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Jan. 20th - 26th Issue

Port Wings

Ports | Shipping | Logistics
Maritime Exim Weekly Newspaper
Published from Chennai and Circulated among the trade across the country
RNI TNENG/2014/59741 Wednesday, January 20, 2021 8 Pages ₹12 Wing 7 Feather 23

India Strengthens Cargo Handling Capacity of Chabahar Port, Iran

New Delhi

Port Wings News Network

India has supplied a consignment of two Mobile Harbour Cranes (MHC) to Iran's Chabahar port, with a total contract value of over USD 25 Million under a contract agreement for supply of 6 MHC. The consignment of cranes arrived from Marghera port, Italy has been unloaded successfully on 18 January, 2021 at Chabahar port and presently undergoing trials run.

With 140 metric tons lifting capacity, multipurpose equipment and accessories like Mobile Harbour Cranes (MHC) will enable India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) to provide seamless services for Container, Bulk and General Cargo at Shahid Beheshti Port of Chabahar.

This is a step towards India's commitment towards infrastructure development of Shahid Beheshti Port of Chabahar.

The bilateral contract between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of India was signed on 23 May 2016 with a total value of USD 85 million for Equipping, Mechanizing and starting Operations at Shahid Beheshti Port of Chabahar development Phase- I. To achieve this ambitious aim, an SPV namely India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) Mumbai was incorporated under the ambit of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (I/C), Shri Mansukh Mandaviya stated that Chabahar Port is a strategic port with great national importance. The delivery of consignment of heavy equipment, including cranes shows India's commitment to the strategic connectivity of Chabahar port project that will provide access to markets in Central Asia. Development of Chabahar port is the anchor for the expansion of economic and mutual relations between India and Iran and it will give a further boost to the maritime trade between both the countries.

The location of Chabahar Port has strategically advantage and high potential to provide connectivity among India, Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and other CIS countries specially Eastern CIS countries to increase trade between these countries.

NHAI Plans To Raise Over ₹10,000 Cr via InvIT, TOT

New Delhi

Port Wings News Network

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) plans to raise at least ₹10,000 crore this calendar year by monetizing its assets, said two people aware of the plans, according to a news report in leading daily Livemint.

For the NHAI, successful sales of tolling rights on highway assets will be key towards funding its ambitious Bharatmala Pariyojana programme, which has pushed the state-run agency deep into debt.

"The NHAI plans to monetize about 1,200km of roads this calendar year. The first will be the InvIT (infrastructure investment trust), which it is ready to launch in the coming months. I believe the first tranche will be about 600km and depending on how

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Inside

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Challenge Remains Formidable

After remaining stranded, off the coast of China's deep-water international seaport of Jingtang, for over six months, the 23-member Indian crew of MV Jag Anand was supposed to arrive home on January 14.

But, the return of 23 Indian sailors from China on the cargo ship MV Jag Anand has been delayed after the vessel's arrival at Japan with the sailors has been deferred to 18 January. Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya earlier announced the return of the 23 seafarers from China via Japan on January 14. However, with the arrival of MV Jag Anand at Japan delayed, the sailors along with the cargo ship are expected to reach Chiba on January 18.

After India's persistent parleys with the ship owner, the Great Eastern Shipping Company, the ship set sail to the Chiba port of Japan for a 'change of crew' which will release the 23 Indians to return home after completing pandemic-related local formalities. The fate of other 18-member Indian crew aboard MV Anastasia still hangs fire, yet release of this first contingent should be a morale booster for the rest of stranded ships.

To begin with, it is a happy news but also a sad reflection on all concerned companies and regulating agencies. Even stranger is the fact that this delayed relief constitutes but a minuscule of the total of 1,400 crew members aboard 70-plus ships anchored off China's northeastern coastline carrying nearly 10 million tons of Australian coal.

While Chinese port authorities continue to deny them docking rights, Chinese buyers have persuaded these ships to wait and their numbers have kept growing. This cascade has become especially rapid since October when China imposed an unofficial ban on Australian coal and since then, only few ships mostly carrying iron ore, and some carrying coal, have escaped this stern cold shouldering and neglect from both sides.

China maintains that these ships are free to go anywhere and explains its denial for docking in terms of several shipments having "failed to meet environmental standards" as also in view of its general pandemic-related guidelines. The Hebei province — where most of these ships are anchored ashore in Chinese waters — have lately witnessed a spike in pandemic cases leading to stringent control measures and monitoring. But at the same time, Chinese importers — most of them State-owned companies — have already paid for this coal and need it to sustain their recently revived production lines. The confusion gets compounded as these importing firms and port authorities continue to work on cross-purposes.

As regards Australia, it presents a unique example among the developed nations that exports more than it imports from China. China accounts for over 32 percent of Australia's total exports. For 2019-20, this figure stood at $151 billion with its second highest export destination, Japan, accounting for mere $52 billion. Coal alone, on average, constitutes Australia's exports to China worth $10-14 billion per year. For China, this coal feeds into its enormous industrial manufacturing. This intertwine of economic interests explains this so far subdued Sino-Australian response to addressing this crisis in the making.Both Canberra and Beijing have meanwhile found an excellent scapegoat: they have put the onus on the maze of merchant shipping companies to resolve this crisis. These include coal importing and exporting firms, owners of ships, their sub-contractors, insurance companies, freight forwarding firms, crew providing firms, flag nations, maritime regulators and others.

All of these take time to streamline their complex web of operations based on shared profits and responsibilities. More often than not, their complex web hits aground when faced by exigencies like this.

Moreover, in their approach to such crisis, merchant shipping owners and regulators are driven by limited legal and commercial perspectives. For them, each day of delay imposes financial and efficiency costs where any clogging, like this one, begins to see them minimise their own costs by skirting responsibility, hiding behind legalese. When these regulators and companies cannot deliver relief, nation-states have to step in, as India did. But India remains an external interlocutor with this network of merchant shipping. Plus, Indian crew remains tied to the fine prints of their complex hiring contracts. All this perhaps calls for redesigning the remit and resources of regulating agencies. What remains equally intriguing is that in spite of all the pandemic-related angst and anger against Beijing, this crisis has also not triggered any geopolitical rhetoric for censoring China or for redesigning regulating agencies. It has failed to persist in global headlines or reach the UN Security Council.

As neither geopolitical nor commercial interests have triggered any redress of this crisis, it is perhaps time to explore alternate perspectives. India has repeatedly demonstrated its capacity and aim in rescuing national and foreign citizens from situations of distress. The challenge of bringing back all sailors aboard these stranded ships to their motherland in face of an uncooperative China, remains an uphill task for the Indian government

Port Wings

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SUBSCRIPTION

1 Year	₹750
2 years	₹1400
3 years	₹2000

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Account No. : 50200016324291
IFSC Code : HDFC0000166
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NHAI Plans To Raise Over...

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successful that is, they can bring in more assets later," one of the two people said. "The second will be 3-4 bundles under the toll-operate-transfer (TOT) route of about 150km each. NHAI will make these bundles smaller than in previous rounds to suit investors."

Tapping these two routes, the agency hopes to raise at least ₹10,000 crore by December, the person said.

NHAI has had a chequered relationship with the TOT model, ever since it was debuted in 2016. The TOT model was introduced to monetize publicly-funded highways, where investors could make a one-time payment for toll collection rights for 30 years. NHAI has successfully completed two rounds of such auctions since the programme was launched, raising ₹14,700 crore, but has failed to generate enough interest in two subsequent attempts. Its most recent TOT bundle, last September, was abandoned when the auction failed to attract even a single bid after waiting a whole year.

"NHAI has responded to investors' concerns regarding problems with previous auctions," the second person said. "Investors are looking for smaller stretches of roads that are geographically close

to each other, which makes it easier for them to manage. They also want shorter concession periods, and the NHAI has been willing to reduce the length from 30 years to 20 years. They might also decide not to set a reserve price, which investors have failed to meet in the past."

The NHAI's maiden InvIT is another path in alternative finance the agency intends to raise much-needed funds. An InvIT manages income-generating infrastructure assets, typically offering investors regular yield and a liquid method of investing in infrastructure projects.

NHAI's InvIT was approved by the Union cabinet in 2019 and preliminary documents for the public issue were filed with the Securities and Exchange Board of India last year.

In an interview to Mint in January 2020, Nitin Gadkari, Union minister for road transport and highways, had said the InvIT would launch with a preliminary issue of ₹15,000-20,000 crore.

For NHAI, it's vital to keep these modes of financing open and available even to keep project awards under Bharatmala Pariyojana on track. The agency's total debt swelled more than three times to ₹2.49 trillion as on March-end 2020 from ₹75,385 crore as on March-end 2017, according to data from credit rating agency Icra. The borrowings are expected to surpass ₹3.5 trillion by FY23 to fund the Bharatmala Pariyojana programme, part of the National Infrastructure Pipeline.

APEDA organizes VBSM with FPOs of APDMP and Millet Exporters to promote Millet products

New Delhi

Port Wings News Network

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) in association with Andhra Pradesh Drought Mitigation Project (APDMP), an externally aided project funded by IFAD, organized a Virtual Buyer Seller Meet with Millet Exporters and FPOs of Millet for establishing marketing linkages.

Considering the potential of increasing exports of Millets and Millet products and the focus given by Government for development of Millet sector of Nutri Cereals, APEDA is closely interacting with Indian Institute of Millet Research (IIMR) and other stakeholders like National Institute Nutrition, CFTRI and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) for perspective planning of five years for promotion of Millets and Millet products. This platform has provided an opportunity to the exporters and FPOs to interact with each other for supply and sourcing of products.

Further, efforts would be made on identification of Organic Millet clusters, registration of FPOs and exporters of Millets at Farmer Connect Portal developed by APEDA for further interaction for buy and sell activity, and identification of new Potential International Markets for promotion of Indian Millets.

Increasing interest in reviving the consumption of millets across various countries is favoring the growth prospects of this product in recent years within the country and for exports as well

Dr. M. Angamuthu Chairman APEDA, Shri H. Arun Kumar, Commissioner Agriculture, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Shri G. Vinaichand, COO, APDMP, Senior Officers of APEDA and APDMP, FPOs and exporters of Millet participated in the programme.

Millet is a common term to categorize small-seeded grasses that are often termed nutri-cereals, and includes Sorghum, Pearl Millet, Ragi, Small Millet, Foxtail Millet, Proso Millet, Barnyard Millet, Kodo Millet and other millets. Millets are the cereal crops generally small-seeded and known for high nutritive value.

Abu Dhabi Ports Accelerates Transportr's Inland Container Depot with Premium Logistics Services

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

Abu Dhabi Ports, part of ADQ, one of the region's largest holding companies, has signed an agreement with Transportr Ltd to manage its inland container depot (ICD) in Musaffah, provide handling facilities within the ICD and deliver fully inclusive transportation solutions for containers between the ICD and Khalifa Port.

The agreement will not only improve connectivity between Transportr's depot located within Ittihad Paper Mill LLC and Khalifa Port, but will also aid in reducing costs for transport of containers, while simultaneously improving the efficiency of the supply chain. Transportr had already secured the movement of over 15,000 TEUS for 2021 from several prominent industrialists located in ICAD 1, 2 and 3, and is expected to increase the handling to over 20,000 TEUs over the course of next year.

Saif Al Mazrouei, Head of Ports Cluster at Abu Dhabi Ports, said: "We are proud to have been selected by Transportr to handle the transportation of their goods between Khalifa Port and their inland container depot in Mussafah."

Saif Al Mazrouei stated: "Leveraging our expertise in delivering top of the line logistics

services, as well as our long-standing experience as a facilitator of trade within the emirate of Abu Dhabi, we will aid Transportr in reducing costs and streamlining their operations. Connectivity for the entire Musaffah trade will also be improved through reduced waiting times, increased availability and integration with shipping lines."

Alaa Hawari, General Manager of Transportr, said: "We're tremendously excited to work closely with Abu Dhabi Ports, the region's primary facilitator of industrial logistics. The ICD establishment at the heart of Mussafah will be instrumental as we target significant strengthening of our digital freight marketplace operations and infrastructure, in addition, to collectively address the challenge of empty miles within the industry."

At the same time, the company will provide ICD-related container handling services as part of the contract offering shipping lines, local importers, and or exporters the ability to collect and offload containers within the ICD.

In addition to assisting Transportr, one of the fastest-growing digital freight platform in the UAE, in achieving greater economies of scale through reduced transportation costs — thanks to the utilisation of mixed-sized containers to and from its Mussafah-based ICD — the operation is expected to improve supply between the companies under the group's umbrella via an ongoing shuttle service.

Adani Group and Partners To hold 49 % in Sri Lanka Port Terminal

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

India's Adani group and their partners will hold 49 percent and the Sri Lanka government a majority of 51 percent in a container terminal in Colombo Port, President Gotabaya Rajajapaksa had said.

Sri Lanka's East Container Terminal is vital to expand Colombo port which had reached capacity with the last terminal build by CM Ports of China now reaching capacity.

About a third of the East Terminal had already been built, but the balance is estimated to require an investment of around 600 million dollars.

Colombo Port trade unions had opposed bringing private investment to the port, claiming it will be 'sold'. However, port terminals are usually concessions, where ownership reverts back after a build, operate and transfer concession.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at a meeting with trade unions had said the last administration had signed an agreement involving Japan and India, and current administration had re-negotiated it for the government to have majority stake in the East Terminal.

India's Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd, was expected to have been named by the Indian government as their nominee to build the terminal.

President Rajapaksa had said Adani group and other partners would hold a 49 percent stake in the terminal company. Sri Lanka's John Keells Holding is expected partner Adani in the terminal.

India is the main customer of Sri Lanka's Colombo Port. President had told unions that 66 percent of transhipment business comes from India, 9 percent from Bangladesh and the balance from other countries.

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had urged Sri Lanka to complete the agreement. India is keen to have a foothold in Colombo, which depends on Indian transhipment. China's CM Ports already has a terminal in Colombo.

President had also told unions the next West Terminal would be given to Sri Lanka Ports Authority to develop and for them to come up with plans on how to do it.

LANKAN TRADE UNIONS REMAIN OPPOSED TO ADANI GROUP INVESTMENT IN COLOMBO PORT

Sri Lankan port trade unions said they were not convinced with the proposal of Indian multinational company Adani Group and its partners buying 49 per cent stake in the Eastern Container Terminal (ETC) of Colombo Port, a day after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa met them to explain the need for foreign funding, according to a report in Millenniumpost Online.

"The ETC is in its last gasp, we have lost everything, our aim is to retain the ETC's operation 100 per cent under the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA)," Niroshan Gorakanage, a trade union leader told reporters, adding that the talks with the president had failed. President Rajapaksa met representatives of 23 Colombo Port trade unions at the Presidential Secretariat here few days ago.

Rajapaksa said the previous government had agreed to sell the ECT to Indian stakeholders and take a loan from Japan to procure equipment required to operate the terminal. The president said his administration had re-negotiated the agreement, according to which Sri Lanka would hold 51 per cent of ownership of the ECT and the SLPA would manage the terminal's operations.

Speaking to reporters, union leader Shamal Sumanaratne said the president had explained to them the geo-political reasons behind the investment from Adani Group.

"He (Gotabaya) said that there was a danger that the Colombo Port would be losing the 66 per cent of transhipment business coming from India, which the port currently handles. We told the president, if that was the case, we would still lose the 66 per cent business even after the new deal was inked,"

Sumanaratne said. During the meeting, the president said Adani Group and other investors would own 49 per cent of the ECT, thereby remaining minority partners to the SLPA. Rajapaksa had reiterated that the investments would not compromise the country's independence or sovereignty. Sumanaratne said, "We told the president that public opinion was strongly against the deal. We asked him to give us a chance to talk to the Cabinet committee." The Cabinet committee is representing Sri Lanka in the negotiations with the foreign investors. Rajapaksa's office has said the new deal would bring economic benefits to the people in the form of additional employment and increased traffic at the port. However, trade unions across all political parties have united to reject the foreign investment in the ECT.

Industry Mulls Premium On Freight Rates Into China

Mumbai

Port Wings News Network

Talks of a premium on freight for shipping dry bulk cargo into China is gaining ground after ships were held up for months at the anchorage of Chinese ports waiting to berth due to a trade spat with Australia, reports BusinessLine

The wait to discharge cargo, some stretching as much as seven months after Chinese customs delayed import clearance, has spoilt their chances to get new contracts and extended the already delayed crew change on ships.

The global dry bulk shipping industry is looking into the "possibility" of levying a premium on freight rates into China, a shipping industry executive said. "Shipping has become the collateral damage of a trade war between China and Australia," he said.

However, others say that getting a freight premium would be a tough ask.

"Dry bulk shipping is a very fragmented industry. It's not like the container shipping sector where there are only a few players. In dry bulk, there are thousands of ship owners. So, nobody can decide anything, it is only the markets which will finally decide," said another industry source.

China- Biggest buyer

The main hurdle in getting a freight premium is China's status as the world's biggest buyer of dry bulk commodities. In 2020, China's share of global sea-borne trade was 72 per cent in iron ore, 22 per cent in coal and 22 per cent in grain.

"China has an upper hand in dry bulk shipping. If I demand a premium and don't get it, I will have no option to go anywhere else because large volumes of dry bulk trade is going into China," he said. "If I have some other location, then it's okay," he added.

Sour relations

Relations between Australia and China have soured in recent months after Australia called for a global probe into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic and China retaliating by putting restrictions on a range of Australian products, including coal.

At the peak of the crisis, over 40 ships were stationed at the anchorage of some of China's top ports, waiting for a berth to discharge cargo and sail off for their next contracts.

The long wait forced ship owners and charterers to re-work their commercial terms mid-way, including that on demurrage, a development that was unforeseen at the time of chartering the ships.

Some of the ships also had crew on board who were long overdue for signing-off, adding a humanitarian dimension to the crisis.

Gulf of Guinea Records Highest Ever Number of Crew Kidnapped in 2020: IMB Annual Piracy Report

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

The International Chamber of Commerce's International Maritime Bureau (IMB)'s annual piracy report recorded an increase of piracy and armed robbery incidents in 2020.

In 2020, IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) received 195 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships worldwide, in comparison to 162 in 2019. The incidents included three hijacked vessels, 11 vessels fired upon, 20 attempted attacks, and 161 vessels boarded. The rise is attributed to an increase of piracy and armed robbery reported within the Gulf of Guinea as well as increased armed robbery activity in the Singapore Straits.

Incidents rise in the Gulf of Guinea

Globally, 135 crew were kidnapped from their vessels in 2020, with the Gulf of Guinea accounting for over 95% of crew numbers kidnapped. A record 130 crew members were kidnapped in 22 separate incidents. Since 2019, the Gulf of Guinea has experienced an unprecedented rise in the number of multiple crew kidnappings. In the last quarter of 2019 alone, the Gulf of Guinea recorded 39 crew kidnapped in two separate incidents.

Incidents in the Gulf of Guinea are particularly dangerous as over 80% of attackers were armed with guns, according to the latest IMB figures. All three vessel hijackings and nine of the 11 vessels fired upon in 2020 related to this region. Crew kidnappings were reported in 25% of vessel attacks in the Gulf of Guinea – more than any other region in the world.

Once kidnapped, crew are removed from their vessel and can be held on shore until their release is negotiated. The furthest crew kidnapping in 2020 occurred almost 200 nautical miles (NM) from land with the average kidnapping incident taking place over 60NM from land, according to IMB.

The rise in kidnapping incidents further away from shorelines demonstrates the increasing capabilities of pirates in the Gulf of Guinea. Given these developments, IMB advises vessels in the region to remain at least 250 NM from the coast at all times, or until the vessel can transit to commence cargo operations at a berth or safe anchorage.

"The latest statistics confirm the increased capabilities of pirates in the Gulf of Guinea with more and more attacks taking place further from the coast. This is a worrying trend that can only be resolved through increased information exchange and coordination between vessels, reporting and response agencies in the Gulf of Guinea Region. Despite prompt action by navies in the region, there remains an urgent need to address this crime, which continues to have a direct impact on the safety and security of innocent seafarers," said Michael Howlett, Director of the ICC International Maritime Bureau.

Singapore Straits

The increase in incidents against vessels underway within the Singapore Straits has continued since Q4 2019, with 23 incidents reported for 2020. Vessels were boarded in 22 of the 23 incidents. Although considered low level – i.e aimed at armed theft from the vessel – and tend to take place in the hours of darkness, one crew was injured, another taken hostage and two threatened during these incidents. Knives were reported in at least 14 incidents.

Indonesia

Armed robbery reports in Indonesia remained consistent with 26 low-level incidents reported in 2020, in comparison to 25 in 2019. Vessels continue to be boarded while anchored or berthed at Indonesian ports with two crew taken hostage and two threatened in 2020. The continued efforts of the Indonesian Marine Police are credited for maintaining the reduced levels of reported incidents.

Another year without incident in Somalia, but crew must maintain vigilance

The IMB PRC received zero incidents of piracy and armed robbery in 2020 for Somalia. While there were no recorded incidents, the IMB PRC warns that Somalia pirates continue to possess the capacity to carry out attacks in the Somali basin and wider Indian Ocean. In particular, the report warns that, "Masters and crew must remain vigilant and cautious when transiting these waters."

Since its founding in 1991, IMB PRC remains a single point of contact to report all crimes of maritime piracy and armed robbery, 24 hours a day. Their prompt forwarding of reports, and liaison with response agencies, broadcasts to shipping via GMDSS Safety Net Services and email alerts to CSOs, all provided free of cost, help the response against piracy and armed robbery and the security of seafarers, globally.

IMB continues to encourage all shipmasters and owners to report all actual, attempted and suspected global piracy and armed robbery incidents to the IMB PRC. This first step in the response chain is vital to ensuring that adequate resources are allocated by authorities to tackle piracy. Transparent statistics from an independent, non-political, international organization can act as a catalyst to achieve this goal.

December Exports Move Toward Positive Territory as New Year Brings Ray of Hope: FIEO

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

Reacting to December 2020 export figures, FIEO President, Mr Sharad Kumar Saraf said that the monthly exports have moved towards positive territory as major export products show signs of further revival as expected. Marginal increase of 0.14 percent with USD 27.15 billion of exports is showing signs of revival as order booking position has continuously improved besides more new orders in the offing added Mr Sharad Kumar Saraf. He reiterated that the New Year 2021 has brought a ray of hope and optimism for all from the worst of Covid-19 and effective vaccines are expected to bring both life and economy back on growth trajectory with a v-shaped recovery in world trade. Arrival of vaccines have also helped in boosting the business sentiments for the sector as a whole, which can be further seen from the positive figures of the upcoming months said Mr Saraf.

FIEO President added that December exports also signals that our traditional and labour-intensive sectors of exports have passed the most challenging and testing times as both Christmas and New Year Season sales have shown positive trends with further improvement in coming months. Going ahead by this trend, we expect our inventories to be liquidated, adding further to the overall demand, observed Mr Saraf.

Mr Sharad Kumar Saraf
FIEO President

FIEO Chief said that the exports of other cereals along with oil meals, iron-ore, cereal preparations and miscellaneous processed items, jute mfg. including floor covering, handicrafts excl. hand-made carpet, carpet, ceramic products and glassware, drugs and pharmaceuticals, spices, electronic goods, fruits and vegetables, organic and inorganic chemicals, cotton yarn/fabrics/made-ups, handloom products etc., rice, meat, dairy and poultry products, gems and jewellery, mica, coal and other ores, minerals including process, tea and engineering goods showed either a very high or impressive growth or were in positive territory showing signs of further revival. Exports of 20 out of the 30 major product categories were positive during the month.

Mr Saraf also said that reduction in exports of major products including petroleum products, oil seeds, leather and leather manufactures, coffee, RMG of all textiles, man-made yarn/fabrics/made-ups etc., marine products, cashew, plastic and linoleum and tobacco and which are major constituents in India's export basket and related to labour-intensive sector of exports have also been of key concern during the month. However, increase in imports during December 2020 by 7.56 percent to USD 42.59 billion compared to the same period during the previous fiscal led to a trade deficit of USD 15.44 billion with a substantial increase of over 25 percent during the month.

FIEO chief also said that the operationalization of the new RoDTEP effective from January 1, 2021 will remove uncertainty from the minds of the trade and industry and being WTO compatible, the same would provide complete rebating of Indian exports by refunding the taxes including embedded taxes, not rebated through any other mechanism. However notification of the rates is the need of the hour. Mr Sharad Kumar Saraf urged the government to address some of the key issues including adequate availability of containers, softening of freight charges, release of the required MEIS benefits and clarity on SEIS benefits, resolving risky exporters issues, introduction of NIRVIK Scheme, long pending demand for the creation of an Export Development Fund for marketing of Brand India products and various other infrastructure bottlenecks with regard to customs and port clearances, which will further help in giving boost to our exports not only in FY' 2020-21 but also for the upcoming new fiscal.

V.O.Chidambaranar Port Creates Record in Handling Highest Volume From Container Ship

Tuticorin

Port Wings News Network

V.O. Chidambaranar Port's, Container Terminal Operator, M/s. PSA SICAL Container Terminal, created a new record by handling 4413 TEUs of containers, the highest volume from a single vessel on 10 January 2021, bettering the previous record of 3979 TEUs of containers handled from a single vessel on 10 February 2018.

The vessel M.V. SSL Brahmaputra with Length overall (LOA) of 260.05 metres was berthed at Port's PSA SICAL Container Terminal on 08.01.2021. After handling 4413 TEUs of containers at a gross crane moves per hour per crane of 25 moves / hour, the vessel sailed from the Port on 10.01.2021. The vessel agent for the above vessel is M/s. Transworld Shipping Agencies Private Ltd., Tuticorin. The vessel's service rotation is Tuticorin – Kandla -Pipavav – Cochin – Tuticorin.

This achievement is set in the context of a market that has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 situation, with container volumes through VOC Port decreasing almost 11% during the end of the third quarter of this financial year, 2021.

Shri T.K. Ramachandran, IAS, Chairman, V.O. Chidambaranar Port Trust, in his message stated that " the Industry being skeptical on the global merchandise trade due to COVID pandemic, the volumes handled at the Port are slowly recovering and have started to show positive signs since October, 2020. Moreover, the shortage of empty containers also has started to ease out and the influx of Exports & Imports through VOC Port is expected to surge in the coming months".

JNPort Becomes First Major Port to Sign Distribution Franchisee Agreement with MSEDCL

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), India's premier container port has entered into Distribution Franchisee Agreement with Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for supply of electricity in its area.

The Board of Trustees of JNPT in its meeting held on 24 December 2020 approved the proposal to enter into the Agreement. By this Agreement, JNPT becomes the first Major Port in India to sign the Distribution Franchisee Agreement in compliance with the Electricity Act, 2003 and resolve the hurdles in supply of electricity.

JNPT has five container terminals and handles over 50% of the total container cargo amongst the Major Ports of India. JNPT has allotted land to NSICT, BMCT and GTIPL on lease for a period of 30 years through Concession Agreement, and under the Concession Agreement, JNPT is responsible for providing electricity supply to the Terminals. With the support of MSEDCL officials, separate category for JNPT named as "Government/Semi-Government" was created for signing the Franchisee Agreement, which will have large load such as Ports, Defence, and MIDC, etc.

"With this agreement the process of legalizing electricity distribution once for all is resolved and will help JNPT in delivering its duties towards its stakeholders and we are thankful to MSEDCL team for all their support", said Shri Sanjay Sethi, IAS, Chairman, JNPT.

DP World Lays Foundation Stone for Free Trade Zone in Mumbai

Mumbai

Port Wings News Network

Global logistics company DP World has started construction of its Nhava Sheva Business Park (NSBP) Free Trade Zone (FTZ) in Mumbai.

The Rs 1000 Cr DP World FTZ investment comes under the Hindustan Infralog Private Limited (HIPL) joint venture between DP World (65%) and the National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) (35%). This venture has been created to invest up to USD 3 billion in ports, logistics and related sectors across the country.

NSBP, a Special Purpose Vehicle, is a co-developer for the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) SEZ. The FTZ is on a long-term Lease of 60 years and is located 5 kms away from JNPT. After signing a Lease Agreement in July and successfully acquiring all permissions & approvals, the company has started construction in full swing.

The gold rated facility comprising of 1 million sq. ft covered storage area with other cargo handling facilities, modern equipment, commercial building, etc., will be completed in 12 to 14 months.

The facility will be equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure like specialized multi-product and temperature-controlled warehouses, and a container yard with ultra-modern digital & security systems. It will offer round-the-clock customs clearance and value-added services to provide customers a one-stop solution for all their consumption and trading needs.

Its strategic proximity – to the largest container port in India, the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport and National Highways – provides quick and direct access to domestic and global markets. It will offer long-term advantages to domestic as well as global traders and manufacturers, by enabling reliable and fast movement of cargo.

Rizwan Soomar, CEO & MD, Subcontinent, DP World said "We are delighted to build the Free Trade Zone in such a strategic location. We are extremely pleased with our project's progress. Despite various challenges and tough business environment posed by COVID-19, we have been successful in achieving this key milestone. This reinforces DP World's commitment to India and strengthens our integrated logistics portfolio in the country.

We are further committed to complete this project in a record time and have it operational towards the end of 2021. Our vision is to provide our customers with a world-class facility for their trading needs in India. With its strategic location, the FTZ will help position India as a prime hub for exports to neighbouring countries and provide a huge fillip to the manufacturing sector in the country."

The project will help boost trade especially in sectors like electronics, IT, telecom, pharmaceuticals, chemicals & petrochemicals, machinery, agri & foods, and metals.

Essar Ports Growth Trajectory Continues in Q3 FY 21

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

Essar Ports, a leading private port infrastructure company, today said it had clocked a cumulative revenue for 36.5 million tonnes (MT) of cargo handling for the nine months ending December 2020, led by demand in power and steel industries and as the economy finds green shoots ahead of the world's largest ever vaccination drive to fight the C-19 pandemic.

For the three months ending December 2020, the company has sustained revenues for 12.7 MT, same as the previous quarter, as it tries to overcome challenges posed due to the C-19 pandemic era.

"Essar Ports' growth trajectory has continued despite facing several challenges during the entire year. Our cargo handling performance over the nine months is a testament of how Ports play a pivotal role to keep economic engines running and their key role for an "Atmanirbhar Bharat". We now look forward to a post Covid era now that India embarks upon one of the largest vaccination drives of the world. We expect a bounce back in the economy and revival of demand in next few months," said Mr. Rajiv Agarwal, CEO & MD, Essar Ports Ltd.

Why LNG Shipping Rates Are So High?

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

It has never been more expensive to get a container of goods across the ocean. But it's not just containers. Liquified natural gas (LNG) shipping is also rewriting the record books.

Argus reported that BP has just chartered the ship LNG Abalamabie for the equivalent of $350,000 per day. That makes it the most expensive cargo-ship charter in history, surpassing the $300,000-per-day peak previously recorded in the very large crude carrier (VLCC) segment.

What's different about the LNG record — compared to container and crude shipping highs — is that LNG deals remain extremely profitable for cargo shippers.

The cost of LNG in Asia is now so much higher than the cost in the U.S. that shippers can pocket massive profits even when paying record rates to transport cargoes from the Atlantic to the Pacific Basin.

When the VLCC sector hit its pinnacle, crude transport costs reached the point where they erased refiners' margins; refiners stopped booking cargoes and rates fell back. In the container sector, rates appear to be near the point where they erase importer profit margins. Some importers may even be transporting goods they will have to sell at a loss, because the alternative is to halt imports and lose market share to competitors.

In LNG shipping, there is plenty of room for rates to rise and for shippers and traders to still profit on the cargo move.

The problem — similar to what is happening in the container sector — is that there are not enough LNG ships in existence to handle demand.

Clarksons Platou Securities explained, "The Platts Far East assessment surpassed $21 per MMBtu [million British thermal units] at the end of last week, which compares to U.S. Henry Hub natural gas prices below $2 per MMBtu.

"This has fueled LNG spot vessel demand, leading to rates above $300,000 per day. While the rate jumps off the page, the freight cost equates to around $5.50 per MMBtu — well within the wide $18 per MMBtu spread between the regions," said Clarksons.

Clarksons assessed average rates for modern two-stroke LNG carriers at $215,000 per day. At this time last year, rates for a comparable ship were $103,000 per day.

But some shippers cannot find vessels to load even when offering to pay Guinness Book rates.

According to Argus, "A number of U.S. offtakers opted to turn down February volumes in December, because of an inability to find the vessels to load their contractual cargoes. Offtakers that opted not to turn down their February volumes are now finding themselves with cargoes that they cannot find the tonnage [for]."

HOW LONG COULD RATE SPIKE LAST?

In the case of container shipping, COVID has supercharged rates as consumers switch purchasing from services to goods. In the case of LNG, shipping rates have been driven up by extreme winter weather in Asia (LNG is used to generate power for heating), LNG production outages in Asia and Panama Canal congestion.

According to Stifel shipping analyst Ben Nolan, "The tightness …will doubtless ease with moderating weather. However, we believe the fact that prices are as high as they are is indicative of stronger underlying demand even after seasonal adjustments."

According to Jefferies analyst Randy Giveans, "We expect LNG carrier spot rates will remain robust during Q1 2021 as the arb [arbitrage] window remains open."

NEWBUILDS IN THE PIPELINE

Toby Dunipace, head of gas at brokerage SSY, is bearish on the prospects beyond Q1. One reason for concern is the large wave of newbuildings about to be delivered.

Unlike the container industry, where ordering has been low, the LNG orderbook is prodigious. Alphaliner estimated that the container-ship orderbook represents just 10.4% of the capacity of the on-the-water fleet. According to Clarksons, the orderbook-to-fleet ratio in LNG shipping is more than double that, at 26.1%.

In SSY's annual outlook released Monday, Dunipace warned, "The [LNG] market will more than likely slide during March at the latest, when a significant amount of LNG newbuildings are delivered. Newbuildings will continue to deliver through Q2 and Q3 and ships also come off time charter during this period. Overall, the market projections are very bearish for Q2 and Q3 2021."

SPOT EXPOSURE, RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

In the near term, listed LNG companies with ships in the spot market or with variable-rate time charters stand to benefit.

On the Nov. 17 conference call, Flex LNG CEO Øystein Kalleklev reported that his company has three ships on fixed time charters, three on variable hire and four in the spot market. Flex LNG's share price is up 68% over the past six months.

Golar LNG has less exposure to current rates, as well as significant non-LNG exposure. Iain Ross, Golar's CEO, said on the company's Nov. 30 call, "We do have ships on index-linked charters and a couple of ships that could potentially be in the spot market. But the vast majority of the fleet is on a fixed-rate structure, some of it up to a year and some slightly longer."

On Nov. 10, GasLog LNG reported that half of its ships were in the short-term or spot market, or had variable charters.

But even for companies with spot exposure, it ultimately comes down to timing. A round-trip voyage from the U.S. to Asia takes two to three months. Very few LNG carriers are on spot, unemployed and in the right position to take advantage of today's unprecedented rates.

Seafarers On Indian, Foreign Ships To Get PF, Gratuity And Pension Benefits

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

Some four lakh Indian seafarers of all ranks working on board Indian and foreign flagged ships moved a step closer to getting provident fund, gratuity and pension benefits after their long-pending demand was accorded "in-principle" approval, reports BusinessLine.

The Board of Trustees of the Seamens' Provident Fund Organisation (SPFO), headed by Amitabh Kumar, Director-General of Shipping, backed the demand at a meeting on Monday.

"An in-principle decision has been taken by the SPFO Board of Trustees to extend these benefits to all seafarers working on Indian and foreign flagged ships," Amitabh Kumar, who chaired the meeting, told BusinessLine. "With the in-principle approval, the SPFO will now work out the modalities, take approval from the Board of Trustees and make a recommendation to the government. The final decision to amend the Seamens' Provident Fund Act, 1966 to extend these benefits will rest with the government," Kumar added.

Wage agreement

While the provident fund for seafarers employed on Indian flag ships is covered by the statute, gratuity and pension benefits are still a bilateral arrangement between the National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) and the shipowners as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement or wage agreement for seafarers.

"For nearly two decades, NUSI has been demanding the benefits of provident fund, gratuity and pension should become a statute for all ranks of seafarers- officers, petty officers, ratings, others serving on both Indian and foreign flag ships," said Abdulgani Serang, general secretary-cum treasurer of NUSI, which represents general purpose staff employed on ships. Serang represents NUSI on the board of trustees of SPFO.

Petition to PM

Last year, more than 25,000 seafarers petitioned the Prime Minister during the Covid-19 pandemic to secure these benefits.

"Seafarers and their families are happy at this development which will take care of them when they are not working on ships," Serang said.

Seafarers working on Indian flag ships were getting provident fund benefits as per the Seamens' Provident Fund Act, 1966 enacted exclusively for them. But, Indian crew working on foreign flag ships were excluded from the ambit of the Act and denied provident fund, gratuity and pension benefits, Serang added.

Maersk Sees Little Change In Tight Shipping Supply Near Term

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

Demand for ocean shipping services is likely to remain unusually high and supply will remain tight for some time as shippers and carriers adapt to shifts in supply chains driven by the coronavirus pandemic, according to Robbert van Trooijen, senior vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Maersk Line container shipping unit of A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S, reports WSJ.

Manufacturers in China and other parts of Asia have boosted output as their customers in the rest of the world rebuild inventories depleted by the interruption of production in Chinese factories at the start of last year, Mr. van Trooijen said.

At the same time, idle capacity in the ocean shipping sector is at a historic low of about 1.5%, and there's little extra capacity coming online anytime soon, he said.

"The current supply and demand situation isn't going to change dramatically for the foreseeable future simply because there's not enough new capacity on order," he said. "That situation could continue for some time."

Prices have risen recently as a result of the imbalance in demand and supply. Mr. van Trooijen declined to say where he thinks prices will go in the near future. New-build orders are at their lowest ever in relation to the existing fleet, the executive said.

The flow of manufactured goods from China to the rest of the world is likely to see a temporary lull after the Lunar New Year holiday in February, as many migrant factory workers return to their homes to visit family. But demand is likely to remain high, he said. Mr. van Trooijen said he hadn't heard any reports of Chinese factories remaining open during the holiday.

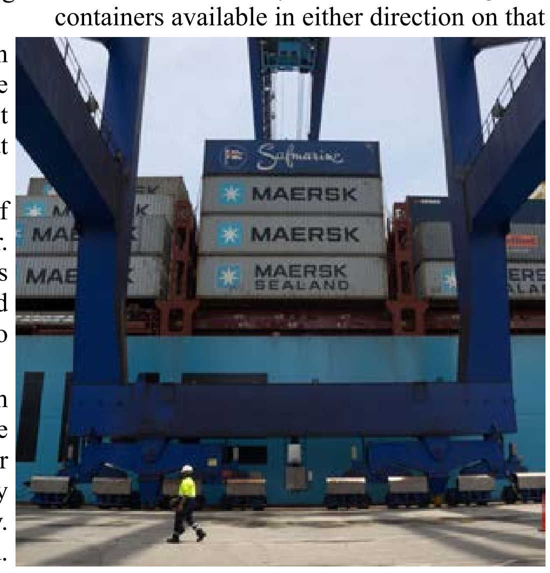
Maersk Line, the world's largest container carrier by capacity, according to research group Alphaliner, doesn't have significant new capacity coming into service in the near future and is instead focusing on opening up bottlenecks and improving the flow of goods on land as well as at sea, said Mr. van Trooijen.

"We're comfortable with the supply we have today, our goal is more to expand our footprint in services," he said. "Our position with landside logistics is modest in Latin America compared with other parts of the world."

Maersk is looking to expand its logistics business in the region both organically and through acquisitions, Mr. van Trooijen said, declining to discuss what sort of acquisitions the company would consider. Maersk has made investments and purchases in the past couple of years in areas such as customs clearance and inland logistics.

Brazil is a big exporter of commodities that are in strong demand in China, most notably soybeans and iron ore. Those commodities typically move on dry-bulk ships that Maersk doesn't operate in its fleet. But Brazil is also a big buyer of Chinese manufactured goods that move on container ships.

There is currently an acute shortage of containers available in either direction on that



route, exacerbated by tactics some customers are using to get around bottlenecks, Mr. van Trooijen said.

"Some clients book with two or three different" carriers to try to make sure they can get their goods in or out of the country, he said.

The company is working closely with some big customers to smooth operations, including implementation of a new system that guarantees them space on a ship while discouraging overbooking, he said.

CCTL - Chennai

ETA	ETD	Service	Vessel Name	Voy	Agent/Line	Calling Ports
22/01	23/01	PIC-2	SSL VISAKAPATANAM		SHR	HAM, LEH, LGP,ANR, TNG,RTM,MUN,JED
22/01	23/01	CCG	MESSINI		SHR	Cochin , Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Jebel Ali, Bandar Abbas, Dammam
20/01	21/01	CI5	SC MARA			TAO/PUS/SHA/SKU/SIN/PKW/PKG
20/01	21/01	SIF	SPIRIT OF MUMBAI			Colombo

CITPL - Chennai

ETA	ETD	Service	Vessel Name	Voy	Agent/Line	Calling Ports
19/01	20/01	TCXNEW	VERMONT TRADER	016W/016E	RCF	Port Kelang(North port) – Singapore,Shangha
22/01	23/01	FME	KMTC MUNDRA	2006W / 2006E	KTC	Port Kelang(North port) – Singapore,Shangha
25/01	26/01	TCXNEW	MOL GATEWAY	104	ONE	Port Kelang(North port) – Singapore,Shangha

NSICT - Mumbai

ETA	ETD	Service	Vessel Name	Voy	Agent/Line	Calling Ports
20/01	21/01	CSC	RITA		SMM	
20/01	21/01	BMM	GEMINI		EMS	
20/01	21/01	MIDAS	E R FRANCE		MSK	Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Port Qasim, Singapore
22/01	23/01	MIDAS	GH ZEPHYR		MSK	Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Port Qasim, Singapore
22/01	23/01	ADHOC	MAERSK BOGOR		MSK	Nhava Shiva,Mundra, Khor Al Fakkan, Port Klang,Singapore, Shanghai,
23/01	24/01	ADHOC	LAILA		SHS	Nhava Shiva,Mundra, Khor Al Fakkan, Port Klang,Singapore, Shanghai,
23/01	24/01	MWE	SPHENE		MSK	
24/01	25/01	MECL	MAERSK SELETAR		MSK	Colombo,Damietta Piraes Rotterdam, London
25/01	26/01	AS1	CONTI COURAGE		MSK	
26/01	27/01	ME2	NORTHERN PRIORITY		CCA	Pipavav,Hazira,JNPT,Jebel Ali,Salalah,Port Said,Mersin,Ambarli Port,Izmlt Korfezi,Novorosslysk
26/01	27/01	MESAWA	HAMMONIA AMERICA		MSK	Mundra, Nhava Sheva, Valencia, New York, Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah, Freeport
27/01	28/01	BLUENILE	TIM S		MSK	

APM Terminal - Mumbai

ETA	ETD	Service	Vessel Name	Voy	Agent/Line	Calling Ports
25/01	26/01	TIP	MOL GENEROSITY		ONE	Jebel Ali, Mundra,Hazira,Nhava Sheva
20/01	21/01	CWI	IAN H		GLD	Pipavav,Port Klang,Singapore, Shangai, Ningbo, Xiamen
24/01	25/01	CWX	KMTC DUBAI		KMD	
21/01	22/01	MINA	APL ANTWERP		CCA	Jebel Ali, Mundra,Hazira,Nhava Sheva
27/01	28/01	TIP	MOL GRANDEUR		ONE	Jebel Ali, Mundra,Hazira,Nhava Sheva
21/01	22/01	ASX	NAGOYA TOWER		TWF	Jebel Ali, Mundra,Hazira,Nhava Sheva
23/01	24/01	ME3	MAERSK KAMPALA		MSK	Pipavav,Hazira,JNPT,Jebel Ali,Salalah,Port Said,Mersin,Ambarli Port,Izmlt Korfezi,Novorosslysk
22/01	23/01	CIX3	XIN HONG KONG		CEA	Jebel Ali, Mundra,Hazira,Nhava Sheva
25/01	26/01	PS3	ONE COMMITMENT		ONE	Port Qasim, Nhava Sheva, Pipavav, Colombo, T.Pelepas,Tanjung, Singapore, Hong Kong, Ningbo, Pusan, Kwangyang, Qingdao, Dalian, Xingang
24/01	25/01	CIX3	NAVIOS AMARILLO		GLD	Jebel Ali, Mundra,Hazira,Nhava Sheva

VCTPL, Vizag

ETA	ETD	Service	Vessel Name	Voy	Agent/Line	Calling Ports
20/01	21/01	CHX	VENETIA	101W	MSK	Ennore, Krishnapatnam,Visakhapatnam ,Tanjung Pelepas, Xingang, Qingdao
20/01	21/01	CCG	VARADA	32	SMI	Cochin , Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Jebel Ali, Bandar Abbas, Dammam
22/01	23/01	ADHOC	RHL AURORA	SH103R	MSC	Nhava Shiva, Mundra, Khor Al Fakkan, Port Klang, Singapore, Shanghai
22/01	23/01	CCG	NEYYAR	18	SMI	Cochin , Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Jebel Ali, Bandar Abbas, Dammam
24/01	25/01	CCG	MESSINI	110W	EGI	Cochin , Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Jebel Ali, Bandar Abbas, Dammam
24/01	25/01	ADHOC	MSC IRIS		MSC	Nhava Shiva,Mundra, Khor Al Fakkan, Port Klang,Singapore, Shanghai,
25/01	26/01	MDM	CAPE MAYOR	20704E	WHL	Colombo
25/01	26/01	MDM	SSL KOCHI	196E	SSL	Colombo

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Kattupalli

ETA	ETD	Service	Vessel Name	Voy	Agent/Line	Calling Ports
19/01	20/01	BULK	MV IZUMO	1	PM1	
19/01	20/01	ADHOC	NORTHERN DEMOCRAT	1	ONE	Nhava Shiva,Mundra, Khor Al Fakkan, Port Klang,Singapore, Shanghai,
21/01	22/01	CCG	VARADA	32	SIM	Cochin , Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Jebel Ali, Bandar Abbas, Dammam
21/01	22/01	ADHOC	BLPL BLESSING	2102	BLP	Nhava Shiva,Mundra, Khor Al Fakkan, Port Klang,Singapore, Shanghai,
21/01	22/01	ACS	HYUNDAI JAKARTA	107W	HMM	Nhava Shiva,Mundra, Khor Al Fakkan, Port Klang,Singapore, Shanghai,
22/01	23/01	C13	SC MARA	5	WAN	Tuticorin,cochin,Pipava, Kandla,Jebel ali
23/01	24/01	TCX	MOL GATEWAY	114	ONE	Port Kelang(North port) – Singapore,Shangha
23/01	24/01	ACS	HYUNDAI COLOMBO	114W	HMM	Nhava Shiva,Mundra, Khor Al Fakkan, Port Klang,Singapore, Shanghai,
25/01	26/01	SHTL	GRACE BRIDGE	102	MSK	
25/01	26/01	CCG	NEYYAR	18	SIM	Cochin , Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Jebel Ali, Bandar Abbas, Dammam

Kakinada Container Terminal

ETA	ETD	Service	Vessel Name	Voy	Agent/Line	Calling Ports
28/01	29/01	KAK>CMB	RHL ASTRUM		SAMSARA	Halida,Colombo

DAKSHINBHARATH GATEWAY TERMINAL / TUTICORIN

19/01	20/01	BOX	MV.XPRESS COTOPAXI	21004S	BTL	COLOMBO-TUTICORIN-COLOMBO
20/01	21/01	CTS	MV.VLADIVOSTOK	169S	FAR SHIPPING	COLOMBO-TUTICORIN-COLOMBO
21/01	22/01	TUX	MV.OEL SHARVAN	21103	TWF	COLOMBO-TUTICORIN-COLOMBO
22/01	22/01	ADHOC	MV.XPRESS MAKALU	2002E	XCL	MUNDRA-TUTICORIN-PKG
22/01	23/01	BOX	MV.XPRESS COTOPAXI	2100SS	BTL	COLOMBO-TUTICORIN-COLOMBO
23/01	24/01	CTS	MV.VLADIVOSTOK	170S	FAR SHIPPING	COLOMBO-TUTICORIN-COLOMBO
24/01	25/01	TUX	MV.OEL SHARVAN	21104	TWF	COLOMBO-TUTICORIN-COLOMBO

International Investors Call On UN For Actions To Protect Seafarers

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

A group of 85 institutional investors representing over $2 trillion in assets, joined forces calling on the United Nations to take further action to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis for seafarers brought on by the global restrictions enacted to control the coronavirus. In an open letter to the UN Secretary-General, the investors in consultation with key marine organizations such as the International Labor Organisation and the International Transport Workers' Federation added their voice to the call to recognize seafarers as key workers and specific actions to ensure crews' health and safety while maintaining global trade.

"As investors, it is clear that this is no longer solely a shipping industry problem nor a crisis that the shipping industry can resolve on their own," said Jenn-Hui Tan, Global Head of Stewardship & Sustainable Investing at London-based Fidelity International, which is leading this latest effort. "Shipping is responsible for 90 percent of global trade and holds the key not just to a global economic recovery from the devastation of COVID-19, but to maintaining our current way of life."

In the letter to Secretary-General Guterres, the investors write, "We recognize that any solution here has to be premised on a multi-lateral approach aimed at facilitating seafarers' movement while protecting local communities from re-infection risk. As investors, we acknowledge our responsibility with regard to the companies of which we are lenders or owners to raise our concerns and seek constructive responses."

The signatories to the letter, which include leading global investment firms Achmea Investment Management, ACTIAM, Ethos Foundation, Lombard Odier Investment Management, and MFS Investment Management, identify what they call the clear need for action. They support the ongoing call to designate seafarers as key workers and the establishment of systematic processes to enable safe crew changes such as safe corridors and testing regimes.

As Covid-19 vaccines are being rolled out, the group also says that it is looking to the leadership of the UN to ensure key workers including seafarers are included in the priority groups by their respective governments and that a complementary arrangement can be made by the UN or the IMO to secure a reasonable supply of vaccines for seafarers to effect immediate crew change where it is (over)due.

"We believe vaccinating a critical mass of the seafarer population is the most effective way of resolving the crisis," the group writes in its letter while also calling for other actions. They also call for a publicity campaign to raise awareness as well as sharing the IMO's 12-step protocol with relevant entities to facilitate universal implementation.

They conclude by highlighting the role that they believe seafarers will play in maintaining global supply lines and economic recovery. "We believe that the sustainability of the maritime industry and the humane treatment of seafarers affects all investors as well as our portfolio companies that depend on these workers."

Agreement To Bring Stranded Indian Seafarers Home From Ship Off China

Chennai
Port Wings News Network

After months of trying and international support, Indian officials announced an agreement to permit one of the vessels caught off China to complete a crew change. Two Indian vessels stranded for months off the coast of China unable to unload shipments of coal they had transported from Australia became the face of the growing humanitarian crisis as a growing armada of vessels found themselves caught in a trade dispute between China and Australia.

In a message posted on Twitter on Saturday, India's Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways & Chemicals & Fertilizers Mansukh Mandaviya announced, "Our Seafarers stuck in China are coming back to India!"

One of the vessels that has been waiting off the Chinese port of Jingtang in the northern province of Hebei was cleared to depart after having been at anchor since June 13 waiting to offload its cargo. Under the terms of the agreement worked out between the governments and the Great Eastern Shipping Company, owners of the 179,250 dwt Jag Anand, the vessel left the anchorage on January 10 bounded for Chiba in Japan. Once the COVID-19 protocols have been cleared, the crew of 23 will be flown home to India.

The Jag Anand was considered the priority by the Indian officials as the vessel was the longer of the two in the anchorage and several of her crew members had already been well into their contracts before the voyage began in June. Some reports have said some crew members are aboard the vessel for more than 20 months.

A second bulk carrier, the Anastasia which is operated by MSC Shipping has been in the anchorage near the Caofeidian port in China since September 20. That vessel has 16 Indian nationals in its crew. MSC issued a public appeal on their behalf in December also suggesting that the vessels sail to Japan if China was not going to permit the crew changes. Highlighting the level of desperation among the crew members one aboard the Anastasia attempted suicide a few days ago.

The vessels had found themselves stranded after China refused to let the Australian coal be landed. Observers believe it stems from a trade dispute between China and Australia while China has said the issues were COVID-19 restrictions in many of its ports. Chinese officials had suggested with the Jingtang port closed that the Jag Anand should depart or seek permission from alternate ports to complete a crew change.

The issue came to light when in November when the National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) issued an appeal for 10,000 email messages to be sent to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and Chinese authorities to highlight the humanitarian crisis. International unions and other organizations responded to the call.

MSC in its role as the operator of one of the vessels noted that it was bound by the charter and international regulations which precluded sailing away from the port. MSC had applied for the ship to go to possibly Hong Kong or Japan if China was not willing to facilitate a crew change.

The Indian government became involved with ministers and their embassies reaching out to their Chinese counterparts. Mandaviya had reported that "Diplomatic talks are going on for this," suggesting in late December that he thought it could be resolved soon. Recently, the Indian government had suggested that a crew change could be done at sea.

No information was provided if a similar agreement might be possible for the Anastasia to also complete a crew change.

More Crew Change Complications Emerge As Virus Mutates

Chennai
Port Wings News Network

Crew changes are once more becoming difficult as much of the world locks down again following the emergence of several new and more transmissible variants of Covid-19, warns crew specialist Danica.

With travel corridors being closed and new travel restrictions imposed, airlines are once again cancelling or reducing flights which poses a problem for crew transiting to vessels. Ports too, if they have reopened, are imposing greater restrictions.

Henrik Jensen, Managing Director of Danica Crewing Services, warns: "I believe we may be heading for a new crew change crisis every bit as bad as last spring. Over the past six months crew changes have been possible in many cases, although they have been costly and complex. However, now we are seeing a range of new restrictions and barriers to crew travel while also facing some serious issues in relation to crew health risk factors. I can foresee this impacting heavily on crew changes for the next few months."

Danica specialises in crew deployment and has been assisting a range of ship operators in order to achieve crew changes over the past year. As a result, the company is fully aware of the latest rules and restrictions and well-placed to notice how they are impacting crewing.

Mr Jensen explained: "In response to the rapid increase in infections around the world, governments are imposing new or additional measures including travel restrictions. Although these measures are understandable in the circumstances, based on scientific evidence, and intended to provide protection for their populations, they also cause operational and logistical problems for crew changes.

"For example, requiring Covid-19 tests at a set period before travel isn't always easy to comply with depending on where the crew change is being effected from. Tests may not be available at short notice and there may not be available accommodation in which to isolate crew members while they await the results.

Mr Jensen pointed out that the more rapidly transmissible new coronavirus variants also pose a greater threat to seafarers and ships. "The new, more infectious variants present a higher risk that a crew member may be infected on the way to the vessel and transfer the infection to his ship mates onboard. This a particular concern during air travel, which requires crew to spend many hours in a contained space with large numbers of other people. Due to all the flight cancellations there are plenty of aircraft available to lease for private transits but this option is really only economically viable if there are large numbers of crew which is not usually the case.

"One or more Covid-19 infected patients on a vessel is a very serious situation as there is insufficient medical care available onboard to treat a serious case. It is very difficult to mitigate this risk and in some cases we have to abandon crew change plans if they involve a long transit or a high-risk area."

Greater implementation of the IMO's crew change protocols instead of national rules could improve the situation but Mr Jensen is not optimistic of this being a solution at present. He commented: " While I appreciate and support the international cooperation and effort that has gone into producing this excellent protocol, unfortunately I think that it may be a remote dream as we have local governments rules, rules in the transit airports/countries and individual airline rules, and I do not think it is realistic to expect all these parties to come together.

"We have seen that, when a country's health service is at full stretch trying to cope with infected patients, then broad and strict restrictions are imposed quickly. Sadly we have to realise that, when a country has a citizen dying every minute from Covid-19, then a handful of seafarers of foreign nationality left behind on a vessel are not a high priority for them."

"We are looking at some hard months ahead," Mr Jensen predicted "It seems likely that things will only get better once the vaccination programmes around the globe begin to take effect."

NEWS - BITS

Bunkering Of A New-Generation LNG-Powered Container Ships Begins In Rotterdam

The CMA CGM Group has embarked on a major program to build a new class of liquefied natural gas-powered vessels, as part of its drive to take the shipping industry's energy transition to the next level. The CMA CGM JACQUES SAADE, the world's largest containership powered by LNG and the CMA CGM Group's flagship, is today beginning its first LNG bunkering operation in Rotterdam. The Port of Rotterdam will play a key role in refueling the Group's LNG-powered fleet, which operates regular services between Asia and Europe. In November 2017, Rodolphe Saadé, Chairman and CEO of the CMA CGM Group, made the visionary decision to order nine 23,000 TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units) with an LNG power supply, a first in the history of the shipping industry for vessels of this size. This pioneering fleet is the product of seven years of research and development efforts. It will operate on the Group's iconic French Asia Line (FAL 1) connecting Asia with Europe. The line provides a weekly service comprising 13 calls over 84 days. These 9 vessels will be registered on the International French Register (RIF).

SCF Takes Delivery Of New LNG Carrier To Expand Long-Standing Partnership With Shell

On 15 January 2021, PAO Sovcomflot ("SCF Group") took delivery of SCF Timmerman, a new 174,000-cbm LNG carrier. The same day, the vessel embarked upon her maiden commercial voyage. The carrier is operated under a long-term time charter agreement with Shell, which will provide SCF with an additional USD 165 million of contract backlog.

The naming ceremony for the vessel was held on 12 January 2021. The carrier was named after Frans Timmerman, a 17th-century Dutch merchant who served as a shipbuilding mentor to the Russian emperor Peter the Great and played an important role in creating the Russian seaborne fleet. The naming ceremony was attended by: Igor Tonkovidov, President and Chief Executive Officer of PAO Sovcomflot; Cederic Cremers, Country Chair Shell Russia; representatives from the vessel's builders, Hyundai Samho Heavy Industries, and financiers, ING Bank, KfW IPEX-Bank, and Crédit Agricole.

As per maritime tradition, the vessel's sponsor, Ekaterina Grushetskaya, Vice President for Conventional Oil and Gas at Shell Russia, wished the new carrier, her master and crew 'calm seas and fair winds.'

Sakura Kuma Named As New Managing Director Of APM Terminals Japan

To support the expansion of the company's business in Japan, Sakura Kuma will join APM Terminals Japan as CEO effective 1 February 2021.

"I am pleased to welcome Sakura Kuma to APM Terminals Japan, where she will play a key role in the acceleration of our strategic transformation and lead the development of our business at the recently expanded Minami Honmoku terminals (MC1-4) in Yokohama", says Tim Smith, Head of Terminals, Asia at APM Terminals.

Prior to joining APM Terminals, Sakura Kuma held several leadership positions within marketing and sales, new business development and corporate management in NYK, as well as secondments to NYK Bulk & Projects Carrier Ltd, Yusen Terminal Inc. and Yokohama-Kawasaki International Port Corporation (YKIP).

"With nearly two decades spent in the port, shipping and logistics industries, Sakura brings extensive experience, strong management skills and a proven record of business development. We are very pleased to have Sakura strengthen our leadership team and drive the exciting growth of our business in Japan," adds Tim Smith.

CUSTOMS EXCHANGE RATES

with effect from 08th Jan. 2021

Notification No.03/2020 (N.T.)

ALL RATES PER UNIT

FOREIGN CURRENCY	RATE (INR) Import	Export
Australian Dollar	58.30	55.90
Bahraini Dinar	200.35	188.05
Canadian Dollar	58.75	56.70
Chinese Yuan	11.50	11.15
Danish Kroner	12.35	11.90
EURO	91.80	88.60
Hong Kong Dollar	9.60	9.25
Kuwaiti Dinar	249.20	233.60
New Zealand Dollar	54.75	52.35
Norwegian Kroner	8.85	8.55
Pound Sterling	101.20	97.80
Qatari Riyal	20.75	19.45
Saudi Arabian Riyal	20.15	18.90
Singapore Dollar	56.45	54.55
South African Rand	5.00	4.70
Swedish Kroner	9.15	8.80
Swiss Franc	85.00	81.50
Turkish Lira	10.30	9.70
UAE Dirham	20.55	19.30
US Dollar	74.00	72.30
Japanese Yen (100)	72.30	69.60
Korean Won (100)	6.95	6.50

We are not responsible for any mistake. ALL RATES ARE PROVISIONAL. The rates in these column are only meant for guidance.

Kerry Logistics Network Opens Chemical Logistics Centre in Cangzhou

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

Kerry Logistics Network Limited has opened a logistics centre in the Cangzhou Lingang Economic and Technological Development Zone in Hebei province, China under Kerry IMS Chemical Logistics to capture the market potential in chemical logistics. The logistics centre was opened and commenced operation on 8 January.

The Kerry IMS Chemical Cangzhou logistics centre was developed to strengthen Kerry Logistics Network's service capability in the chemical sector and an important base in Northern China, consolidating the Company's combined resources in logistics, export industries, an international-standard operating platform and transportation facilities. Located in the proximity of the Tianjin Nangang Industrial Zone, the logistics centre has a total area of 320,000 sq ft, comprising Class A warehouse, Class B warehouse, as well as office facilities, and has the capacity to handle 400,000 tonnes of Class A and Class B chemicals per year. The logistics centre was designed and built above Chinese national standards and is equipped with smart monitoring and management systems. At present, it is handling mainly industrial raw materials, mostly packaged in Intermediate Bulk Container (IBC), drum and pail. The warehouse will store 38 types of dangerous goods, including flammable liquids and solids, oxidisers and corrosive substances.

William Ma, Group Managing Director of Kerry Logistics Network, said, "The Kerry IMS Chemical Cangzhou logistics centre is the flagship development in Kerry Logistics Network's expansion of its chemical logistics business, unleashing its strength as a 3PL in the chemical and dangerous goods market. With this logistics centre, Kerry Logistics Network is confident that it will greatly enhance its service capabilities in chemical and dangerous goods logistics, enriching user experience and service quality to offer growth initiatives to the industry."

Edwardo Erni, Managing Director - China and North Asia of Kerry Logistics Network, said, "There is enormous potential and development prospects in the chemical logistics market. The completion and opening of the Cangzhou logistics centre will allow us to provide professional chemical supply chain consolidation services to our customers in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region. It will give support to our customers' national and regional framework and consistently optimise supply chain networks to raise the autonomy of the chemical industry supply chain."

Leveraging the geographical advantage of the Cangzhou Lingang Economic and Technological Development Zone, the Kerry IMS Chemical Cangzhou logistics centre is supported by Kerry IMS Chemical Logistics' strong chemical warehousing, long-haul trucking and distribution services and network. Not only can it fulfil the warehousing and transit needs of local chemical companies, but can also provide services to the Hebei, Tianjin, Shanxi and Shandong regions, integrating regional resources and upstream and downstream industries to create a sustainable industry chain. The logistics centre is the implementation of Kerry Logistics Network's operation strategy of synchronised distribution from the warehouses in Eastern, Southern, Northern and Southwest China, so that the logistics and distribution time nationwide is shortened, ensuring the timely delivery of goods to increase the competitiveness of its customers' products.

PSA International Handles 86.6 mn TEUs in 2020

Chennai

Port Wings News Network

PSA International Pte Ltd (PSA) handled 86.6 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) of containers at its port projects around the world for the year ending 31 December 2020. The Group's volume increased by 1.7% over 2019, with flagship PSA Singapore contributing 36.6 million TEUs (-0.9%) and PSA terminals outside Singapore handling 50 million TEUs (+3.7%).

Mr Tan Chong Meng, Group CEO of PSA, said, "2020 was an extraordinary year which saw the world collectively respond to the challenges and changes from COVID-19. As a Group, PSA has demonstrated agility and performed credibly against the backdrop of a global pandemic and resulting recession, playing our part alongside as an essential business to keep supply chains open safely."

Tan Chong Meng stated: "My deepest appreciation goes out to our staff, unions and management globally who have gone above and beyond throughout the year. We are also thankful for the continued support and partnership from our customers, partners and stakeholders, as we collectively strive towards greater resilience and sustainability as a global economy."

"2021 continues to give us the opportunity to Reset and Reform, as a business and as individuals. The way companies and consumers engage, transact and collaborate has evolved at lightning quick pace, and meanwhile, the climate crisis gains urgency. PSA will continue to

invest and innovate on solutions to improve supply chain transparency and to create possibilities for smarter resource efficiencies. Our goal is to move the world's goods, for the greater good," Tan Chong Meng added.

Port Wings - Maritime Exim Weekly Newspaper : Published by K.Sivakumar on behalf of Universal Media Associates, Old No.72, New No.149, 1st Floor, Srinivasa Complex, Linghi Street, Mannady, Chennai - 600 001. And Printed by V.Meganathan at Web Kingdom, No.115, Jani John Khan Road, Royapettah, Chennai – 600014. Editor: K.Sivakumar.