

19th June 26

Mumbai-India

Global Maritime Trade & Transport

Criminal Charges Filed Against Chief Engineer Of Container Ship Dali That Hit Baltimore Bridge, Killing 6



US federal prosecutors have charged the chief engineer of the container ship Dali for allegedly failing to report dangerous conditions aboard the vessel before it struck Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge in March 2024, causing the bridge to collapse and killing six road workers.

The charge against Karthikeyan Deenadayalan is the first criminal case filed against a crew member who was aboard the ship at the time of the disaster, which temporarily shut down the main shipping channel into the Port of Baltimore.

According to court filings, Deenadayalan has been charged with violating the Ports and Waterways Safety Act. Prosecutors allege he "knowingly and willfully" failed to notify the US Coast Guard about hazardous conditions on the Dali before the vessel departed Baltimore.

Federal authorities and Deenadayalan have entered into a deferred prosecution agreement, meaning the criminal charge could eventually be dismissed if he complies with certain conditions. The terms of the agreement have not been publicly disclosed.

The US Department of Justice alleges the Dali was operating with equipment issues involving its generator fuel supply system.

Prosecutors claim redundant supply and booster pumps for generators 3 and 4 were not being used and that a non-redundant flushing pump had been used instead. According to investigators, the Dali suffered at least four power outages before striking the bridge.

Court documents state the first blackout was likely caused by a loose wire, while the second and critical blackout occurred because the vessel relied on the non-redundant flushing pump to supply fuel to two of its four generators.

The charges against the chief engineer come weeks after federal prosecutors unsealed criminal charges against the vessel's operator, Synergy Marine, and one of its technical superintendents.

Prosecutors allege the company concealed dangerous conditions aboard the ship by falsifying inspection reports and bypassing maritime safety requirements. They also claim the vessel was fitted with the wrong fuel pump, preventing it from regaining power before the collision.

Synergy Marine has denied the allegations, describing them in court filings as "unfounded and strenuously denied." The collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge on March 26, 2024, killed six construction workers who were repairing potholes on the structure.

The incident also blocked the main navigation channel serving the Port of Baltimore for weeks, disrupting shipping and business activity in the region.

The ship's owner and operator have already reached settlements with the families of the six workers who died, surviving road crew members, the State of Maryland and the US government over bridge losses, salvage operations and recovery costs.

However, several civil claims remain active, including cases brought by the City of Baltimore, Baltimore County, longshore workers and local businesses seeking compensation for economic losses linked to the bridge collapse and port disruption.

Separately, Grace Ocean, the owner of the Dali, has filed a lawsuit against shipbuilder HD Hyundai in Pennsylvania, alleging manufacturing defects. The shipyard has rejected the claims, noting the vessel had been operating for more than a decade and that it was not responsible for maintenance during that period.

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The advertisement features a dark blue background. On the left, there is a circular logo with a stylized 'A' and the text 'Container Terminal Automation Conference Asia'. Below this, it says 'Asia's New Terminal Technology Hub' and '8-9 September 2026 | Bangkok, Thailand'. A blue button with the text 'REGISTER NOW' is positioned below the date. On the right, there is a large, semi-circular image showing a container ship at a port with cranes and stacks of containers. A large, stylized blue 'A' is overlaid on the right side of the advertisement.

Maersk tests return to Suez route as Red Sea conditions improve

Maersk vessels have begun returning to the Suez Canal route after months of disruption linked to the conflict in the Middle East, although shipping lines continue to monitor conditions in both the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz.

The 8,648 TEU Clementine Maersk transited the Suez Canal on 13 June while operating on Maersk's Middle East-India to U.S. East Coast service. The vessel was travelling from Salalah to New York. According to Linerlytica, the Clementine Maersk and the 7,154 TEU Santa Catarina Maersk were the first Maersk vessels to pass through Bab el-Mandeb since 1 March 2026, when the company paused transits following the escalation of the Iran conflict.

The move does not yet represent a full return to the route. Earlier this year, Maersk had already indicated that its MECL service would return to the trans-Suez route, subject to continued stability in the Red Sea.

In its June market update, the company said conditions in the Middle East remained unpredictable and that shipping conditions in the Strait of Hormuz had not yet shown clear signs of improvement. Reuters reported on 15 June that Maersk welcomed the newly announced U.S.-Iran agreement but had not changed its Middle East operations because details of the agreement remained limited.

The Suez Canal remains an important route for Asia-Europe and Middle East-related services, as diversions around the Cape of Good Hope increase voyage distances, transit times, and operating costs. While a return to Suez could improve schedule efficiency and release vessel capacity, cargo owners continue to focus on route reliability and consistency.

Questions also remain regarding commercial transit through the Strait of Hormuz. Reports indicate that the U.S.-Iran agreement includes the restoration of commercial transit, but uncertainty remains regarding any fees or charges for vessels using the waterway. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, foreign vessels cannot be charged solely for passage through a territorial sea, although charges may be levied for specific services provided to a vessel.

According to the Drewry Red Sea Diversion Tracker, the number of containerships transiting the Suez Canal rose to 27 in the week ended 7 June and 28 in the week ended 14 June. During the two-week period ended 14 June, 55 containerships passed through Suez, up 20 per cent from the previous fortnight.

In the week ended 14 June, CMA CGM operated eight vessels, MSC one vessel, and Maersk three vessels of more than 8,000 TEU through the canal. Two 24,000 TEU CMA CGM vessels on Asia-North Europe and Asia-Mediterranean services also transited Suez.

Meanwhile, vessels using the Cape of Good Hope route declined to 181 in the week ended 14 June, compared with 204 the previous week. Despite this reduction, the Cape route remains the primary route connecting Asia and Europe. (Source: [Hellenic Shipping News](#))



Asian Maritime Industry

CU Lines Upgrades Southeast Asia–Joint Venture Partner in HLX Service



Intra-Asia shipping line China United Lines (CULines) has expanded its regional service network by transitioning from a slot charterer to an official joint venture operator on the Hercules (HLX) Southeast Asia–South Asia service. The operational upgrade establishes a more robust transportation corridor designed to streamline trade flows between the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asian industrial zones.

The enhanced network structure optimizes space allocation and schedule integrity for commercial shippers moving freight across the Intra-Asia, Middle East, and Red Sea maritime sectors.

Direct Weekly Rotation Strategy

The HLX liner service features a direct, high-frequency port rotation aimed at cutting down transit windows and bypassing intermediary domestic handoffs. By operating as an independent vessel provider within the joint venture layout, CULines ensures greater control over container slot availability and equipment positioning.

The fixed-day weekly service maintains a comprehensive regional loop:

HLX Service Port Rotation: **Laem Chabang – Singapore – Port Klang – Nhava Sheva – Mundra – Karachi – Port Klang – Singapore – Laem Chabang**

By anchoring the loop at Thailand's main gateway of Laem Chabang and routing directly through the major West India terminals of Nhava Sheva and Mundra, the carrier creates a high-capacity pipeline for time-sensitive manufacturing components, textiles, and agricultural goods. **(Source: Logistics Manager)**

Direct Wuhan–Indonesia Shipping Route Strengthens Central China's Connectivity with Southeast Asia



A cargo vessel is berthed at Yangluo Port in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, before sailing to Indonesia via the direct Wuhan–Indonesia shipping route. (Photo courtesy of QMB New Energy Materials)

The direct Wuhan–Indonesia shipping route is enhancing logistics connectivity between central China and Southeast Asia. Wuhan (ANTARA) — The vessel Lanning 19, carrying more than 10,000 tonnes of equipment and materials, departed from Yangluo Port in Wuhan for Sambalagi Port in Indonesia on June 16, 2026. The voyage marked the 81st trip since the launch of the direct Wuhan–Indonesia river-sea shipping route on November 30, 2024.

The cargo was intended to support GEM Group's development projects in Indonesia.

Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore, expanding market access for companies in central China across Southeast Asia.

In total, the two-way Yangluo Port–Indonesia route has recorded more than 100 voyages, transporting 620,000 tonnes of cargo with a trade value of approximately US\$1.4 billion. The route accounts for more than 50 percent of trade between Hubei Province and Indonesia.

The direct Wuhan–Indonesia shipping route was initiated by the Hubei Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Hubei Provincial Government, with support from local maritime and port authorities. The route was established to address cross-border logistics challenges faced by companies in Hubei.

Before the route became operational, most imports and exports from Hubei had to transit through coastal ports such as Shanghai, Huangpu, and Ningbo. Following the opening of the direct route, vessels have been able to sail from the Yangtze River through the East China Sea and the South China Sea directly to Indonesia.

According to data provided by GEM Chairman Xu Kaihua, the route has shortened delivery times by more than seven days and reduced logistics costs by more than 300 yuan per tonne. The improved efficiency has enhanced the competitiveness of inland Chinese enterprises in international markets.

In addition to Indonesia, vessels operating on the route can also call at ports in the **Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore**, expanding market access for companies in central China across Southeast Asia.

Building a Two-Way Logistics Network

As trade activity has increased, the shipping route has gradually developed into a more balanced two-way logistics network.

Xu Kaihua said that, to date, 240,000 tonnes of nickel resources and other strategic raw materials worth US\$1.1 billion have been shipped from Indonesia to Wuhan. Meanwhile, shipments of equipment and materials from Wuhan to Indonesia have reached 380,000 cubic metres, with a total value of around US\$300 million.

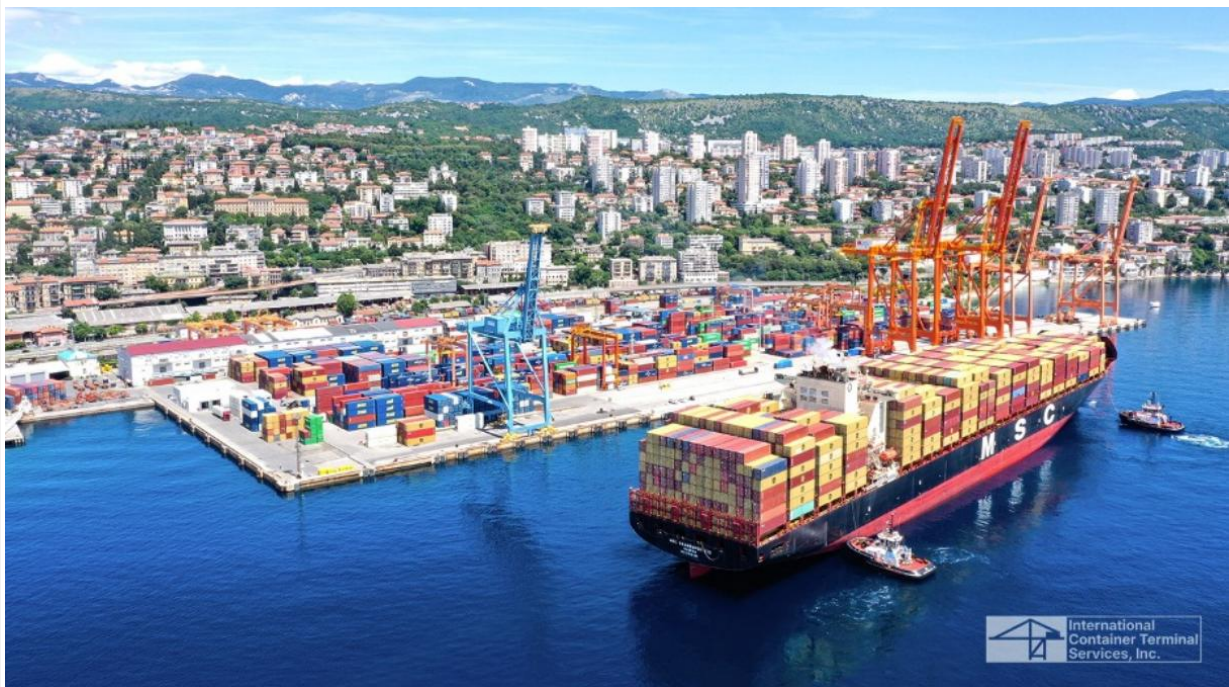
The logistics corridor not only secures supplies of key raw materials for China's new energy industry but also supports the overseas export of Chinese manufacturing equipment and technologies.

The opening of the route also coincides with growing investment by Hubei-based companies in Indonesia. In recent years, companies from Hubei, including GEM, have invested in developing green nickel-based industrial parks in Indonesia.

These investments have supported the transformation of Indonesia's nickel processing industry toward the new energy sector while strengthening the global new energy supply chain. **(Source: Antara)**



MSC Expands Far East Connectivity Via Rijeka With New Phoenix Mainline Service



The Port of Rijeka has strengthened its position on the Asia Europe trade lane following the launch of Mediterranean Shipping Company's Phoenix service at Adriatic Gate Container Terminal (AGCT).

The new service, operated by MSC, provides a direct maritime connection between the Adriatic region, the Eastern Mediterranean and major ports across the Far East. The move adds another mainline option for shippers moving cargo between Asia and Southeast and Central Europe.

The inaugural call took place on June 2 when the **MSC AGAMEMNON VIII** arrived at **Adriatic Gate Container Terminal**, marking the official start of the service.

Direct Access to Key Asian Markets

The Phoenix service links several of Asia's largest manufacturing and consumer hubs with the Adriatic. The rotation includes Busan, Ningbo, Shanghai, Shekou, Singapore, Ashdod, Haifa, Trieste, Koper and Rijeka before returning through the Eastern Mediterranean and Singapore to Busan.

For cargo owners and logistics providers, direct services can often mean fewer transshipment moves and more predictable transit times. In a supply chain environment where reliability remains a priority, those factors continue to influence routing decisions.

According to **Iñigo Mendibe**, chief executive officer of AGCT, the new connection further strengthens the terminal's role within MSC's Adriatic network.

"We are grateful to MSC for their trust in AGCT as one of their main gateway terminals in the Adriatic. With this addition, AGCT now has two weekly direct services coming from the Far East to best serve not only Croatia, but also key landlocked markets in Southeast and Central Europe," Mendibe said.

Larger Vessels Planned

The service is initially deploying vessels with capacities ranging from 8,000 TEU to 11,000 TEU. MSC plans to gradually introduce larger ships exceeding 13,000 TEU, increasing available capacity on the Asia Adriatic trade corridor.

The deployment of larger tonnage reflects continued carrier interest in the Adriatic as an alternative gateway for cargo destined for inland European markets. As rail and road connections from the region continue to develop, ports such as Rijeka are seeking a greater share of cargo flows traditionally routed through Northern European gateways.

Strengthening Rijeka's Hub Role

The addition of the Phoenix service further enhances Rijeka's global connectivity while reinforcing AGCT's position as a strategic hub within MSC's network.

For regional importers and exporters, the new service provides another direct link to Asian markets at a time when supply chains continue to focus on efficiency, transit reliability and network flexibility. **(Source: Break Bulk News)**



Asian Logistics Sector

Logistics **SUPPLYCHAIN**
MANAGEMENT MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Thailand revives \$30 billion coast-to-coast corridor to rival Malacca Strait



- Project backers promise faster, cheaper shipping to bypass congested Malacca Strait
- Investors remain cautious due to high costs, geopolitical sensitivities
- Local residents and activists criticise plans, question need for industrialisation

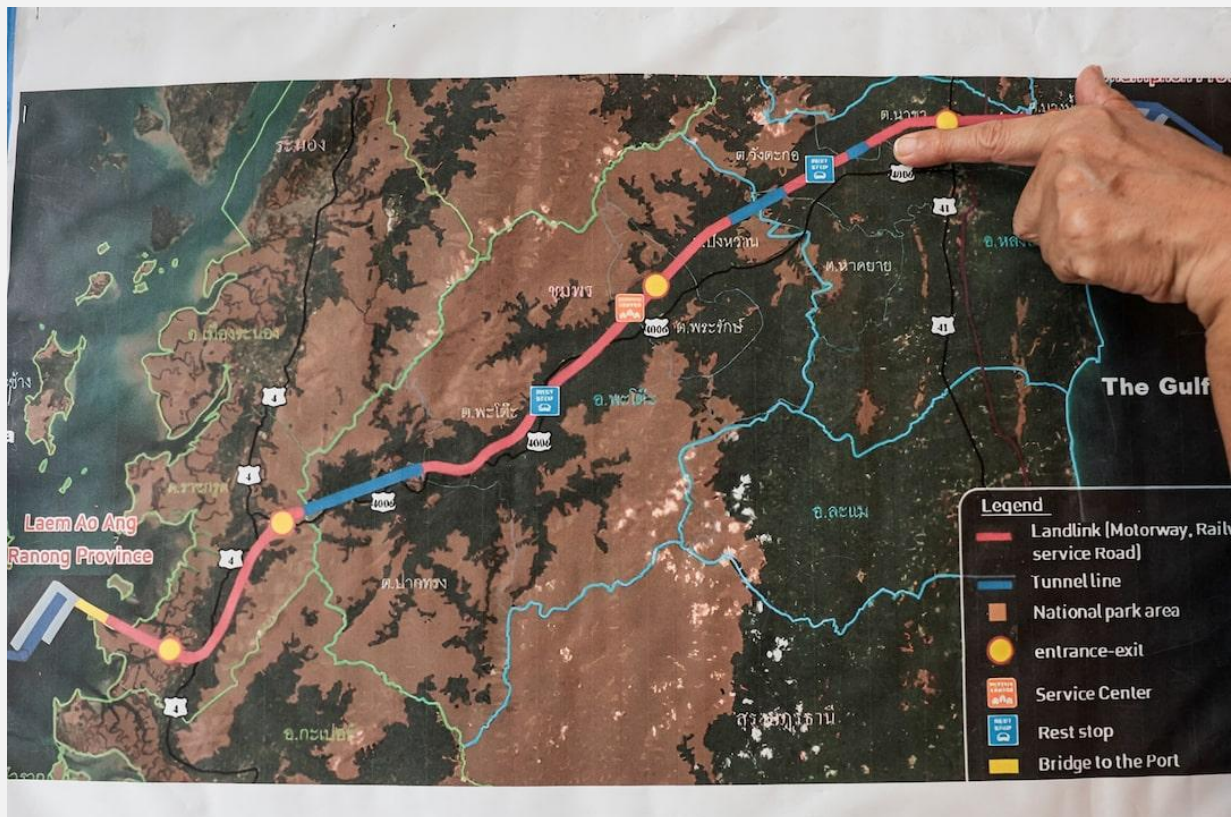
RANONG, Thailand, June 18 (Reuters) - Chaiyaporn Arunrasamee hunched over his fishing nets, overlooking the waters of the Andaman Sea, where Thailand's government is proposing an ambitious "Land Bridge" that will ferry goods between ports on opposite sides of the peninsula.

"Personally, I don't want it to happen at all," Chaiyaporn said of the project, which Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul has resuscitated after the war in Iran and the closure of the Hormuz Strait highlighted countries' reliance on strategic maritime chokepoints.

Plans envision a 1 trillion baht (\$30.45 billion) logistics corridor to offer an alternative route to the congested [Strait of Malacca](#) by connecting two new deep-sea ports: Chumphon, on the Gulf of Thailand to the east, and Ranong, along the western Andaman coast, where Chaiyaporn, 50, has fished for his entire life.

"This thing will be located in the area where we make our living," he said last month in the small fishing hamlet of Baan Hat Sai Dam on an island ringed by mangrove forests. "Where will we go?"

Reuters crisscrossed the land and communities in the path of the proposed Land Bridge and interviewed more than 15 residents, local officials, experts, planning leaders and others involved or affected by the process.



The interviews, as well as government documents reviewed by Reuters, reveal previously unpublished details of a project with promises of savings and speedy shipments, but hampered by complicated logistics, local opposition and a staggering cost that has yet to attract major investors.

Analysts say the project currently appears economically ambitious and is unlikely to compete with Malacca as a global transit route, but it could prove viable as a smaller-scale strategic corridor for Thailand.

The 900-km (550-mile) long Malacca Strait is bounded by Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore and provides the shortest sea route from East Asia to the Middle East and Europe.

"The land bridge may ultimately...emerge as a modular national security asset aimed at securing local energy routes and boosting Thailand's own western export capabilities," said Eugene Mark at Singapore's ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

ALTERNATIVE TO MALACCA

An internal government presentation seen by Reuters says the proposed corridor could reduce logistics costs by nearly 30% and cut transit times by up to 14 days for cargo moving between southern China and ports in the Indian Ocean serving South Asia and the Middle East.

At the core of the project is a standard-gauge railway across the 90 km (56 miles) between the two deep-sea ports, which will be capable of handling up to 20 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit (TEU) a year, according to the presentation. One TEU represents the volume of a single, standardized 20-foot shipping container.

Another meter-gauge rail line will link the cargo flow to the existing national railway network. The corridor would also be supported by multi-lane highways and local roads, all integrated with Thailand's broader transport network.

About 80% of all container traffic handled at major regional ports along the Malacca Strait, including Singapore, consists of trans-shipment cargo waiting to be transferred between vessels rather than goods destined for local markets, according to Thai estimates.

"We want to capture some of this 80% market, particularly the feeder segment," said Jiraroht Sukolrat, Director-General of Thailand's Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning, referring to freight ships with 12,000 TEU capacity or lower.

Overall, feeder-to-feeder cargo movements from the Gulf of Thailand to the Andaman Sea - or vice versa - could be around 10% cheaper and six days faster than comparable routes through Singapore, largely because of lower congestion, according to the internal government presentation. "We are not targeting giant mainline vessels," Jiraroht said.

The Land Bridge plan, first floated around 2020, is a successor to a series of infrastructure schemes pursued by Thai governments over two decades that did not materialise due to shifting policies and lack of continued investment support.

Unlike earlier iterations, the current version of the project excludes petrochemical complexes and oil refineries, focusing instead on ports, railways and light industries.

"The concept hasn't really changed. What has changed is the packaging," said Wipawadee Panyangnoi, an independent researcher who wrote her doctoral dissertation on the Land Bridge proposal.

"In the past they openly talked about industrial estates and petrochemicals, which people opposed. Today the project is framed as transport infrastructure and logistics because that language is easier for the public to accept."

The government faces an uphill effort to convince cargo liners to bear the financial and time costs of unloading, moving goods overland, and reloading them onto another vessel, said Mark of the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute.

"Proving that this double-handling model can genuinely compete with the seamless transit through the Strait of Malacca remains a major hurdle," he said. But authorities have learned from unsuccessful past projects and the state will play a regulatory and supporting role, while the financing primarily comes from private investors, said Jiraroht.

"It has to be a consortium involving shipping lines, port operators, financiers and land developers," he said. So far, investor interest has been decidedly cautious and non-committal due to shifting policy frameworks and immense capital requirements, Mark said.

The project also faces a tricky geopolitical situation, with neighbours watching with both cautious interest and wariness, he said.

"Chinese state enterprises are unlikely to commit significant capital unless they secure strong operational leverage, which would trigger intense domestic political pushback in Thailand over foreign control," Mark said.

"Thailand must navigate a delicate diplomatic balancing act to prevent the corridor from becoming a geopolitical flashpoint." The Singapore foreign ministry did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment.

EXPANDING RESISTANCE

Chaipayorn is among a dozen residents along the 90-kilometers (56-mile) corridor between the two seas, home to fishing and farming communities that would be upended by the project, who told Reuters that they are opposed to the plan.

In the middle of the proposed land bridge corridor in the fertile Phato district, where durian plantations and coffee farms bring in substantial income, some residents question whether this scale of industrialisation is needed at all.

"My hometown's durian industry alone generates around 10 billion baht a year without needing to build anything new," said coffee entrepreneur Chalermchart Seekhiao, 30. "People need to understand: this isn't an empty wasteland."

The project suffered a blow this month when regulators ordered a completely new Environmental and Health Impact Assessment because of a large discrepancy between government and private research estimates on the density of marine life near the ports.

"Local opposition alone rarely cancels a top-down mega-project in Thailand, but it acts as a powerful regulatory drag that compounds investor risk," Mark said. **(Source: Reuters)**

Vietnamese coconuts arrive in China via cross-border refrigerated rail

VOV.VN - A shipment of fresh coconuts from Vietnam's Vinh Long province arrived at Nanning International Railway Port, China, on June 18 aboard a cross-border refrigerated freight train, marking another step forward in agricultural logistics connectivity between Vietnam and China.

The train carried approximately 135 tonnes of fresh fruit valued at approximately 2.19 million yuan (US\$305,000) from ASEAN countries, including Thailand's Monthong durians and Vietnamese coconuts. After completing customs procedures, the cargo was transported to the China-ASEAN Fruit Trading Centre under a pilot customs clearance mechanism designed to accelerate processing while preserving product freshness.

The Vietnamese shipment originated from Vinh Long, one of the country's key coconut-growing regions. The province is home to more than 30,000 hectares of coconut plantations certified under European Union and United States organic standards.

The cargo also included Phu Tan wax coconuts, a specialty product known for its distinctive texture and higher commercial value. Exporters expect the use of refrigerated cross-border rail transport to improve access to premium consumer segments in the Chinese market.

The shipment was packed in containers near production areas before being transported by road to Dong Dang Railway Station in Northern Vietnam, where it was connected to the rail network linking Vietnam and China. Upon arrival in Nanning, part of the cargo was distributed locally while the remainder continued to eastern, northern and northeastern regions of China through specialised cold-chain logistics services.

The successful operation was made possible through trade facilitation measures introduced by China's General Administration of Customs in coordination with the Department of Commerce of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Nanning authorities.

The shipment is expected to further strengthen Nanning's role as a key distribution hub for ASEAN fruit and support the development of a regional supply chain linking ASEAN production, Guangxi distribution and nationwide consumption across China.

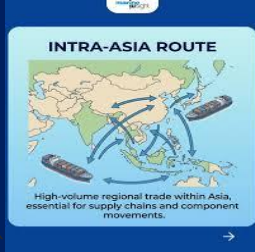
The refrigerated rail model helps reduce transportation time, improve product preservation and strengthen market access for Vietnamese agricultural exports, particularly fresh fruit products that require reliable cold-chain infrastructure and rapid delivery.

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Intra- Asian Trade

Chinese onion imports pressure South Korean market

Domestic onion prices in South Korea remain below imported onion prices, extending a price inversion that has persisted for six months since November 2025.

According to Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation (aT) data, domestic onions traded above Chinese onions on only one of 126 trading days this year. On June 12, imported onions traded at an average of 1,426 won (US\$1.03) per kilogram, while domestic onions traded between 412 and 516 won (US\$0.30-0.37) per kilogram.

A wholesaler in Songpa District said, "Lately, domestic onions are transacting about 700-800 won lower than imports," adding, "Because demand for domestic onions is low, they inevitably come out at lower prices."

Chinese onion imports reached approximately 130,000 tons in 2025, more than four times the volume imported in 2020. Private-sector imports accounted for 85% of the total. Imports have continued despite a tariff rate of 135%.

Industry sources attribute part of the trend to differences in product uniformity. Chinese onions are largely produced through large-scale cultivation and mechanised farming, resulting in more consistent size and shape. Domestic production is spread across smaller farms, leading to greater variation between farms and production regions.

One onion wholesaler said, "Chinese products are relatively accurate in weight and stable in quality, Market participants also point to changing consumption patterns. Household onion purchases declined from 9.8 purchases per year in 2010 to 7.0 purchases in 2024, according to the Rural Development Administration. Producers have raised concerns that current prices do not cover production costs. In early June, onion growers in several producing regions, including Gimcheon, Hamyang, Wanju, and Muan, ploughed onion fields under with tractors in protest.

To support the market, the government plans to increase onion reserves to 20,000 tons, 82% above the average year. Additional measures include efforts to stimulate consumption and suspend shipments of surplus supplies. (Source: [Chosun Biz](#))



Vietnam exports 16,000 tons of lychees to China by Road

More than 16,000 tons of fresh lychees valued at nearly US\$11 million were exported from Vietnam to China through Kim Thanh International Border Gate No. 2 between the start of the harvest season and June 14.

According to the Lao Cai International Border Gate Customs Team under Regional Customs Sub-Department VII, nearly 1,500 trucks carrying lychees completed export procedures through the border gate during the period.

A representative of the Lao Cai Economic Zone Authority said the Bac Ninh lychee harvest entered its peak season on June 10. Traffic volumes at Kim Thanh International Border Gate No. 2 are expected to increase to between 70 and 100 trucks per day as harvesting continues.

To manage the flow of fruit exports, trucks carrying fresh lychees are directed to a dedicated parking area with capacity for approximately 100 vehicles. Following completion of customs documentation, vehicles are moved to the supervision area for export clearance procedures.

According to the authority, customs procedures and documentation requirements have been made publicly available to enable exporters to prepare documents in advance and reduce potential delays.

The Lao Cai Economic Zone Authority also held meetings in early May to coordinate traffic management and personnel deployment ahead of the season. These arrangements allow customs procedures to begin 45 to 60 minutes before the border gate officially opens.

Fresh agricultural products have been prioritised during the export season, with fresh lychees receiving priority clearance during morning hours to help maintain product quality during transit. (Source: [Vietnam+](#))

Bangladesh border guards seize garlic bound for India

Members of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized 340 kilograms of garlic and 450 kilograms of urea fertiliser during an anti-smuggling operation in the Choto Harina area of Barkal upazila on Thursday.

According to BGB officials, the goods were allegedly being smuggled into India. Acting on a tip-off, personnel from Choto Harina Battalion-12 BGB conducted a raid at Amtala under the battalion's jurisdiction at approximately 11:00 a.m. and recovered the garlic and fertiliser.

The seized goods have an estimated market value of Tk129,000 (US\$1,060), according to BGB. Lieutenant Colonel Imrul Kayes Mehedi, Zone Commander of 12 BGB, said the force remains focused on preventing cross-border smuggling activities. Source: [BSS News](#)

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