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Mumbai-India

## Global Maritime Trade & Transport

### Maersk adds Antwerp to AE1 Asia–Europe loop from 6 March

A.P. Moller – Maersk (Maersk) is strengthening its Asia–Europe network by adding Antwerp to the rotation of its AE1 service, a key loop within the carrier’s East–West network and the Gemini Cooperation.

The move reinforces Antwerp’s position as a strategic Northern European gateway while expanding routing options for shippers across the trade.

Under the revised rotation, AE1 will call Shanghai, Yantian, Tanjung Pelepas, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp, London Gateway, Tangier TC1, Tangier TC3 and Singapore.

By integrating Antwerp into this established corridor, Maersk is deepening connectivity between major Asian export hubs and core European consumer and industrial markets.

The first westbound sailing under the updated rotation will be operated by *Hamburg Express*, voyage 610W, departing Shanghai on 6 March 2026.

The vessel is scheduled to arrive in Hamburg on 17 April before calling Antwerp on 21 April 2026. The addition of Antwerp is expected to deliver greater optionality and flexibility for customers shipping to and from Northern Europe.

With the inaugural call scheduled for 21 April 2026, the enhanced AE1 rotation marks a further step in optimising network coverage across the Asia–Europe trade lane.

Recently, [Maersk signed an order of eight large vessels with New Times Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. in China.](#) (Source: Port Technology)



## Gas Tanker Captain Jailed Over Fatal Cover-Up in Singapore



**Singapore has delivered one of the clearest warnings yet to maritime professionals about the consequences of misleading authorities after a serious onboard accident, sentencing the master of a gas tanker to 14 months in jail for covering up details surrounding a fatal tank-cleaning incident.**

By Paul Morgan (gCaptain) – The ruling marks a rare moment in commercial shipping where a master has been imprisoned not for a collision or environmental disaster, but for what happened after the casualty itself.

According to court findings, the captain admitted providing false information and failing to accurately report the circumstances of a seafarer's death during hazardous cleaning operations inside the vessel's tanks, a task long recognized as one of the most dangerous duties in the tanker trade.

Singapore's maritime courts have steadily built a reputation for strict enforcement of safety and reporting standards, but the severity of the sentence has caught the industry's attention. Judges stressed that honesty and transparency are essential when fatalities occur at sea, warning that attempts to mislead investigators undermine both safety lessons and the rights of victims' families.

The incident traces back to a routine tank-cleaning operation that turned fatal when a crew member was exposed to a hazardous environment. While the precise technical cause remains the subject of official investigation records, authorities concluded that the master's subsequent actions, including inaccurate statements and misleading documentation, obstructed the inquiry process. Earlier legal proceedings against another officer connected to the case had already signaled that Singapore intended to pursue individual accountability rather than rely solely on corporate penalties.

For many industry observers, the case reflects a broader shift in how maritime incidents are prosecuted. Historically, masters have faced disciplinary action or fines following accidents,

but jail sentences tied to post-incident conduct remain unusual. The Singapore ruling suggests regulators are increasingly prepared to treat falsified records and misleading casualty reports as criminal offenses rather than administrative violations.

The implications extend far beyond one ship or one company. Tanker operations rely heavily on detailed record-keeping, from gas monitoring logs to safety checklists and incident reports. Any suggestion that those records can be manipulated without consequence undermines the credibility of safety management systems across the fleet. By imposing a custodial sentence, Singaporean authorities appear intent on reinforcing a culture where transparency is not optional.

Insurance and compliance specialists say the ruling will likely influence how operators train senior officers. Masters are already under growing pressure to navigate complex regulatory environments, from emissions rules to sanctions compliance, but the latest case adds another layer of personal exposure. In future investigations, legal advisers expect greater scrutiny of bridge logs, electronic communications and safety documentation, particularly in incidents involving confined spaces or hazardous cargoes.

The case also arrives at a time when maritime regulators worldwide are emphasising human factors and safety culture. Confined-space fatalities remain a persistent problem across the tanker sector despite decades of guidance from industry bodies and classification societies. By focusing on the reporting phase rather than just the operational failure, Singapore's courts are sending a signal that accountability extends beyond the moment of accident and into the integrity of the investigation itself.

For shipowners and managers, the lesson is stark. Safety procedures do not end when an incident occurs. Accurate reporting, cooperation with investigators and transparency with authorities are now firmly embedded in the legal expectations placed on masters and senior officers. Any deviation risks not just reputational damage but criminal consequences.

As global shipping navigates an era of increasing scrutiny, from sanctions enforcement to environmental regulation, the Singapore case stands out as a reminder that the industry's greatest vulnerabilities often lie not in technology or equipment, but in human decisions under pressure. With a custodial sentence now on record, the message from one of the world's busiest maritime hubs is unmistakable: when tragedy strikes at sea, honesty is no longer simply good practice, it is a legal obligation that can determine a captain's fate.



# Asian Maritime Industry



## Sakhawat highlights his success in Maritime sector in Bangladesh



### Construction of Pyra Sea Port in Bangladesh

Shipping Adviser Brigadier General (ret'd) Dr. M Sakhawat Hussain on Tuesday presented an overall picture of the activities and achievements of his ministry and its subordinate departments and offices during the period from September 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026.

He made the presentation at a press briefing at the conference room of the Ministry of Shipping. The adviser said the country's maritime sector is being transformed into a strong, safe and internationally standard-compliant sector due to clear policy guidance of the interim government and efficient management.

As per the briefing, a project for constructing a heavy lift cargo jetty at Laldia is underway to enhance heavy cargo handling capacity at Chattogram Port, which is being implemented through Bangladesh Navy, reports BSS.

At the same time, a 33-year concession agreement has been signed with APM Terminals BV under the PPP model for the construction and operation of the Laldia Container Terminal, which is expected to go into operation by mid-2029.

According to Chattogram Port Authority data, during the period under review, the port earned revenue of TK 2,378.77 crore, incurred expenditure of TK 837.99 crore, and recorded a surplus of TK 1,540.08 crore. Significant growth was achieved in container, cargo and ship handling, and in 2025 Chattogram Port set an all-time record in container and cargo handling.

Achieving 'Zero Observation' in the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) audit under international security standards was cited as recognition of the port's security capability.

The Shipping Adviser said that the approval of the preservation dredging project in the

Pashur Channel of Mongla Port by ECNEC has paved the way for resolving the long-standing navigability crisis. At the same time, a modern waste and waste oil removal facility (PRF) project has been inaugurated at Mongla Port, marking a milestone in environment friendly port management.

# INTERMODAL

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At Payra Port, revenue income has increased through significant cargo handling from both domestic and foreign vessels. Under the PPFT project, various infrastructure works including construction of roads, bridges and mobile harbour cranes are progressing rapidly. Initiatives by BIWTC and BIWTA to launch sea-truck and ferry services to Kutubdia, Hatiya, Maheshkhali, Bhasan Char and other island areas have made travel for people in remote regions safer, easier and more time-saving. Extensive improvements in inland waterway communication have been achieved through the installation of new launch terminals, pontoons and jetties.

The adviser informed that during the tenure of the interim government, BIWTA has installed more than thirty launch terminals and more than fifty pontoons to improve the quality of life of marginal people and to ensure smooth and uninterrupted movement of passengers and transportation of goods. Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) has achieved its highest-ever profit of TK 306.56 crore, and the addition of new bulk carrier vessels to its fleet has further enhanced the country's capacity on international sea routes. Recovery of a substantial amount of foreign currency through dispute resolution was also highlighted as a government success.

In his concluding remarks at the press briefing, the Shipping Adviser said, "The maritime sector is not just a transport system; it is an important driving force of the national economy. Our goal is to transform Bangladesh into a modern, efficient and internationally standard maritime hub. These achievements reflect our firm progress towards that goal." Shipping Secretary Dr Nurun Nahar Chowdhury, and other concerned senior officials were present at the press conference



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LAEM CHABANG PORT

## Cargo ship sinks off Thailand, Navy confirms oil leak



Thai authorities are responding to the sinking of the Panama-flagged general cargo vessel *Sealloyd Arc*, which went down off the coast of Phuket after taking on water and listing heavily in the Andaman Sea.

According to reporting by *The Nation Thailand*, Vice Admiral Weerudom Muangjeen, Commander of the Third Naval Area Command, confirmed that the vessel experienced flooding before capsizing and sinking offshore.

The Royal Thai Navy is leading a multi-agency response involving marine police, port authorities and environmental agencies.

The vessel was carrying approximately 290 containers. Authorities have confirmed that more than 200 containers were dispersed across the sea surface and seabed following the sinking, creating navigational risks in surrounding waters.

All 16 crew members were safely rescued, with no injuries reported. Regional coverage confirmed that nearby vessels assisted in the initial response before Thai naval units arrived and took over the evacuation and coordination efforts.

Environmental concerns are now central to the ongoing response, as Thai authorities have confirmed oil leakage from the vessel. The Royal Thai Navy has activated monitoring and containment measures, with environmental impact assessments underway to evaluate potential effects on coastal and marine ecosystems.

Vice Admiral Weerudom Muangjeen stated that a coordinated task force has been established to oversee container recovery, pollution control and planning for potential wreck management operations. At the time of writing, no official cause for the incident has been disclosed as investigations are ongoing. (Source: Port Technology)



## Adani Ports signs pact with France's leading port Marseille Fos



Port of Marseille is one of the oldest seaports in the country and its busiest oil port.

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd signed an MoU with France's Port of Marseille Fos to expand cooperation in trade facilitation, port innovation and energy transition. The partnership proposes setting up an IMEC Ports Club to improve coordination among ports along the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor route and strengthen connectivity between India and the European Union.

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) and the Port of Marseille Fos, France's leading port and the Mediterranean's premier gateway, on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to deepen cooperation on trade facilitation, port innovation, and energy transition.

This partnership proposes the creation of an IMEC Ports Club to strengthen coordination among key ports along the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) route, reinforcing connectivity between India and the European Union. This completes the IMEC pathway for India-EU trade, that has been boosted by the FTA between India and the EU

On the eastern gateway of IMEC, APSEZ's ports at Mundra and Hazira form a multimodal logistics hub connecting South Asia to West Asia. Through this MoU, Marseille Fos strengthens the western European gateway of the corridor, adding approximately 70 million tonnes of capacity and extending IMEC's reach deeper into Europe.

Marseille Fos is one of Europe's largest integrated multi modal port ecosystems. This partnership establishes a more structured and coordinated pathway to facilitate India-EU trade flows, said Adani Group in an exchange filing. (**Source: Economics Times**)



## APM Terminals joins DP World at Jeddah Port under new agreement Adani Ports signs pact with France's leading port Marseille Fos



DP World and APM Terminals have established a strategic partnership that will operate the Southern Container Terminal at Jeddah Islamic Port in Saudi Arabia.

Under the agreement, APM Terminals will acquire a 37.5 per cent minority stake in the terminal, while DP World will retain a 62.5 per cent majority shareholding and continue to lead the operations at the facility.



APM Terminals said the investment will enhance Jeddah Islamic Port as a gateway to Saudi Arabia and a key Red Sea hub connecting trade flows between Asia, Europe and Africa.

Since securing the 30-year build-operate-transfer concession in 2019, DP World has delivered a major upgrade and expansion of the Southern Container Terminal, significantly increasing capacity and improving efficiency.

Separately, both DP World and APM Terminals' parent company Maersk have made investments in integrated logistics capacity within Jeddah Islamic Port, linking the quay to warehousing, distribution and inland transport, allowing customers to benefit from enhanced connectivity and more integrated logistics support and ensuring the terminal continues to serve as a gateway for import and export cargo. **(Source: Baird News)**



## Asian Logistics Sector

### Pakistan offers Arabian Sea trade routes to Russia, Central Asia,

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is offering overland trade routes to Russia and landlocked Central Asian states through its Arabian Sea ports, Communications Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said on Thursday, positioning the country as a strategic transit hub as regional supply chains shift toward alternative corridors.

Pakistan has long sought to leverage its geography to connect landlocked Central Asian economies to warm-water ports, a strategy that has gained importance in recent years as countries explore routes that bypass traditional maritime chokepoints and longer shipping lanes. Islamabad promotes its ports at Karachi and Gwadar as gateways linking South Asia, the Middle East and Eurasia.

Speaking at the 88th session of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Inland Transport Committee in Geneva, Khan said Pakistan's growing integration into Eurasian connectivity networks marked a new phase in regional trade cooperation.

"Pakistan's strategic integration into the Belarus, Russia, and Central Asia corridors represents the dawn of a new era in regional connectivity," he said, adding the country was providing "high-efficiency trade routes for Russia and landlocked Central Asian Republics."

The minister said six land corridors were now facilitating transit trade, including routes via Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Iran, as well as China-Kazakhstan connectivity and Trans-Afghan links connecting Central Asian states to the Arabian Sea. He added that the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA) route could also expand northward.

He cited the transit of a Kazakh cargo shipment to the United Arab Emirates via Pakistan in June 2024 as proof of the country's logistical viability for intercontinental trade.

Khan also pointed to more than 1,800 international TIR road-transit shipments — a UN customs system that allows sealed cargo trucks to cross borders without repeated inspections — as evidence of Pakistan's operational readiness.

Central to Islamabad's investment pitch was the proposed Sukkur-Hyderabad (M-6) motorway, a planned highway in southern Pakistan that would complete the country's main north-south trade corridor linking ports on the Arabian Sea with inland and regional markets. Khan described it as a key missing link in Pakistan's north-south transport backbone and an opportunity for foreign investors.

He said the project offered "nearly 30 percent guaranteed equity" and would significantly strengthen regional connectivity while generating predictable returns.

Pakistan has increasingly promoted infrastructure built under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as the backbone of its connectivity ambitions, arguing that improved road and logistics networks could transform the country into a transit economy rather than solely a destination market.

The government has also allocated a 100-acre terminal at Gwadar Port for Central Asian states and expanded visa-on-arrival access for citizens of 126 countries to facilitate business travel, according to the communications ministry.

Officials say digitalization of transport data and coordination with regional partners including Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are aimed at making cross-border trade faster and compliant with international conventions.

Khan said the goal was to position Pakistan not merely as a transit territory but as "a proactive hub for global economic activity and a catalyst for a regional trade revolution."

(Source: Arab News)

## Intra-Asia Trade

### **India remains a reliable market for Vietnamese dragon fruit, after China”**

Vietnamese dragon fruit imports into India are peaking right now during the November-February wedding season, says Vikrant Sharma, partner at IndoViet Group, a fresh produce importer and exporter. "Vietnam's red soils produce top-quality white-flesh varieties with a distinctive sweet-sour taste that Indian buyers prefer," he notes.

Shipments have risen steadily through the winter wedding season: "We loaded 6 containers in November, 8 in December, 10-11 in January, and 6 already this month, with a target of 8-10 containers to wrap up the peak. White-flesh fruit is packed in standard 9kg boxes, containing 19-20 fruits of 400-450g each, primarily for Mumbai's Vashi market, which demands premium quality for pan-India distribution, while Chennai port accepts slightly lower grades. CIF Nhava Sheva prices have dropped around 30% from last year's peak shortage levels, and fluctuate weekly based on vessel arrivals and Vietnam's priority shipments to China or Hong Kong."

### **Indonesia is the largest importer of Saudi dates**

The Saudi pavilion has become a permanent feature at major international trade shows dedicated to fresh produce. Its elegant green stands attract visitors' attention, all displaying the same fruit, dates, albeit in several varieties. Behind the pavilion is the National Centre for Palms and Dates, an institution that organizes the participation of Saudi exhibitors, support. Several origins compete on the global market, but Saudi origin and its varieties are very popular and preferred in several markets, particularly in Asia, most notably in India, China, and Indonesia, the largest importer of Saudi dates," Alshbel continues. Its production and marketing, and promotes dates to a wide international public.

"The European market is also important to us. It is a qualitative market focused on the healthy and nutritious benefits of dates, and one that is showing growing interest, as we have seen during our regular participation in international trade fairs."

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