



5th Dec 25

Mumbai-India

Global Maritime Trade & Transport

Ferry Captain Attends Arrest Warrant Hearing After Grounding Off South Korean Coast



The captain of the Queen Jenuvia II appeared at a local court on Tuesday for an arrest warrant hearing linked to last month's grounding accident off South Korea's southwestern coast, which left about 30 passengers injured. He is facing allegations of causing injury through gross negligence and breaching the Seafarers Act.

The 26,546-tonne passenger vessel, carrying 246 passengers and 21 crew members, struck an uninhabited islet on 19 November while navigating the narrow coastal waters off Sinan in South Jeolla Province, roughly 366 kilometres south of Seoul.

Investigators arrested the first mate and the helmsman three days after the incident, stating that they had failed to steer the ferry properly while on duty.

Attention later shifted to the captain, a man in his 60s whose identity has not been disclosed. Authorities allege that he was outside the wheelhouse while the ferry transited the confined waters off Sinan, which is said to be a violation of the Seafarers Act.

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Nine Filipino seafarers to be released after Red Sea Houthi attack



Nine Filipino seafarers held hostage by Yemen-based Houthi militants following an attack on the *Eternity C* are set to be released and transferred from Sana'a to Muscat, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has confirmed.

The DFA said it received confirmation of the imminent release from Omani authorities, following months of diplomatic engagement.

The Philippine Embassy in Muscat and the Migrant Workers Office-Muscat will now coordinate the safe and immediate repatriation of the seafarers to the Philippines, with the government also expressing its "sincerest appreciation" to the Sultanate of Oman for its mediatory role.

The *Eternity C*, a Liberia-flagged bulk carrier operated by a Greek company, was sailing through the Red Sea en route to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, when it came under repeated attack in July. The vessel was targeted using sea drones, rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire, and subsequently sank.

Onboard were 22 crewmembers, 21 of whom were Filipino. At least four crew members were killed in the assault, while others were reported missing or detained by the Houthis. The militant group later published footage of the attack, claiming it had "saved" an unspecified number of crew members and transported them to a secure location.

The attack on the *Eternity C* came shortly after the Houthis claimed responsibility for sinking another vessel, the *Magic Seas*, whose crew was successfully rescued.



Asian Maritime Industry

Vizhinjam port boasts many records on the 2st anniversary



Vizhinjam port's capability to handle the world's largest vessels strengthens India's presence in global logistics and maritime trade.

In just 10 months, it became the fastest Indian port to handle 1 million TEUs cargo. 41 ultra-large container vessels that are 399+ metres long berthed at the port, highest for any Indian port.

The Vizhinjam International Seaport, developed and operated by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. (APSEZ) in partnership with the Kerala government, marked one year of commercial operations on Wednesday, setting new benchmarks.

In just 10 months, Vizhinjam became the fastest Indian port to handle 1 million TEUs (twenty equivalent units) cargo. The port has so far handled 615 vessels and 1.32 million TEUs cargo. Among the vessels, 41 ultra-large container vessels (ULCVs) 399+ metres long, the highest in any Indian port, and 154 ships above 300 metres long were also handled, demonstrating the port's capability to handle the world's large carriers.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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MSC Verona with a 17.1 m arrival draft, the deepest-draft vessel ever handled in south Asia, and *MSC Irina*, the world's largest container ship had called at the port during the

year. Vizhinjam became the first Indian port to deploy women automated crane operators, advancing gender inclusion in maritime operations. The work on the second phase of the development of the port has begun, although the work will be formally inaugurated after the local body election.

The work on berth and breakwater extension is under way. The second phase will see an investment of ₹9,700 crore by the port concessionaire Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Ltd. (AVPPL). As per the master plan for the development of the multipurpose seaport, the breakwater, which currently has a length of around 3,000 m, will be extended to 3,900 m by 2028.

The container terminal berth in the port will be extended by 1.2 km from the existing 800 m. Once completed, the port's annual handling capacity will be increased to over 4 million TEUs, making Vizhinjam the largest container-handling port in southern India

Located close to major East-West shipping lanes, Vizhinjam is emerging as India's premier deep-water transshipment hub. Its capability to handle the world's largest vessels strengthens India's presence in global logistics and maritime trade. Vizhinjam's exceptional first year not only elevates the port's global standing but also reinforces India's growing influence in international shipping, said the port authorities here on Wednesday.

(Source: The Hindu)

South Korea puts steam behind world port dreams



South Korea's cruise market is experiencing a major upswing as key ports move towards infrastructure upgrades and deepen global tourism strategies.

South Korea has also parked an investment of 1.66 trillion won to modernise strategically important ports such as Jinhae in Busan and the port of Gwangyang.

Notably, Busan – home to the world's seventh-largest and second-busiest transshipment port – recently became the first Asian city to join the board of the World Association of Port Cities (AIVP).

Its entry secures influence towards maritime and port collaborations worldwide, just in time as Busan pushes on its North Port redevelopment project, pegged at 20 trillion won.

Split into three phases, phase one has entered its final stage – with the Busan Port International Passenger Terminal, Busan Port Complex Hydrophilic Park and North Port Marina completed. An opera house is set for a 2027 opening along Busan’s reclaimed waterfront land.

When phase two completes, a mix of port areas, housing, commerce, business, railway and tourism facilities will set across 2.28 sqm of land in Jung-gu and Dong-gu.

Busan Port Authority President Song Sanggeun also recently joined TOC Asia 2025 in Singapore, highlighting the port’s smart and automation technology adoption and future digital transformation direction while expressing keen interest in exchanges with overseas markets.

“We will not stop at the achievement of being elected as a board member city, but will do our best to attract the 2027 general assembly and, in the long term, establish the Asian headquarters of the World Association of Port Cities in Busan,” said Busan Mayor Park Heong-joon in a BusinessKorea report.

Gangwon Province has its eyes set on transforming Sokcho into a central cruise hub, which currently has 12 homeport calls scheduled this year, and 29 confirmed through 2029.

A highlight in 2025 was the inaugural call of Australian ship, Scenic Eclipse II, which saw officials pulling together pop-up stores, tourist information centres, experience zones and planned transport to ferry passengers to local attractions.

To increase exposure and interest to cruising, Gangwon officials planned a cruise experience for 200 locals onboard Italian-flagged cruise ship Costa Serena earlier this year in September. The seven day voyage departed from Sokcho Port, and called at Muroran, Kushiro, and Hakodate in Japan before arriving at Busan Port.

59 container vessels scheduled to enter Yangon Port in Dec



The picture depicts a container vessel in the Yangon River.

A total of 59 container vessels are slated to call at the Yangon Port in December 2025, the Myanma Authority announced.

Ten container vessels run by Cosco Shipping Line, seven each by CMA CGM Line and SITC Shipping Line, six each by Ti2 Container Line and ONE Line, five each by MSC Line and Maersk A/S Line and four by Samudera Shipping Line, three each by RCL Line and BLPL

Shipping Line and two by Evergreen Line, and one by Land and Sea are scheduled to dock at the Yangon Port in December.

Myanma Port Authority has arranged maritime trade channels to handle increasing imports to meet domestic demand, to bolster exports, and to improve port capacity for significant arrivals of ships. Myanma Port Authority notified that it will inform exporters and importers of ship arrival schedules promptly upon an extended schedule.

A total of 62 container vessels in January 2025, 53 in February, 58 in March, 62 in April, 65 in May, 62 in June and 60 in July arrived at Yangon Port. Sixty containers in August, 59 in September, 68 in October and 60 in November entered the Port.

Yangon Port handled 633 container vessels in 2024 and 629 in 2023. Thanks to the draft extension, the international ocean liners can access the inner port for now, according to the Myanma Port Authority's statement on 22 June 2022.

After the new navigation channel (Kings Bank Channel) accessing the inner Yangon River was found, the draft extension work was accelerated. Afterwards, the port can now handle larger ships. The container vessel MV SITC Zhaoming (185.99-metre LOA, 35.25-metre Beam, 29,232 GRT and 2,698 TEU) of Hong Kong-based SITC Shipping Line docked at Asia World Port Terminal for the first time on 22 June, which is the largest ship that AWPT Port has handled.

From May 2021, the arrival of the ships at terminals in Yangon has increased again. Three new container vessels by Maersk Line Myanmar (SeaLand Maersk) started to run to fulfil the seaborne trade requirements in 2021. Earlier, the larger ships had draft problems, preventing sailing on the Yangon River. With the draft being extended up to 10 meters, the larger ocean liners can enter the Thilawa Port. — NN/KK

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Vietnam Emerges as Fastest-Growing Trade Partner for Savannah Port

The Port of Savannah has identified Vietnam as its fastest-growing trade partner, driven by a significant expansion in manufacturing capabilities and logistics infrastructure development in Southeast Asia.

Container trade between Savannah and Vietnam has surged 38 percent over the past five years, adding 104,000 twenty-foot equivalent container units to reach 379,000 TEUs in fiscal year 2025. This growth comes as both nations navigate a shifting trade landscape marked by recent tariff adjustments.

“With its strategic location and business-friendly policies, Vietnam represents an expanding logistics market,” said Georgia Ports President and CEO Griff Lynch.

The trade relationship has been bolstered by a recent agreement between the U.S. and Vietnam to reduce reciprocal tariffs to 20 percent on imports, with some product categories potentially moving to zero tariffs under the new framework. This development is expected to provide unprecedented access to the Vietnam market for U.S. exports.

The trade flows between the two nations remain robust in both directions. Savannah exports forest products, food, cotton, hardware, resins, and retail consumer goods to Vietnam, while importing apparel, footwear, furniture, electronics, and machinery. Georgia Ports currently offers nine direct ocean carrier services connecting Savannah and Vietnam, with transit times averaging 33 days.

In a significant operational development this November, Gemini—an operational collaboration between shipping lines Maersk and Hapag Lloyd—made Savannah its first port of call on the U.S. East Coast for its TP11/US1 service originating from the Port of Haiphong in Vietnam. The revised rotation now includes stops at Ningbo, Shanghai, Lazaro Cardenas, Savannah, Charleston, New York, and Singapore, with an advertised transit time of 39 days from Haiphong to Savannah.

The growing partnership reflects Vietnam’s rising prominence in global trade. In 2024, U.S.-Vietnam trade totaled approximately \$135 billion, making the United States Vietnam’s second-largest trading partner after China. Vietnam’s role in global electronics production continues to deepen, with Samsung alone investing more than \$23 billion in Vietnamese plants that supply over half of the company’s global smartphone output.

The Port of Savannah’s infrastructure positions it as a strategic gateway for this expanding trade relationship. The facility handles 35 ship calls per week, 42 doublestack trains per week, and 14,000 truck gate moves daily. Georgia Ports Authority has outlined a self-financed \$4.5 billion investment plan for the next decade, which includes adding five new big ship berths in Savannah to accommodate future growth.



Hong Kong court postpones ruling on 2012 ferry tragedy



The Coroner's Court of Hong Kong has postponed its issuance of a ruling following [inquest proceedings](#) related to a [maritime incident that left over 30 people dead](#) in 2012.

The court had originally scheduled Thursday, December 4, as the date during which it would announce its verdict on the inquest into the October 1, 2012 collision between the ferries *Lamma IV* (pictured) and *Sea Smooth* near Lamma Island.

However, last Tuesday, December 2, a spokesperson for the judiciary confirmed that the hearing has been postponed. No reason was given for the postponement, and no details have been provided on when the proceedings would resume. This latest inquest is being held to conduct a more thorough probe into the incident.

Lamma IV sank within minutes following the October 1, 2012 collision. Thirty of the ferry's 124 occupants were pronounced deceased at the scene, eight others were later declared dead on arrival in hospital, and another individual expired while undergoing treatment.

An earlier call for a coroner's inquest was [rejected](#) by the Hong Kong High Court in late 2022 on the basis of a lack of evidence that would warrant a deeper probe into the tragedy.

A High Court judge stated that a commission of inquiry report issued in 2013 had already identified the incident's "immediate cause" as well as the "structural causes rooted in the design and equipment on board the vessel."

A group of lawyers representing the families of four of the victims had told the High Court that additional police investigations have yielded new evidence warranting the inquest, which then led to the reversal of the court's earlier decision rejecting the inquest.

The latest proceedings revealed that a [design flaw](#) on *Lamma IV* was a contributing factor to its loss in 2012. The ferry was originally designed with six belowdeck compartments with a watertight bulkhead separating the tank room and the steering gear compartment at the stern.

It has since been revealed that a director at Cheoy Lee Shipyards, which built the ferry, decided to incorporate a hatch between the two stern compartments but without a watertight door. The omission of this door is said to have contributed to the water ingress that caused people to be trapped on board the vessel as it sank following the collision.

ICHCA urges early action on 2026 ammonium nitrate rules

ICHCA International is intensifying its Dangerous Goods Awareness campaign with a renewed call for the maritime sector to fully implement a key amendment to the IMDG Code on ammonium nitrate ahead of its mandatory entry into force on 1 January 2026.

The association is reminding shipowners, charterers, ports and terminals that, although the rule was adopted earlier and can already be applied voluntarily, it will **soon become a binding requirement**.

The **change concerns Clause 7.6.2.8.4** of the **International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code** and clarifies how **UN 1942 Ammonium Nitrate** and **UN 2067 Ammonium Nitrate-Based Fertiliser** may be carried under deck.

Under the revised wording, such cargo is only permitted below deck if all hatches – including tween deck hatches – can be opened in an emergency so that maximum ventilation, boundary cooling and effective firefighting can be carried out. In practice, this means that **holds containing ammonium nitrate should not be over-stowed with other cargo**.

The amendment follows an **ICHCA white paper** submitted to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in **2022**, which examined the fire risks associated with ammonium nitrate carriage and called for greater clarity in the Code.

“Although not mandatory until 1 January 2026 it can be applied on a voluntary basis from January 2025. ICHCA is urging all those involved in the maritime transport of ammonium nitrate to abide by the new regulation immediately,” said [ICHCA CEO Richard Steele](#).

“The work by our Technical Panel over several months made the case for amending the IMDG Code very clear, backed by thorough understanding of the properties of these compounds and by detailed guidance on how such risks could be mitigated.”

Ammonium nitrate (NH_4NO_3) is a white to grey, odourless substance used extensively in fertilisers and explosives. It has a melting point of around 169 degrees Celsius and decomposes at about 210 degrees Celsius.

While it does not burn on its own, it can substantially accelerate the combustion of other materials, which means that fires involving this cargo can escalate quickly without appropriate control measures. “These properties in particular **demand careful consideration** of how and where ammonium nitrate is stowed on board vessels,” noted the white paper’s lead author, Brian Devaraj, a member of ICHCA’s Technical Panel.

“Ammonium nitrate fires can escalate out of control very rapidly. To help prevent consequential loss of life and damage, the new provisions laid out in the IMDG Code, in particular clause 7.6.2.8.4 should be complied with at all times.”

He described the clause as “seemingly unremarkable” but “crucial to safe shipping of ammonium nitrate”, pointing out that it requires clean cargo spaces capable of being opened in an emergency, including the need to **open hatches in case of fire to provide maximum ventilation** and to **apply water**.

Devaraj highlighted particular **concerns for multi-layered compartments** on conventional reefer vessels, where meeting the requirement to open all spaces is “next to impossible”. Some jurisdictions that handle significant volumes of ammonium nitrate, such as Australia, South Africa and Chile, already impose specific rules addressing these risks.

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Intra Asian Ports & Trade

Southern Vietnam port establishes strategic partnership with Kobe



Long An International Port in Vietnam’s southern province of Tay Ninh and Japan’s Port of Kobe on Monday signed an MoU establishing a strategic port partnership which is expected to boost trade flows, cut logistics costs, and deliver greater benefits to businesses across the region.

The MoU was reached within a labor, trade and investment promotion event carried out by Tay Ninh province authorities in Japan from November 16-22.

“This cooperation affirms the commitment of both local governments and the business communities of the two provinces to promote trade, strengthen connectivity, and enhance domestic industrial capacity toward a modern, sustainable direction aligned with global integration,” Long An International Port stated on its website.

As a new entrant to the seaport market, Long An International Port has been expanding its network, enabling it to learn from international best practices, exchange technical expertise, and collaborate on value-added projects.

Its key partners include the Port of Oakland, Port of Long Beach, and Port of Portland in the U.S.; the Port of Gothenburg in Sweden; the Bohaiwan-SPG port cluster in China; and Oriental Port and Allied Services Corporation (Opascor) in the Philippines.

The MoU signing capped nearly a year of discussions, with the partnership aimed at boosting maritime transport capacity; expanding cargo throughput at both ports; sharing best practices in port governance and operations, and modern terminal management; and strengthening connections with global partners and clients.

The two sides will also collaborate on developing green and smart port models, implement advanced management technologies to cut carbon emissions, and train and exchange high-quality logistics professionals in line with international standards and best practices.

On November 16, prior to the signing, the Vietnamese delegation made a field trip to the Port of Kobe, one of Japan's oldest seaports and a leading hub for large-scale container and general cargo infrastructure.



Long An International Port, located in Tan Tap commune, Tay Ninh province, about 30 km south of Ho Chi Minh City, is steadily working to establish itself as a recognized and preferred partner port in Asia, contributing to Vietnam's Logistics Development Strategy for 2025-2035, with a vision to 2050.

Built in 2015, the port has rapidly affirmed its role as a key cargo consolidation and transshipment hub in the region. It helps ease congestion at HCMC port clusters, reducing urban traffic pressure, and significantly optimizing logistics costs for enterprises throughout the Mekong Delta.

In July, Long An International Port signed a [cooperation agreement with SPG Bohaiwan Port and Bohwa Shipping Pte Ltd of China](#) to expand its logistics network.

Under the deal, the three parties agreed to establish a new maritime shipping corridor, named "Two Ports, One Route," directly linking northern China with southern Vietnam, aiming to boost two-way cargo capacity and promote bilateral trade.

The partnership will form an integrated logistics ecosystem, encompassing port operations, maritime transport, and logistics services. It aims at optimizing business costs, enhancing operational efficiency, and promoting a sustainable, green supply chain between Vietnam and China.

Tay Ninh was recently merged with the neighboring province of Long An to form the new Tay Ninh province which borders Dong Nai, Dong Thap, Ho Chi Minh City, and Cambodia.

Its master plan toward 2030, with a vision to 2050, includes over 59 industrial parks and 82 industrial clusters, positioning logistics as a spearhead economic sector.

Long An was an industrial center in southern Vietnam, together with HCMC, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Binh Duong, and Dong Nai.

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5th Dec 25