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US TO EXPAND PROTECTION FORCE FOR RED SEA SHIPPING

THE THE US is to launch of an expanded maritime protection force involving Arab states to combat Houthi attacks from Yemen's ports on commercial shipping in the Red Sea, reports the UK's Guardian. The force, provisionally called Operation Prosperity Guardian, is to be much like the Task Force 153 already operating out of Bahrain, the larger protection force is designed to provide reassurance to commercial shipping companies that Houthi attacks will be seen off, and that the sea remains safe for commercial shipping. Five big shipping companies have now stopped their ships using the Red Sea in the wake of attacks mounted by Houthis in protest at Israel's efforts to eliminate Hamas in Gaza. The chairman of the Suez Canal Authority, Lt Gen Osama Rabie, also revealed that 55 ships have been redirected around the Cape of Good Hope, a two-week longer journey than that through the Bab al-Mandab Strait south of the Suez Canal. More than 20 ships have reported incidents in the past months, many around the narrow Bab al-Mandab that separates the Arabian Peninsula from Africa.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

PANAMA CANAL TO INCREASE DAILY TRANSITS TO 24 IN JANUARY

THE THE Panama Canal has announced that it will increase the number of daily transits to 24 starting in January, according to Advisory to Shipping No A-54-2023, reports the American Journal of Transportation. Currently, 22 vessels transit daily, divided into six neopanamax and 16 panamax. This restriction is in response to the challenges posed by the current state of Gatun Lake, which is experiencing low water levels due to a drought. October 2023 marked the driest October on record for the Canal Watershed. In anticipation of a potential worsening of the situation in November and December, the decision was made to adjust the number of daily transits to 22 in December, 20 in January, and 18 in February. This year marks the first time the canal has ever had to restrict transits.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

TIANJIN OFFERS RAILFREIGHT FOR EVS TO EUROPE

A FREIGHT train carrying 110 electric vehicles (EVs) has Tianjin for Europe, marking the launch of a new international logistics route for transporting made-in-China EVs, reports Xinhua. It is the first China-Europe freight train departing from Tianjin that is exclusively for shipping EVs manufactured in China, according to local railway authorities. The train is scheduled to run outbound through the Erenhot port in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and arrive in Moscow in 18 days. The EVs produced in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region can now reach Central Asia and European countries in two weeks through the newly launched route, according to the cargo agent SWIFT Transport. By the end of November, Tianjin, a main node of China's transport channel to Eurasia and one of the closest Chinese ports to Central Asia, had launched 634 China-Europe freight trains and China-Central Asia trains, transporting more than 68,000 TEU of goods this year, said the China Railway Beijing Group Co Ltd.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

TAIWAN'S EVERGREEN SUSPENDS ISRAELI SERVICES

Hong TAIWAN shipping giant Evergreen has announced it was suspending its Israeli cargo shipments with immediate effect due to the "escalation of the war", reports Agence France-Presse. It is the latest major shipping firm to suspend passage in the Red Sea following Yemeni attacks in the area. Due to "escalation of war situation in recent days, Evergreen will suspend Israel import and export service due to rising risk and safety considerations with immediate effect until further notice," Evergreen said in a brief notice to its customers. Several of the world's largest shipping companies, including Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd, and energy giant BP have already suspended passage through the Red Sea's strategic Bab al-Mandab strait in response to a warning by the Iran-backed Houthi forces. The Houthis, who control much of Yemen but are not recognised internationally, said they were targeting vessels near the strait to pressure Israel over its devastating war with Palestinian Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. Forty per cent of the world's international trade transits through the strait.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CHINA CONTAINERIZED FREIGHT INDEX

ROUTE	LAST PERIOD 2023/12/15	THIS PERIOD 2023/12/22
CCFI	869.34	879.75
(JAPAN SERVICE)	772.36	804.91
(EUROPE SERVICE)	1023.75	1049.63
(W/C AMERICA SERVICE)	718.5	703.99
(E/C AMERICA SERVICE)	845.31	854.8
(KOREA SERVICE)	455.82	454.56
(SOUTHEAST ASIA SERVICE)	678.75	680.9
(MEDITERRANEAN SERVICE)	1310.39	1352.49
(AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND SERVICE)	862.07	849.19
(SOUTH AFRICA SERVICE)	818.78	823.12
(SOUTH AMERICA SERVICE)	644.75	650.16
(WEST EAST AFRICA SERVICE)	536.73	522.98
(PERSIAN GULF/RED SEA SERVICE)	1037.31	1053.37

14,500-TEU CATCHES FIRE AFTER HOUTHII MISSILE STRIKES

THE 14,500-TEU Liberian flagged Al Jasrah caught fire in the Red Sea after being hit by a Houthi missile from Yemen, reported the Associated Press. The ship is owned by German shipping giant Hapag Lloyd, which maintains an office in Tel Aviv. The incident occurred a day after an attempt by Houthis to board and redirect the 10,100-TEU Hong Kong-flagged Maersk Gibraltar, culminating in missile fire. In response to Gibraltar's distress call, the USS Mason intercepted and shot down a Houthi-launched drone, as per USNI News. Ambrey, a British intelligence firm, confirmed the missile impact on the containership, noting that the projectile hit the ship's left side, leading to a fire.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

LA UP 19PC TO 763,262 TEU, LB UP 24PC TO 731,033 TEU

HE Port of Los Angeles' cargo volume increased 19 per cent year on year in November to 763,262 TEU while the adjacent Port of Long Beach was up 24 per cent to 731,033 TEU in the same period. LA's laden imports totalled 384,619 TEU, up 25 per cent while Long Beach imports rose 37 per cent to 355,339 TEU. LA laden exports rose 24 per cent to 111,755 TEU, while empties came in at 266,888 TEU, up 10 per cent over the previous November. Said LA port executive director Gene Seroka: "Our year-end growth reflects the strength of the US economy powered by the American consumer. Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales were strong, and the forecast for overall holiday sales is three to four per cent above last year, another high mark." Long Beach imports rose 37 per cent to 355,339 TEU while exports declined 13 per cent to 108,798 TEU. Empties were up 30.6 per cent to 266,896 TEU. Said Long Beach port CEO Mario Cordero: "We are recapturing market share, online shopping is on the rise and retailers are keeping the shelves stocked to meet rising consumer demand for the holidays. We remain optimistic as cargo returns to this critical gateway."

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

RATES CONTINUE TO FALL WITH INCREASING CAPACITY

CHINA has unveiled a design for a giant containership powered by a nuclear reactor that will offer near zero emissions, reports Hong Kong's South China Morning Post. The design for the new ship - now known as the KUN-24AP - was unveiled by the Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard at the city's Marintec China exhibition. If built it would be one of the largest ocean-going containerships the world at 24,000 TEU. Unlike the nuclear reactors found on warships powered by uranium, this new reactor is likely to use a radioactive metal called thorium, which is abundant and inexpensive in China. The reactor will not need large amounts of water to cool down, making it safer and more efficient. However, the technology is complex, and most countries have given up on trying to develop it after decades of fruitless efforts, including the United States which looked into the possibility of using it to power a long-range bomber. But China has carried on and, earlier this year, got the first thorium-based molten salt running in the Gobi desert.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

US-CANADA TRADE FUELS CROSS-BORDER ACQUISITIONS

THE prospect of increased US-Canada trade and opportunities for growth in the US are fueling transportation acquisitions and expanded services across the northern border, reports New York's Journal of Commerce. Canada Cartage and Kuehne+Nagel Group last week announced acquisitions that strengthen their cross-border business. Canada Cartage purchased Montreal-based GTI Group, which owns several US trucking and logistics companies, while Kuehne+Nagel acquired Ontario-based customs brokerage and logistics provider Farrow. Roadrunner, a large US-based less-than-truckload (LTL) carrier, said it will provide a cross-border service in December.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

FREMANTLE SEES BOX VOLUME RISE 10PC IN OCTOBER

TAIWANESE AUSTRALIA's Port of Fremantle saw an influx of container throughput in October, driven by an increase in both imports and exports, reports Australia's Daily Cargo News. Fremantle Ports handled a total of 77,436 TEU during the month, an increase of 10 per cent on the previous month, and an increase of six per cent on October 2022. The influx of containers through the port was driven by increases in both exports and imports - up 14 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively, compared with the previous month. Compared with October 2022, exports were up nine per cent and imports were up one per cent. Total coastal trade was down 14 per cent month to month to 6,566 TEU, and down eight per cent year on year.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)