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Container Corporation of India reports 21pc growth for December

CONTAINER Corporation of India has reported a record net profit of INR1.66 billion (US$37.49 million), up 20.98 per cent year on year for the quarter ending December 2006, reported Myiris Business Services, an Indian financial wire.

Net sales for the quarter rose 17.53 per cent to INR7.47 billion compared with the corresponding quarter a year ago.

Total income of the company also showed a net jump of 15.28 per cent to INR7.68 billion against INR6.50 billion in the corresponding quarter in 2005.

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Nigerian customs accused of looking the other way for US$782 per TEU

NIGERIAN Customs at Tincan Island Command, Lagos, is suspected of having officers collude with smugglers to bypass security checks and shift containers out of the port without thorough examination.

A report by The Tide newspaper in Port Harcourt said that the scam works by first placing containers in position for scanning. Then they are then put in protective custody and moved out "as soon as the coast is clear" as the customs gate and other operational customs staff "are put on notice to make for smooth passage".

The customs area command is accused of reaping NGN100,000 (US$782) per TEU from importers for turning a blind eye.

The Tide newspaper claimed to have learned that the practice of failing to conduct full examinations of the contents of containers has been going on for a long time, despite stringent anti-terrorism measures implemented at seaports worldwide.

The result is a flood of contraband and substandard goods in the Nigeria market, not to mention massive loss in revenue earnings which could potentially have boosted the state's economic growth.

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Advance International said to have moved largest Black Sea cargo item

FREIGHT forwarder Advance International says it has moved the single largest item of cargo from a Black Sea port as part of a major project freight management contract for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI).

The 312-ton shipment, consisting of an auxiliary boiler unit 13 metres long, six metres wide and 19 metres high, was loaded on the Annegret, which set sail from Constanza in Romania, setting a new record for the country.

"This was a shipment to remember for many years. In fact, I don't know if there will be a larger unit ever exported from the Black Sea in my lifetime. Eighteen months of work, preparation and planning paid off with excellent results," said Advance International president and CEO Jawad Kamel.

From Constanza, the boiler moved via Italy to Oman and arrived just over four weeks after loading. It forms part of a multi-million dollar fertiliser complex being constructed by MHI at Sohar, Oman.

Advance International is the principal freight forwarder contracted by MHI to ship thousands of pieces of equipment from all over the globe used to construct the fertiliser facility, said a statement issued on behalf of Advance International.

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Lufthansa Cargo's new CEO posts rosy outlook for 2007

LUFTHANSA Cargo is upbeat about the company's performance this year, after its airfreight and mail business grew by 1.3 per cent in the 2006 to 1.76 million tonnes.

The cargo load factor last year climbed 2.7 percentage points to 67.7 per cent.

The return to growth in 2006 came after Lufthansa Cargo reduced capacity on the year-earlier level by 0.6 per cent to 11.97 billion available tonne-kilometres. Consequently, revenue freight-kilometres rose by 3.5 per cent to 8.10 billion, a company statement said.

"Our stake in the Chinese carrier Jade Cargo International is spawning excellent growth opportunities. We are expecting the airfreight industry generally to continue growing in 2007 and Lufthansa Cargo to profit strongly," said Carsten Spohr, the CEO and chairman of Lufthansa Cargo.

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Qantas to reduce fuel surcharges

AUSTRALIA's Qantas announced that domestic fuel surcharges are to be cut and that some of its international surcharges will be further reduced after January 23.

"We reduced international surcharges in October and we have been monitoring oil prices closely since then," said Qantas general manager John Borghetti.

"With the more recent fall in the price of jet fuel, we can now extend the surcharge reduction, as well as make further reductions on a number of our international routes," he said.

Mr Borghetti said Qantas would continue to monitor oil prices and refining costs, which remained a major issue for Qantas and the wider aviation industry.

"Despite hedging and surcharges, we are still under-recovering the cost of fuel price increases by hundreds of millions of dollars, even with the recent drop in jet fuel prices," he added.

On international services [one way] there will be no changes to the fuel surcharge for flights from Australia to UK and Europe remaining at A$170 (US$133) and for flights from Australia to US, Canada, South America, South Africa and India at A$133.

The fuel surcharge for flights from Australia to Asia, Pacific and Honolulu will be cut by A$5 to A$100, and the surcharge to New Zealand will come down from A$60 to A$55.

On domestic services, the surcharges on flights operated by Qantas Australian and New Zealand domestic as well as jet services provided by QantasLink will be reduced from A$31 to A$26 (including GST). There will also be an A$5 reduction to A$24 on turboprop services operated by QantasLink.

JLS Logistics UK re-brands to BALtrans

FOUR years after its acquisition by Hong Kong-based BALtrans Holdings, UK multimodal forwarder JLS Logistics is changing its name to BALtrans Logistics UK Limited on January 22.

JLS UK has offices at London Heathrow, London Gatwick, Manchester, Southampton and Basildon. The company was launched in 1987 as Clover Systems Airfreight until Jardine Pacific acquired a controlling stake in Clover in 1990 and the company was then re-branded, JLS Logistics UK.

In 2003, the JLS Logistics global operation was acquired from parent Jardine Pacific by BALtrans, which saw a doubling of the latter's business and increased its own network, a BALtrans statement explained.

In other news, Eddie Stroud has been promoted to managing director of BALtrans UK, while John Gomes moves up to the new post of UK chairman.

"The change of identity is the final step in a gradual process of integration which has been taking place over the past four years. We feel the time is now right to make our membership of the BALtrans system more obvious and to raise the group's profile here in the UK as we further develop the business," said Mr Stroud.

Founded in 1982, the BALtrans Group is one of the largest Asia-based freight forwarding and logistics organisations, with its own office network spanning China, South East Asia, India, the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Canada and the US. Its net profit for 2005/6 was HK$113 million (US$14.47 million), up 36 per cent over the previous financial year.

Maersk resets port coverage transit times on Asia-Mideast runs

THE world's largest ocean freight carrier, Maersk Line, is revamping its Asia-Middle East service network, starting through March and April.

The restructured network will feature enhanced port coverage on direct services to meet customers' changing demands. No change will add extra capacity.

The Asia-Middle East services will continue to provide extensive port coverage in east and south China, and direct coverage of the Arabian Persian Gulf from north China.

But change will come to the Asia-Arabian Persian Gulf service and the Asia-northwest India and Pakistan service. Coverage of ports in Asia and the Red Sea will be expanded with a new direct service to Salalah and Jeddah.

As a result, the company's Asia-Arabian Persian Gulf ships will call at ports in Japan and transit times to Dammam will be reduced four days. The first vessel to be deployed on this revised FM1 service will be the Maersk Kyrenia scheduled to call at Yokohama on April 2.

On the Asia-northwest India and Pakistan service (FM3), direct South Korea coverage will be introduced. Also transit times on the eastbound leg of this service will be cut. The arrival of the Nedlloyd Oceania on April 3 at Kwangyang will signal the launch of this revised FM3 service.

Finally, the Asia-Red Sea trade will see the start of direct service from east and south China to Salalah and Jeddah on the FM5. This service will provide direct coverage of Yantian and shorten transit times from Shanghai and Ningbo to Salalah and Jeddah by up to seven days. The FM5 will be launched with the first westbound call in Ningbo on March 5.

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Xiamen to pour US$321m into developing the port in 2007

AUTHORITIES in Xiamen plan to spend at least CNY2.5 billion (US$321.38 million) on six port development projects in 2007, Xinhua reports.

The six projects include building berths 11 to 13 in the Haicang port area; a project to reclaim land to facilitate the building of berths 20 to 22 in the Haicang port area, plus dredging work to develop berths 14 to 19 also in the Haicang port area. Construction will also begin on the second phase of developing the quay length in the Songyu port area.

Xiamen will also continue construction work on eight other port projects this year.

The goal of all this activity is to turn Xiamen port in southern Fujian province into one of China's shipping hubs.

As such, the port aims to develop over the next few years 100,000-tonne container and bulk cargo berths in the Songyu and Haicang port areas, boost the construction of the Xiamenwan 100,000-tonne shipping channel, and complete channel expansion works in the Dongdu and Haicang port areas, the report added.

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Qinzhou's port throughput rises 44pc in 2006

THE throughput of cargo at Qinzhou port in China's Guangxi province surged 43.5 per cent year on year to 7.52 million tons in 2006.

The total cargo volume included 2.28 million tons of foreign trade cargo, up 73.7 per cent compared to 2005's results; 5.24 million tons of domestic trade, up 33.3 per cent; and 43,484 TEU, up 71 per cent, a Xinhua report said.

The strong growth in throughput volumes at Qinzhou port was attributed to the development of coastal port industries in surrounding areas and the opening of a number of new terminals at the port.

In 2006, Qinzhou port also opened a 50,000-ton oil and gas terminal and a 70,000-ton coal terminal among others, the report said.

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