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# Indian Navy foils Somali pirates' plot, rescues 20 Iranian crew from hijacked Fishing ship



**The Navy intercepted the vessel and freed its crew from 12 armed pirates, with Indian Air Force support, after the hijacking off northeastern Somalia on Thursday.**

The Indian Navy has rescued all 20 crew members of a fishing vessel hijacked by heavily armed Somali pirates in the Arabian Sea, completing a meticulously coordinated 48-hour operation more than 3,000 km from Mumbai.

The Navy located and intercepted the vessel before securing the release of the crew and the ship from the pirates on Monday, with support from the Air Force. The operation came amid a resurgence of Somali piracy across the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean, where recent hijackings have re

newed concerns about threats to commercial shipping.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the Indian Navy for successfully locating, intercepting and securing the release of the Iranian fishing vessel, Azini, and its crew members. The operation was carried out with timely support from the Indian Air Force, he said.

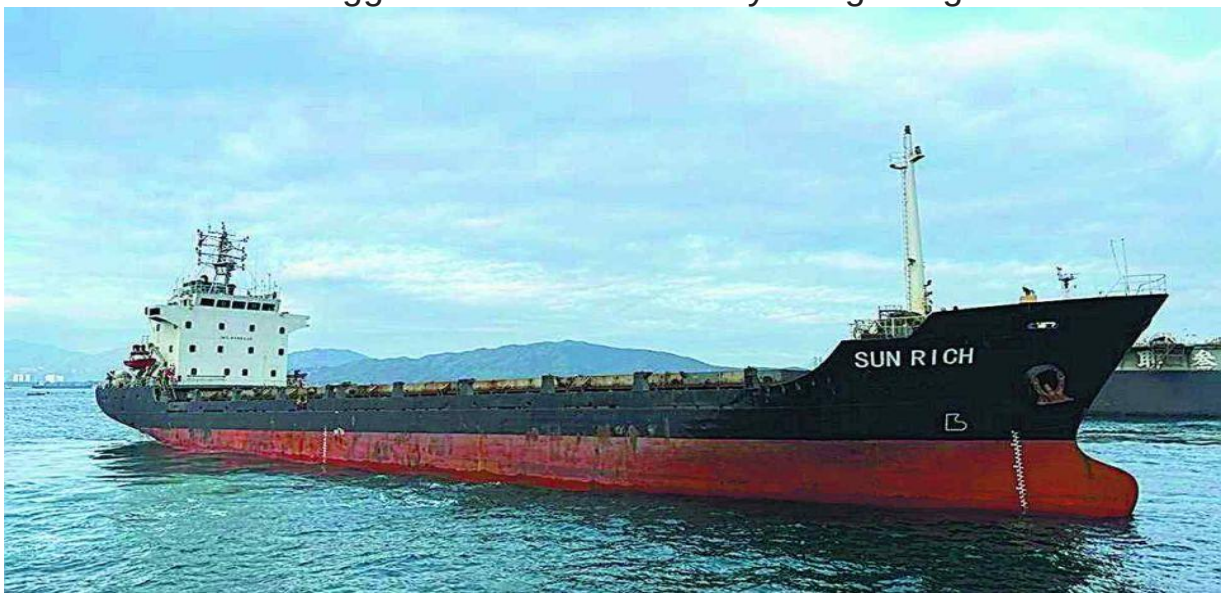
He pointed out that the operation was a testimony of "Indian Navy's high operational readiness and ability to respond decisively to maritime threats across the region."

The rescue operation came after Somali pirates hijacked the Azini off the northeastern coast of Somalia, raising concerns that the vessel could be used as a base for further attacks on commercial shipping. The vessel was seized on Thursday between the coastal towns of Bandar Bayla and Hafun in northeastern Somalia.

According to officials, 12 pirates had boarded and seized the fishing vessel. At the time of the hijacking, it was carrying 21 Iranian crew members and two Somali security guards, taking the total number of people on board to 23.

The Maritime Security Centre Indian Ocean had issued an alert about the hijacking, warning that the vessel was approaching a commercial shipping lane and could potentially be used as a "mother ship" to facilitate further attacks on merchant vessels.(Source: India Today)

## Guns from U.S. smuggled into North Korea by Hong Kong network




**The cargo ship Sun Rich. PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN**

The smuggling operation is believed to still be active, amid weakened international efforts to monitor illicit arms shipments to North Korea.

**TOKYO** – A network of private individuals, including a Chinese national, based in the free-trade port of Hong Kong played a key role in a weapons-smuggling operation involving North Korea that led to the arrest of a Chinese man in the United States in 2024, according to multiple people familiar with the case.

The network used an elaborate scheme to transport firearms that had been shipped from the United States to Hong Kong, concealing them among the household belongings of North Korean diplomats returning home. The smuggling operation is believed to still be active, amid weakened international efforts to monitor illicit arms shipments to North Korea.

According to U.S. prosecutors, Shenghua Wen, acting on instructions from North Korean officials, shipped firearms he had procured in the United States from the Port of Long Beach, Calif., to Hong Kong in December 2023. The weapons arrived in Hong Kong around Jan. 1, 2024, and were subsequently transported to North Korea.

United Nations Security Council resolutions prohibit arms exports to North Korea. Wen was sentenced in August last year.

According to people familiar with the operation, the smuggling effort from Hong Kong was led by a Hong Kong man who effectively controlled a trading company designated as the recipient of the shipment from the United States. He had also been contracted to transport the household belongings of North Korean diplomats returning home following the closure of North Korea's Consulate General in Hong Kong in 2023.

The man waited for the weapons shipped from the United States in December 2023 to arrive in Hong Kong, and then arranged for them to be loaded alongside the diplomats' belongings onto a cargo ship that was named the Sun Rich and flying the flag of Sierra Leone at the time. The weapons were falsely declared as being "refrigerators" and "kitchen equipment."

The deception exploited Hong Kong's relatively simple import and export procedures as a free-trade port handling enormous volumes of cargo, as well as the expectation that customs authorities would not closely inspect shipments containing diplomats' personal belongings.

The diplomats themselves were entirely unaware of the scheme, according to the sources.

Others involved in the smuggling operation included a Taiwanese man who effectively owned the cargo ship and a Chinese man who was the de facto operator of a shipping company, the sources said.

The network continues to operate a fleet of four cargo ships, according to the sources. Its recent activities have included shipments of iron and steel products, whose export to North Korea are also prohibited under U.N. Security Council sanctions. The network may also be planning to smuggle petroleum from Malaysia to North Korea.

The U.N. Security Council's Panel of Experts, which monitored compliance with sanctions imposed on North Korea, was forced to cease operations at the end of April 2024, after Russia vetoed a resolution to extend its mandate.

Katsuhisa Furukawa, a former member of the panel, examined U.S. prosecution records and cross-checked them against several documents provided to The Yomiuri Shimbun by people familiar with the smuggling operation.

Based on his analysis, Furukawa concluded that there were "substantial grounds to regard the accounts as reasonable and credible."

The cargo ship used to smuggle the weapons has repeatedly sailed under different names and flags. It has also been confirmed that the vessel has repeatedly engaged in unusual behavior, including switching off its automatic identification system, which transmits and receives information about a ship's location and other data, after leaving Hong Kong and reaching waters around the Yellow Sea.

According to Furukawa, the vessel has "almost no record of calling at the ports it had declared as its destinations, including ports in South Korea."

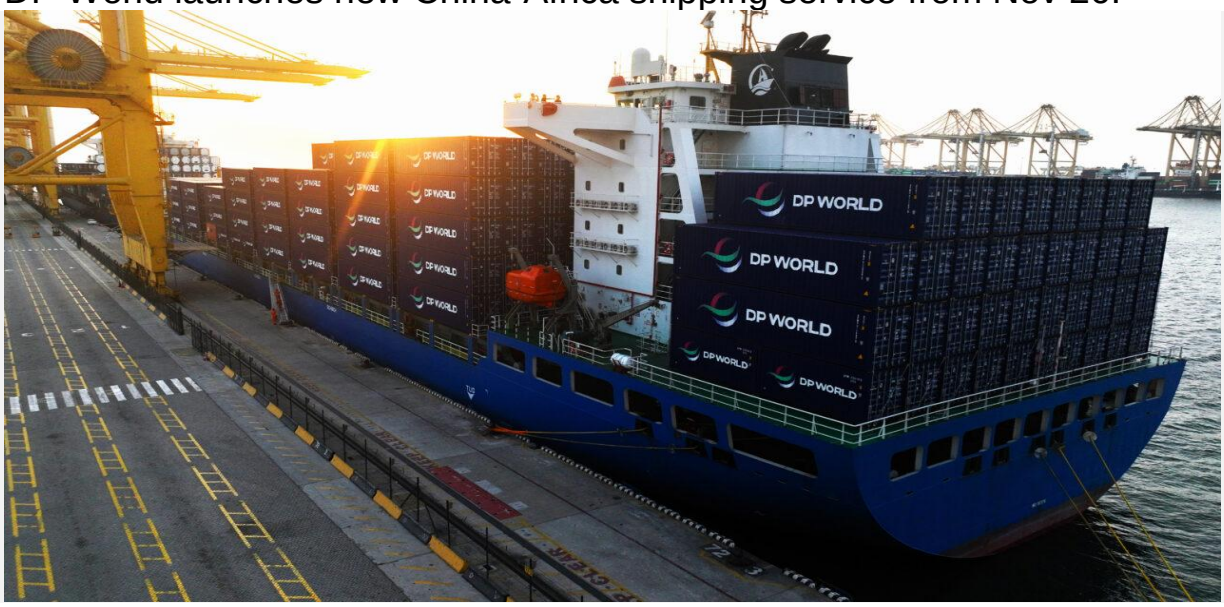
"The only plausible explanation is that the vessel has repeatedly made clandestine calls at North Korean ports," Furukawa added. He stressed that all U.N. member states, including China, must implement asset-freezing measures, including seizing the vessel, in accordance with Security Council resolutions.(Source:Asia News Network)






# Asian Maritime Industry

## DP World launches new China-Africa shipping service from Nov 26.




**DP World will launch a new weekly shipping service between China and East and Southern Africa in late November 2026.**

Named the China Africa Link, the service will be operated by DP World's Shipping Solutions AMEA business and connect major Chinese export hubs with ports in Tanzania and Mozambique.

The port rotation will cover Shanghai, Ningbo and Nansha in China, Port Klang Westport in Malaysia, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Maputo in Mozambique and Singapore, before returning to Shanghai.

The service aims to provide additional routing options for cargo moving between the Far East and Africa, supporting trade flows across established and emerging markets.

DP World said the launch forms part of its Connected Trade Corridors strategy, which integrates maritime services, port infrastructure and inland transport to improve connections across international supply chains.

Ganesh Raj, Global COO of Marine Services at DP World, stated: "Global trade is changing, and our customers need more than shipping capacity. They need reliable connections, greater choice and the flexibility to adapt as trade patterns evolve. The new China Africa Link demonstrates how we are bringing our Connected Trade Corridors approach to life.

By strengthening maritime connectivity between China and Africa, we are opening up more opportunities for businesses and creating smarter, more flexible shipping networks that help keep cargo moving."

The service will handle a range of commodities, including machinery, electronics, construction materials and automotive components from China, alongside African exports such as agricultural products, minerals and other commodities.

The launch comes alongside DP World's investments in African port infrastructure, including a $165 million expansion of the Maputo container terminal in Mozambique, designed to more than double its handling capacity.

In Tanzania, the company has also committed more than $500 million to modernising the Port of Dar es Salaam. (**Source: Port Technology)**

## OOCL ANNOUNCES NEW CHINA-INDONESIA SERVICE

Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL) will launch a new China Indonesia Service (CIS4) later this month, expanding its network coverage between China and Indonesia.

The new service is scheduled to commence on Nov. 22 and will provide direct links between key ports in northern and southern China and Indonesia, including Qingdao, Shanghai, Nansha, Jakarta and Surabaya.

According to OOCL, the service is designed to strengthen connectivity between the two markets and offer additional options for cargo moving on the trade lane.

The CIS4 service will operate on the rotation: **Qingdao - Shanghai - Nansha - Jakarta - Surabaya - Singapore - Qingdao.**

The addition of the service comes as carriers continue to adjust their intra-Asia networks to accommodate growing trade flows and manufacturing links between China and Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, which has increasingly attracted investment in industrial and downstream processing sectors.

With the launch of CIS4, OOCL will provide direct port coverage between northern and southern China and Indonesia while incorporating Singapore as a regional transshipment hub.(**Source: Asia Cargo News)**



## Gia Lai approves investment in inland port worth 250 billion VND.




Gia Lai has the advantage of being connected to Quy Nhon seaport, facilitating the development of logistics. In the photo: Cargo containers are gathered at Quy Nhon seaport.

The People's Committee of Gia Lai province has just approved the investment plan for the Nam Pleiku Inland Port project (phase 1), with a total capital of 250 billion VND, a scale of 10 hectares, and a designed capacity of 50,000 TEU/year.

The project is located in Hoi Phu ward and is invested by Thagri Gia Lai Agricultural Company Limited. Of the total investment capital, the investor contributes 50 billion VND, accounting for 20%; the remaining 80% is raised through other sources. The project has an operating period of 50 years.

The inland port will have a warehouse area of approximately 20,000 m², including general warehouses, cold storage, bonded warehouses, and container yards, as well as a loading and unloading area of approximately 30,000 m². Along with the internal transportation system, parking lots, and supporting facilities, the inland port will serve the receiving, storage, loading, unloading, and transshipment of goods, contributing to the completion of the local logistics infrastructure. The project is expected to commence in December 2026 and be completed and operational in December 2027.

The project is eligible for preferential policies regarding land, corporate income tax , import tax, and other incentives as stipulated by current laws.

Inland ports are land-based logistics complexes connected to the seaport system. Leveraging their strengths in agricultural production, industry, and import/export, inland ports enable businesses to consolidate, store, and load/unload containers locally, thereby reducing transshipment and saving time and logistics costs.(Source: Vietnam.van.en)



## 1,000 containers to move from Manila to Subic, Batangas



Manila International Container Terminal photo from operator International Container Terminal

- ***The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry said stakeholders have committed to move 1,000 containers to Subic and Batangas within two weeks to free up space in Manila ports and yards***
- ***This commitment was secured during a meeting convened by Cabinet secretary Benhur Abalos, the Bureau of Customs, and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, with companies with aging containers, truckers, and port operators***
- ***Stakeholders also committee to move out empty containers to Subic and Batangas ports, where they will be collected by sweeper vessels***
- ***PCCI said it continues to work with government offices, port users, and other stakeholders to support other measures identified by the private sector***

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) said stakeholders have committed to move 1,000 containers to Subic and Batangas within two weeks to free up space in Manila ports and yards.

This commitment was secured during a meeting convened by Cabinet secretary Benhur Abalos, the Bureau of Customs (BOC), and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority with companies with aging containers, truckers, and port operators, PCCI said in a statement on November 3.

Stakeholders also committed to move out empty containers to Subic and Batangas ports, where they will be collected by sweeper vessels, PCCI added. "The commitment to move an additional 1,000 containers within two weeks is an encouraging first step," PCCI president Ferdinand Ferrer said.

"PCCI is ready to help mobilize our members and industry partners so that these commitments lead to measurable improvements for businesses and consumers," he added.

**Addressing supply chain bottlenecks**
PCCI said the "follow-through effort builds" on a separate stakeholder dialogue it initiated last October with the Department of Trade and Industry's Supply Chain and Logistics Group, BOC, port and container-yard operators, shipping lines, truckers, customs brokers and importers and exporters.

The dialogue aimed to find urgent operational bottlenecks affecting the supply chain, specifically container yard capacity, empty container returns, port dwell times, and rising logistic costs.
PCCI said the discussion identified immediate priorities to address issues on port and container yard congestion in Manila, including:

**freeing terminal space;**
facilitating the return of empty containers; andtransferring eligible overstaying cargo to suitable off-dock facilities.PCCI said it continues to work with government offices, port users, and other stakeholders to support these measures.
The group said it is also helping sustain private-sector engagement so that cargo owners, shipping lines, truckers, and facility operators can coordinate their participation in the clearing effort.
Supporting this is BOC's recent directive to extend designated examination areas (DEA) schedules at Manila and other ports experiencing congestion, in anticipation of increased cargo volumes during the Christmas season.
In Office of the Commissioner Memo No. 118-2026 dated October 30, DEA operations will be extended from the regular schedule of 8 a.m.-5 p.m. to until 12:00 midnight, effectively immediately, "to facilitate the timely examination and clearance of shipments."

PCCI said the extended schedule responds to truckers' concern about arriving at the port at around 7 p.m., after regular examination hours. The chamber said their arrival would now fall within the prescribed examination window, although actual processing and waiting times will still depend on operational conditions.

The memorandum directs district collectors to make the necessary operational arrangements and coordinate with relevant regulatory agencies to ensure their availability during extended examination hours. PCCI said it welcomes the directive as a practical step toward better aligning cargo examination services with trucking schedules and keeping shipments moving beyond regular office hours.

**Continued communications**
PCCI said it is supporting continued discussions with shipping lines on the accumulation and evacuation of empty containers. Repositioning empties, expanding suitable storage capacity, and improving coordination across the logistics chain remain important to sustaining the initial gains, it added.

The chamber also supports the prompt transfer of eligible overstaying cargo and a review of storage charges to encourage timely withdrawal from port terminals. These measures were identified during its stakeholder dialogue as part of a broader effort to make better use of available terminal and off-dock space.
"These are important first steps, and we are grateful to the Cabinet Secretary for facilitating, and our government partners for their responsiveness," Ferrer said. "With sustained cooperation, we can build on this momentum and work toward lasting improvements in our logistics system."

PCCI also expressed its appreciation for various government agencies for their immediate action on the issue of Manila port congestion. (**Source: Ports calls)**

## Malaysia plans 3- to 4-day overland durian shipments to China

Malaysia is negotiating transit agreements with neighboring countries to enable fresh durian exports to China by road and rail, with shipments expected to take three to four days.

Agriculture and Food Security Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu told the Dewan Rakyat that the proposed routes would offer an alternative to air freight, which carries higher costs, and sea transport, which requires longer transit times.




The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security is coordinating with the Foreign Ministry and Transport Ministry to establish cross-border transport routes through Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia.

"Overland shipments are expected to take only three to four days, allowing goods, particularly durians, to reach the Chinese market quickly. Malaysian durians are very popular among consumers in China, but sometimes they find it difficult to obtain them at more affordable prices," Mohamad said.

Formal negotiations to secure transit rights through the four countries began on July 20. The initiative aims to reduce logistics costs and improve access to the Chinese market for Malaysian fresh durians.(Source: Fresh Plaza)




## Philippine banana exports reach 3.03 million tons in 2025

The Philippines ranked as the world's second-largest exporter of bananas and pineapples in 2025, according to international trade data and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Banana exports reached 3.03 million tons, approximately 500,000 tons more than Colombia. However, shipments remained below Ecuador's 6.5 million tons, making Ecuador the world's largest banana exporter.

Philippine pineapple exports reached a record 812,507 tons, exceeding Ecuador's shipments. Costa Rica remained the leading exporter, supplying 2.31 million tons to international markets.

Despite maintaining its export rankings, the Philippine tropical fruit sector faces challenges from rising agricultural input costs, plant diseases, and market access restrictions.
Banana growers continue to contend with Panama disease, also known as Fusarium wilt, which affects plantation yields.
The report highlights the need for government support in managing crop diseases and addressing rising fuel and input costs. It also calls for greater consideration of tropical fruit exports in bilateral and regional trade negotiations to expand access to international markets.These measures are intended to support the competitiveness of Philippine banana and pineapple exports.

## Cambodia interested in apple imports from Kazakhstan

Cambodia is interested in importing apples from Kazakhstan as the two countries discuss closer agricultural trade ties. The matter was discussed at a meeting between Kazakh Agriculture Minister Aidarbek Saparov and his Cambodian counterpart, Dith Tina.

According to the Kazakh side, Cambodia named apples among the agricultural products it would like to import. The talks focused on expanding bilateral trade and improving conditions for market access.

Kazakhstan is looking to broaden the reach of its agricultural exports and develop new trade channels. Apple supplies to Cambodia may now become part of that agenda as both sides continue discussions on practical trade arrangements.

The two countries are also considering further coordination through direct contacts between exporters and buyers, as well as a joint working group that would examine supply conditions and access requirements. Cambodia has proposed continuing the talks and formalising the main points of cooperation in a memorandum. Source: kapital.kz




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