

Transworld Group to accept India's RuPay Card in UAE

Transworld group including 21 businesses and 5,000 ATMs across the UAE will soon start accepting India's RuPay card. The card payment scheme was launched by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday during his visit to the UAE. An MoU was also signed to establish a technology interface between the payment platforms in India and the UAE. That enables the RuPay card to be used at point-of-sale terminals across the Emirates with individual businesses expected to announce the start date of accepting the card in their outlets. Meanwhile three UAE banks – Emirates NBD, First Abu Dhabi Bank and Bank of Baroda - will soon start issuing RuPay cards for UAE residents. RuPay is an Indian equivalent of a Mastercard or Visa card. "As a part of our constant endeavour to serve our customers better and digitalization drive, we are delighted to announce that Transworld Group is now associated with RuPay to accept the payment via RuPay in UAE to promote Ease of doing Business." said Mr. Ramesh S Ramakrishnan chairman of Transworld Group. It is India's domestic debit and credit card payment network with wide acceptance at ATMs, point of sale devices and e-commerce websites across the country. Today, there are close to 500 million RuPay cards in circulation in India.

RZD expands China-Europe rail freight services with new routes

Another month, another new container rail service for Russian rail and logistics operator RZD, with a new connection between China and Germany. Connecting Yantai and Duisburg, the service initially will operate on a limited schedule, but RZD chief executive Vyacheslav Valentik expects it to become regular by the start of Q4. "Our cooperation with Yantai station is developing rapidly – just a month ago we launched a service to Moscow, and today we present a transit route to Germany," he said. "There is no doubting its successful development. . . Shandong ranks third in the GDP ranking of provinces in China. It is an industrial region with a high level of production and consumption, which gives us a good chance to work out the issue of reverse loading of transit trains." The inaugural service arrived in the German city, after a 19-day transit, on 14 August, carrying auto parts, electrical components and household products. The carrier said the service was available to a "wide range" of shippers, with further new routes due this month: "The service will be launched on the new route from Jinan City, Shandong Province to Budapest," it said. "Now, RZD Logistics has container trains from various cities of the Shandong province to Moscow, St. Petersburg, Perm, Minsk and Duisburg."

Saudi firm looks to invest in Bangladesh's port infrastructure

Red Sea Gateway Terminal (RSGT), one of the largest terminal operators in Saudi Arabia, is keen on making investments under public-private partnership to develop Bangladesh's port infrastructure and maritime sector. The RSGT has proposed investing in port infrastructure development and providing technical support for the existing Chattogram, Mongla and Payra ports, said Abdus Samad, secretary to the shipping ministry. The Saudi firm, known internationally for world-class port terminal services, has built the newest flagship container terminal at Jeddah Islamic Port. The secretary said the RSGT would prepare a plan for investment in multiple port-related infrastructure projects in Bangladesh and share operational expertise. The Saudi company has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the shipping ministry to explore investment opportunities and provide expertise to Bangladesh. "We are aiming to leverage Bangladesh's geographic location between South and Southeast Asian countries to position the country as a key regional transport hub," Samad said. Bangladesh needs to expand its port facilities as economic activities are accelerating and export and import will increase in the next decade.

Suez Canal Container Terminal to open reefer repair hub to all brands

Suez Canal Container Terminal (SCCT) plans to open its reefer container inspection and repair hub to all brands, while also launching a dry container inspection and repair hub in October 2019. Until just over a year ago, the terminal faced unnecessary costs for moving and repositioning reefer containers with damaged panels or defects that hadn't been recorded. Since it opened its reefer container inspection and repair hub for Maersk containers around a year ago, the facility has inspected close to 30,000 reefers. The terminal now plans to offer the same service across all shipping lines, as the majority do not have their own inspection and repair process. Inci Bicen, East Mediterranean (EMED) equipment maintenance and repair (EMR) manager for Maersk, said: "Previously SCCT hired in a third-party to inspect and repair non-sound reefers. "This brought added complexity and delays, particularly as the terminal had the internal capability to carry out the task much more efficiently." All technicians at the terminal have undergone training to inspect, wash and repair reefer container to Maersk standards. SCCT has its own engineering training lab, which looks to combine theoretical knowledge with practical experience in equipment automation and technology.

KIZAD and AIPMA open new investment opportunities for Indian polymer companies

Abu Dhabi: Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (KIZAD), a subsidiary of Abu Dhabi Ports, has signed a strategic agreement with All India Plastics Manufacturers' Association (AIPMA) to support Indian polymer investors in expanding their geographic and economic reach through KIZAD. The move also highlights KIZAD Polymers Park as a tailor-made manufacturing and distribution location for the industry. The agreement, signed earlier this month in Delhi, underscored KIZAD Polymers Park's access to raw materials from regional producers and connectivity through KIZAD's major transport links, which include Abu Dhabi Ports' flagship deep-water port, Khalifa Port as well as international airports. Commenting on the agreement, Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, CEO of Abu Dhabi Ports, said: "We look forward to hosting Indian businesses at KIZAD and supporting the location, position and business ecosystem. Our aim is to provide investors from all over the world an enabling environment to do business and a platform for growth that is unparalleled in the Gulf and the Middle East region." Meela Jayadev, President of AIPMA said: "India has an enormous plastic and polymers manufacturing industry and the UAE is one of our top five import markets."

India's Nicobar container port plan seen threat to Sri Lanka transshipment business

India has called for proposals to build a container port in Andaman & Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal that could threaten Sri Lanka's transshipment business at Colombo port which mainly handles sub-continental cargo. The port management board of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has called for expressions of interest (EOI) from private developers to build the port and also a free trade warehousing zone meant to reduce India's dependence on foreign transshipment hubs like Colombo. It plans to issue an international public tender to develop a 'Container Transshipment Terminal' with 'Free Trade Warehousing Zone' on a Public Private Partnership basis at South Bay. The chosen bidder will be required to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the container port and logistics facility. According to the proposal, the uniqueness of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands location lies in two geographical advantages. These are proximity to the busy East-West international shipping route which can help shorten transits and improve economies of scale, and deep natural water depths that can accommodate the latest generation of mega-ships.

India-France to build and run world's first space-based automatic ship tracking system

The world's first space-based automatic identification system or AIS to track merchant ships on a real-time basis will be built and operated jointly by India and France, the French space agency (centre national d'études spatiales or the National Centre for Space Studies (CNES) has said. CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall and K Sivan, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), signed an agreement on Thursday to start development and production of a constellation of satellites on which studies have been underway for more than a year. The pact between the space agencies of the two countries on the production of a constellation of satellites was signed during the state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to France. The constellation carrying telecommunications (AIS), radar and optical remote-sensing instruments is capable of monitoring ships in the Indian Ocean, CNES said in a statement. "The system will cover a wide belt around the globe, benefiting a broad range of French economic interests. With a revisit capability making it possible to task acquisitions several times a day, it will also be able to detect oil slicks and trace their origin," CNES said.

PSA Thailand establishing JV to operate Rebranded Thai Prosperity Terminal

PSA Thailand has teamed up with SCG Logistics Management Company Limited to invest in the development and operation of the Thai Prosperity Terminal in Thailand which will be rebranded as Thai Connectivity Terminal (TCT). The undertaking is part of an agreement that will involve the establishment of a joint venture company in Thailand called SCG-PSA Holdings Co., Ltd. PSA said the company would serve as a springboard for potential joint exploration and investment in supply chain related opportunities across the region, with a focus on Thailand. TCT is situated on Thailand's Chao Phraya River close to Bangkok's city center and industrial estates. It is also well connected to the deep-sea port at Laem Chabang. "Capitalising on TCT's strategic location, PSA is committed to growing this critical node as part of our greater transport and cargo solutions network, and to open up more avenues of opportunity for the movement of goods and materials throughout the region," Ong Kim Pong, Regional CEO Southeast Asia, PSA International, said. "This partnership would enrich logistics services of SCG Logistics in the areas of port, freight management, and import/export," Paitoon Jiranantararat, Managing Director, SCG Logistics Management, added.

FDI needed to give boost to coastal shipping in India : Director-General of Shipping

Director-General (Shipping) Amitabh Kumar said that there is an imperative need to bring in foreign direct investments (FDI) into the maritime sector. He said that this could give a boost to coastal shipping, as the cost of finance is high in the country. For this purpose, he added that the regulatory regime has to be relaxed. In an interview here on Friday, he said the regulatory framework could be relaxed to facilitate 49 per cent FDI to stimulate coastal shipping, with 51 per cent remaining with the Indians and with it the ownership of the vessel. Further, overseas Indians should also be allowed to invest in the sector for the purpose and the vessels could be registered in the country. He said the taxes should be reduced by the Union Finance Ministry to bring down costs. Availability of cargo was another major problem, and the ports should set up dedicated coastal cargo berths. Multi-modal logistics parks were coming up in the country to address some of these issues, he added. However, he said, the Union Shipping Ministry was aware of these challenges and taking up steps to address them. Kumar said that accidents do happen in spite of all the precautions. "Still, compared to the roads and railways, shipping is safer and it is the regulated and the most insured," he said.

Mwani Qatar to build Hobyo Port in Somalia

Mwani Qatar has entered into an investment partnership with the Somali side to construct the Hobyo Port in Mudug region of central Somalia, HE the Minister of Transport and Communications Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti announced on recently. The Ministry of Transport and Communications said this investment reflects the strength of bilateral relations between Qatar and the Republic of Somalia, adding that this project is a key building block to the field of cooperation in maritime transport, and will contribute to opening new horizons of cooperation between the two countries for the benefit of the two peoples. A ministry press release said the Hobyo Port will be designed and built according to the latest international standards and according to the highest standards in safety and security fields, in a way that will bring many economic benefits for Somalia in terms of the investment returns and the great business opportunities that the port will offer by enhancing the commercial relationship with new markets in Africa and access to international markets, in addition to providing maritime services to wider areas in Somalia. The Hobyo Port is an important Somali harbour due to its proximity to the Bab al-Mandab Strait, It is also important due to its location in the Mudug region.

Call for State to devise alternative ship routes to Europe

Pressure is building on the Government to advance plans for alternative shipping routes bypassing Britain to avoid severe delays at English Channel ports stemming from a possible no-deal Brexit. Potential risks to the key "landbridge" transit route for Irish traders through the UK to Europe have escalated in light of the UK government's no-deal plans which show severe disruptions at British ports. Operation Yellowhammer, the secret UK planning dossier leaked over the weekend, warns of significant interruptions at UK ports that could last up to three months after Brexit. The report says up to 85 per cent of lorries travelling across the Channel may not be ready for French customs, creating delays of two days and a severe bottleneck for Irish hauliers bound for Europe. About 150,000 haulage units use the landbridge every year, leading to concerns among Irish businesses that there is insufficient capacity on direct shipping routes to Europe to offer an alternative for this traffic. Industry groups have warned delays at English ports could affect the transport of fresh food and time-sensitive produce, and have criticised the Government for not developing detailed alternative plans.

APM Terminals to invest in container terminal expansion in Mexico

Port of Progreso operator APM Terminals Yucatán has revealed plans to expand and modernise the port's container terminal in Yucatan Peninsula, southern Mexico. The investment will see the terminal's yard capacity be expanded by 20% at a cost of \$714,000. Two new reach stackers will be acquired to increase operational productivity. One of them has already been delivered to the company. In order to offer an efficient transactional process in the terminal, a digital client portal will be launched along with software optimisation. APM Terminals Yucatan managing director Martijn Koolen said: "We are committed to the long-term sustainable development of the region and are delighted to announce that we have signed an addendum with the port authority to commence a 20% expansion of the yard to support the region's growing trade needs, as well as other investments to improve productivity and efficiency. "This represents a significant additional investment on top of the \$22.6m that has already been invested in the terminal since the concession began in 2005." The company also noted that the investment in the terminal will meet the growing demand from the region's importers, exporters and shipping lines.