

new ships' deliveries +++ terminal news +++ service updates +++ casualties

The  
**Containershipping -Newsletter**



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**Panamanians Vote in Favour of Canal Project**

After several months of debates and propaganda campaigns, Panamanians have finally voted in favour of an expansion of the Panama Canal. The referendum was held last Sunday. About 2.1 million Panamanians had been convened to vote to reject or approve the USD 5.3 billion project and it was overwhelmingly backed by 78 percent of the voters. The project includes the construction of three additional sets of locks as well as massive modifications to the canal's fairways and approaches. In eight years from now, even today's very large container ships shall

be able to transit the waterway between the Americas. The Panama Canal's annual capacity will double to an estimated 508 million tons per year. Despite the apparent success of the proposal, the referendum was highly controversial: The 2,216 voting centres were under the custody of some 12,000 police agents and National Maritime and Air Service personnel.

## **IRISL Launches Asia – Europe Loop in 2008**

Unconfirmed reports suggest the Iranian shipping company IRISL will launch a new Asia-Europe loop in 2008. A few years ago, the company had ordered three series of 5,000 and 6,500 TEU ships from South Korean yards: Four 5,000 TEU panamaxs were signed with Hyundai, who will also build three 6,500 TEU ships for IRISL. Three more 6,500 TEU vessels have been ordered from Hanjin HI. The new Asia-Europe service will serve the Gulf Region with direct calls. Thus, it requires a fleet of ten vessels in order to provide weekly departures. Obviously, the loop is not aimed at express cargo from Asia to Europe, but rather caters for the requirements of Asia-Gulf and Gulf-Europe loads. The news of an IRISL Asia-Europe loop comes as a bit of a surprise since most analysts believed the Persian carrier would use the new ships to upgrade capacity on its existing services.

## **Maersk to Ship Cars in Containers**

Maersk Logistics recently announced to start shipping new cars in containers soon. The idea to transport vehicles in containers rather than on ro-ro ships is not new, but it never really caught on. Today, cars are already today transported inside standard containers, mainly within the US. Vehicle manufacturers frequently expressed the desire to be ship ready-to-use cars directly to dealers, instead of transporting them via ro-ro distribution centres. Transporting new cars in containers rather than on vehicle carriers will also reduce vehicle damage and theft. Container transport is especially favourable for distributing low-volume models and serving smaller markets. Maersk Logistics signed an agreement with Trans-Rak International to develop a new rack system to be installed inside forty-foot high-cube containers. Thus, it will be possible

to carry four standard passenger cars even five or six sports cars in one container. When not in use, the empty rack can be retracted into the container's roof void to make way for alternative cargo. Cars can be loaded and unloaded to and from the boxes without the use of any machinery. Maersk secured a first long-term contract for car transports and will export Lotus' Elise roadsters from Great Britain to the United States. On the return journey to Europe, American-build sports cars will be transported.

## **Stocznia Gdansk Hands Over Passat Spring**

Polish Stocznia Gdansk shipyard recently delivered another unit of their 2,732 TEU type containerships. The new vessel is owned and managed by Hamburg-based Passat Schiffahrt, who named her Passat Spring. The ship is 211.80m long and 32.20m wide and measures in at 32,214 gross tons.



**Passat Spring's first arrival at Hamburg**  
**Photo: Jan Tiedemann**

Passat Spring's seven cylinder MAN B&W engine produces 22MW and drives the ship at a speed of up to 22.5 knots. The deck load of containers in the photograph easily reveals the ship's charterer: The newbuild trades for Hapag-Lloyd. Passat Schiffahrt already own a sister vessel of Passat Spring, the

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2005-built Passat Breeze. Presently, this ship sails under the name CSAV Morumbi. Next year in April, Passat Schifffahrt is scheduled to receive a third sister vessel: Passat Star.

### **New MSC Joanna Replaces Silvana on the Silk Express**

South Korean Samsung HI has now finished work on another 9,178 TEU ship and handed the vessel over to the Mediterranean Shipping Company. The Swiss carrier named the new ship MSC Joanna. It was then phased into the line's Silk Express service, a loop that links China, South Korea and Northern Europe. Here, MSC Joanna will join a fleet of vessels of similar size. The introduction of Joanna will free the slightly smaller MSC Silvana. Your editors have reason to believe, Silvana will be transferred to MSC's Lion service – a typical example of vessels cascading through the services, since Silvana will free a ship on the Lion sling and so on. Some of our reader might have noticed that the exact port rotation of the Silk Express is a bit of a mystery: On some voyages ships call at Rotterdam. Sometimes Rotterdam is not served at all and all cargo goes via Antwerp. If both ports are served, the order is frequently reversed, compared to MSC's online schedules. Presently, MSC schedules the new ship to call at Rotterdam on November 24<sup>th</sup> and at Antwerp on November 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Hyundai Samho Deliveres MSC Bengal**

Hamburg-based E.R. Schifffahrt has recently taken delivery of yet another of Hyundai Samho HI's 8,204 TEU container ships. Projected as E.R. Texas, it is the eighth unit in a series of nine sister vessels. All of the ships were destined for long term charters with Coscon (three ships) and CMA CGM (six ships). However, it turned out that the French Line will subcharter the remaining two ships out to MSC. Thus, E.R. Texas will not turn out as CMA CGM Faust, but will instead trade as MSC Bengal. Despite the fact that MSC is right in the middle of a massive newbuilding programme, the Swiss seem desperate to add even more tonnage by means of charters and subcharters. MSC Bengal has been deployed to the Lion Service. Her maiden call at Antwerp will be on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Three days later she will

call at Hamburg. Her European debut will be concluded with a visit to Bremerhaven on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **Mitsui Places More Orders**

Japanese Mitsui OSK Line presently expand their fleet of tankers, bulkers, car carriers and container ships. Recent industry rumours suggest that MOL are very close to signing four 6,500 TEU ships from Mitsubishi HI. The vessels would be due for delivery in late 2009 and cost some USD 100 million per ship. MOL does neither deny nor confirm the order. Presently, Mitsui's order book with Mitsubishi includes confirmed contracts for eight 8,100 TEU vessels for delivery in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Some sources suggest that MOL will charter out four of these ships to APL upon delivery. In the next few years the company will receive three more 6,450 TEU P-class ships from Koyo. Additionally, Hyundai HI will deliver four 5,042 TEU panamaxs in the second half of 2007. Four more will follow in 2009. These ships will be delivered to Seaspan Container Line who will charter them out to MOL. Presently, Mitsubishi HI do not have a proven 6,500 TEU design, but the ships might be based on Evergreen's successful 7,000 TEU ships.

## **Emirates Shipping's Second Mainline Service**

Dubai-based Liner shipping newcomer Emirates Shipping Line has published plans for a second large international service to be launched very soon. The company that was established at the beginning of this year will commence a service that links The far East, India and the Gulf on November 11<sup>th</sup>. The venture secured charter deals for a fleet of six ships of 3,100 to 3,400 TEU. The new loop will be operated jointly with the Shipping Corporation of India and TS Line who will both contribute one ship. Stylised 'Hyper Galex', the sling will incorporate calls at Xingang, Qingdao, Shanghai, Ningbo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Port Kelang, Colombo, Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Jebel Ali, Dammam, Abu Dhabi, Jebel Ali, Cochin, Colombo, Singapore, Hong Kong and Xingang. OOCL and NYK secured slots on the service. The port rotation will add direct links between cities that have not been connected so far. Five of the six vessels employed will be chartered from Hamburg's Peter Döhle

Schiffahrt. The remaining ship will be Schepers' Adelheit S which is to be renamed Emirates Wasl.

## **Construction Starts on Pasir Panjang Extension**

The port of Singapore has profited greatly of the steady growth of containers transport volumes between Asia, Europe and North America. Today, Singapore is the world's busiest container port and enjoys annual growth rates near ten percent. In the first three quarters of 2006, the port handled some 17.73 million TEU.



**The Pasir Panjang Terminal  
Image by Google Earth**

In order to provide adequate capacity, the Port of Singapore Authority has launched another expansion of the Pasir Panjang Terminal. Three large containership berths will be added until April next year. Pasir Panjang is Singapore's newest terminal. It lies on an L-shaped peninsula of reclaimed land. The first berths at the terminal have been opened in 2000. So far, the facility provides ten berths. Each of these can handle in the region of 700,000 TEU per year. The present expansion scheme will eventually create 16 additional berths. Once completed in 2011, Pasir Panjang will have a capacity of 18 million TEU. Singapore's overall capacity will then reach 34 million TEU

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annually. Nevertheless, Singapore's administration presently investigates ways of adding even more capacity. The plan is to boost the port's annual throughput capacity to some 50 million TEU by 2018.

### **A New Humber Bridge for K-Line**

England's well-known 2,200 meter suspension bridge across the River Humber has now lent its name to K-Line's latest new container ship. The name had hitherto been carried by one of the Japanese line's 3,400 TEU ships. However, this vessel has lately been renamed Clifton Bridge, in order to free the name for K-Line's first super sized container liner: The new Humber Bridge is presently under construction at Ishikawa-Harima Heavy Industries, Japan. The vessel is scheduled to be handed over to her owners early in November. Humber Bridge will have a capacity of just over 9,000 TEU. Since the IHI shipyard builds two identical hulls in parallel, Humber Bridge will be followed by sister vessel Hanover Bridge very soon. The next two ships will follow in the spring of 2007. Until 2009, IHI will deliver a total of eight of ships of the new design to K-Line. The first four of these will sail alongside Yang Ming's U-class ships in a Far East-Northern Europe sling, where they replace the present fleet of 5,500 TEU ships.

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### **World Shipping Lacks Qualified Crews**

The past year's container shipping boom has not only resulted in a shortage of TEU capacity, but also led to a lack of qualified nautical staff. Even if state-of-the-art technology may help reduce the number of crew necessary to safely navigate a ship,

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there are still not enough sailors to sufficiently staff the ever-growing fleet. The shortage does not come as a surprise, since the surge in container transport volumes and the stream of new vessels had been predicted for rather a while. In an interesting side note, Maersk Line recently described the lack of Danish nautical personnel as one of the reasons for selling four M-class ship to Seaspn. Only last week, Japan's NYK ordered four ships from South Korean Hyundai HI: The vessels will be fitted with some extra accommodation space and equipment for the training of crew members. One of the ships is an LNG carrier, since this type of ship needs large specially trained crews. The remaining three orders are for containerships. Each of these will be capable of accommodating up to 20 trainees. Another well-known Japanese shipping company, K-Line, has opted for another solution for the problem and recently opened a crew training centre in the Philippines. The facility comes equipped with a life-sized main engine and bridge simulator. Mitsui on the other hand has entered a cooperation with the Dalian Maritime University in China. Over the next years, Chinese officers will be trained to work on MOL ships.

## **Introducing Fuel-Optimised Schedules**

Tight schedules, full ships and insufficient terminal capacity have forced container ship crews to sail their vessels at full speed much more often than some years ago: Very frequently, the ship has to make up for lost time or try and gain some hours to reach a favourable terminal berthing slot. This practise, together with today's extraordinarily high bunker prices, has resulted in some very heavy fuel bills. Running at full speed, a vessel's bunker cost can easily outweigh the ship's daily charter payment. In many cases, the high speed does not even pay off, since vessels have to wait at the anchorage for port congestion to clear. The Grand Alliance has now decided to tackle this issue and optimise schedules. Early next year, the members of the GA will add one ship to their EU2 (Far East – Northern Europe) service. The loop will then be served by nine ships instead of the previous eight. Thus, it will be possible to lower the ships' average speed and sail at more economical speeds and increase punctuality. However, the GA will have to be careful not to offer to slow passages and transit times. Your editors believe the new schedule will be laid out to offer rather

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similar transits between the last Far Eastern ports and the European main ports. The GA's move is also a pointer towards their idea of how the market will develop: Probably, vessel capacity will not be the most crucial issue over the next few years, given the massive number of newbuilds that will come on stream. Fuel economy on the other hand is likely to become ever more significant. Provided the EU2 loop's modification is successful, extra ships might be added to further slings' fleet line-ups, too. In a similar move, the French Line CMA CGM announced to add a ninth ship to their NCX loop: K-Line's 5,570 TEU Genoa Bridge will be chartered and introduced to the North China Express. At the same time, eastbound calls at Le Havre and Beirut will be introduced.

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This Newsletter is edited and compiled by Jan Svendsen and Jan Tiedemann. This pdf-file is available for download at "[www.jantiedemann.de](http://www.jantiedemann.de)" and "[www.containership-info.net.tc](http://www.containership-info.net.tc)". Feel free to contact the editors by e-mail at [jantiedemann@hotmail.com](mailto:jantiedemann@hotmail.com) and [jan.svendsen@gmx.net](mailto:jan.svendsen@gmx.net). We greatly appreciate your feedback and your input. More contact details can be obtained from the above websites. Please note the disclaimers displayed on the download pages. All information given in this newsletter is believed correct, but not guaranteed.

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