

## Ramesh S Ramakrishnan conferred with NIMS Honorary Fellowship

Mr. Ramesh S Ramakrishnan, Chairman of the Transworld Group has been conferred with the Narottam Morarjee Institute of Shipping (NMIS) Honorary Fellowship at its 40th Convocation & Prize Distribution Ceremony held at the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) Auditorium in Mumbai recently. Mr. Mukesh Oza, President and CEO of the Samsara Group and Mr. Shantanu Bhadkamkar, Chairman of the ATC Group and President of AMTOI, were also conferred the Fellowship. Convocation certificates were also presented on the occasion to 128 successful students by Mr. Ugo Vincent, Managing Director of CMA CGM India, who was the Chief Guest at the function, and others. The Guest of Honour was Mr Mukesh Oza, with Capt. Anoop Kumar Sharma, CMD of SCI and President of INSA, being the Presiding Officer. The three recipients of the Fellowship, while addressing those gathered, thanked their colleagues, associates and families for their success. They appreciated the work being done by NMIS in preparing commercial shipping and logistics professionals and stressed on the importance of attracting young people to the sector. The occasion also saw the institute's Governing Council, faculty and supporters being honoured. Mrs. Geeta Ramakrishnan and Mrs. Hina Oza too were felicitated.

## Saudi Crown Prince inaugurates King Abdullah Port

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, inaugurated in Rabigh on Monday the King Abdullah Port during his visit to King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC), reported the Saudi Press Agency. The event was attended by numerous officials, including Transportation Minister Nabil al-Amoudi and chairman of the Board of Directors of the Port Development Company Saleh Bin Laden. A number of agreements were signed by the King Abdullah Port on the occasion. They include a memorandum of understanding with Saudi Air Cargo for setting up of a land-air bridge to link the port and airport sectors in Saudi Arabia with a volume of intra-trade, costing SR10 billion, by 2030. One of the latest mega infrastructure projects in the Middle East, the King Abdullah Port was established based on Saudi Arabia's vision for a world-class port that can receive modern vessels and transform the Kingdom into a global logistics hub. The port has established partnerships with shipping companies, banks and international companies operating port operations, in addition to investments that exceeded 13 billion riyals. It will provide jobs for 20,000 Saudis.

## DP World slams impact of Brexit wrangling on UK economy

DP World, the global ports operator, has hit out at the damaging uncertainty of the prolonged British wrangling over the country's exit from the European Union. Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, the Dubai-based company's chairman, met Liam Fox, the UK's international trade minister, at the World Government Summit in Dubai this week, where he said DP World's two modern ports on the English coastline were willing to offset any disruption after the March 29 deadline to quit the EU. Addressing the WGS on Tuesday, Mr bin Sulayem said that the failure so far to strike a Brexit deal was frustrating for businesses. "Our problem is the indecisiveness of the government," he said. "We don't care as businessmen whether they have Brexit, or Brexit with an agreement, or Brexit with a good agreement, or Brexit with a bad agreement. Once they decide, as businessmen, we are capable of running our business once all this basically indecisive environment disappears." After the briefing with Mr Fox, Mr bin Sulayem said the operator's two terminals in the UK, at the deep-sea ports of Essex-based London Gateway and Southampton on the south coast, were well-placed to cope with Brexit disruption.

## Big first for India! World's largest container shipping firm Maersk moves containers on NW-1 inland waterways

Major step to enhance India's shipping industry, Maersk Line, the world's largest container shipping company recently moved as many as 16 containers on the river Ganga (National Waterway-1) from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh to Kolkata in West Bengal. The announcement was made by the Ministry of Shipping recently. Interestingly, according to the ministry, the company, which moves 12 million containers annually across the globe, is on board India's inland waterways for the first time. Earlier, similar movements were carried out by companies like PepsiCo, IFFCO Fertilizers, Emami Agrotech, Dabur India. Now that Maersk Line is on board, the cargo from the hinterland will directly move through the Bay of Bengal to and from Bangladesh as well as rest of the world. The country's first riverine multimodal terminal on river Ganga was dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Varanasi on November 12, 2018. PM Modi also received the country's first container cargo on the same day that travelled on river Ganga from Kolkata to Varanasi. According to the ministry, both the events marked watershed moments in the development of Inland Water Transport (IWT) in the country as well as broke grounds for a spurt in business activities on National Waterway-1, river Ganga.

## US container imports still strong as tariff increase approaches

Imports at the nation's major retail container ports have dipped since peaks seen last fall but remain at higher-than-usual levels as a possible increase in tariffs on goods from China approaches in March, the National Retail Federation (NRF) and Hackett Associates said. "With trade talks with China still unresolved, retailers appear to be bringing spring merchandise into the country early in case tariffs go up in March," Jonathan Gold, NRF Vice President for Supply Chain and Customs Policy, noted. "We are hopeful that the talks will succeed, but until the trade war is behind us, retailers need to do what they can to mitigate the higher prices that will inevitably come with tariffs," he added. US tariffs of 10 percent on USD 200 billion worth of Chinese goods that took effect last September are scheduled to increase to 25 percent on March 1 unless negotiations that began in December are successful. US ports covered by Global Port Tracker handled 1.97 million TEUs in December, the latest month for which after-the-fact numbers are available. That was up 8.8 percent from November and 13.9 percent year-over-year. That brought 2018 to a record 21.8 million TEU, an increase of 6.2 percent over 2017's previous record of 20.5 million TEU.

## Nigeria ranked 10th most connected African country

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has ranked Nigeria as the 10th most connected economy in Africa to the global liner shipping network. According to a report published in the 2018 UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics, the Liner Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI) is an indicator of a country's position within the global liner shipping networks. Rankings are arrived at from data on the world's container ship deployment; the number of ships, their container carrying capacity, the number of services and companies, and the size of the largest ship. The report listed Morocco as the number one most connected African economy, using the 2017 LSC index. The rest economies in the top ten, in order of connectivity are Egypt, South Africa, Togo, Mauritius, Djibouti, Congo, Angola, Sudan and Nigeria. It said, "In 2017, the economy best connected to the global liner shipping network, as measured by the UNCTAD liner shipping connectivity index (LSCI), was China. Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong SAR and Malaysia followed next in the ranking". It said also listed the top five economies in the world for flags of registration to include Panama, Marshall Islands, Liberia, Hong Kong and Singapore.

## Piraeus Port Authority to strengthen Venice and Chioggia cargo flows

The Piraeus Port Authority in Greece and the North Adriatic Sea Port Authority have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen cargo flows between the two ports. The Ports of Venice and Chioggia are overseen by the North Adriatic Sea Port Authority. Under the terms of the MoU, the two parties propose to establish mutual cooperation to develop their ports and services. This would support infrastructural connectivity policies and port services to improve the commercial flows between Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Far East through the two ports. Piraeus Port Authority CEO Fu Chengqiu said: "The port of Piraeus, the largest port of Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean, is an ideal hub between Asia and Central & Eastern Europe. "The Piraeus port, with its ongoing investment plan, aims within the next years to contribute to the growth of the local and regional economy by developing almost every aspect of the shipping and maritime industries, including containers, shipyards, logistics, cruise and ferries." The MoU aims to improve the exchange of best practices and know-how in port management. Both the ports serve as fundamental networks in the upcoming international maritime connections along the new Silk Road.

## DP World to invest up to Dh1bn expanding Jebel Ali in 2019

DP World, the global ports operator, plans to spend between Dh500 million and Dh1 billion to expand Jebel Ali free zone this year and seeks new acquisitions following a deal to buy a Chilean ports operator last month. "Dh500m is what the free zone and board is committing to expansion in 2019 – this could be more equipment, warehousing, accommodation, land development or more roads," DP World chairman Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem said on Sunday. "However, if [the board] comes to us in June and says, we think that Dh500m is going to be Dh1bn, we have a flexible budget." Jebel Ali, or Jafza, Dubai's oldest port and free zone which houses around 7,500 companies, accounted for 33.4 per cent of the emirate's gross domestic product and 10.7 per cent of the UAE's GDP in 2017, according to an Oxford Economics analysis published by DP World. "We will continue to expand the free zone in 2019," Mr Bin Sulayem said. Meanwhile, the fifth-largest ports operator in the world is on the hunt for new global acquisitions this year, while adopting a "cautious" approach to investment, the chairman added. "We are watching our money; that said, anything good, we will buy it, like [in] Chile."

## India signs MoU with Russia to fast-track North-South corridor

India, eyeing a bigger role in Eurasia and Afghanistan amid prevailing geopolitics, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Russia for fast-tracking International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) that will enable a smoother connectivity to the region via Iran. Russian Railways Logistics Joint Stock Company (RZD) and Container Corporation of India (CONCOR), the largest rail container transport operator in India, last week signed the MoU for providing logistics services on INSTC, the implementation of which has been delayed for years despite a dry run on the corridor in recent years. The MoU involves study of possibilities for developing joint logistics projects in Russia and India using international transport corridors, including INSTC, ETHas learnt. India and Russia have been in dialogue to jointly implement connectivity projects or corridors within the Eurasian region as well initiatives that connect Eurasia with the Indian Ocean Region. The two countries, as part of the MoU, intend to organise joint workshop to improve Indo-Russian logistics cooperation, develop joint projects in the field of container transportation between countries, and also develop high-quality logistics services, including those aimed at further improving the efficiency of INSTC.

## Nepal pushes ahead with creation of a national shipping line

Landlocked Nepal is pushing ahead with plans to create a national shipping line. Prime minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli this week opened the Nepal Ship Office in Ekantakuna just to the south of the capital, Katmandu, near the banks of the 600 km-long Bagmati river. If Oli's vision becomes reality the world's only non-quadrilateral flag could eventually be seen in oceans around the globe. Oli, a communist in his second term as prime minister, has long championed the creation of a national shipping line. "Ships flying the Nepali flag will sail in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean," he said during his first stint as prime minister three years ago. Oli aims to buy ships for riverine trade through the mountainous country for onward shipment through Indian ports, likely by rail connections. The prime minister's chief advisor Bishnu Rimal tweeted an image this week of a poster issued by the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport that read: "A ship office is being established for the first time in the history of Nepal. His Excellency Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli is inaugurating the office. Today a dream is taking its first step. Where there is will, there is way." Landlocked countries and international shipping have a colourful history.

## French ports ready to ease congestion from any Brexit fallout

Smaller ports in northern France are ready to absorb more shipping traffic from Britain if congestion builds up due to any fallout from Brexit, a top French official said on Wednesday. The Ports of Normandy Authority (PNA) currently owns and operates Cherbourg and Caen-Ouistreham terminals and will take on operating Dieppe nearby in 2019. "We can accept more (traffic) and we would like to accept more if there is congestion on the east side of the UK," Philippe Deiss, managing director of the PNA told Reuters during a trade visit to London. Over 1 million passengers and over 100,000 lorries pass through these French terminals each year with ferry lines and ro-ro cargo ships active on these routes. "Newhaven, Portsmouth and Poole can accept more traffic of course," Deiss said, referring to three southern English ports. Since striking a draft deal with the EU last week, British Prime Minister Theresa May has faced the most perilous crisis of her premiership with several ministers resigning. May has pledged to fight on, warning that toppling her risks delaying Britain's exit from the EU or leaving without a deal, a step that could thrust the economy into the unknown.

## Bangladesh starts building its largest port

The congested nature of Bangladeshi ports is set for some alleviation with the construction of a giant new port. European engineering consultants Royal HaskoningDHV, in partnership with the Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology, has been selected as master plan consultant for the Payra Deep Sea Port Development Project in the south Asian nation. Payra Port will be the country's third and largest sea port in Bangladesh and is being designed to add much needed port capacity as well as allow larger vessels to call at the facility, negating the need for transshipment to other ports such as Singapore and Colombo. Chairman of Payra Sea Port Commodore M Jahangir Alam commented yesterday: "This port will be as essential link in the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor and as such will have a great impact on the economic development of Bangladesh." Eric Smit, business development director maritime at Royal HaskoningDHV, said of the multi-million euro contract: "It's rare to see greenfield port developments of this scale, and the new port will help the country achieve its growth ambitions and create greater economic growth, more jobs and new opportunities."