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Wilhelmsen names new ro-ro vessel in Singapore

NORWEGIAN shipping company Wilh. Wilhelmsen named the newest ship to its fleet, the "Tortugas", at a ceremony in Singapore earlier this week.

Speaking at the event, company chairman Wilhelm Wilhelmsen said the addition of the Tortugas represented another important step for the company.

"This new Pure Car and Pure Truck Carrier (PCTC) is ideally suited in carrying the mix of cargoes we ship to and from Southeast Asia through Singapore every year including cars, agricultural machinery, construction equipment and specialist freight such as yachts and power generation equipment," he said.

The Tortugas, the sixth of 10 new ships from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, is said to

be environmentally friendly and fuel-efficient.

The new vessel is one of a series of ships to receive the ShipPax Award for Outstanding Ro-Ro Cargo Decks.

"This design combines double bottom fuel tanks and solid ballast with cargo space that maximizes the capacity and flexibility to carry a wide variety of ro-ro cargoes," the statement said.

The company is scheduled to take delivery of eight more vessels between now and year-end 2009. Each will be capable of taking on between 6,345 to 8,000 vehicles.



DP World allies with Kaplan Equity to strengthen logistics in Australia

GLOBAL marine terminal operator DP World is forming a logistics alliance in Australia with a consortium led by a private equity fund managed by Kaplan Funds Management, Kaplan Equity Limited (KEL).

The alliance intends to expand DP World's automotive, stevedoring and landside logistics in Australia, which include P&O Automotive and General Stevedoring (A&GS) and P&O Trans Australia (POTA). They will retain the P&O brand following their acquisition by DP World.

Existing investments by DP World in associated companies are also under consideration as part of the joint venture, a company statement said. It's estimated the final transaction value will be in the range of A\$200 million (US\$159 million) when concluded in the first quarter.

The new alliance, to be chaired by former Patrick Corporation managing director Chris Corrigan, aims to help DP World develop its core container terminal business in Australia with the consortium providing management expertise and financing.

"DP World's decision to engage in these joint ventures is about growth and the company's determination to build and strengthen DP World in Australia," said DP World of Australia chairman Tim Blood.



Port of Mumbai to undergo massive expansion by 2012

THE Mumbai Port Trust (MPT) is expected to award a contract to build an INR1,228 crore (US\$275.2 million) offshore container terminal that would add 15 million tonnes capacity annually, to a consortium led by Gammon India.

The consortium is said to have been the highest bidder for the project which is

earmarked for completion in three years on build-operate-transfer (BOT) basis.

A formal decision on the awarding of the deal is expected to be announced after the MPT board meets later this month.

The development of a second container terminal at the Port of Mumbai will be constructed in two phases, with the first phase adding 800,000 TEU, and the second phase 400,000 TEU.

The BOT operator is expected to invest INR866 crore in the project and the remaining funds would be covered by the port trust.

The building of the offshore box terminal is a key feature of the port's INR2,500 crore expansion plan that would double MPT's handling capacity to 90 million tonnes by 2012 to cope with rapid trade growth in recent years.

Other port expansion works include plans to redevelop the three harbour wall berths at a cost of INR363 crore to enable the facility to accommodate larger and deep-draught vessels by dredging to 14 metres from today's eight metres, and adding seven million tonnes of capacity.



Hactl sets new throughput record, up 5.3pc in 2006

HONG KONG Air Cargo Terminals Limited (Hactl) handled a total of 231,757 tonnes of cargo in December, an increase of 4.2 per cent over the same month a year ago.

Tonnage handled in the fourth quarter amounted to 717,361 tonnes, up 6 per cent year on year.

Total volume handled for the whole of 2006 rose 5.3 per cent over 2005 to 2,561,902 tonnes, setting a new annual tonnage record for Hong Kong's top air cargo terminal operator.

Export volume showed a year-on-year growth of 4.5 per cent in December, with a total of 128,688 tonnes being handled, a Hactl statement said. Export tonnage for the fourth quarter was 411,893 tonnes, up 5.1 per cent year on year. Aggregate export tonnage for the whole year reached 1,440,181 tonnes, representing a year-on-year growth of 4.7 per cent.

A total of 64,953 tonnes of import cargo were handled in December, up 1.9 per cent, while 185,607 tonnes of import cargo were handled in the fourth quarter of the calendar year, representing an increase of 3 per cent year on year. Total import volume for the whole year was 696,178 tonnes, up 3.3 per cent over the previous year.

Transshipment volume for December was 38,116 tonnes, up 7.3 per cent against the same month in 2005. Cumulative transshipment tonnage for the fourth quarter was

119,861 tonnes, up 14.3 per cent. Total transshipment volume for 2006 was 425,543 tonnes, representing a growth of 11.3 per cent year on year.



US favours United for Washington-Beijing daily franchise

THE US Department of Transportation (DOT) has indicated that United Airlines should have the right to fly daily from Washington to Beijing.

If the move is finalised, the new, non-stop service would operate between Dulles International Airport and China Peking Capital Airport, starting from March 25.

The selection was made from a choice of four rival airlines which have been bidding to operate seven weekly flights between the two countries.

In coming to this tentative decision, the DOT assessed that United's proposed service from Washington to Beijing would potentially benefit the greatest number of passengers, a statement from the US authorities said.

Interested parties have 14 days to file objections to the decision.

Also applying for the daily service were American Airlines, which sought to fly between Dallas/Fort Worth and Beijing; Continental Airlines had applied for service between Newark, New Jersey and Shanghai; and Northwest Airlines applied for Detroit-Shanghai service.

Towards the end of the selection proceeding, American sought to change its proposal to add a stop in Chicago before continuing to Beijing. US transport officials subsequently denied American's motion, saying that any amendment this late in the proceeding would significantly delay the start of any new service.



Kitty Hawk sees strong fourth quarter results

DALLAS-BASED air cargo transportation group Kitty Hawk say they are expecting to report their strongest quarterly revenue since the company went public.

The group are also are expecting to report a solid fourth quarter financial performance when they announce their 2006 results in mid-March.

This optimism follows the successful completion of a number of contracts with the United States Postal Service (USPS), Business Wire reports.

Speaking on the group's performance in 2006, company president and CEO Robert Zoller said the combination of Kitty Hawk's dealings with the USPS; the acquisition

and integration of Air Container Transport Inc in June last year and the growth of the company's expedited air and ground network will likely see fourth quarter revenue exceed US\$80 million.

"We expect to be solidly profitable in the fourth quarter and expect fourth quarter cash generation from operations, combined with existing debt financing, will be sufficient to fund the company's 2007 operating plan," Mr Zoller said.

According to the report by Business Wire, full year revenue is expected to exceed \$220 million, an increase of more than 41 per cent year on year.



Maersk upgrades Asia-Europe coverage to keep up with growth

THE world's largest ocean liner, Maersk Line, has unveiled measures to improve its Asia-Europe service network from April as part of an ongoing review.

"Together with our customers we regularly review our services due to new and changing trading patterns and an ever increasing global trade," said Peter Frederiksen, senior vice president of Maersk Line.

"Our new Asia-Europe network will offer exporters and importers more direct calls and enhanced transit times, especially between north and east China and Europe. An example is Shanghai to Bremerhaven in 21 days which will provide our customers with the best transit time in that market."

To support the service changes, the company plans to increase its capacity 13 per cent during the coming year, primarily through deployment of larger vessels to keep pace with forecasts of 15 per cent growth in the market on the westbound trade.

The restructured Asia-Europe network will also feature greater coverage of ports in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea. Maersk Line said in a statement that it plans to dedicate two services to these markets with direct calls in Istanbul (Turkey), Piraeus and Thessaloniki (Greece), Constantza (Romania) and Ilychevesk (Ukraine).

Currently the world's largest containership in operation, the Emma Maersk along with her sister vessels will be deployed in the AE7 service, which connects East and South China to Algeciras in Spain and the Northern European markets.

Maersk Line's Asia-Europe offering comprises of nine dedicated services with connections to the company's feeder networks in Europe and South East Asia.



OOCL names its 11th 8,063-TEU vessel 'OOCL Tokyo'

ORIENT Overseas Container Line (OOCL) has named its 11th 8,063-TEU vessel the OOCL Tokyo, which was built by Samsung Heavy Industries of South Korea.

The newbuild was christened by Maria Smith, wife of HSBC president and CEO Michael Smith, at the Geoje Shipyard's Quay No 6, Geoje Island, Korea.

Speaking at the ceremony, OOCL chairman and CEO CC Tung, said: "As one of our flagship vessels, the OOCL Tokyo is part of a proud series of ships with advanced design and state-of-the-art equipment. These ships are the foundation on which OOCL is able to deliver the high level of services required by our customers."

The OOCL Tokyo will be deployed on the EU4, Asia-Europe service with north and central China focus, within the Grand Alliance.

"In this capacity, the OOCL Tokyo will continue to demonstrate OOCL's commitment to providing a vital link to world trade," said Mr Tung.

The OOCL Tokyo will join a service with a port rotation of: Rotterdam, Hamburg, Southampton, Singapore, Kaohsiung, Busan, Dalian, Tianjin, Qingdao, Pusan, Shanghai, Ningbo, Singapore, Port Kelang, Jeddah and back to Rotterdam for a 63-day round trip.



Sweden's GreenCarrier sets its sights on China market

GREENCARRIER, the logistics arm of the Sweden-based Bjork.Eklund Group, plans to strengthen its presence in China, using its Shanghai and Hong Kong offices as a springboard.

This development comes less than six months after opening its first representative office in Shanghai.

The company's China subsidiary, GreenCarrier Asia, has also set its sights on opening an office in Guangdong later this year.

GreenCarrier said in a statement that its air and sea freight business is focused mainly on its home market in Scandinavia. In China, it has recruited personnel with detailed knowledge of Scandinavia and is providing further training as required to service mainly Chinese importers and exporters doing business in the region.

"We studied the market for two or three years, taking advantage of the deep involvement of other Bjork.Eklund companies have in Asia. We recognised the need to have our own people on the spot, able to provide practical advice and to maintain tight control of cargo movements and the flow of information," said Niklas Olsson, managing director of GreenCarrier Scandinavia.



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