

Abu Dhabi Ports digitises all import/export activities

Abu Dhabi Ports has announced the introduction of a new stream of digital services in the field of import and export operations for RORO and General Cargo. The new offering will provide customers and stakeholders new benefits from the automation of operational processes and services through its Maqta Port Community System (PCS). The new service marks the completion of the digitalisation of all operational services, following the success in providing digital services for container and cruise vessels across Abu Dhabi's commercial ports in 2016. "This achievement is a major milestone that highlights Abu Dhabi Ports' continued commitment to offer innovative and competitive solutions to our customers and stakeholders," said Captain Mohamed Al Shamisi, CEO of Abu Dhabi Ports.

Charter market in unexpected revival, says Drewry

The charter market has found a new lease of life in the recent weeks driven in part by carriers' poor network planning ahead of the new alliances, according to shipping consultancy Drewry. In recent weeks, time charter rates for some of the biggest available ships doubled since the start of the year. In February, Panamaxs were being chartered at barely above USD 4,000 per day, but by mid-March USD 8,000 was more the going rate. Also, 8,000 TEU ships that were chartered at USD 8,000-USD 9,000 per day are now going for rates in the high teens. It has been a particular oddity of the market that smaller units of some 1,700 TEUs have until very recently fetched higher time charter rates than classic Panamaxs of 4,000-5,000 TEUs, mainly because the smallest ships are less exposed to the cascade.

DP World, Port of Fujairah End Concession Deal

DP World and the Port of Fujairah have reached an agreement to terminate the Fujairah Port concession deal entered into in 2005. The concession contract signed between the parties was on a build, operate and transfer basis (BOT) to expand and develop the Fujairah Container Terminal at the port for container handling and transshipment. Following the termination deal, signed by Mohammed Al Mualllem, Senior Vice President and Managing Director of DP World UAE Region and Capt. Mousa Murad, General Manager, Port of Fujairah, both parties have completed the transfer of operations from DP World to the Port of Fujairah authorities. "The termination and handover of the management of the port is taking place in accordance with the conditions of the agreement. We are proud of our record in supporting our partners in Fujairah, developing the capability of the port and its efficiency and we wish them continued success," Mohammed Al Mualllem said.

Abu Dhabi Ports and Jaheziya collaborate to provide Maritime Training Courses

Abu Dhabi Ports (ADP) and Jaheziya, a subsidiary of Tawazun, are joining forces to introduce a range of maritime training courses and programs, as well as attract students and interested parties to enroll in them. As part of the agreement, Abu Dhabi Ports will deliver all the maritime theory and practical courses, and provide all the necessary experienced teaching staff to facilitate these courses. Recognised and endorsed internationally, and delivered by accredited instructors, ADP courses cover a wide range of maritime subjects. These include the Musaffah Channel Familiarisation Course, IMO Model Course 1.27 for ECDIS, IMO Model Course 1.07 for Radar/ARPA Operational Level, and the mandatory course for seafarers, Human Element, Leadership and Management Course (HELM), mandated by the Manila amendment to STCW.

Dry run for India-Iran-Russia Transport project

India is pulling out all stops to operationalize the International North-South Transport Corridor with a dry run planned this week. The second such dry run is aimed at ironing out the creases in the ambitious multimodal transportation project involving Iran, Russia and India, and comes in the backdrop of China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative. While the Chinese strategy is aimed at connecting some 60 countries across Asia, Africa and Europe to boost trade and economic ties along its traditional maritime route, INSTC will connect the India Ocean and Persian Gulf with the Caspian Sea through Iran and then onwards to St. Petersburg in Russia and northern Europe. The plan is to move goods from Jawaharlal Nehru and Kandla ports on India's west coast to Bandar Abbas Port in the south of Iran by sea.

Cargo at India's 12 major ports grew by 6.78 per cent in 2015-16

Boosted by a slew of steps to enhance efficiency, the country's 12 major ports handled 647.63 million tonnes (MT) of cargo in the year ended March 31, 2017. "Major ports under the Centre handled a record 647.63 MT of cargo in 2016-17 registering an annual growth rate of 6.78 per cent against 4.32 per cent in 2015-16," Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari said adding that the performance of major ports was steadily improving on the back of a number of initiatives taken by the government to enhance their efficiency. "Kandla Port retained its top position among all major ports and handled 105.44 MT followed by Paradip Port which handled 88.95 MT and Mumbai Port that handled 63.05 MT," Gadkari said. JNPT handled 4.5 million TEUs in 2016-17.

Somali security forces free Indian crew after stand-off with pirates

The crew of the Indian cargo ship that was taken by Somali pirates on 1 April have been released after a standoff with Somali security forces. Up to 11 crew members were said to be on board MV Al Kausar when it was hijacked. Two crew members were abandoned by pirates earlier and now the remaining nine crew have been released as well. Following the attack, EU Naval Force said that the cargo dhow was located in the vicinity of Hobyo, Somalia. The naval force tried to establish radio communications but without success. The cargo vessel was en-route from Dubai to either Bosasso, Somalia when it was attacked in the vicinity of Socotra island. The master of the vessel had reported that it was approached by a skiff with men onboard, who tricked his crew by asking for water.

India's ambitious plan to tax goods and services

After a tortuous legislative battle, India is finally about to enact a unified goods and services tax that could provide a boon for the world's fastest-growing major economy. If the ruling party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has its way, the tax will be introduced on July 1, 11 years after it was first proposed in the Indian parliament. The new GST represents the most ambitious tax reform in India since independence 70 years ago. It could also be the most significant economic development in the country since deregulation and privatisation began in the early 1990s.

Indian Railways set to allow private freight trains

The Indian Railways has hinted that private companies may soon be allowed to run freight trains from their private terminals. Under the Freight Train Operations Scheme, companies can lease rakes from the Indian Railways or have rakes manufactured as per their specifications and run them entirely as per their convenience on the existing rail network from their private freight terminals. Companies will have to pay track and other usage charges to the Indian Railways. However, the train operations will be managed by railways. "As we'll soon set up the rail development authority, which will recommend fares, there will be a transparent mechanism to set usage charges for these operators. This will also break the monopolistic view that railways had on freight operations," a Railway Ministry official said.

JNPT to hire truckers for direct port delivery (DPD) containers

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) will select transporters to improve direct port delivery (DPD) efficiency. The move will help importers in Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Pune, Goa and Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) as these six routes have been identified for DPD. "The transporter will be required to work in a time-bound manner in order to clear the cargo within a duration of 48 hours, failing which the container will be shifted to the designated container freight stations. The cost due to the delay will be recovered from the transporter," JNPT Chairman Anil Diggikar said. Transporters will be appointed on per kilometre, per twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) basis and one transporter per route will be selected.

Draft maritime law intended to boost UAE shipping sector

Less than 9 per cent of money in the UAE's Dh75-billion-a-year maritime sector stays in the country, Khamis Juma Bu Amim told delegates to a briefing on a draft federal maritime law. "Is this right? Is this acceptable?" said Bu Amim, Managing Director and Group CEO of Gulf Navigation Holding, and chairman of the committee responsible for the new draft law, at a briefing organised by the Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre (EMAC) on Tuesday. "The bottom line: we need that money to stay in the UAE and we need it to create opportunities," he added. He said the first priority of the new law, currently in its second phase of development and due to come into force at the end of 2017, was in the national interest, including security. The second priority was driving growth in infrastructure, and only after that should the worldwide benefits be considered.

RAK Ports launches Marine Training Institute

DRas Al Khaimah Ports (RAK Ports) has announced the launch of the Marine Training Institute as part of the growing demand for specialised maritime training in Ras Al Khaimah and the northern regions. Captain Michael Magee, Harbour Master of RAK Ports, said that the continued growth and success of Ras Al-Khaimah in establishing its position as an active maritime trading centre has demonstrated the need to launch a private training institute. The institute will initially be located at the Saqr Port and training will be held at Al Jeer Port in cooperation with the RAK Civil Defence Department. (WAM).