COAL INTERNATIONAL TRANS

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China to invest in Russia's coal mining

China is reportedly prepared to invest US$6B in the development of Russian coal mines, as well as in the improvement of coal deliveries from Russia to China.

China is very interested in Russian coal and has expressed an interest in importing 15 mt each year by 2015 and up to 20 mt after the date, under the credit agreement.

According to Russia's deputy energy minister Anatoliy Yanovsky, part of the credit funds will be invested in the development of the Eleget coal field in Tuva, one of the world's largest coal deposits, as well as six coal mines and an enriching factory on the island of Sakhalin.

Another project of utmost importance for both Russia and China is the construction of the Kyzyl-Kuragino rail line aimed at linking mineral resources-rich but mountain-locked Tuva with the Trans-Siberian Railway.

It is expected that the planned inflow of the Chinese money in the development of Russia's coal mining and export deliveries will result in the growing stock value of the Russian-based coal producers.

Low supply hurting Indian power plans

India's state-run power company NTPC has rung alarm bells by saying depleting coal availability was upsetting its production plans and asked the government to compensate it for the coal blocks which have fallen under the 'No Go' category.

In a letter to the Power Ministry the company pointed out that coal availability was being affected due to the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) declaring three of its mines as part of the 'No Go' coalfields (non-mineable areas).

"Because of inadequate coal supply, Farakka and Kahalgaon plants are losing generation and are not able to recover full fixed charges," NTPC said.

The NTPC has decided to pursue the matter with the Prime Minister's Office and the MoEF, a Power Ministry official said.

The company's plea for clearing forest for a section of the railway line too was rejected by the MoEF in August, compelling the company to explore alternate route for hauling coal from two mines by conveyer systems, the company said.

But, unwilling to buy its argument on issues in securing green clearances for various projects, the Coal Ministry in September served show-cause notices to the NTPC, asking it to explain why the five coal blocks given it should not be de-allocated.

Logmarin reports strong business in 2010

Logmarin has said that 2010 has been a year of remarkable achievements for the company.

It saw great success with the floating terminals PRINCESSE RACHEL, RATU GIOCK, MARA and PRINCESSE CHLOE, which was developed with Bedeschi and Liebherr and built under RINA's supervision, as well as its involvement with the upgrading of the Toros terminal in Turkey.

In addition, Logmarin was involved in the preliminary design of supply chains for new power stations and commodity suppliers around the world.

In June it formed a strategic business alliance with cargo handling manufacturers Bedeschi and Liebherr under the name of BulkLogisticLandmark (BLL). BLL pools the skills and expertise of the three partners to optimise the flow of dry-bulk materials through a range of integrated cost-effective solutions for both onshore and offshore terminals, says Logmarin.

The MARA is Logmarin's fourth and newest coal supply project this year, contributing to the coal supply chain in Indonesia and Turkey.

MARA, owned by Singapore-based Scorpio Logistics, is capable of loading over 1 mt/month of coal. Its environmentally-friendly transferring operations are carried out at Samarinda, East Kalimantan, at a daily average loading rate ranging between 25,000t and 55,000t, depending on coal blending requirements.

Thanks to the availability of over 60,000t of floating buffer storage, loading operations are carried out smoothly and continuously even in the case of coal barge shortage, thus minimising demurrage charges. The MARA incorporates blending and mechanical sampling facilities, metal detectors, temperature monitoring equipment and weighing instruments.

MARA about to start her maiden coal transhipment operation in Indonesia

Record shipments for Richards Bay

After several years of supply problems, Richards Bay Coal Terminal (RBCT) announced record monthly exports of 7.38 mt in October, close to its maximum handling capacity of 91 mtpa.

RBCT chief executive Raymond Chirwa said: "It is also pleasing that the above records have been achieved while we have teething challenges, especially on the new off-loading plant and while other machines were on planned maintenance."

The state owned rail company, Transnet Freight Rail (TFR), which transports coal to the port, is now more confident that it will exceed the 65 mt of coal railed to the terminal last year. TFR plans to increase its handling capacity on the line between the Mpumalanga mines and RBCT to 81 mtpa but its operations have been affected by derailments and vandalism over the past few years.

Transnet Capital Projects' (TCP) director for ports planning, Dave Stromberg, has also revealed that the company is examining means of adding yet more capacity to the line. He said: "We are currently doing a study, which should be finished towards the end of this year. Our future plans for Richards Bay is to expand... beyond 81 million tonnes for coal."

Meanwhile, research by Deutsche Bank concluded that global thermal coal consumption will increase by 12% next year, further boosting demand for South African coal.

Deutsche Bank analyst Daniel Brebner said: "Thermal coal has the potential to be the best performer of the bulk commodities in 2011."

Demand is likely to be particularly strong in China and India, while other Asian markets are also likely to increase their imports. An increasing proportion of South African coal is being shipped to Indian and other Asian customers, so rising demand is likely to increase the pressure on RBCT and the South African rail network.