

DP World and Branson launch hyperloop cargo joint venture

DP World's vision of a cargo carrying hyperloop has moved a step closer from pipe dream to reality with the launch DP World Cargospeed. The new company is a partnership between DP World and Virgin Hyperloop One and is to develop hyperloop-enabled cargo systems to support the fast, sustainable and efficient delivery of palletised cargo. The launch of DP World Cargospeed on Sunday in Dubai was attended by Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and Virgin Group founder Richard Branson. HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid said: "The UAE is keen to be a leading player in shaping the future of the world. Being a pioneer means taking bold decisions that open the way for adopting innovative solutions. We have big aspirations because we have unlimited mindsets and the confidence that we can achieve whatever we set our minds to." Branson highlighted the dramatic shift in consumer and business behaviour brought about by e-commerce. "DP World Cargospeed systems powered by Virgin Hyperloop One will enable ultra-fast, on-demand deliveries of high-priority goods and can revolutionise logistics, support economic zones, and create thriving economic megaregions," Branson said.

Cooperation and collaboration – the talk of the UAE maritime sector

Digitalisation and innovation continue to be the favoured buzzwords in Dubai in 2018 as the emirate pushes forward with its smart city initiative, and this month saw Dubai Maritime City Authority (DMCA) launch a digital payment and services portal. The authority hopes to reduce the number of visits to its customer service centres by 80% by the end of the year through using electronic platforms to process transactions and queries more speedily and efficiently. "Our aim is to provide the best marine services and develop them on the basis of strong pillars of innovation and intelligent transformation," said Mahmoud Oweida, director of information technology at DMCA. "We are simplifying, accelerating, and facilitating government services to bring happiness, ensure community welfare, and support efforts to build a smart and fully connected city with a sustainable capacity to keep pace with future growth." The digital payment and services portal is the latest in a series of initiatives launched by DMCA to deliver smart marine services and foster knowledge-sharing and innovation in the sector. Other launches in the past year have included the Dubai Maritime Virtual Cluster, the Maritime Innovation Lab and Innovation Quay.

India's 1st floating LNG Terminal inaugurated

India's first floating liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal was inaugurated on May 1 by the country's gas company H-Energy, a unit of Hiranandani Group. Eni's floating storage re-gasification unit (FSRU) GDF SUEZ Cape Ann was hired for the job in 2017. The 145,000 cbm FSRU, which was hired for a minimum period of 5 years, arrived at the LNG re-gasification project at Jaigarh port in Maharashtra on the west coast of India, on April 30. The vessel is equipped with the re-gasification capacity to operate the project at around 4 million tons per annum. H-Energy said the FSRU sets a new era in Indian LNG industry. "Growth has to percolate to the common man and has to contribute to the progress of the nation," Niranjan Hiranandani, Chairman of the Hiranandani Group said at the launching ceremony. The terminal was officially inaugurated by Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Devendra Fadnavis. Inauguration of India's first FSRU in addition to providing the country with gas, a technical modification of the vessel is planned, aimed at enabling bunkering vessels to load LNG. In this way, the vessels in Maharashtra ports will be able to become compliant with the IMO's Sulphur Regulations set to enter into force in 2020.

Drewry: Leased container fleet still growing

The leased fleet now has a clear majority over that owned by transport operators as companies continued moving towards container leasing, according to shipping consultancy Drewry. Leasing companies accounted for 55% of container purchases in 2017, which continues the trend seen for most of this decade. With the fleet of containers owned by transport operators growing by a mere 2.4%, the leased fleet added 6.7% and the share owned by lessors is now nearing 52%. "Drewry expects this trend to continue over the next few years," Martin Dixon, Drewry's director of research products, said, adding that the leased share of the fleet could reach 54% by 2020. Container manufacturing staged a 55% rebound in 2017, with dry van building more than recovering from the 2016 slump as buyers responded to the rebound in the liner industry. Despite the influx of new boxes, the average age of the fleet remained above 6.5 years for the second year running. Newbuild prices have been relatively stable, according to Drewry. They recovered quickly as demand returned last year and have been largely stable ever since. "Geopolitical issues notwithstanding, we do not expect any significant change in newbuild prices over the next couple of years," added Dixon.

Krishnapatnam Port's lower charges driving transshipment gains

More than infrastructure superiority and spare capacity, a strategic pricing policy appears to be the "X factor" that has enabled the Krishnapatnam Port to grab a larger share of transshipment freight moving to and from South India. Located 112 miles north of Chennai, Krishnapatnam Port is an alternative, privately operated minor harbor. A study by global consulting firm McKinsey & Co. found that ocean carriers using Krishnapatnam as a "relay point" have a slight economic advantage over other hub ports in the region, due to lower port charges. "Krishnapatnam Port is giving a 40 to 50 percent discount on vessel-related charges to incentivize mainline calls," the report stated. Officials at Krishnapatnam were unavailable for comment regarding price adjustments. The agency said the incentive plan has proved to be an "alluring" factor for mainline carriers targeting the South Indian container trade, which is largely transhipped. When compared with its peers, average voyage costs for a call at Krishnapatnam hover at \$183 per TEU on the eastbound leg, for example to Shanghai in China, and at \$297 per TEU on the westbound direction, for example to Le Havre in France. In contrast, those costs are pegged at \$186 and \$298, respectively, for transshipment via Chennai, according to the report.

Jebel Ali Free Zone exhibits capabilities at Automechanika Dubai

Jebel Ali Free Zone, the region's premier business and logistics hub is showcasing its auto sector capabilities at the 16th Automechanika Dubai show, which opens at the Dubai World Trade Centre on May 1. Jafza has reinforced its position as the location of choice for the industry handling over a fifth of Dubai's total automotive trade worth AED 39.5 billion in 2017. This equates to over 21 per cent of Dubai's total trade value of AED 184.6 billion for the sector over the same period. Jafza is exhibiting its services as a premier business location at Automechanika Dubai featuring logistics solutions such as storage and distribution, transportation management and customs brokerage. Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, DP World, said: "We've built the most sophisticated and efficient integrated port-and-free zone mod at Jafza and Jebel Ali Port giving companies the ability to setup operations and work on growing their business. Our customer focused approach helps businesses develop their products and services and adapt rapidly to the demands of local and regional markets. Jebel Ali Port offers 90 weekly shipping services to 140 direct ports of call and accommodates 340 logistics companies in tandem with a custom-bonded Dubai Logistics Corridor.

DP World Nhava Sheva refines direct port delivery to speed cargo

As competition intensifies, marine terminals at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) — India's busiest container gateway — are exploring new ways to improve customer service and increase productivity. DP World Nhava Sheva, in collaboration with local customs authorities, has launched "on-wheel examination and sampling" services for imports booked under the direct port delivery (DPD) program, an ease-of-doing-business measure that the company claims is a first in the country and can further reduce dwell times at the port. Officials at the Dubai-based company told that the simpler process applies to full containerloads handled at the flagship Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal (NSICT), and that a dedicated space within the terminal has been allocated to ensure smooth customs operations and clearance of cargo from the terminal. "With this initiative, we aim to provide faster and cost effective delivery of containers directly to customers in order to support their strategic growth ambitions," DP World Nhava Sheva CEO Ravinder Johal said. "We have worked closely with Jawaharlal Nehru Port Customs to make this process efficient and add even more value to the logistics supply chain."

INSA calls for greater usage of Indian ships and ports for transshipment traffic of Bangladesh

Bearing in mind the thrust of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India as well as Hon'ble Minister of Shipping towards the growth of maritime transport and growth of the trade between BIMSTEC countries, Indian National Shipowners Association (INSA) has called upon the BIMSTEC Secretariat to promote the usage of Indian ships and Indian ports/transshipment hubs on the East Coast of India for the purpose of transshipment of Bangladesh EXIM cargo. The letter dated 30/4/2018 of INSA draws the attention to the fact that geographically, Indian ports are closer to Bangladesh. This will mean faster connections, cheaper freight and better utilisation of port capacities and vessels slots ex Indian ports. Indian port operators are known to be open to commercial negotiations. "This is a win-win situation for all concerned, Indian ports will benefit through increased traffic and the Bangladesh box trade will be connected faster and at a cheaper cost", said Capt. Vivek Kumar Singh, Managing Director, Shreyas Shipping Limited who is already providing transshipment services over ports in the East Coast of India. The letter requests the assistance of BIMSTEC Secretariat towards initiating suitable steps which could lead to fruition of commercial discussions between service providers and trade.

DigitalOcean launches Kubernetes-based container service

Cloud computing platform DigitalOcean has announced its first Container offering with the launch of its Kubernetes-based container service. The service will enable developers to deploy and manage container workloads on the DigitalOcean platform. It will be available through an early access program starting in June with public availability later this year. "This product allows developers to focus on successfully shipping their applications while not being burdened by the complexity involved with creating and running a highly scalable and secure cluster across multiple apps," said DigitalOcean VP of Product, Shiven Ramji. "Today, many Indian companies are adopting containers to improve infrastructure performance, reduce develop-deploy cycles and lower costs. By focusing on Kubernetes for our first container offering, DigitalOcean will allow developers to concentrate on building impactful applications, allowing the product to do the heavy-lifting around managing their container workloads" said Prabhakar Jayakumar, Country Director, DigitalOcean India. DigitalOcean said that the service will be integrated to its core product suite that includes Compute Servers, Block Storage, Object Storage, Firewalls and Load Balancers among others.

New rail freight route will link the Port of Liverpool to Scotland

A new rail link from the Port of Liverpool will provide a "seamless" route to carry freight from vessels docking in the Mersey up to Scotland. Port owner Peel Ports says the new service will begin on May 8 with goods loaded in Liverpool and transferred to Mossend terminal in Glasgow, before onward delivery to destinations across Scotland. Peel has teamed up with the UK's largest rail freight company, DB Cargo UK, to provide the new service aimed at shipping lines, freight forwarders, tank operators and cargo owners. The returning service to Liverpool will carry Scottish goods for export, with a large portion destined for the US. Scottish family-run company Walkers Shortbread, which produces 40,000 tons of biscuits every year, will be one of the first customers to use the new service, exporting 700 containers a year to the US. The new service will comprise of up to 30 wagons and is expected to carry more than 40 containers per trip. The service will initially run three days a week with DB Cargo UK providing the rail haulage. Joke Schaap, container director at Peel Ports, said: "We know that cargo owners are looking for more efficient ways of getting their goods from A to B, and this rail freight service provides them with a simpler, more cost effective and environmentally friendly way of doing that."

INTTRA sees digitalisation kicking off this year

This is the year that digitalisation will rapidly come to the container line industry, online platform INTTRA believes. An INTTRA survey found that 82% of respondents at its Technology Summit in Hamburg said process automation and digitalisation initiatives were underway, 53% are focussed on blockchain and 51% are working to improve reporting and analytics. "It is clear, based on the feedback from our attendees and the momentum in our business that the industry has moved over the digitalization tipping point. This is the year of moving from innovation to action," said ceo John Fay. Other key findings included 46% of respondents saying that the biggest container shipping challenge for carriers was data sharing across the supply chain, while 31% thought reporting and analytics was a big problem. "INTTRA can help address the needs discussed at our Technology Summit and highlighted in our survey," said president and coo Inna Kuznetsova. "By listening to our industry, we can design products that elevate key issues for customers. A great example is an automated management of contracted rates that we are starting to pilot as a way to tackle a difficult challenge highlighted during the summit.