

Cabinet approves India-UAE maritime transport pact

India's cabinet has approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on institutional cooperation in Maritime Transport. The MoU will set the stage for facilitation and promotion of maritime transport, simplification of customs and other formalities. Additionally, the agreement would also encourage the use of existing installations for waste disposal and enable shipping companies in India and UAE to enter into bilateral and multi-lateral arrangements for sustainable trading activities, the government said in a statement.

DP World takes control of Saint John container terminal

The world's fourth largest container port company, DP World, has officially taken over operations of the west side container terminal at Port Saint John, about six months after a 30-year lease was signed between the port and company. The goal is to grow the business and two massive cranes, now ready for use, are expected to be a big part of that growth. "These cranes will help us to not only meet the needs of current vessel owners that call the port throughout the tidal range but also be able to work with larger ships up to twice or maybe even three times the size of ships that are calling the port today," said Curtis Doiron, general manager of DP World in Saint John.

Kalmar to supply new generation empty container handlers to DP World Jebel Ali Port

Kalmar, part of Cargotec, has won an order to supply DP World's flagship terminal, Jebel Ali Port in Dubai, with 13 new generation empty container handlers. The deliveries will start in the second quarter of 2017 and are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2017. Kalmar's new range of empty container handlers - the DCG80-45ES8 machines - have the capacity of eight tonnes and they can stack eight containers high. Every empty container handler in this range comes fitted with the latest EGO cabin as well as with Kalmar SmartFleet remote monitoring and reporting system that improves operational transparency and reduces downtime.

India can boost value of exports by \$5.5 billion by reducing cost of trade

The cost of trade in India is amongst the highest in the world, especially in comparison to other developing countries. India's transport and logistic costs are at 14.4% of its GDP as compared to China, where these costs are 8%. A study conducted by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Maersk Group found that indirect and hidden costs in the form of unreliable transport services and bureaucratic delays hike the total logistics cost by 38-47%. The study, which covered the four key sectors of pharmaceuticals, textiles, electronic and auto components, revealed a 10% reduction in trade can boost India's competitiveness and contribute an additional revenue \$5.5 billion annually.

Annual container volumes up 8% at Saudi's King Abdullah Port

Annual container volumes at Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah Port grew by 8% to 1.4m TEUs in 2016, according to latest data. The port said the increase has been achieved despite challenging market conditions and a slowing global economy. During 2016, King Abdullah Port also received 729 vessels compared to 637 vessels in 2015. The port has expanded its annual capacity to 4m TEUs recently. "King Abdullah Port is gearing up to become a prime East-West hub on the main trade route between Asia and Europe," said Abdullah Hameedadin, owner and developer of King Abdullah Port.

Khalidia to set up \$22m warehouse in Kizadr

Abu Dhabi Ports (ADP) has signed an agreement with Khalidia International Shipping, a subsidiary of Emirates Business Group (EBG), to set up a third-party logistics (3PL) warehouse with an investment of Dh80 million (\$21.7 million) in Kizad, the Khalifa Industrial Zone's trade and logistics cluster. Located in Khalifa Port Free Trade Zone (KPFTZ), a dedicated new project that will serve as a platform for businesses looking to expand in the trade, logistics, and manufacturing sectors in the region, the warehouse will be developed on a 47,081.4-sq-m plot of land with a total capacity of 33,318 pallet positions. It is expected to be completed in Q2 of 2018.

Box ships still top demo sales as 2017 begins on a high note

The ship demolition market picked up where it left off in 2016 but with a positive twist, according to GMS, the world's leading cash buyers of ships. "The first week of 2017 has certainly commenced on an optimistic note with some of the highest prices seen across all sectors for nearly a year. Containers continue to dominate the headlines as another two large LDT panamax-sized units were fixed at increasingly bullish numbers," according to the latest weekly report from GMS. There was even talk of a 2010-built container being sold for scrap; however, this could not be verified.

India to roll out the new GST from 1 July

From 1 July, India will roll-out the Goods and Services Tax (GST), a landmark tax reform that seeks to transform India's \$2 trillion economy and 1.2 billion people into a common market by dismantling inter-state barriers to trade in goods and services by subsuming a slew of local taxes. The GST Council broke a deadlock over issues of administrative control over assesses. Whether a state or the Centre will assess an entity would be decided by a computer programme. The Council also resolved a logjam over the right to tax economic activities within 12 nautical miles from India's coast, India's Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, the chairman of the Council, said.

Container Corp., Nippon Express partner for freight

India has entered into a collaboration with Japan for providing scheduled freight rail services between Delhi and Bengaluru. Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has picked logistics firm Nippon Express to collaborate with Indian Railways and Container Corporation of India for providing rail services that will transport finished cars as well as general cargo. The first train service between Delhi and Bengaluru commenced on 20 January with transit time of less than 70 hours on each side. "The project is aimed at improving rail freight services and hope this project is expanded throughout the country and not only on the Delhi-Bengaluru sector," Japanese Ambassador to India Kenji Hiramatsu said.

WCA and Alibaba agree on Joint Logistics Platform

Global logistics-providers network WCA Ltd and leading online trading-platform Alibaba.com have signed an agreement on a joint logistics platform for international shipments, particularly between the USA, India and the UK. In the collaboration, WCA Ltd will recommend the providers to facilitate the shipments required by customers of Alibaba.com. - and its B2B division - and the approved providers will be able to compete for orders generated by the online platform. The companies have further agreed on an insurance scheme for participants, establishing standards to safeguard the quality of the service and agreeing on conditions for compensation.