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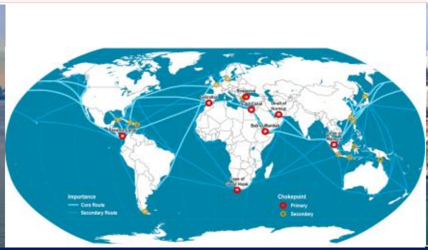



21st August 26 Mumbai-India

Global Maritime Trade & Transport

USA Sanctioned tanker hijacked off Aden 16 Indian crew on board

An Eritrea-flagged oil products tanker, M T Sibu 1, with 20 crew members including 16 Indians, was hijacked by armed pirates in the Gulf of Aden, around 30 nautical miles off the coast of Yemen on August 20, the official said

Iran Oil

US authorities said the tanker had transported Iranian petroleum products, including naphtha and gasoil, on multiple occasions and had also called at Houthi-controlled Yemeni ports.

A US-sanctioned product tanker has been hijacked in the Gulf of Aden and forced towards Somalia, the second reported vessel seizure in the region this week as Somali piracy gathers renewed momentum.

UK Maritime Trade Operations said the incident occurred around 136 nautical miles east of Al Mukalla, Yemen, after the vessel broadcast a distress call reporting the approach of an unauthorised craft.

Six armed men subsequently boarded, seized control and redirected the tanker towards Somalia. Maritime security sources have identified the ship as the 32,200 dwt Sibu 1. Its AIS reportedly transmitted the message "**PIRATE ONBOARD HELP**" before the vessel changed course.

The tanker entered the Somalia High Risk Area on Wednesday while sailing west through the Gulf of Aden. Sibu 1 has an unusual trading history. The vessel, previously named Seamull, was sanctioned by the US Treasury in December 2025 as part of Washington's crackdown on Iran's shadow fleet.

The latest attack follows Monday’s hijacking of the cargo ship Lutuf around four nautical miles south of Mareeyo on Somalia’s Puntland coast, when eight armed attackers boarded the vessel. Other ships seized off Somalia this year include the product tanker Honour 25 and general cargo vessel Sward.

The resurgence has continued despite the southwest monsoon, which normally makes offshore pirate operations more difficult. Pirate groups have increasingly used captured fishing vessels and dhows as motherships, extending their operating range far beyond the Somali coastline. (Source: Splash 24x7.com/ The Hindu-India)

Singapore Arrests 8 Tug Crew Members Over Suspected Illegal Marine Gas Oil Transaction

Singapore police have arrested eight crew members of a Singapore-registered tugboat over their suspected involvement in the illegal sale of marine gas oil worth about S$10,570.

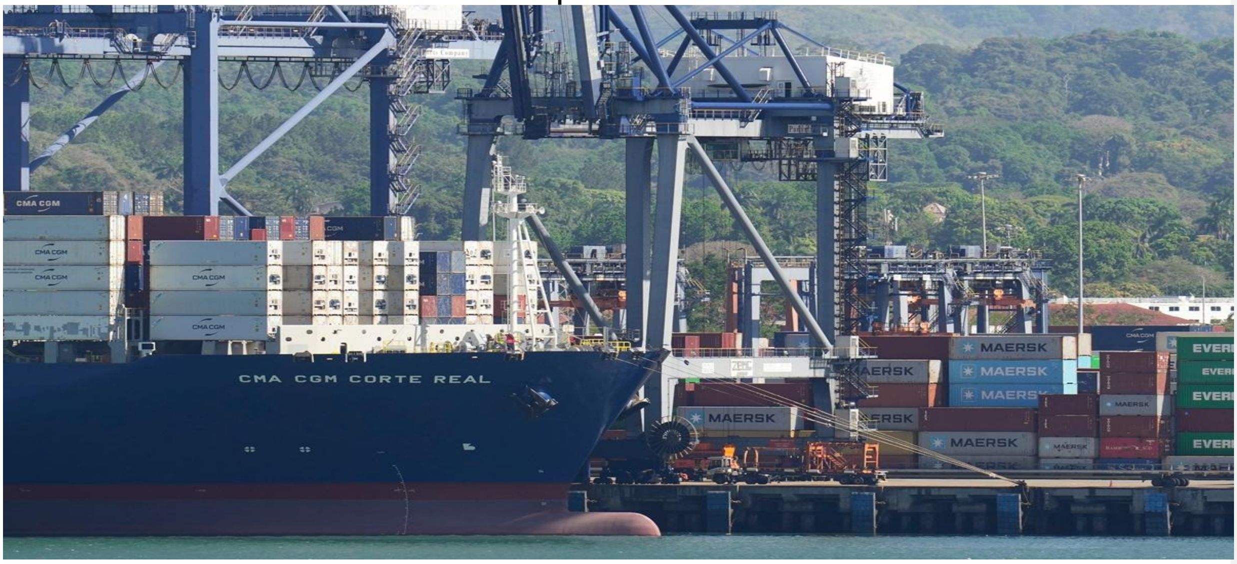
The men, aged between 25 and 54, were arrested by Police Coast Guard officers during a check on the tugboat in waters off Tuas at about 1:05 a.m. on Aug. 13.

Preliminary investigations found that the crew members had allegedly misappropriated the marine gas oil without their company’s knowledge and sold it illegally for personal financial gainThe eight men were due to appear in court on Aug. 14 and face charges of theft by servant of property in possession of master under Section 381 of the Penal Code 1871., police said.

Police said they take illegal marine gas oil transactions in Singapore territorial waters seriously. They will continue carrying out enforcement and security checks to prevent and detect such activities.

The arrests followed a routine check by the Police Coast Guard on the Singapore-registered tugboat. Further details about the alleged sale and the company involved were not provided. The case will now proceed through the courts. (Source: Marine Insight)

CK Hutchison files $1.5 billion arbitration claim against Panama over canal port takeover



Experts warn Panama's assets seizure violates spirit of contracts, undermines investor confidence

Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison has launched international arbitration against Panama seeking more than $1.5 billion in damages after the Latin American country seized its core port assets following months of regulatory suppression. Experts stressed that Panama's unilateral repudiation of valid commercial contracts and treaty obligations violates basic global market rules, erodes international investor confidence in shipping economy.

Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison commenced arbitration proceedings against Panama on Thursday, seeking damages of more than $1.5 billion for breaches of treaty obligations and international law, according to a statement on the website of the company.

CK Hutchison said it notified Panama of a treaty dispute on February 4, 2026, following a year-long State attack campaign on the company's assets, and sought to resolve the dispute to no avail.

In early 2025, Panama suddenly launched a State attack campaign against CK Hutchison investments that included a sudden new investigation that lacked due process, a reversal of its longstanding legal position that had protected the ports concession for three decades as a matter of law, pursuing a governmental assault on the constitutionality of its own "contract-law" and concession, and the development of a scheme to replace CK Hutchison subsidiary Panama Ports Company, S.A. (PPC), said the statement.

After notification of the treaty dispute in early 2026, Panama intensified its State campaign through executive actions and a radical takeover of the Balboa and Cristóbal port terminals controlled by PPC February 23, 2026, taking over property, equipment, technology, employees, and proprietary and protected documents and materials, all at great damage, CK Hutchison said.

Panama failed to take steps to resolve the treaty dispute and instead continued its campaign of attacks and disinformation. CK Hutchison continues to seek resolution and permanently reserves all rights, it said.

On March 6, PPC said in a statement that it had already filed an international arbitration against Panama seeking at least $2 billion in damages, a figure that the Panamanian State has misstated in press comments. PPC also said that it had taken additional legal actions

against the illegal takeover by the Panamanian State of the ports of Balboa and Cristóbal in Panama on and after February 23.
In response to a question on Panama's authorities taking control of two ports from CK Hutchison, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning stated at a press conference on February 24 that China's position on relevant Panamanian ports is clear, and China will firmly protect the company's legitimate and lawful rights and interests.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, told the Global Times that CK Hutchison's statement is a normal and necessary response, given that the company has been directly affected by the Panamanian government's overturning of existing agreements.
Zhou noted that this incident carries far-reaching implications for Panama. Its disregard for international market rules and the spirit of commercial contracts will make potential foreign investors wary of policy unreliability and deter new investment.
"Panama's economy and employment are heavily reliant on shipping, which in turn depends on foreign investment and infrastructure development. If the market perceives that a government may arbitrarily overturn existing agreements, few new investors will be willing to enter the market," Zhou said.

Such unilateral repossession by Panama runs counter to the provisions of existing contracts and cooperation agreements. From a commercial perspective, it violates the spirit of contracts and good-faith principles, as well as prior cooperation consensus reached between China and Panama, Li Yong, an executive council member of the China Society for WTO Studies, told the Global Times on Thursday.

Chinese enterprises have operated in Panama for years, making important contributions to Panama's economic growth and people's well-being. It is hoped that Panama will earnestly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a meeting with Panamanian Foreign Minister Javier Martínez-Acha Vásquez in New York on May 26.
China has always maintained that bilateral relations do not target any third party nor should they be subject to third-party interference. China stands ready to work with Panama to uphold the original aspiration of establishing diplomatic relations, deepen practical cooperation, fend off external disruptions, and promote the healthy and stable development of bilateral ties, Wang said. (**Source: Global Times)**

ICTSI EAST JAVA SEEKS STRONGER TRADE LINKS IN INDONESIA

International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI) said the growing commercial activity between East Java and Eastern Indonesia is increasing demand for more efficient transport networks and is prompting industry groups to look at ways to improve the flow of cargo across the archipelago.

East Java Multipurpose Terminal (EJMT), ICTSI's Lamongan operation, recently hosted logistics industry representatives to explore trade opportunities between East Java and the broader Eastern Indonesia region, with a focus on freight development, market access and transport connections through Lamongan.

The exchange centered on cargo flows between production centers and consumer markets, access to domestic and international shipping routes, and the role of port, warehousing and bonded facilities in serving companies across different industries.

John Largo, EJMT chief executive officer, said the dialogue provided a clearer view of freight patterns and the factors influencing transport decisions. "We are seeing growing interest in shipping routes linking East Java and Eastern Indonesia. These conversations help us understand where demand is growing and how Lamongan can facilitate the movement of goods."

Sebastian Wibisono, Indonesian Logistics and Forwarders Association (ALFI/ILFA) East Java chairman, said connectivity, competitive costs and reliable transport options remain important considerations for companies moving cargo across the archipelago.

"For the logistics industry, connectivity, competitive costs and reliable transport options help keep freight moving efficiently. We welcome the dialogue with EJMT and see potential for Lamongan to provide additional routing options for businesses moving freight between East Java and the wider eastern part of the country."

As activity grows, transport costs, routing options and service reliability continue to shape distribution patterns.

Stronger ties between industrial centers, service providers and end markets can expand access to growth areas and improve cargo flows. Largo said East Java's position as one of Indonesia's major production and consumption centers underscores the importance of dependable transport infrastructure.

"East Java is one of Indonesia's major production and consumption centers, making reliable transport links critical to domestic and regional trade. Regular engagement with cargo owners and service providers helps us understand where demand is increasing and where improvements can be made."

Located within the Lamongan Shorebase complex, EJMT provides access to port, warehousing and bonded logistics facilities and is linked to nearby industrial developments, including the Jakamitra Industrial Park i-sentra project.

The terminal began operations in October 2024 and handles containerized, bulk, project and heavy-lift shipments. It serves customers in Lamongan, Tuban and surrounding areas, providing an additional gateway for companies operating in East Java.

The exchange took place during a meeting on August 5 between EJMT and members of ALFI/ILFA. Patrick Chan, former EJMT chief executive officer, joined the meeting and both sides agreed to continue consulting manufacturers, freight operators and cargo owners to better understand business requirements and potential cargo flows between East Java and Eastern Indonesia.

The meeting also reflected ICTSI's efforts to support economic activity in Indonesia through its port operations. In addition to EJMT, the company operates Batu Ampar Container Terminal (BACT) in Batam, a gateway along the Strait of Malacca serving the Riau Islands and handling regional and international shipments.

Beyond Indonesia, ICTSI has developed port and logistics networks across key markets. Similar approaches can be seen in the Philippines, Brazil and Papua New Guinea, where the company's facilities help connect domestic and international supply chains.

EJMT is an international gateway designed to support the thriving economies of Lamongan, Tuban and central Java through the handling of containerized, breakbulk and project cargo.

It is situated in Lamongan Regency 60 kilometers west of Surabaya City, the multipurpose facility sits within the 80-hectare Lamongan Shorebase complex, which supports Indonesia's specialized offshore oil and gas industry.

EJMT is a joint venture between International Container Terminal Services, Inc. and East Log Holdings, an Indonesian company specializing in offshore oil and gas supply bases.
(**Source: Asia Cargo News)**

South Korea to send its first container ship through Arctic route

South Korea plans its first trial voyage through the Arctic this week as Middle East conflict disrupts global shipping, Seoul's oceans ministry said Thursday, while environmental groups warn the route could accelerate melting of polar ice. Global shipping has been heavily disrupted by war in the Middle East, sparked by US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February -- prompting shipping companies and governments to explore alternative routes.

The voyage follows that of the Chinese container ship "Dubai Tower", which left the eastern port city of Ningbo for Europe this month, heading north through the Bering Strait before turning west along Russia's Arctic coast. The Northern Sea Route (NSR) is only accessible during the time of the year when the ice is melted enough to allow transits without icebreakers.

"South Korea's trial voyage is currently expected to depart on the evening of August 22, though the schedule time could change depending on weather conditions, including typhoons," a spokesman for the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries told AFP. The container ship will sail to Europe via the Arctic, testing whether a route opened by melting sea ice can be commercially viable.

The Arctic route "is bound to become an alternative to Middle Eastern routes," South Korea's vice oceans minister Nam Jae-hon said recently. Busan-based shipping company PanStar Line Dot Com has been selected to operate the trial, using the container vessel Panstar Acro, according to the ministry.

"The ship will depart from Busan and sail to Felixstowe in Britain, Rotterdam in the Netherlands and Gdansk in Poland before returning, with the entire voyage expected to take around 45 days," the spokesman said.

The usual maritime route between Asia and Europe runs through the Suez Canal, but travelling through the Arctic can cut the journey by around 7,000 kilometres and about 10 days, according to the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy.

Vice minister Nam said the route was becoming increasingly attractive not only because of political risks elsewhere, but also because technological advances were improving its cost competitiveness. South Korea has been laying the groundwork for greater use of the route. A special law aimed at promoting the use of the Arctic shipping route while fostering related industries was passed in May.

Prior to China's "Dubai Tower", Danish shipping giant Maersk was among the first major container carriers to test the route in 2018. Environmental groups warn growing traffic along the shorter NSR could accelerate Arctic sea ice loss, already worsened by global warming.

Major carriers, including **France's CMA CGM, Switzerland-headquartered MSC and Germany-based Hapag-Lloyd,** have pledged to avoid Arctic trans-shipment routes. (**Source:AFP)**

China's state shippers deploy oil tankers outside Gulf, avoid chokepoints,

SINGAPORE, Aug 18 -State shippers used to transport half of China's imports of Middle Eastern oil before Iran war - shipping sources Now deploying supertankers to load at UAE's Fujairah, at or near Omani ports - trackers, broker Loadings outside the Gulf carry 'low risk and good profits' - shipping exec

Two Chinese shipping giants have stopped sending oil tankers through two Middle East chokepoints amid ongoing conflict and are instead collecting oil cargoes outside the Gulf, according to three industry executives, tanker trackers and a ship broker.

State-controlled COSCO Shipping Energy Transportation (600026.SS), opens new tab and China Merchants Energy Shipping (CMES) (601872.SS), opens new tab have kept their tankers out of the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb since late July, according to tanker tracker Vortexa and a ship broker, with security concerns curbing oil shipments to the world's largest importer.

Yemen's Houthis declared a maritime embargo against Saudi Arabia on July 20, while the Strait of Hormuz remains largely closed after a brief U.S.-Iran interim peace deal reached in June fell apart.

The decision by the two shippers to avoid both chokepoints followed communications with central authorities, according to a state oil trading executive and two Chinese shipping executives with direct knowledge of the matter. These sources and others declined to be named due to company policy.

CMES told investors in late July that its vessels would not enter the Strait of Hormuz for the time being. It added that other shippers have avoided Bab al-Mandeb, without mentioning its own policy for the narrow passage at the southern end of the Red Sea, a public filing showed.

The two shippers, which together control more than 100 very large crude carriers (VLCCs) capable of carrying 2 million barrels of oil apiece, handled roughly half of China's crude imports from the Middle East before the Iran war began in late February, according to shipping sources.

Excluding oil from U.S.-sanctioned Iran, China's crude imports from the Middle East, shipped mostly in VLCCs, averaged 4.9 million barrels per day last year according to Chinese customs data. The two state shippers do not transport Iranian oil due to sanctions, according to traders and analysts.

An executive at one of the state shippers said supertanker utilisation has dropped since the Iran war started, with many vessels diverted to longer routes to the Atlantic and the Americas.

"The tankers remain engaged, but (they are) sailing longer voyages, experiencing longer waiting time amid greater uncertainty," the executive said. (**Source:Reuters) -**

DP World Strengthens Ecuador's Trade Connectivity with New Direct Asia Shipping Service

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador, Aug. 18, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- **DP World** launched the AX4 shipping service (also known as NW4), operated jointly by Ocean Network Express and Hyundai Merchant Marine, providing Ecuadorian exporters an additional direct connection to Asia.

The new weekly service reduces reliance on transshipment hubs and offers transit times of approximately 21 days, supporting key import and export sectors including shrimp, bananas, broccoli and other temperature-sensitive products that depend on reliable transportation to Asian markets.

The launch marks the third direct Asia service operating through DP World's Port of Posorja. Operated by vessels with capacities exceeding 8,000 TEUs, the service expands shipping options for exporters while strengthening Ecuador's connectivity to one of its fastest growing customer markets.

Carlos Merino, CEO of DP World in Ecuador, Peru and Colombia, said: "The addition of this new direct service strengthens Ecuador's connectivity with Asia while giving exporters faster and more reliable access to one of the world's most dynamic markets. Combined with our continued investment in infrastructure and operational excellence, it reinforces Posorja's position as a strategic gateway for Ecuadorian trade."

Since 2023, the Port of Posorja has doubled the number of shipping services calling at the terminal, increasing from four to eight weekly services and connecting Ecuador with more than 40 ports across Asia, Europe, the Mediterranean and the Americas.

DP World has invested approximately US$700 million in its deep-water port terminal in Posorja since operations began in 2019. In April 2026, **the company inaugurated the port's new 700-meter berth**, enabling the simultaneous handling of two large container vessels. By the end of 2026, the berth will reach 800 meters, increasing annual capacity to 1.4 million TEUs.

The port was also recently **ranked first in Latin America and 20th globally in the 2025 Container Port Performance Index (CPPI)**, reinforcing its position among the world's most efficient container ports.

The Port of Posorja plays a key role to Ecuador's export economy, particularly for the agricultural and seafood sectors, where it has become the country's leading gateway for refrigerated cargo. According to the Ecuadorian Banana Marketing and Export Association (ACORBANEC), **the terminal handled more than 100 million boxes of bananas in 2025**, representing 28.16% of the country's total banana export volume. Its share of the country's containerized banana exports was even higher, at approxim. (Business Insighter)

CHINA LAUNCHES REGULAR ARCTIC SHIPPING ROUTE TO EUROPE

India, Japan and South Korea have also expressed interest in using the NSR.

China has begun regular weekly operations on a new Arctic container route linking Ningbo-Zhoushan with major European ports, creating a faster seasonal corridor as disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal push carriers to explore alternative pathways.

The service, operated by Chinese shipping company Sea Legend and branded as the China-Europe Arctic Express or "Ice Silk Road," entered its summer navigation schedule on August 15 with the departure of the 1,740-TEU Dubai Tower from Ningbo-Zhoushan Port.

The route follows Russia's Northern Sea Route (NSR) across the Northeast Arctic Passage before calling at Felixstowe, Rotterdam, Hamburg and Gdynia. It completed a pilot voyage in September 2025, reaching Felixstowe in about 20 days — roughly half the transit time of traditional routes via the Suez Canal and faster than the China-Europe freight train.

Sea Legend says the journey can take as little as 18 days under optimal conditions, compared with more than 40 days through the Suez Canal.

The shorter transit time is particularly attractive for high-value, temperature-sensitive cargo such as energy storage systems, power batteries, photovoltaic modules and new-energy vehicle components shipped from China's Yangtze River Delta.

"The route stands out for its advantages in transit time and supply chain security," said Xin Jianning, general manager of Zhejiang Seaport Logistics Group Co., Ltd.

The service will operate mainly from July to October due to seasonal ice conditions, with at least eight voyages planned this year. The NSR spans roughly 5,500 km along Russia's Arctic coastline and is typically open only between July 1 and October 1.

Interest in Arctic shipping has grown as geopolitical tensions expose vulnerabilities in traditional trade corridors.Sea Legend's chief operating officer Li Xiaobin said recent instability in West Asia has highlighted risks facing major routes such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz, increasing interest in alternatives between China and Europe.

The route also reflects China's long-term ambition to develop a "Polar Silk Road," first outlined by President Xi Jinping in 2017.

Access to the NSR remains under Russian control, with state-owned nuclear company Rosatom issuing navigation permits, managing operations and providing icebreaker support. Rosatom has reportedly approved seven Chinese vessels to use the route.

China-EU trade reached US$447.8 billion in the first half of 2026, up 14.2% year on year, underscoring the demand for faster and more resilient transport links. (Asia Cargo News)

Intra- Asia Trade

China and Vietnam expand agricultural trade and logistics ties

Vietnam and China's Hebei Province are exploring closer agricultural cooperation, with discussions focusing on market access, logistics, quality standards, and supply chain integration.

At an agricultural trade promotion event in Hà Nội, Li Dan of Hebei's Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said the province focuses on vegetables and fruits. The value-added revenue of Hebei's agriculture, forestry, and fishery sectors reached RMB451.45 billion (US$67 billion) last year. Its pear sector ranks first in China for cultivation area, output, and export value. In 2025, Hebei exported agricultural products to 174 countries and territories, generating $2.57 billion.

Vietnam has an advantage in tropical products, while Hebei produces vegetables, pears, mushrooms, and other temperate-climate products. An ASEAN freight train linking the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region with Hà Nội, launched in March 2025, provides another logistics option for agricultural trade.

Vietnamese officials said cooperation needs to address quality standards, food safety, traceability, packaging, volumes, pricing, quarantine, payment terms, storage, and transportation. Opportunities also include processing, technology transfer, agricultural by-products, and higher-value products.

Businesses are encouraged to use the Hebei-Hà Nội railway route, expand cold storage and specialised logistics, and standardise production, packaging, and traceability.

Hebei companies presented pears, grapes, freeze-dried vegetables, dried fruits, canned fruits and vegetables, processed chicken, sesame oil, sweet potato products, and spices at the event.(Source: Vietnamnews.vn)

Compiled by Dr.Sham Choughule through various sources for private circulation

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