



Iran inaugurates railway that will transport cargo to Europe via Azerbaijan

Iran has inaugurated its Chabahar-Zahedan railway line that will help transport cargo to Europe through Azerbaijan via Kazvin- Rasht- Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) railway. Azertag reported on July 9 with reference to the Iranian media. The railway is located in Sistan Baluchestan province and will play an important role in uniting Asia and Europe, as well as developing the region and reviving international trade. The Chabahar-Zahedan railway line connects not only the two Iranian cities but also the province of Sistan Baluchestan, where the port of Chabahar is located, along with the national railway system. This indicates that, along with the port of Bandar Abbas on the Gulf coast, the port of Chabahar will have access to the international North- South transport corridor. Thus, Gulf countries will use the port of Bandar Abbas and South-East Asian countries will use port of Chabahar to trade with Europe through the international North- South transport corridor. The railway connecting the Azerbaijani and Iranian cities of Astara has already been put into operation as Azerbaijan's infrastructure is ready to receive and send large volumes of cargo.

Europe's busiest port launches Blockchain-based container handling pilot

In a bid to mitigate the possibility of frauds, the Port of Rotterdam – the biggest and busiest port in Europe – stated that it is mulling launching "Secure Container Release," a blockchain-powered application that, according to the authorities, is considerably less susceptible to fraud than the current PIN-based verification method. Per sources close to the matter, the pilot is expected to be three months long and will involve some of the biggest stakeholders in the maritime industry, including Ocean Network Express, CMA CGM, Hapag-Lloyd, MSC, and Hutchison Ports. As mentioned earlier, the Port of Rotterdam is the busiest port in Europe handling 14.5 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) every year. Globally, the port ranks 11th eclipsed by the Dubai Port in the 10th position. The collection of containers on the port is a notoriously complicated process that involves close coordination and communication among several parties including shipping companies, freight forwarders, transport firms, and terminals. A high synergy among these players is vital to ensure the safe release of the freight.

Port of Oakland volume uptick pleasant surprise

The Port of Oakland this week reported June loaded import volume grew 1.9% year-over-year. "The gain was unexpected given that shipping lines canceled 10% of their scheduled Oakland visits due to the trade-related impact of the coronavirus," the port said. The port attributed the uptick in imports to retailers accelerating shipments to the United States because of capacity restrictions as shipping lines continue to cancel sailings, as well as to an anticipated hike in freight rates. Oakland's overall container volume — imports, exports and empty containers — did decline 2.3% in June from the same month last year. The port handled 199,011 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in June compared to 203,730 TEUs a year ago. The port said the overall decrease resulted from a "pandemic that continues to dampen global trade." June export volume declined 5.7%. "The weakening export performance was likely due to reduced consumer demand in foreign markets caused by COVID-19 disruptions," the port said. The return of empty containers to Asia decreased 14.5% in June.

Port of Long Beach posts 11.1% container decline

The Port of Long Beach said Friday the COVID-19 pandemic continued to drive down demand for goods in the second quarter of 2020, leading to an increase in canceled sailings and a decline in containers shipped through the gateway. Dockworkers and terminal operators moved 602,180 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) last month, an 11.1% decline compared to June 2019, the port said. Imports shrank 9.3% to 300,714 TEUs and exports dropped 12.2% to 117,538 TEUs. Empty containers shipped to Asia were down 13.1% to 183,928 TEUs. The port said economic uncertainty brought on by decreased consumer spending and ongoing health concerns amid the coronavirus pandemic contributed to a 6.9% volume drop in the first half of 2020 to 3,433,035 TEUs. "Canceled sailings continued to rise at a rapid rate in the second quarter as ocean carriers adjusted their voyages to a decline in demand for imports during the national COVID-19 outbreak," said Executive Director Mario Cordero. "The economic challenges may persist for some time, but the Port of Long Beach continues to invest in infrastructure projects that will meet the needs of our customers."

Kloosterboer starts construction of Cool Port II at city terminal Rotterdam

In mid-July, Kloosterboer will begin the construction of a new state-of-the-art fully automated multi-customer high-rise cold-storage facility with a storage capacity of 60,000 pallets at City Terminal Rotterdam. The building is expected to be finished by January of 2022. Two years after the realisation of Kloosterboer Cool Port I, an ultra-modern fruit terminal that offers a combination of cool and cold storage capacity, Kloosterboer is now developing a state-of-the-art fully automated high-rise cold-storage warehouse at City Terminal Rotterdam. Pallets will be brought in on self-unloading or conventional trucks and are then automatically taken from the shipping hall via conveyer belts, turntables and sluices to the cold-storage facility, where cranes will automatically place the pallets in their designed position. Sustainability is a key concern for Kloosterboer. The high-rise cold-storage warehouse is 35-45% more energy efficient than a conventional cold-storage facility.

Two foreign firms picked for Patenga Container Terminal

The shipping ministry has selected two foreign companies for the construction of Patenga Container Terminal, ignoring local private and government enterprises, even after completing of 60 percent works by the Chattagram Port Authority. The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) is constructing the Patenga Container Terminal with its own fund at a cost of Tk 2,075 crore. The CPA is also procuring necessary equipment meant for operating the terminal – and it has made 60 percent progress so far – at its own expense. If a foreign company operates the terminal despite the fact that the country has skilled terminal operators and workers, a significant amount of local currency will go out of the country, port officials and domestic terminal operators have said. The local firms will also be deprived owing to this decision, they added. However, recently the shipping ministry primarily finalised two global port operators – the Saudi-based Red Sea Gateway Terminal and the Dubai-based DP World – to operate the terminal. Their details have been sent to the Prime Minister's Office.



THE Alliance blanks sailings and keeps services merged in August

Container shipping grouping THE Alliance has announced its blank sailing and service suspension plans for the month of August as lines continue to face reduced demand due to the Covid-19 pandemic. THE Alliance, which comprises container lines, Hapag-Lloyd, HMM, Ocean Network Express (ONE), and Yang Ming, said its Asia – North Europe FE4 loop would remain suspended. On the Asia – Med trade four sailings would be blanked in August, while seven sailings to the transpacific west coast would be voided. On the transpacific east coast services via the Suez and Panama Canals the EC3 and EC1 services would remain merged with the exception of week 33. On the Asia – Middle East trade there would be one blank sailing in August, and the AG1 and AG3 loops would remain merged. On the transatlantic trade there would be two blank sailings. THE Alliance will continue to closely monitor the market situation and respond efficiently by restructuring their service scheme to meet market demand," ONE said.

China's rail freight transport up 3.6 pct in H1

China's rail freight transport volume, an indicator of broad economic activity, rose 3.6 percent year on year in the first half of the year, a sign of recovery from the COVID-19 shock, official data showed Saturday. The country's state-operated railways carried 1.69 billion tonnes of cargo in the first six months, the China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. said. During the January-June period, revenues from the rail freight transport dipped 4.2 percent from the previous year to 187.7 billion yuan (about 26.9 billion U.S. dollars). In June alone, the average daily rail freight volume exceeded 10 million tonnes, the highest daily average level in a month since the beginning of this year, the company said. State-operated railways handle the majority of the country's rail freight traffic. Apart from state-operated railways, China also has rail lines operated by local governments and enterprises.