

Nitin Gadkari flags off consignment of steel cargo from Vizag Port through coastal shipping on SSL Sabarimalai

Union minister Nitin Gadkari today flagged off a consignment of steel cargo from Visakhapatnam Port and said a new era of coastal transport has begun and it will propel industrial growth and create jobs. The 75-crore annual contract has been awarded to the consortium led by Shreyas Shipping & Logistics Ltd, a member of Transworld Group, Dubai. The consignment of 2.3 lakh tonnes of steel cargo was flagged off via video conferencing by the minister from the Vizag port to Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Kochi. "This is a new era in transport that will encourage industrial growth, give a boost to the economy, create more employment and raise the GDP of the country," the Union Road, Shipping and Water resources minister said here today while addressing the gathering at Vizag port through video conferencing. Mr. Gadkari said Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL) was, till now, transporting its products to 22 stockyards through road and rail mode. Coastal transportation of these products will now bring down logistics costs, he said. The contract involves taking delivery of material from the plant, shifting by road, shipping the material by sea to a port near the stockyard and finally delivering the material to RINL Stockyard. The quantities expected to be transported are 90,000 tonnes, 75,000 tonnes and 60,000 tonnes to Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Kochi stockyards, respectively.

King Abdullah Port caps first phase of electronic integration with Saudi customs

King Abdullah Port has announced the completion of the first phase of integration between the Port Community System, a computerized information system that facilitates access to information and allows efficient implementation of operations at the port, and the Customs-affiliated SANAM, in a step that will enable King Abdullah Port and the Customs to implement the electronic exchange of cargo manifests and container inspection instructions – which are part of 24-hour customs clearance initiative – as well as locating the containers at the customs inspection yard. "We are proud of this achievement, which is the result of the fruitful cooperation between King Abdullah Port, the Economic Cities Authority (ECA), the Customs, IBM, the leader in information systems development, Tabadul and the National Container Terminal," said Eng. Abdullah Hameedadin, Managing Director at the Ports Development Company, owner and developer of King Abdullah Port. "The initiative will allow the Customs to work efficiently during two shifts at King Abdullah Port, leading to the development and improvement of customs clearance, which will contribute to achieving the objectives of Vision 2030."

DP World reveals plans to develop Jeddah Port

DP World has unveiled plans to develop Saudi Arabia's Jeddah Port in support of the Saudi Vision 2030, as recently launched by Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman. "As the first major investor in Jeddah port for almost 20 years now, we are committed to supporting the Kingdom's effort to leverage its resources and investment capabilities through the development of Jeddah port," said DP World Group chairman and CEO Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem. Jeddah Port is pivotal in facilitating the movement of goods between east and west, and in boosting Saudi exports. Bin Sulayem added his DP World's plans involve increasing efficiencies by using innovative tech solutions and making it a semi-automated facility to create skilled jobs for Saudi nationals. It also aims to transform the port to an important gateway to markets serving 500 million people which will make the kingdom's ports and logistics services a necessity and not a choice for global trade markets, particularly the Red Sea, which is the blood line of global trade. "Trade and infrastructure are key pillars in diversifying economies supported by technology and automation as we've seen at our Jebel Ali Port and Freezone, which together contribute to over 20 percent of Dubai's GDP," Bin Sulayem said.

Emirati woman named VP of FIATA

Nadia Abdul Aziz, President, National Association of Freight and Logistics (NAFL), has become the first Emirati female from the United Arab Emirates to be nominated as Vice-President on the Global Extended Board of the International Association of Freight Forwarders (FIATA), which represents more than 44,000 forwarding and logistics firms in 150 countries. She was elected by all global members of FIATA at the recently held FIATA World Congress in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. Commenting on her election, Nadia said: "I am honoured to be elected as the Vice-President of the world's most prestigious freight forwarders association. This election also affirms the UAE's strong position as a logistics hub and brings with it a great responsibility to further support FIATA and NAFL's vision. I am committed to further strengthening the UAE's position as a global logistics hub, raising the industry standards through our professional FIATA training courses and e-platforms and I will always work on opening doors of opportunities to our respected members as well as our country. I will always passionately work to assist all our members and any company interested to invest in the UAE. I am looking forward to enhancing our relations even further with FIATA to build stronger strategic relations for our entire region."

Dubai launches MENA's first e-commerce freezone

Dubai CommerCity, a US\$740mn and 2.1mn square feet, was launched as a joint venture between Dubai Airport Freezone (DAFZA) and wasl Asset Management Group in the Umm Ramool. Dubai CommerCity is the first free zone dedicated to e-commerce in the MENA region, is strategically intended to promote Dubai's position as a leading platform for international e-commerce and to support economic diversification and smart transformation strategies. The project will accelerate the growth of the e-commerce market which is expected to reach US\$20bn in 2020 in the GCC countries. It will provide an environment that stimulates creativity and attracts more direct foreign investments in line with Dubai Plan 2021 which aims to create a unique and sustainable economy based on innovation. DAFZA chairman Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum expressed his confidence that the joint venture will add a new dimension to Dubai's commercial activity and will help attract more direct foreign investments to the emirate. The project is led by the inspiring vision of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice-President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to establish a unique and sustainable economy based on growth, innovation, diversification, and competitiveness.

India calls on vehicle makers to ship their products

Indian Minister of Shipping has called upon all automobile manufactures to use coastal shipping mode for transporting their vehicles. Shri Nitin Gadkari, the country's Minister of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, informed that, besides saving time, coastal transport will also be more cost effective and environment friendly. The announcement was made on October 28, when the Minister digitally flagged off a vessel MV IDM DOODLE carrying a consignment of 185 trucks from Chennai Port to Mongla port in Bangladesh. These trucks, which are being exported by Ashok Leyland Ltd, were being sent to Bangladesh through the land route before, traveling a distance of about 1500 km. Transport by sea is expected to save 15-20 days of travel time. Ashok Leyland, which is currently exporting truck chassis to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, as well as other countries in Africa, expects to increase its exporting volume by 80% in the coming years. More than 500 trucks per month are expected to be exported via the sea route. The Coastal Shipping Agreement between India and Bangladesh was signed during Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh in June 2015.

India launches new trade route to Afghanistan via Iran

India has launched a new trade route to landlocked Afghanistan by sea through Iran's strategic Chabahar port, a move that bypasses Pakistan and could have significant geopolitical ramifications in the region. India shipped 1.1 million tons of wheat to Afghanistan from the western seaport of Kandla on October 29. The shipment will be taken by trucks to Afghanistan from the Iranian port. "I believe that this is the starting point of our journey to realize the full spectrum of connectivity -- from culture to commerce, from traditions to technology, from investments to IT, from services to strategy and from people to politics," Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said in a statement on October 29. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter on October 29 that the launch of the trade route "marks a new chapter in regional cooperation & connectivity." U.S. President Donald Trump urged India to play a bigger role in Afghanistan's development when he presented his new South Asia strategy in August. India, Afghanistan, and Iran decided in 2016 to establish the trade route, which would allow Indian goods to reach Central Asia. India committed up to \$500 million for the development of the Chabahar port, along with roads and rail lines.

Warburg Pincus in talks with DP World to sell stake in Gangavaram Port

US-based private equity firm Warburg Pincus has started talks with UAE ports operator DP World to sell its 31.5% stake in Gangavaram Port in Andhra Pradesh, two people aware of the development said. Warburg has hired investment bank UBS to find a potential buyer, said one of the two people, both of whom spoke on condition of anonymity, adding the port is valued at \$1-1.4 billion and Warburg plans to sell its 31.5% stake for \$300-400 million. Other interested parties include Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) and JSW Infrastructure, a unit of Sajjan Jindal led JSW Group, according to the second of the people cited above. Warburg plans to sell its stake while the other shareholders have no such immediate plans, according to the second person who spoke on condition of anonymity. In 2007, Warburg had invested around Rs150 crore (\$40 million) in the port at Gangavaram in Andhra Pradesh. The port, operated by a D.V.S. Raju-led consortium, is the deepest all-weather port in India. Raju and his family owns 58.11% stake and Warburg Pincus 31.5%, while the Andhra Pradesh government holds the rest.

At Port of Manila, cargo clearance is now paperless

The cargo clearance process at the Port of Manila will now be fully paperless after the chief of the Bureau of Customs announced yesterday that he had ordered the dismantling of transaction windows at the country's second largest port. Customs Commissioner Isidro S. Lapeña said yesterday that he ordered the removal of the Formal Entry Division's 15 window sections "effective immediately" as part of efforts to curb corruption. Import entry declarations are made through that unit, the Formal Entry Division, but the face-to-face transactions between Customs examiners and traders could prompt collusion in declaring valuation of shipments that favor the importer in exchange for money. "The 15 sections, we will resort to a queuing system of the (Formal Entry Division)... It will remove one source of corruption," Mr. Lapeña told. "There are fixed examiners assigned on windows. This time, that's no longer the case. So any examiner can be assigned to any broker to assess the shipment. So, there will be no more face-to-face contact, no more familiarity," he added.