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April 2007, 17th week

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NSC Linked to Potential Mega Order

According to some recent, but rather vague media reports, Hanjin Heavy Industries will enter the league of builders of ultra-large container vessels. The South Korean yard is said to be in negotiations with Hamburg-based NSC Schiffahrtsgesellschaft over a series of 12,000-TEU newbuildings. Industry sources say that Hanjin Heavy already developed a design for a 12,000 TEU container carrier to the point that the yard was now ready to accept orders. Since Hanjin's cramped facilities within the port of Busan can only accommodate vessels of up to 320 meters, the mega carriers would be constructed at Hanjin Heavy's new large-scale shipyard at the Subic Bay free-trade zone in the Philippines. If the deal should actually materialise it

would mean a giant leap for NSC, who so far only contracted ships of up to 5,100 TEU. Allegedly, the deal would include four firm orders as well as options for several more ships. Hanjin Heavy plans to build the super carriers in the Subic Bay yard's second dry dock. This dock which is not even under construction yet, will measure 460 metres in length and 135 metres in width. Analysts believe that Hanjin should be able to deliver newbuildings from the second dry dock from mid-2010. Presently, work is proceeding on the first graving dock of 370 metres length and 100 metres width. Hanjin who plan to invest up to USD one billion in Subic Bay, is not the first South Korean shipyard that established a shipbuilding facility abroad: Deawoo already operates a yard at Mangalia on the Romanian Black Sea coast. Several other South Korean yards have acquired stakes in block factories in China. Some like for example STX plan to built entire ships in China too.

First Time Around in Europe: Hyundai Bangkok



Hyundai Bangkok off Cuxhaven, bound for Hamburg
photo: Jan Svendsen

The past weekend saw quite a number of maiden arrivals of new large containerships, at least from a north European point of view. One of those new vessels was Hyundai Bangkok. The ship is employed in Hyundai Merchant Marine's AEX loop and

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called at Rotterdam on Thursday. The vessel later sailed to Hamburg where it arrived late on Sunday. A call at Thamesport will eventually conclude the carrier's first European round trip. Built at Hyundai Heavy Industries' Ulsan yard, the new Hyundai Bangkok is 300.20 metres long and 40 metres wide. She has a capacity of 6,800 TEU. Driven by an MAN-B&W-designed 10-cylinder engine rated at 57MW, the ship has a top speed of about 25 knots.

Xin Beijing Delivered

The shipbuilders at Samsung Heavy's South Korean Koje Island yard recently delivered yet another 9,600 TEU container vessel to CSCL. The ship was originally planned as Xin Hamburg, but for some reason the decision makers at China Shipping changed their minds and named the ship Xin Beijing. The vessel will follow its two earlier sisters into CSCL's standalone AEX 1 between the Far East and northern Europe. In Europe, The AEX 1 includes calls at Felixstowe, Hamburg and Antwerp, where the new ship is expected in May.

Kota Laju in Europe

Pacific International Lines third new vessel of the Kota-L-class premiered at Hamburg over the weekend. The new ship named Kota Laju was built at Dalian new shipyard in northern China. Like her earlier sisters, Laju is employed in PIL's and Wan Hai Steamship's joint Far East Europe Service. Until very recently, this loop was by far the smallest-capacity full container service between northern Europe and the Far East. Both companies employed vessels of only around 2,500 TEU. With the arrival of Kota Laju, the loop's fleet has now been almost completely upgraded to a homogenous 4,250 TEU: Four of Wan Hai's 50X-class ships sail along side a trio of PIL's L-classes. A fourth ship will be delivered very soon. After 22 days of continuous steaming from Port Kelang, Kota Laju called at Rotterdam and Hamburg over the weekend. The vessel then sailed to Antwerp from where it will return to the far East with intermediate stops at Aden, Port Kelang and Singapore. Please turn to our online ship data base for more photos and vessel particulars.



**The new Kota Laju departed Hamburg on Sunday
photo: Jan Tiedemann**

Humen Bridge

Japanese K-Line has now taken delivery of the last unit in a quartet of 9,100 TEU containerships from Ishikawajima-Harima. The new ship was named Humen Bridge. Its earlier sisters were Humber, Harbour and Hannover Bridge. All four units have been built at IHI's shipyard at Kure. The new Humen Bridge will enter K-Line's and Yang Ming's joint Far-East to northern Europe service. The loop will thus be fully upgraded to ships of at least 8,200 TEU. All four of K-Line's H-class ships sail in this service along with a quartet of Yang Ming's Hyundai-built U-class carriers. Humen Bridge's northern European calls are scheduled for Rotterdam, Hamburg and Antwerp. The ship is bound to arrive in Europe in May.

Hanjin Orders 9,200 TEU Quintet

It looks like South Korean Hanjin Shipping will finally succumb to market realities and buy container ships of the +9,000 TEU class. For years Hanjin claimed that the company's route network would not need any ships of over 8,000 TEU. The biggest ships in the Hanjin fleet were a quintet of Hyundai-built 7,500 TEU carriers employed on the Transpacific run. Other

than that, the shipping company's fleet mainly consisted of ships of 5,500 to 6,500 TEU. However, it seems that a change of mind has now taken place: Hanjin recently turned to Samsung Heavy Industries for three new +8,000 TEU ships for delivery in 2010. Now it was Hyundai Heavy Industries who announced to have secured an order for five 8,200 TEU ships from Hanjin. These vessels are also slated for delivery in 2010. Officially classed as +8,000 TEU ships, your editors believe the vessels are more likely to turn out as 9,200 units with an 18-row wide design.

Port of Americas Progress

The new Port of the Americas at Ponce, Puerto Rico could be operational as soon as next year. This is how port executive director Ramon Torres Morales summarised the most recent developments at Ponce. He stated that dredging of the port's approach channel to 15 metres has been completed and construction of the first quays finished. The facility could be operational next February with an annual capacity of 250,000 TEU. A yearly throughput capacity of 800,000 TEU would be achievable within a few years. Bids will soon be open to potential operators with several carriers and terminal operators seemingly interested in the project. Given the latest toll hikes for the Panama Canal, the new port hopes to capitalise on trans-Suez services bound the north American East Coast and the Gulf ports.

CSCL Zeebrügge on Her First European Round-Trip

The new Samsung-built CSCL Zeebrügge, a sister vessel of the abovementioned Xin Beijing, premiered in Northern Europe on Wednesday. The ship first called at Felixstowe and later continued to Hamburg, where it arrived early on Sunday. After leaving the German port, the vessel is scheduled to perform a call at Antwerp early this week and return to the Far East after that. With both CSCL Zeebrügge and Xin Beijing in service and CSCL Long Beach on the Horizon, the AEX-1 Asia Express will soon employ a fleet of four 8,500 TEU and four 9,600 TEU ships. The new ship's dimensions and specifications are available from our online vessel data base.



CSCL Zeebrugge at Hamburg's Eurogate
photo: Jan Svendsen

Maersk Line Revamp Transpacific AC2

Over the last few weeks more and more information about a massive upgrade of Maersk Line's AC2 transpacific service has become available. The Danish carrier's AC2 is a sling that connects southern China with Mexico and Panama. The service currently employs a fleet of seven vessels with an average container intake of 4,200 TEU. The ships are frequently running to capacity. So far, it was not possible to deploy significantly larger vessels to the loop, since the Mexican port of Lázaro Cárdenas proved to be a bottleneck in terms of ship size. With massive investments both into the vessel fleet and the terminal, this is now going to change. Starting late in May, Maersk Line will cut the AC2-fleet by one ship and replace the remaining six units with vessels of +8,000 TEU. Over a period of only nine weeks, Maersk will introduce six newbuilds from Hyundai Heavy Industries. These ships of the Maersk Seletar class were originally ordered as 6,024 TEU units back in 2004. Your editors however believe the vessels will actually take in more than 8,000 standard boxes. With such ships on the horizon, action at Lázaro Cárdenas is imperative: The port's single 286-metre-berth is presently only able to accept ships

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with a beam of up to 14 rows and a draught of 13.5 metres. Over the next few years, the terminal will thus be extended to a quay length of 1,350 metres with a clearance of 16 metres. The stacking yard area will be extended from 15 hectares to 85. Once completed, the new facility will have an annual capacity of two million TEU and will be able to accommodate 18-wide ships. The inauguration of the first terminal extension at Lázaro Cárdenas will coincide with the fleet upgrade in the AC2. The port of Lázaro Cárdenas is located 350 kilometres from Mexico City with its estimated population of 25 million in the greater urban region. The terminal's strategic location is further enhanced by a very good railway connection with its hinterland, especially Mexico city and the neighbouring city of Puebla, where a large share of Mexico's industry is located. The port is thus conveniently placed to handle Mexican imports from the Far East. Furthermore, compared to Californian ports, Lázaro Cárdenas lies closer to cities in the southern part of the central United States. On the downside, two days of additional steaming time from North China to Cárdenas do not compare favourable to Californian ports like Long Beach and Los Angeles. The Lázaro Cárdenas terminal is owned by APMT who recently acquired it from Hutchison Whampoa.



planned terminal developments in Lázaro Cárdenas
map: Jan Tiedemann, image source: Google Earth

Döhle Eyes Samsung Supercarrier Order

It's not only NSC Schiffahrt who have recently been believed to be negotiating supercarrier orders: Another Hamburg-based company, Peter Döhle, is rumoured to be close to ordering a new class of 12,000 TEU vessels from Samsung Heavy. Negotiations are believed to have reached an advanced stage for a series of four ships. Worth USD 160 million apiece, the vessels might come on stream in 2010. Samsung stated that no order has been placed yet and that not details of the ships have been determined so far. Nevertheless, Samsung confirmed, that the two parties are in discussion about the project. Shipping analysts believe the USD 640 million order will be signed rather soon. Presently it is not clear whether a charter for the quartet has already been arranged, but it is highly unlikely that Döhle would speculatively order such massive carriers. Now that Maersk, MSC and CMA CGM have pushed ahead, it is quite likely that a number of carriers like CSCL, Evergreen or Cosco might follow suit. A Samsung-built 12,000 TEU ship would probably be 366 metres long an 48.4 metres, that is 19 rows, wide. Only last month, Peter Döhle announced a joint venture with a division of General Electric to invest in container tonnage. GE's transportation finance subsidiary will be in charge of ship financing, with Peter Döhle providing brokerage and ship management.

Like some nice ship-photos? Visit our friends' website: [www. ship-gallery.de](http://www.ship-gallery.de)



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A First Glimpse of NYK Venus

Let's round up our coverage of new ship arrivals with the NYK Venus, the third Hyundai Heavy-built 9,200 TEU vessel for Japan's NYK Line. The ship's design follows the lines of Venus'

two earlier sisters NYK Vega and NYK Vesta. Soon to be joined by NYK Virgo, the V-class-vessels presently are the largest ships in the Grand Alliance fleet. They measure 338.20 metres in length and 45.60 metres in width. Driven by a B&W 12K98MC engine, they reach a service speed of 24.5 knots. The ships' northern European calls are limited to Rotterdam, Hamburg and Southampton.



NYK Venus off Rotterdam
photo: Jan Svendsen

This Newsletter is edited and compiled by Jan Svendsen and Jan Tiedemann. This pdf-file is available for download at "www.jantiedemann.de" and "www.containership-info.net.tc". Feel free to contact the editors by e-mail at jantiedemann@hotmail.com and 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.

The Weekly Containershipping-Newsletter
by Jan Svendsen and Jan Tiedemann

For assistance with the present issue, the editors gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Bent Mikkelsen, Bert Vernimmen, Helge Barth and Klaus Masuch.