



29<sup>th</sup> April 26

Mumbai-India

## Global Maritime Trade & Transport

### PIL launches Ubuntu Express for Asia–South Africa trade

Pacific International Lines (PIL) has launched a new weekly service linking major Asian hubs with South African ports.

The Ubuntu Express (UBX) will provide a direct connection between Central and South China, Taiwan, Singapore and South Africa, strengthening port-to-port connectivity and capacity on the Asia–Africa corridor.

The move comes amid rising demand driven by industrial growth, consumer markets and increased flows of agricultural, temperature-sensitive and manufactured cargo.

The service is designed to improve transit times and operational efficiency between key production centres in Asia and South Africa’s import and export gateways.

Named after the South African philosophy of “Ubuntu”, the service underscores PIL’s approach to fostering closer trade links and integration between regions. The inaugural sailing is scheduled to depart Shanghai on 28 May 2026.

William Ho, General Manager, Long-haul Services, PIL, said: “PIL has been serving Africa for decades, building deep market knowledge, strong partnerships and a trusted network across the continent.

“The launch of Ubuntu Express reflects our continued commitment to growing our presence in the region, complementing our existing services to add capacity and better support the burgeoning Asia–South Africa trade demand. With our modern vessels deployed across these services, we provide our customers with reliable, competitive and comprehensive solutions across their supply chains.”

Ports of call: **Shanghai – Ningbo – Kaohsiung – Shekou – Singapore – Durban – Cape Town – Singapore – Shanghai**



## India Condemns Ship Attacks In Strait Of Hormuz, Calls For Immediate Restoration Of Safe Navigation



India has condemned attacks on commercial ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, calling such incidents deplorable and urging the immediate restoration of safe and uninterrupted navigation through the strategic waterway.

Speaking at a United Nations Security Council debate on the Middle East, India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Yojna Patel, said the Strait of Hormuz is of major importance to India's energy and economic security, and commercial shipping must not become a target of military attacks.

She said Indian seafarers had lost their lives during the conflict and that targeting merchant ships and putting civilian crew members at risk was unacceptable.

Patel said international law protecting commercial shipping must be fully respected and freedom of navigation through the strait must not be obstructed.

She added that India had co-sponsored UN Security Council Resolution 2817, adopted on March 11, and called for an early return of safe and unimpeded movement of global trade through the Strait of Hormuz.

She said recent developments in the Middle East have serious consequences for international security, economic stability, energy supplies, food security, trade and global supply chains. She added that the debate was timely given the scale of concerns in the region.

Patel said India has major interests in the Gulf, with nearly 10 million Indians living and working there, making regional security a priority for New Delhi. She said India has consistently called for dialogue, diplomacy and de-escalation since the conflict began on 28 Feb (Source: Baird News)

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## U.S. Marines board merchant ship which heading to Iran



### **CENTCOM said U.S. forces released the vessel after conducting a search and confirming the ship's voyage would not include an Iranian port call**

CENTCOM added that 39 vessels have been "redirected to ensure compliance" with the blockade. U.S. Marines boarded a commercial ship in the Arabian Sea suspecting it was headed to Iran in violation of the [U.S.-imposed blockade of the Strait of Hormuz](#).

The U.S. Central Command said that the commercial ship M/V Blue Star III was searched and released after ascertaining that it was not headed to an Iranian port.

Earlier today in the Arabian Sea, U.S. Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit boarded M/V Blue Star III, a commercial ship suspected of attempting to transit to Iran in violation of the U.S. blockade of Iranian ports," CENTCOM said U.S. forces released the vessel after conducting a search and confirming the ship's voyage would not include an Iranian port call.

The vessel was released after a search determined it was not planning to dock at an Iranian port, it said.

Prior to the U.S. blockade on Iran, 5 ships were moored or anchored in the Iranian port of Chah Bahar on an average day. Today, more than 20 vessels remain in Chah Bahar as U.S. forces cut off economic trade going into and coming out of Iran during the ongoing blockade," the CENTCOM said.

According to marine traffic monitoring websites, M/V Blue Star III is a container ship sailing under the flag of Comoros and was headed to the port of Sohar in Oman.

(Source: M wrote on X on Tuesday (April 28, 2026).



## Asian Maritime Industry

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### World's first ammonia port-to-ship bunkering for dual-fuel gas carrier wraps up in Korea



Ulsan Port Authority (UPA), which manages and operates South Korea's largest industrial port complex, has revealed the Asian country's latest leap toward cleaner maritime fuel solutions in the global shipping industry's energy transition by completing what it describes as the world's first ammonia bunkering operation for an ammonia dual-fuel gas carrier.

This achievement was accomplished at Ulsan Port on April 23, 2026, adding to earlier milestones, including the world's first [methanol bunkering](#) demonstration (2023–2026) and simultaneous LNG bunkering operations for car carriers.

With this latest development, Ulsan Port is said to have demonstrated ammonia bunkering for a commercial vessel via port-to-ship (PTS) operations for the first time in the world, reinforcing its position as a green marine fuel supply hub.

**Byun Jae-young**, President of UPA, commented: *"This world-first ammonia bunkering operation was made possible by Ulsan Port's advanced energy infrastructure and accumulated bunkering expertise."*

*"It is a meaningful milestone that demonstrates the port's readiness to support a range of major sustainable marine fuels. We are committed to spearheading sustainable marine fuel bunkering and strengthening Ulsan Port's position as a trusted global hub."* (Source: **Off shore Energy**)



## Danang deep cooperation with Maersk on Lien Chieu port, logistics



Danang is stepping up cooperation with A.P. Moller-Maersk to accelerate the development of its Lien Chieu port and expand logistics capabilities, as the central Vietnam city seeks to strengthen its role in regional supply chains.

Construction on the Lien Chieu container terminal project started on Saturday, developed by a joint venture between Hateco Group and APM Terminals B.V., an unit of of A.P. Moller-Maersk.

With a total investment estimated at around VND45.3 trillion (\$1.7 billion), the port is designed to include eight container berths with a combined length of 2,750 meters, capable of handling vessels of up to 18,000 TEU.

The port will have a designed capacity of 5.7 million TEU per year, equivalent to about 74 million tons of cargo. The first phase is expected to reach four million TEU annually within three years of operation.

At a meeting with Maersk CEO Vincent Clerc as part of the groundbreaking ceremony, Danang Chairman Nguyen Manh Hung said the Lien Chieu container terminal project is a strategic project in the city's long-term development plan, with a focus on synchronizing infrastructure and improving connectivity between seaports, airports, and economic zones, while maintaining environmental sustainability. (Source: The investor VN)



## Seized Iranian cargo ship highlights China trade links, sanctions risks



The Iranian cargo vessel seized by U.S. forces in the Gulf of Oman over the weekend is part of a shipping network tied to trade with China, a key economic partner for Tehran, The Wall Street Journal reported Monday, citing shipping analysts.

The incident underscores growing enforcement risk around Iranian shipping routes and could tighten pressure on trade flows involving China, energy markets and regional logistics. For investors, renewed scrutiny of sanctions evasion networks may raise volatility in oil prices, shipping insurance and companies exposed to Middle East supply chains.

The ship, the MV Touska, had visited the southern Chinese port of Zhuhai twice in the six weeks before U.S. forces intercepted it Sunday while it was heading toward Iran's Bandar Abbas port.

According to the Pentagon, the vessel ignored repeated warnings from the USS Spruance for about six hours. U.S. forces then fired at the engine-room area, disabled the ship and sent Marines aboard.

U.S. officials have not disclosed what cargo was on board. Analysts said the ship's apparent attempt to break a U.S. blockade suggests it may have been carrying material considered strategically important. Despite U.S. and European sanctions, transporting oil, containerized goods and industrial cargo. It was sanctioned by Washington in 2018 during the Trump administration's earlier pressure campaign against Iran.

The Touska is among a fleet of Iranian-linked vessels that continue operating. Shipping records indicate the vessel is linked to an IRISL subsidiary. Other ships tied to the same operator have previously been associated with transporting Chinese-origin materials allegedly used in Iran's missile program.

China said it was concerned by the seizure and called for restraint in the Strait of Hormuz, while reiterating opposition to unilateral sanctions. The U.S. Navy said last week that sanctioned Iranian vessels, and ships suspected of carrying contraband such as weapons or military electronics, could be boarded, searched and seized.



## Asian Logistics Sector

# AD Ports inks Azeri transport, logistics infrastructure collaboration deal



AD Ports Group has announced that it has signed an agreement with Azerbaijan Transport and Communications Holding (Azcon Holding) to explore strategic collaboration across ports, shipping, logistics, and digital trade solutions in the energy-rich Caucasian country.

The MoU establishes a strategic framework for co-operation between the parties to explore investment opportunities and advance collaboration in integrated transport and logistics infrastructure, including maritime and digital solutions in Azerbaijan.

This collaboration comes as the UAE-Azerbaijan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) officially entered into force on 15 April 2026. The agreement will accelerate bilateral trade flows, create new opportunities for investments and joint-ventures, and enhance market access and global reach for exporters in both countries by eliminating or reducing tariffs on the majority of goods and services, in addition to enhancing private-sector collaboration and empowering entrepreneurs and SMEs.

The MoU was signed by Abdulaziz Zayed AlShamsi, Regional CEO of AD Ports Group; and Vugar Mirzazada, the Deputy Executive Director of Azcon Holding in the presence of Saeed Bin Mubarak Al Hajeri, UAE Minister of State; and Yalchin Rafiyev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan as well as Mohammed Al Blooshi, UAE Ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan; Elchin Baghirov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Azerbaijan to the UAE; and Shahin Babayev, Executive Director of Azcon Holding

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AlShamsi said: "Our deal with Azcon Holding marks a further step in advancing AD Ports Group's corridor-focused strategy, strengthening trade links between Central Asia and Europe. Azerbaijan's pivotal position bridging East and West offers strong opportunities, we look forward to leveraging our integrated capabilities across ports, maritime, logistics, and digital solutions to enable more efficient, connected, and commercially attractive trade routes."(Source: Trade Arabia)

### **Vietnam Reduces Inland Port Fees to Enhance SCM Efficiency**

Vietnam has announced a reduction in inland port fees as part of a broader effort to strengthen its logistics sector and improve overall supply chain efficiency.

The move is aimed at lowering transportation and handling costs for businesses, particularly exporters who rely heavily on inland container depots (ICDs) for cargo consolidation and movement to seaports. By easing fee structures, authorities expect to enhance the competitiveness of Vietnamese goods in global markets. Industry stakeholders have welcomed the decision, noting that high inland logistics costs have long been a bottleneck in the country's trade ecosystem.(*India Seatrade News*)

### **South Korea Supports Shippers With Freight Rate Discounts**

South Korea has introduced freight rate discounts to support domestic shippers facing elevated logistics costs and ongoing uncertainty in global shipping markets.

The assistance is aimed at easing the burden on exporters and importers dealing with volatile freight charges, longer transit times, and capacity disruptions across major trade lanes. Small and medium-sized enterprises are expected to be among the primary beneficiaries of the support measures. Officials say the initiative is designed to help maintain export competitiveness for key sectors such as electronics, automobiles, machinery, chemicals, and consumer goods. Lower transport costs could also improve supply chain stability and enable businesses to fulfill overseas orders more efficiently.



## Intra- Asian Trade

### Cambodia–Japan Q1 bilateral trade rises 15% due to cooperations and investment

Bilateral trade between Cambodia and Japan in the first quarter of 2026 passed \$750 million, an increase of nearly 15% over the same period in 2025. Japan remains Cambodia's fourth-largest international trading partner, after China, the US and Vietnam.

The General Department of Customs and Excise (GDCE) reported Q1 total trade at \$753.46 million, up 14.8% from \$656.45 million in 2025. Cambodia exported \$487.41 million to Japan, up 13.2%, while importing \$266.06 million, up 17.8%. This generated a trade surplus of \$221.35 million in Q1 2026, compared to \$204.77 million in the same period of 2025.

Lim Heng, vice-president of the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce (CCC), told *The Post* that strong relations between the governments and private sectors of both countries have helped boost trade exchanges and Japanese investment in Cambodia. He added that the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), of which both countries are members, has also contributed to improving bilateral trade.

He noted that to promote exports from Cambodia to Japan, the CCC has established a representative office in Japan. The office helps promote Cambodian export products and attract Japanese investors to set up businesses or factories in Cambodia for export to Japan and other global markets.

"Given that Cambodia's production capacity and product quality are increasingly meeting international standards, I am confident that exports to Japan and other global destinations will continue to grow," he said.

Key Cambodian exports to Japan include garments, footwear, electronic components and agricultural products, while imports include machinery, vehicles, electronics and some food products. Japanese investments in Cambodia span sectors such as agriculture, industry, real estate and banking, according to Lim Heng.

A meeting to further promote bilateral trade and attract more Japanese direct investment was held at the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) headquarters on April 27.

It was chaired by Sun Chanthol, first vice-chairman of the CDC, with the Japanese side led by Akira Yoshimoto, chairman of the Japanese Business Association in Cambodia (JBAC). Also in attendance were representatives from several government institutions and Japanese companies operating in Cambodia.

According to the CDC, the purpose of the meeting was to gather feedback from the private sector and review support measures aimed at improving the efficiency of business operations for companies investing in Cambodia.

Akira noted that the attention and support from the Royal Government through various mechanisms, along with relevant ministries and institutions at all levels, have strengthened optimism and confidence among JBAC members regarding their investments in Cambodia.

In 2025, total trade between Cambodia and Japan reached \$2.53 billion, an increase according to GDCE of 17.1% compared to the \$2.16 billion recorded in 2024. Cambodia exported \$1.57 billion to Japan, up 11.9%, while imports totalled \$956.23 million, up 27%, according to GDCE (Source: The Phnom Penh Post)

## Pakistan sets June 1 start for mango exports

Pakistan's Federal Ministry of Commerce has set June 1, 2026, as the start date for mango exports for the 2026 crop year after amending the Export Policy Order 2022. The decision follows requests from exporters and was approved by a committee reviewing concerns related to crop conditions, logistics, and market risks.

According to the notification, all other terms and conditions under the Export Policy Order 2022 remain unchanged. The communication has been circulated to relevant institutions, including the Federal Board of Revenue, the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, and the All Pakistan Fruits and Vegetables Exporters, Importers and Merchants Association.

The revised export window comes after exporters warned that climate change, freight costs, Middle East tensions, and weather conditions could affect the mango export season. Industry representatives had urged the government to delay shipments to ensure fruit maturity, shelf life, and market performance.

The Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Exporters Association stated that mangoes must remain on trees longer to retain their traditional taste, sweetness, and aroma. Exporters said early shipments could result in low-quality fruit reaching international markets.

Waheed Ahmed, patron-in-chief of the association, said mango is the ambassador of Pakistan. He warned that exporting low-quality mangoes would affect the country's reputation in global markets and added that shipments should not be rushed before the fruit is ready.

The decision extends the export start date compared to the 2025 season, when exports were allowed from May 20 under a Statutory Regulatory Order, subject to quality and phytosanitary requirements. The earlier start had raised concerns about premature harvesting and its impact on quality and export performance.

Officials indicated that aligning exports with peak harvesting is expected to support shipment quality and pricing in key markets, including the Middle East, Europe, and the Far East.

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