

### Transworld Group and Japanese Suzue Corporation sign joint venture agreement

UAE based conglomerate Transworld Group and Yokohama, Japan based Suzue Corporation have signed a strategic agreement for the formation of a Joint Venture Company to explore opportunities in the growing logistics business within the Gulf region, Indian Sub-continent and Japan. The Joint Venture agreement was signed in Dubai by Ramesh S. Ramakrishnan, Chairman of Transworld Group and Takahiro Suzue, President and Representative Director of Suzue Corporation. Under the deal, Transworld Group and Suzue Corporation will incorporate a Joint Venture Company at Jebel Ali Free Zone in Dubai to provide comprehensive services to global customers in supply chain management, international freight forwarding, customs clearance, warehousing and distribution, land transport and other related logistics services.

### Saudi Custom drafts new policies to hasten release of containers

Saudi Custom will finalize a document that specifies new regulations to speed up the process of releasing containers from Saudi ports, Ahmad Al-Haqbani, the acting general manager of the agency, said. "We have tried emoluments for the speedy release of containers both at Jeddah Islamic Port and King Abdullah City Port. We are currently modifying the document after our experience and will start moving on to other ports within two weeks so that up to 80% of containers will be released within 24 hours." Al-Haqbani added that their vision is to increase the exports from SR169 billion to SR330 billion and to increase imports from SR660 billion to SR825 billion by 2020. "There are 41 passage way in the Kingdom and up to 40% of the inspections are done manually and we opt to reduce that percentage to 5% only under the condition of preserving security."

### Oman Sohar Port expansion to pull in \$8bln in new investments

Sohar Port and Freezone (Sohar) is targeting \$8 billion worth of new investments over the next five years on the back of a new phase of expansion and growth that the industrial port has embarked upon. Part of this targeted inflow will be generated by Sohar's new reclamation project, according to its Chief Executive Officer. To be named 'Sohar Port South', the newly reclaimed land will allow the industrial port to expand its portfolio of companies and add more business to drive growth within the Omani economy, said Mark Geilenkirchen. "Sohar will build on the Port of Rotterdam's extensive experience with similar projects, like the massive Maasvlakte 2 land reclamation in the Netherlands, to achieve the best results during construction," Geilenkirchen stated.

### INTTRA buys European container tracking firm Avantida

U.S. shipping technology company INTTRA has agreed to buy European container tracking firm Avantida to reduce costs by coordinating land and ocean container movements, it said. Belgium-based Avantida specialises in tracking empty containers and its technology helps cut costs for transport companies, enabling exporters to ship more efficiently. "Avantida has products and customer bases that are highly complementary to those of INTTRA," its CEO John Fay said. INTTRA, which runs one of the largest electronic transaction software platforms in the shipping industry, said industry experts estimate that finding and repositioning empty containers costs the ocean shipping industry up to \$20 billion a year.

### UN body proposes Istanbul to Dhaka train corridor

A UN body today proposed extension of the Istanbul-Teheran-Islamabad (ITI) train corridor to Delhi-Kolkata-Dhaka (DKD) to promote regional cooperation. It maintained that the train corridor has the potential to become an important transport artery for intra-regional trade and an important conduit of Asia's connectivity with Europe. "The operationalisation of a cohesive international transport network faces gaps and challenges in South and South-West Asia, compared to other sub-regions of Asia and the Pacific," Matthew Hammill, officer-in-charge of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), has said.

### Prime Minister of India to flag off first shipment on INSTC routes

The Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India (FFFAI) will participate in the historic event related to the commencement of International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which will be flagged off by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi on 13 April from Mumbai. The INSTC will receive a big boost thanks to the commencement of multimodal transport services between India, Iran and CIS countries from April this year. Sunil Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, informed that to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Russia, the Prime Minister will flag off the first containerised shipment, to be transported via INSTC route.

### Soon integrated transport policy for India

India's shipping minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said the government is working to formulate an integrated, multi-modal logistics and transport policy to reduce logistics costs by nearly half, making Indian products more competitive. The integrated policy will include construction of 50 economic corridors and upgrading of key feeder and inter-corridor routes to improve overall efficiency of freight movement, Gadkari said. India also plans to develop 35 multi-modal logistics parks to serve as centres for freight aggregation and distribution, multi-modal transportation, storage and warehousing and value-added services, Gadkari said.

### Ports, containers searched in five Indian cities over fake currency alert

The Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) carried out extensive searches at container depots in Chennai, Tughlakabad, Kanpur, Kolkata and Mumbai following a tip-off about large consignments of fake Indian currency notes being brought in through ports. Import cargo was frozen at three sea ports in Tamil Nadu and Chennai airport. A senior customs official in Chennai said they had identified a container at Chennai port which, according to an intelligence input, may have Rs 400 crore in fake currency. There was an intelligence alert that fake currency was being brought into the country through the container route," said an official in Delhi.

### DPD at DP World Nhava Sheva facilitates ease of doing business

Global trade enabler DP World operated Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal and Nhava Sheva (India) Gateway Terminal, have seamlessly adapted customs and Government proposed Direct Port Delivery (DPD) model as part of their ease of doing business initiatives. Efficiency in operations has led to a quantum increase in Direct Port Delivery volume by more than 130% in 2017. The process created and followed at DP World Nhava Sheva has enabled prompt and timely delivery of containers directly to the customers. Further reducing inventory cost and saving in transportation time from the Terminal to the Customs-bonded warehouses.

### Panama Canal to implement new vessel scheduling system

The Panama Canal has announced that in response to growing traffic, it will launch a new vessel scheduling and maritime resources management system to further optimising costs, improve safety and increase the overall efficiency and reliability. "For more than a century, the Panama Canal has enjoyed a proud legacy of innovation," said Panama Canal Administrator Jorge L. Quijano. "This system will help carry that legacy forward, allowing us to tap the potential of technology to provide better solutions for our customers as we increasingly manage more transits and adapt to shifts in global trade." The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) will be able, for the first time, to execute a completely integrated operating plan for all of its critical resources, including tugboats, pilots and line handlers.

### India Shipping Min to develop logistics parks in 35 clusters across country

As many as 35 clusters, accounting for half the total freight movement, have been identified for building logistics parks to improve the existing transportation and warehousing scenario in the country. Of the total number of proposed logistics parks, 15 would be developed across states including Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. The proposed parks would reduce transportation cost by 10 per cent for the industries in the 35 clusters, thereby enabling freight movement on higher sized trucks and rail, Minister of Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari said. Locations for development of Multimodal Logistics Parks have been prioritized based on the level of production and consumption activity in a particular city.

### JNPT's DP World terminal cuts fees for speedy import handling

DP World Nhava Sheva, which has two terminals at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), has halved charges for handling imports under the direct port delivery (DPD) scheme following intense pressure from Customs authorities. The company said its terminals would be charging only for one "shift move" instead of two moves previously for containers in the DPD program meant to speed import movements by having Customs clear them for pre-approved clients within 48 hours of landing at the port. The rates remain at Rs. 2,212 (roughly \$35) per 20-foot-equivalent unit (TEU) and Rs. 3,318 per 40-foot-equivalent unit for DPD cargo handled at the Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal, and at Rs. 2,604 and Rs. 3,906, respectively, at the Nhava Sheva (India) Gateway Terminal, according to officials.