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ASIAN SHIPPER

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Friday, January 5, 2007

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OOCL opens Sri Lanka office, adds Cochin to IDX Service

OOCL opened a new office in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo January 1 to strengthen its position in the region.

The office opening follows the conclusion of OOCL's joint-venture agreement with its agent Sri Lanka Shipping Company Limited, effective from December 31.

Mr SL Chong has been appointed managing director for OOCL Lanka (Private) Limited (OSLL), which aims to offer international maritime transportation and logistics services to both domestic and international businesses.

"The OOCL Sri Lanka office is part of our extensive enhancement of the whole region," said SC Chan, managing director of the Straits and South West Asia Region of OOCL.

"The new office will also enhance our strength in linking the subcontinent and Middle East to the rest of the world."

In a separate development, the container carrier is adding a call at India's Port of Cochin to its IDX joint-shipping service that caters to the trade between the Indian subcontinent and the US east coast from January 5.

The move comes in response to increased demand for container transport service from India's fast-growing market.

The IDX's new weekly schedule is: Tuticorin, Cochin, Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Barcelona, New York, Norfolk, Charleston, Barcelona and Colombo for a 56-day rotation.

The IDX service will deploy eight vessels with a capacity of 2,500-2,600 TEU each, and will also provide faster transit times for cargo from Karachi relayed over Mundra.



Indian shippers brace for late January strike at 12 big ports

A STRIKE at India's 12 biggest ports becomes more likely after January 26 unless a settlement can be reached by the government, maritime employers on one side and the All-India Port and Dock Workers Federation on the other, reported India's Express newspaper.

After the 10-year wage settlement under the Industrial Dispute Act expired on December 31, there was much concern that a prolonged strike at the country's major ports will severely damage India's thriving economy.

"The Union Government is pushing workers to total strike as it has neither constituted the obligatory Bipartite Wage Negotiation Committee for the next settlement, nor has it settled some old wage and service related disputes despite promises of time-bound disposal," said a statement from the All-India Port and Dock Workers Federation.

"The union has decided to go on strike if the issue is not addressed by January 26," said Kandla Transport and Dock Workers Union general secretary Manohar Bellani, adding that a strike may paralyse economic activities across the country.

"We don't want this to happen, but we have been pushed to the wall," said Mr Ballani, whose dockers hope to retain work practices and manning scales in the face of changing cargo handling technologies.

The Express newspaper also reported Mr Bellani's claim that workers had only received an interim productivity bonus after agitation.



CWT to build distribution base, bonded logistics centre in Xian

SINGAPORE's CWT Limited has unveiled plans to invest CNY38 million (US\$4.86 million) to develop the Xian Logistics and Distribution Base and Xian Bonded Logistics Centre in the Xian International Port Zone (XIPZ), Logistics Week reports.

The facilities will provide storage, transportation, freight forwarding and cold chain services plus other value added services to companies in the western China region.

XIPZ will cover an area measuring 8.2 square kilometres when all three phases are completed by 2015 at a cost of CNY9.8 billion.

Established in 1970, CWT's network provides logistics, international freight forwarding and engineering services to the Netherlands, Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Egypt and the Middle East.



China Post signs deal with Sagawa Express

JAPAN's Sagawa Express has signed a co-operation agreement with China Post in a bid to end the monopoly of the four global giants DHL, FedEx, UPS and TNT in China's express market, reports Logistics Week.

The report attributed the news to a source close to the deal from Shanghai Poly-Sagawa Logistics, a joint venture established by Sagawa and Chinese state-owned enterprise, the Poly Group Corporation.

The four express giants are said to control half of the Sino-Japanese express market, with China Post accounting for a 13 per cent piece of the pie. Sagawa's share is even less than one per cent, which has been blamed on its late entrance to the China market.

The report noted that two years after Sagawa entered the market, there were a large number of small firms running express businesses under the Sagawa brand and charging 30 to 40 per cent less than Poly-Sagawa. These companies accounted for 15 per cent of the Sino-Japanese express market. They were reported to have "seriously" affected Sagawa's business in China as Sagawa had to focus a great deal of its time and effort on fighting off these companies before focusing on expanding its presence in China.

Poly-Sagawa was established in June 2004 to provide third party logistics services covering express delivery, air and sea freight transportation and warehousing. Sagawa Express and Poly Group Corporation invested a total of US\$10 million in the joint venture firm, with each side holding a 50 per cent share.



World Airways clinches freighter contract with Ethiopian Airlines

AN US\$6.8 million contract has been landed by World Airways to provide Ethiopian Airlines with DC-10-30F cargo service between Addis Ababa and Brussels starting this month.

World will provide Ethiopian with two DC-10 freighters, one for five months and one for three months, a company statement said.

"World Airways will operate these freighters primarily to transport perishables," said Rob Binns, World Air Holdings chief marketing officer. "We are pleased to be working with Ethiopian, which is one of the top airlines of its size and has been rated the best airline in Africa several times."

Founded in 1948, World Airways operates a fleet of 17 wide-body aircraft.



Continental hires country director for HK, Macau, and S China

CONTINENTAL Airlines has appointed Wyn Li as country director of Hong Kong, Macau and Southern China. He will be responsible for all sales and marketing activities and the overall leadership of that region, the airline said in a statement.

"Mr Li has extensive experience in other airlines and has broad marketing experience in tourism. He is a fine addition to our Hong Kong team," said Continental Airlines vice president for sales and marketing Walter Dias.

Prior to Mr Li's position at Continental Airlines, he was regional marketing manager - Pacific (South) and general manager - sales and marketing Hong Kong for a legacy US carrier.

Before that, he was at Singapore Airlines as manager loyal marketing, managing the airline's frequent flyer programme.

His experience also includes positions at KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.



NYK bolsters safety measures to prevent dangerous goods catching fire

NYK has hosted a series of conferences in Shanghai and Tokyo to improve knowledge about safety measures when shipping dangerous goods and chemicals to prevent accidents, as well as those arising from making false declarations.

Representatives from the UK's P&I Club, a third-party liability insurance association for shipowners, participated as guest speakers at the conferences that were held in the wake of a series of fires in recent years amid rapid growth in the global trade of containerised cargo, particularly from Asia.

A statement from NYK said that blazes caused by dangerous goods and chemicals are expected to continue to rise in the future.

For this reason, the NYK Container Trade Management Group began a Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Sea Campaign last September. The campaign encourages strengthening measures to prevent shipments of dangerous goods being falsely declared.

Specific activities include the enhancement of checking functions when booking shipments of dangerous goods and chemicals, introduction of an online e-learning programme for the handling of dangerous goods and the establishment of a dangerous goods help desk to cover booking offices around the world.

"To prevent accidents that result from false declarations of dangerous goods and chemicals, NYK continues to encourage other shipping companies, customers, insurance companies, government offices, and other relevant groups to participate in safety activities related to dangerous goods and chemicals," the release added.



Zhejiang focuses on developing coastal ports

PORT authorities in China plan to develop Ningbo-Zhoushan port and Wenzhou port as major coastal ports, while Jiaxing port and Taizhou port will be turned into key regional ports.

This is according to the guidelines contained in the recently published "Zhejiang Province Coastal Port Layout Plan", Xinhua News Agency reports.

The blueprint calls for Ningbo-Zhoushan port to become an important part of the Shanghai International Shipping Centre, acting as an international container and bulk cargo port, transit point and storage base for energy supplies, raw materials and foreign trade goods in the Yangtze River Delta.

Wenzhou port will also serve the foreign trade for the south western part of Zhejiang, eastern Jiangxi, southern Anhui and northern Fujian provinces.

Taizhou port will act for the catchment area of central and southern Zhejiang and northern Fujian, serving industries on the coast as a transshipment port for raw materials, energy supplies, as well as being a feeder port for containers.

Jiaxing port will focus on the domestic trade for raw materials in Hangzhou, Jiaxing and Huzhou in Zhejiang province, the report added.



Kuehne + Nagel expands in Japan, opens Kobe office

SWISS transport and logistics giant Kuehne + Nagel opened an office on January 1 in the port city of Kobe, expanding its network in Japan to a total of eight locations.

The new office comes in response to growing demand for one-stop services from logistics companies in the market. A company statement said that customers are increasingly looking for providers who are capable of offering in-house customs clearance for all cargo that originates from or is destined to the greater Kobe area.

The new Kuehne + Nagel office will provide sea freight logistics from the Sanomiya business district that is close to the local customs bureau and major infrastructure facilities.

"The new Kobe office is also in line with our business strategy of offering in-house customs clearance on a country-wide basis, and marks a further step in the expansion of our high quality sea freight and related logistics operations," said John Levin, president of Kuehne + Nagel.

It plans to next open a new sea freight clearance office in Yokohama in May.



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