete merger

Hapag-Lloyd and United Arab Shipping Company have completed their merger to become one combined company and a top five global carrier company. Both companies will now run independently while working to integrate internal systems and processes as quickly as possible. Hapag-Lloyd also plans to extend its global network into the Middle East. The combined company also boasts a "larger, more efficient, and environmentally friendly fleet of vessels, allowing us to deploy the most effective vessel class in each of the trade lanes", Hapag-Lloyd stated in an announcement to its customers. The first UASC services will be transferred to Hapag-Lloyd from mid-July, followed by the remaining services over several weeks. The complexity of the deal, valued at US\$7.6 to \$8.7 billion, meant it had to be halted at the end of April this year due to assurances being required from UASC's top shareholder Qatar.

Dubai mulls USD 1 billion shipping investment fund

Dubai Maritime City Authority (DMCA) is considering setting up a USD 1 billion fund to boost investments in shipping and spur on Dubai's maritime sector, Reuters cited sources familiar with the matter as saying. The investment fund will be available to Dubai-based companies, the sources told Reuters. DMCA has initiated discussions on the plan so far, and there is a possibility that the authority could issue a tender in the following months to hire an adviser. The fund is not intended to serve as a replacement for bank financing, but could instead be used to aid the Dubai-based companies in buying vessels or financing initial public offerings and mergers. The financing for the fund could be provided by either state-owned banks, private investors, or a combination of both, the sources said. In any case, the loans provided would be guaranteed by the government.