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ABSTRACTS

Xinjiang Section of Lanzhou-Xinjiang high-speed rail goes into service

The Xinjiang Section of the Lanzhou-Xinjiang high-speed railway has gone into service on November the 16th, marking the first high-speed service in China's far west. The railway, also known as the Lanxin Railway, follows the path of the ancient Silk Road. It runs over 1,700 kilometers, from Lanzhou, Gansu Province, through the Hexi Corridor, to Urumqi in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. It passes through 39 stations, including Xinjiang's cities of Turpan and Hami, and Gansu's Jiayuguan, Jiuquan and Xining. The travel time needed to cover that distance when the line is in full operation later this year will be reduced to half, at about 9 hours.**P14**

Wang Ming's interpretation of the Yangtze River Economic Belt strategy

The State Council released a guideline, on Sept 25, promoting the development of the Yangtze River economic belt into a new engine of economic development. The belt covers nine provinces and two cities, 20 percent of the country's land area and 40 percent of its GDP. The publication Maritime China has recently had an interview with Wang Ming, deputy director of Institute of Comprehensive Transportation of National Development and Reform Commission, who participated in drafting the guideline. Wang Ming stresses that the promotion of the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt is to seize the opportunity for the future huge domestic demand, bring inward-looking economic layout ahead of time and surpass the traditional export-oriented economy thought. He says China will form the highest level of coordination mechanism and implement mechanism. The guideline proposes to offer regions along the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze better access to the ocean, in a bid to broaden the opening-up of the inland region. It calls for a more balanced development among the regions and wants to see an increase the economy's reliance on the ports along the river.**P24**

Focus on Shipping Summit

The "World Shipping Summit 2014" was grandly held in Chongqing City, the first ever host city in the inland and western region of China and on the upper reach of Yangtse River, China, on November 5th–7th. The Summit was attended by more than 700 delegates from global famous organizations, shipping companies or relevant industries. Mr. Huang Qifan, Mayor of Chongqing Municipal People's Government, Mr. Wang Jinfu, Chief Safety Inspector of the Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Ma Zehua, Chairman of the Board of China Ocean Shipping (Group) Company, attended and addressed the meeting. Focus on the theme of "Adapting to New Norms", 66 speakers addressed the audience. The participants explored and discussed the future of shipping industry through Panel Discussion, Top Views, Leaders Forum, Pioneers Dialogue and Q&A. The most authoritative institutions were invited to forecast economy outlook and prospects of shipping Industry, and global and domestic top economists shared their foresight on macro economy. Prominent consulting agencies and industry experts analyzed shipping industry's future, while the most influential leaders and business elites from shipping and related industries have enlightened everyone by their advice on business management. Guests too were active in airing their views on economy, industry, technology, management, strategy, competition, legal, environmental protection and other important subjects, all sharing with us professionally their valuable experience and views full of wisdom. **P26**

The new starting point

DNV GL is the world's leading ship and offshore classification society. Recently, the celebration of DNV GL Year One and DNV 150 Years was held in Shanghai. DNV's relationship with China has a long history. As early as 1888, offices were set up in China and Shanghai is the headquarters of the greater China region of DNV. According to the view point of DNV GL's executives, the Chinese government has made the grand blueprint for the sustainable development of society. What's more, China has taken a solid pace in the transformation of the mode of economic development and made remarkable efforts to develop green economy, which fits with the idea that DNV has stick to for more than one hundred years. DNV's purpose is to safeguard life, property, and the environment. The newly formed DNV GL Group became operational on September 12, 2013 after a long courtship that included numerous relationship-building advances and discussions about co-operation and mergers that took place in 1986, 2000 and again in 2006. Changes in ownership and strategic alignment between the two companies and their leadership provided new opportunities, and the merger was finally successful. Today DNV GL is well positioned as a global player within the maritime, oil and gas, and energy industries as well as food and health care to meet new challenges while balancing the needs of business and society. **P46**

Groovy Baby - VLCCs have got their Mojo back

Over the years, investors in the VLCC market have shared an equally debilitating experience. The first of these miracles of modern shipping appeared in 1967. The VLCC market went mad. Investors queued to order 4 million barrel ships and the VLCC fleet grew faster than any other shipping fleet in history, from zero in 1967 to 193m dwt in December 1979. For twenty years from 1983 to 2003 the VLCC fleet struggled along in a grim and Mojo-less world. Then in 2003 a big dose of Chinese medicine got the fleet kick started again. Long-haul imports by the big three of Europe, USA and Japan were topped off by China and the Asian tigers, and from 2003 to 2013 the VLCC fleet grew at 4% pa. But since 2007 demand has been sapped by high oil prices, increased US production, a credit crisis, and a deep OECD recession. As a result crude oil tonne miles have only increased by 5% in total since 2007. So there you have it. Although it's not the 1960s, Dr Evil is still at work on the VLCC fleet's Mojo. Of course today's Mojo surgery is not as dire as the 1980s, but the flagging crude demand growth since 2007 and brisk fleet growth have created spare capacity. Luckily some of it is soaked up by slow steaming, so when he's in the mood, our hero can still enjoy a nice little spike. But sadly Austin's still very short on stamina. Have a nice day. **P54**

Saving now, paying later on fuel

Plunging fuel prices are filtering down to shippers, but new emissions standards will make the benefits short-lived. Beneficial cargo owners will benefit from the rapid decline in oil and bunker fuel prices, but the benefits will be short-lived, according to Maersk Group CEO Nils Andersen. Cargo carried by Transpacific Stabilization Agreement carriers to North American west coast ports face a $53 per 40-foot container charge, while containers transported to the east coast will be charged an extra $67 per FEU. The price per metric ton of low-sulfur bunker fuel in Rotterdam, a benchmark for global prices, dropped 4.1 percent, or nearly $20, during the week of Nov. 12, to $456, according to BunkerVision. It was the fifth straight week of decline for low-sulfur prices, which have dropped 17.6 percent, or $97, since Oct. 3. The price per metric ton for dirtier high-sulfur fuel has dropped $159 to $443.60 through Nov. 12. Overall, bunker fuel prices have fallen more than 30 percent since June as the oil prices plunged to three-year lows, breaking the $80-per-barrel mark. Bronson Hsieh, second vice group chairman of Evergreen Group, said recently that steadily dropping bunker fuel prices may prompt slow-steaming carriers to speed up ships, which would inject huge amounts of capacity into an already heavily oversupplied market. SeaIntel estimated recently that an increase of just one knot would free up enough vessels to increase global capacity by 6.2 percent. One further knot would add another 5.9 percent of capacity to an industry already reeling from a glut of excess tonnage. Fuel surcharges, meanwhile, have fallen along with oil prices. The immediate positive effect of the falling fuel prices is on the carriers' bottom line. **P56**

Fuel safety, hazardous substances and electronic certificates on IMO agenda

Since the report in the last Bulletin, BIMCO has participated in two International Maritime Organization (IMO) meetings. The first of these was the session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers (CCC 1), formerly known as the Sub- Committee for Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers (DSC), held from 8-12 September 2014. The second one was the 39th Session of the Facilitation Committee (FAL 39), held from 22-26 September 2014. CCC 1 continued to work on the draft International Code of Safety for Ships Using Gases or Other Low-flashpoint Fuels Code (IGF Code) and agreed to make it mandatory under the SOLAS Convention. The sub-committee also discussed HME substances within the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes Code (IMSBC Code) in relation to the revised MARPOL Annex V. FAL 39 initiated discussions on cyber security, an issue which BIMCO is currently exploring with a view to issuing guidance to its members.**P58**

Sharp decline in oil prices to aggravate freight rates

Surplus of products tankers and ATBs in the US Gulf could be exacerbated as appetite dwindles for ships to move crude up the coast. The forecast for Tonnage involved in the coastwise carriage of US crude looks promising but some fear a sharp decline in oil prices could take a toll on freight rates in the months ahead. Shipbrokers who track the Jones Act segment claim demand for domestic products tankers and articulated tug-barges (ATBs) is starting to slide, which has led to what one described as “a distinct surplus” of ships seeking cargoes in the US Gulf. In the first half of 2014, observers note the gap stood at approximately $8, which is when it was widely believed that a 50,000-dwt products tanker could command more than $100,000 per day on a relet to an oil major like ExxonMobil. The EIA's projection followed revised pricing forecasts for 2015 that reflected what it described as “significant changes” in the global balance between supply and demand for oil. While the EIA believes the impact from lower oil prices will increase as time passes, it said levels should be strong enough to support the shale plays that have helped push freight rates for Jones Act tankers, tugs and barges to record highs. According to the US Maritime Administration (MarAd), there are over 100 active shipyards in the US. Of these, Aker Philadelphia and General Dynamics Nassco are the only ones involved in the construction of tankers. Today, there are 14 50,000-dwt units on order in the US and options for seven more, in addition to nine large ATBs. According to St Amand, the current total represents roughly 34% of the existing bluewater fleet.**P60**

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