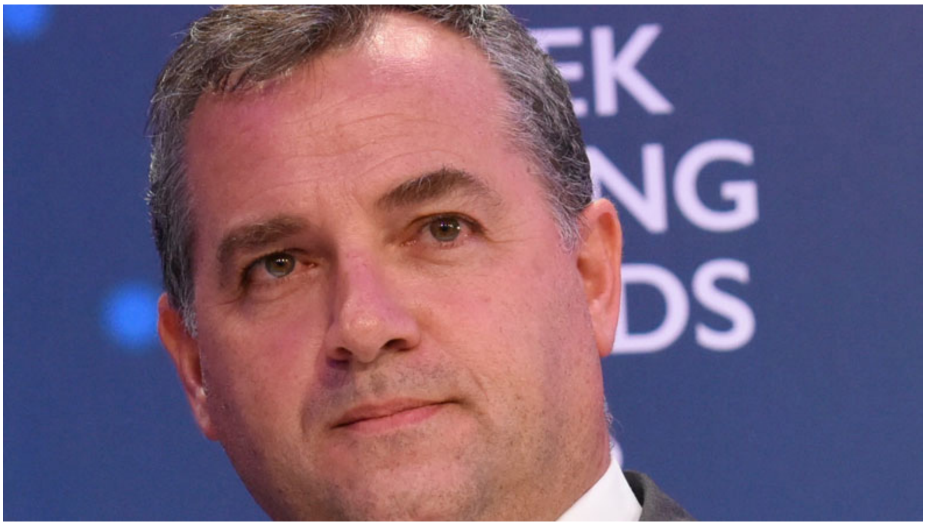
Lloyd's List
Maritime intelligence | informa

Daily Briefing
Leading maritime commerce since 1734

Charterers lambasted for indifference to crew plight



CHARTERERS HAVE BEEN accused of turning a blind eye to the suffering of crew as the shipping industry continues to wrestle with the puzzle of enacting long overdue crew changes.

Safe Bulkers chief executive Polys Hajioannou is one of the first major shipowners to publicly call out charterers for being part of the problem rather than the solution as seafarers continue to be trapped on board their ships amid the coronavirus pandemic.

He said companies faced “a lot of hassle and a lot of problems” from charterers when wanting to make even small deviations from scheduled routes when precious opportunities to effect crew changes arose.

This was the case even when deviations would be undertaken solely at the owner’s cost.

“I’m very disappointed to say that owners are not having the support of charterers when it comes to social responsibility into the wellbeing of seafarers,” Cyprus-based Mr Hajioannou said on an earnings call this week.

“We have to face all the cost ourselves, which is the least of it. Here, we have lack of co-operation from many charterers, including major ones, when there is a need to make a small deviation from the intended route in order to disembark our crew and put on board a fresh crew.”

Mr Hajioannou, who was referring to “even big names, big charterers, that should have supported such small deviations", said there were only few exceptions.

"I have seen only two or three charterers really understanding the problem and co-operating," he said. "Good names like Cargill or Bunge, they are doing their best to assist. But there are some other names that we are really disappointed in."

He also accused the industry of being two-faced over a humanitarian and responsibility issue that he called "a time bomb" for the shipping industry.

He noted that major charterers often portrayed themselves as being socially responsible and caring for the wellbeing of crews and others in the transportation chain.

"These principles that they state in their brochures and in their code of ethics — they don't pass [them] on to their chartering departments who are resisting whenever an owner is asking to make a small deviation for crew changes. I think there is a lot of hypocrisy in the market," he said.

"This is the biggest problem of the shipping industry for the next six to 12 months,' he said. "We all have to face our social responsibilities, not only the owner himself — he can't do it [alone]. We need the co-operation of all the parties, the cargo owners, the charterers, everyone."

US-listed Safe Bulkers owns a fleet of 42 bulkers and Mr Hajioannou also has a smaller family dry bulk operation.

Since the pandemic broke out and emerged as a massive crisis for companies and their crews, owners have been reticent about pointing the finger at charterers or identifying the trend as widespread. But patience among owners and managers appears to be running out.

Recently, senior management in the Greece-based Tsakos Group, a major tanker owner, raised concerns to Lloyd's List about the stance of charterers in the tanker market, too.

"Charterers have not shown sensitivity," said one executive. "There has been no flexibility."

Last week speakers in a Capital Link webinar devoted to the industry's crewing challenge agreed that charterers among other stakeholders should pull their weight.

"Charterers have a very real role in helping to facilitate this," said International Chamber of Shipping general secretary Guy Platten. "Some charterers are starting to step up to the plate, but we need everyone to understand that there is only going to be a solution by the industry working together."

Pacific Basin chief urges governments to allow crew changes

DESPITE the maritime industry's efforts, crew changes have so far been widely blocked because of restrictions put in place around the world.

The onus is now on governments, who need to take some concrete steps amid constantly changing quarantine measures and lack of commercial flights.

"We [shipowners] have to keep putting pressure on governments and maritime organisations to allow crew changes and highlight how unfair it is to not let crew move," Pacific Basin's chief executive Mats Berglund said in an interview.

"We take all the precautions at sea and there is absolutely no reason to be afraid of allowing seafarers to be repatriated."

He pointed out that as long as the seafarers are tested and remain in quarantine there should not be any problem to facilitate the movement of seafarers to and from their ships.

"We are hoping that the governments will listen and be reasonable," he said, adding that the maritime industry was in favour of testing and quarantine.

Mr Berglund believes that being on a ship is one of the safest places to be. "The crew is out in the open ocean and not meeting anyone for 30-60 days, not even in ports and the number of people allowed on board is very restricted."

Pacific Basin runs about 117 owned ships across the supramax and handysize segments and including chartered-in vessels, the company had 235 ships on the water at the end of the first half of 2020.

Among Pacific Basin's two main crew origin countries, China remains more difficult for crew changes, but the shipowner has reported making crew changes for its Philippines seafarers.

"The Filipino crew changes are a little bit easier, there are now flights in and out of the country but it's most difficult with Chinese crew as there are almost no flights and few ports to get them off and get new crew on."

In addition, there were a lot of entry and exit restrictions even for Chinese nationals, he pointed out. "The country does not even allow chartered flights," Mr Berglund said.

Owners are doing everything in their power, he says, adding that the company had been chartering flights and paying 10 times more for the flight tickets.

"We just want to get our people home."

For now, Pacific Basin is trying to look at ways to keep their crew motivated on board vessels while urging them to be patient. "But of course, they want to go home," he reiterated.

Seafarers stop ships as crew crisis worsens

THE continuing crisis with crew repatriation threatens to see berths and terminals clogged by seafarers refusing to work their vessels after their contracts have expired.

The International Transport Workers Federation said two ships currently idle in Australia were the latest to refuse to sail after crew enforced their right to refuse to sail following the end of their contracts.

The ITF said the 2000-built, 5,618 teu *Conti Stockholm* and the 2015-built, 35,000 dwt *Ben Rinnes* had both stopped.

AIS data from Lloyd's List Intelligence shows *Conti Stockholm* at anchor off Freemantle in Western Australia after sitting alongside for three days at the terminal.

Ben Rinnes is alongside at the port of Geelong in Victoria after arriving in the country on Wednesday evening. The ITF said one crew member had been on board for 17 months and others had signed five-month extensions following their nine-month contracts.

Another bulk carrier, the 2019-built, 36,300 teu *Unison Jasper*, has been alongside at Newcastle for nearly two weeks.

A spokesman for NSB, which manages *Conti Stockholm*, said crew welfare was the company's highest concern.

"As ports and airports were closed by official administrations, crew changes are like running the gauntlet," he said.

"Despite these obstacles, we do crew changes every day somewhere in the world, and succeeded in changing more than 60% of our overdue crew. For this we accepted deviations and chartered flights."

He added that the company had flown seven crew to Australia to allow for the repatriation of three overdue crew on *Conti Stockholm*.

"Due to official regulations, they have to go into quarantine for a fortnight, although Fremantle is the last port to call in Australia," the spokesman said.

"We fully understand governmental decisions but also appreciate hands-on solutions not to threaten global logistic chains and the work of our colleagues at sea."

All three vessels are have seafarers on board who are over contract and are using their rights under the Maritime Labour Convention to stop working at the completion of their contracts, the ITF said.

It added that the Australian government's failures to introduce a system of effective crew change had directly led to more seafarers being over contract and taking matters into their own hands to get home.

"The crews of these ships have bravely stood up and said that they will not be leaving these ports to do another tour of duty on what amount to floating prisons," said ITF Australia co-ordinator Dan Summers.

"They have finished the contracts they signed up for, and now they are getting off. It is not their fault that governments like Australia are so profoundly disinterested in shipping that these governments have not used the last five months of this pandemic to find a way to get international seafarers to and from our ports."

He warned that these ships were "just the tip of the iceberg" and that with crew changes all but banned for the past five months, further incidents such as these could occur.

"The crew change crisis is mounting, but so is the courage of seafarers to stand up and fight back. What you'll find is that they'll be saying they are getting off — whether or not the bureaucrats and politicians have their shit together," Mr Summers said.

WHAT TO WATCH

Beirut port officials detained as blast death toll rises

PORT officials in Beirut have been placed under house arrest as investigations continue into the major explosion on Tuesday that destroyed much of the immediate area.

The death toll rose on Thursday to at least 137 people, with 5,000 others injured. Many are still missing and a two-week state of emergency has begun.

The Lebanese government announced that a number of Beirut port officials had been placed under house arrest pending an investigation.

The cause of the blast appears to have been 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate that had been stored at the port since 2014.

Questions are being asked about why the dangerous material was stored in such a large quantity for so long.

The ammonium nitrate was taken from a ship that docked in Beirut in 2013.

The head of Beirut port and the head of the customs authority told local media that they had written to the judiciary several times asking that the chemical be exported or sold on to ensure port safety.

Port General Manager Hassan Koraytem told local television channel OTV that they had been aware that the material was dangerous when a court first ordered it stored in the warehouse, "but not to this degree".

Badri Daher, the director general of Lebanese customs, said his office had sent six letters to the country's judiciary urging them to deal with the chemicals either by exporting the load, reselling it or giving it to the army.

House arrest would apply for all port officials "who have handled the affairs of storing [the] ammonium nitrate, guarding it and handling its paperwork" since June 2014, according to Information Minister Manal Abdel Samad.

Initial investigations indicate years of inaction and negligence over the storage, Reuters reported, citing an unidentified official source familiar with the findings.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have called for an independent investigation into the blast.

HRW said it had "serious concerns about the ability of the Lebanese judiciary to conduct a credible and transparent investigation on its own".

Beirut is Lebanon's key container port, and while the extent of the damage to the container terminal remains unknown, damage to surrounding port infrastructure is likely to severely impact throughput.

"The silos that exploded were around 1.5 km away from the main quay of the container terminal, which is in itself not that far, on the other hand, it might be far enough not to have damaged all of the critical infrastructure," Dynamar consultant Frans Waals told Lloyd's List.

With all operations at the port suspended, container lines have started to divert from Beirut to Tripoli and other ports in the Mediterranean.

CMA CGM and its subsidiary CEVA Logistics have offered the Lebanese and French governments logistics and maritime assistance in order to respond to the emergency.

"The Group is ensuring everything is in place to guarantee perfect business continuity and to maintain the supply of primary necessities to the country," CMA CGM said.

Gard said the office of its local correspondent — Maurice G. Mouracade & Co — suffered "some damage", though there were no reports of serious personal injuries and the office remains open.

"According to our correspondents, the port of Beirut is closed for a minimum period of 14 days which could be extended until port facilities have been restored," it said.

"In the meantime, all traffic for the port is being diverted to the port of Tripoli, Lebanon."

Hapag-Lloyd, whose Beirut offices were completely destroyed in the blast, had no ships in the port at the time of the explosion, but told customers that probably most laden and empty containers there were caught up in the blast.

Grimaldi said one of its vessels was due to call in Beirut on Sunday. This ship, which usually serves Tripoli as well, may discharge its cargo there instead, depending on how the situation evolves. Neither company reported any staff casualties.

Maersk has said its offices were damaged and three employees suffered minor injuries.

Mediterranean Shipping Co has advised customers that it will be using several alternative ports for Lebanon cargo until Beirut's container terminal is operational again.

These include Gioia Tauro, Tekirdag, Mersin and Piraeus. In the meantime, staff have been told to work from home.

ANALYSIS

LNG shipping demand up in the air as traders enter market

TWO THIRDS of liquefied natural gas volumes contracted during the first half of 2020 were on delivered ex-ship terms, which call on cargo sellers to factor in shipping costs.

This would have bolstered ship chartering enquiries given that the first six months of the year saw 24 deals sealed for just under 24m tonnes of LNG supplies each year, according to data released during a Poten & Partners webinar on Wednesday.

But global head for business intelligence Jason Feer also highlighted two pertinent factors weighing on LNG shipping demand and rates.

To begin with, traders and aggregators accounted for the purchase of most LNG supplies contracted during the first half.

Poten's data showed these buyers backing 15 done deals for 15.63m tonnes of supplies each year.

End-users signed just nine deals for 8.35m tonnes per annum.

Traders are generally seeking to profit from a soft market characterised by vast new supplies and multi-year low spot LNG prices.

Mr Feer said that this group of buyers wanted "flexibility" and "will work freight and paper markets" in their bids to maximise returns.

The first three months of this year have already seen trades done on LNG derivatives pegged to the JKM benchmark for Asia reaching nearly half of full-year volumes in 2019, leading energy and commodity pricing agency S&P Global Platts pointed out in June.

LNG shipping rates, on the other hand, surrendered peak season gains earlier than usual during the preceding winter in the northern hemisphere.

Rates in the Atlantic and Pacific basins hit $130,000 last October but tumbled soon after and have yet to break out of the $30,000-$39,000 region, despite posting small gains in recent weeks, Fearnley's assessments showed.

Mr Feer suggested, however, that shipping demand might soon turn the corner with many inquiries being put out for "winter journeys".

One issue that needs to be resolved is an expectations gap between buyers and sellers over shipping charter tenors.

"Many charterers are looking for charters of less than a year, [but] vessel owners seek charters of at least a year," Mr Feer said.

Gulf of Mexico now a major piracy hotspot

MEXICO's government is hiding the extent of its growing piracy problem, according to two maritime academics who say increasing attacks in the southern Gulf of Mexico are going unreported.

There were 14 attacks on supply vessels and offshore platforms in the southern Gulf of Mexico in the first six months of 2020, say Adriana Avila Zuniga Nordfjeld and Dimitrios Dalaklis, from the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden, in a research paper.

Just three attacks were officially reported in the same period according to the paper, which is based on interviews with masters and security officers.

In one incident, small armed groups in multiple boats boarded oil industry vessels at night, took crew members hostage and stole equipment and valuables before fleeing.

"The US government is aware of at least 20 fishing vessels and 35 oil platforms and offshore supply vessels that have been targeted by pirates and armed robbers since January 2018 in the Bay of Campeche area of the southern Gulf of Mexico," Ms Nordfjeld and Mr Dalaklis said in their paper.

Ms Nordfjeld told Lloyd's List the ship masters and security officers interviewed were "concerned about the risk to lives and crew".

"Unfortunately the government has been trying to hide this situation from the international community," she said. "There were 11 incidents… that we could document ourselves, but it doesn't mean they were the only ones."

She said the overstretched Mexican government lacked the resources, vessels and equipment to patrol the area. She said private security companies were not the solution because of the risk of corruption.

The International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre received four reports from the area in an 11-day period in April, said director Michael Howlett. He advised shipmasters and owners to report all actual, attempted and suspected piracy and armed robbery incidents to the PRC.

"This is the vital first step in the response chain to ensuring that adequate resources are allocated by authorities to tackle piracy," Mr Howlett said. "Transparent statistics from an independent, non-political, international organisation can act as a catalyst to achieve this goal."

The US embassy in Mexico put out a security alert in June noting the risk of attacks in the Bay of Campeche, where Mexico's oil industry is concentrated.

Ms Nordfjeld said more international action was needed to draw attention to the problem. She said industry groups could apply to designate a "high-risk area", as the industry did to fight pirates off Somalia, but noted this was a complex and lengthy process.

"It's necessary that all vessels from all other jurisdictions report to [the] IMO the incidents they experience in the area because the coastal state is not doing so," she said.

A spokesman from Mexico's Secretariat of the Navy, known as Semar, told Lloyd's List that companies and seamen had reported an increase in robberies at sea, at ports and around oil platforms in the past few years.

But these were called robberies, not piracy, since the attackers tried to steal belongings and equipment but did not try to take control of the ship, the spokesman said.

"There have been many efforts to get along with the merchant sector in order to reduce or eradicate those events," he said.

"It's been working, [but] unfortunately [they] have appeared again in the north part of the influence zone in a port named Coatzacoalcos, and [their activity has] significantly reduced from the zone of Campeche and Tabasco."

Ms Nordfjeld noted that the attackers had not kidnapped crew for ransom, as was more commonly seen in piracy off West Africa.

Dry bulk market expects little impact from Beirut blast

THE dry bulk freight market will see minimal impact from the blast at Beirut port for now.

Braemar ACM analyst Nick Ristic said that Lebanon imports about 1.5m tonnes per year of dry bulk commodities, two thirds of which are grains and fertilisers shipped on handysize vessels and supramaxes.

Looking specifically at Beirut, grain shipments only amount to a handful of handies per year, he said, adding that about 75% of all agribulk trade into Lebanon went to other ports such as Tripoli and Selaata in 2019.

"I don't see a huge impact from the explosion on the dry bulk freight market," he said.

Immediate concerns were raised following the grain silo explosion at the port on Tuesday, where about 85% of the country's grains are stored, according to reports. The other 15% is received directly by private companies.

The country had less than a month's supply of grains in other reserves, according to a Reuters report, citing government ministers. And while Tripoli's port did not have grain storage, cargoes would be sent to nearby warehouses, according to the port director.

Lebanon mainly imports wheat and corn from Russia and Ukraine, with some corn shipments coming in from Argentina, according to Danish grains consultancy BullPositions.

Imports are most intensive during the late summer and autumn, with monthly averages ranging from 150,000 tonnes to 300,000 tonnes, managing director Jesper Buhl said, adding that with grain facilities damaged in Beirut, it was hard to imagine this import level would likely continue in the coming weeks and months.

The silo in Beirut had a capacity of 120,000 tonnes.

Tripoli, the country's second-biggest port, has typically been receiving wood, sugar, various kinds of beans, scrap iron, vehicles, and construction materials, its website shows.

Lloyd's List Intelligence data shows at least four bulk carriers are heading for Tripoli between now and August 11. Prior port calls include Ukraine, Tunisia, Egypt and Turkey.

Given the importance of grain imports, it is likely the country will shift to another major port, said London-based shipping consultant Maritime Strategies International.

For other dry bulk commodities, imports of steel may be affected in the short-term, but "it's pretty minor on a global scale", dry bulk analyst Will Tooth said.

However, in the medium term, it will probably lead to greater demand for construction materials once rebuilding works begin following the extensive damage, which would provide "minor support" for cargo demand, he added.

ICTSI first-half volumes plunge 11% on coronavirus impact

PHILIPPINES-based port operator International Container Terminal Services saw the effects of the coronavirus pandemic really kick in during the second quarter of 2020 with throughput plunging 11% to 2.29m teu from 2.56m teu in the previous corresponding period.

And the company sees more challenges ahead. "Covid-19 is now the major challenge for most businesses globally and we expect the second half of the year will continue to be challenging and marked with uncertainties," said chairman and president Enrique Razon Jr.

For the year to date, which closely corresponds with the duration of the outbreak, ICTSI saw volumes drop 5% to 4.80m teu, primarily due to the decline in trade activities which resulted from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on global trade and lockdown restrictions, the port operator said in a release.

As a result, first-half revenue from port operations fell 4% to S$724.3m from $751.8m previously as trade activities declined due to the impact of the virus and ensuing lockdown restrictions.

The first half "has been a period of significantly reduced economic and international trade activity, brought about by protracted lockdown periods for many countries around the world", noted Mr Razon.

Net profit in the first half fell 12% to $113.4m from $128.5m in the same period of 2019 due to lower operating income, increase in interest on concession rights payable and Covid-19 related expenses.

"Our primary focus and central to our decision-making since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak has been, and remains, the safety and wellbeing of our employees, customers and our stakeholders," said Mr Razon.

Pointing out that ICTSI took immediate action to preserve cash and reduce capital expenditure, Mr Razon said: "These prudent measures taken early on, our diversified portfolio and maintaining a very high level of service to our clients has helped cushion the impact from the pandemic and generated a resilient and better than expected performance."

Yangzijiang Shipbuilding profit drops 17% in second quarter

YANGZIJIANG Shipbuilding has warned of parlous market conditions as its profits shrank substantially in the first half.

But the Singapore-listed, China-based shipbuilder has shown resilience in winning new orders, which could help bolster future finances.

"The pandemic has continued to spread around the world and grown in severity in many key economies in the past few months," the company said. "This has weighed on the price of new vessels and charter rates, and further dampened shipowners' sentiment and the outlook for the shipbuilding industry."

Amid the adverse impact, Yangzijiang reported a 33% contraction year on year in net profit in the six months to June 30 to Yuan1.2bn ($169.4m). Revenue fell 38% to Yuan8.3bn. Second-quarter profit declined 17% year on year.

Its core business, shipbuilding, saw revenue down 3% in the second quarter to Yuan3bn, having sustained a 33% fall to Yuan2.3bn in the first quarter.

The improvement was partly supported by a quick recovery in delivery capability after the virus-led disruption.

"Since April 2020, the Group's operations have resumed to its full capacity, and it has fully made up for the lost time due to the temporary shutdown in February to early March," said the release. "Vessel deliveries were on schedule."

Citing Clarksons, Yangzijiang added that ship orders globally had dropped to 5.7m compensated gross tonnes in the six months, the lowest since 1996.

The privately-run Chinese builder won $517m worth of newbuilding contracts during the period, more than doubling the year-ago amount. These include two dual-fuel 14,000 teu boxships ordered by Tiger Group in March.

The sum stays on track with analysts' expectations on the company's total order volume of $1bn for the whole of 2020 — although that represents a downgrade from the $1.5bn previously forecast.

As of end-June, Yangzijiang boasted a backlog of $2.6bn or 62 vessels, enough to provide a healthy utilisation rate for its facilities for a year and half.

"In the seemingly darkest of times with weak sentiments and lack of visibility in the market, we will work closely with our customers to ensure successful deliveries and pull through the challenging period with them together." said chief executive Ren Letian.

IN OTHER NEWS

Fuel oil leaking from grounded bulker off Mauritius

NAGASHIKI Shipping, the Japanese owner of the bulker *Wakashio* that grounded off Mauritius, said that fuel oil has leaked from the vessel.

"Due to the bad weather and constant pounding over the past few days, the starboard side bunker tanker has been breached and an amount of fuel oil has escaped into the sea," it said in an emailed statement. "Oil prevention measures are in place and an oil boom has been deployed around the vessel."

The owner said that it and its P&I Club had contracted a specialist oil response and salvage team who are co-ordinating with the Mauritian authorities to mitigate the effects of any pollution.

Genco makes strides in repatriation of seafarers

GENCO, a US-based owner of dry bulk vessels, said it had repatriated crew on about 70% of its fleet despite travel and port restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have prioritised the health and safety of our crew and onshore professionals," said chief executive John Wobensmith.

"An underlying challenge for all shipowners has been successfully executing crew rotations due to various port and travel restrictions globally, and we are proud to have taken proactive measures by implementing industry-leading protocols."

Incidents of shipping detention in decline

PARIS memorandum port state control authorities are detaining fewer ships.

Detentions as a percentage of inspections were at 2.94% last year, compared with 3.17% in 2018 and 3.88% the year before that, according to the latest figures. The number of detainable deficiencies also declined, to 2,995 from 3,250 in 2018.

In the past three years, 76 ships have been banned for multiple detentions, six for failing to call at an indicated repair yard and one ship for jumping detention. In the same period, 13 ships were banned for a second time.

Emissions data point to bigger role for governments

GOVERNMENTS will have a bigger role in cutting emissions from ships, according to research by the International Maritime Organization.

Elena Hauerhof, principal consultant at UMAS, an advisory group based at University College London, said the more precise data could help governments devise incentives for ships on the path to decarbonisation and penalties for those that were not.

Tristan Smith, a director at UMAS and a co-author of the study, said governments could help develop and reduce the costs of solutions for their domestic fleets that could then be scaled up to the international fleet.

Former chief executive returns to helm of OOIL

HUANG Xiaowen, a vice-president of China Cosco Shipping Corp, will assume the chief executive role at Orient Overseas International, according to an exchange filing.

The appointment marks the return of Mr Huang to the helm of the Hong Kong-based container shipping subsidiary since it was taken over by the Chinese conglomerate more than two years ago.

His previous tenure as the chief executive was between August 2018 and September 2019, after which the position was taken over by his colleague at Cosco Shipping, Wang Haimin.

FSL Trust agrees sale of remaining container fleet

FIRST Ship Lease Trust has come to a definitive agreement to sell off the last three container ships in its fleet.

In a release on Wednesday, the Singapore-based owner said it had executed memoranda of agreement to sell the containerships *FSL Eminence, FSL Elixir* and *YM Enhancer* to unaffiliated third parties and had received the initial 10% deposit in escrow. However, the deal price was not disclosed.

The details of the net proceeds of the disposal and their utilisation will be announced upon completion of the disposals, the trust said.

Japan launches first LNG-VLSFO bunker tanker

JAPAN has launched its first tanker capable of bunkering both liquefied natural gas and very low sulphur fuel oil.

The tanker, which was named *Ecobunker Tokyo Bay* at a ceremony held yesterday, is equipped with storage tanks for 2,500 cu m of LNG and 1,500 cu m of VLSFO.

The owner of the tanker, Ecobunker Shipping, is a joint venture comprising interests from Japanese groups Sumitomo Corporation, Yokohama-Kawasaki

International Port and Uyeno Transtech.

North's Yiacoumis to join Skuld in Piraeus

SKULD has appointed Helen Yiacoumis as head of freight, demurrage and defence at its Piraeus office.

Ms Yiacoumis spent almost 18 years at the North of England P&I Association, where she joined as a solicitor and progressed to director in the Greek office.

Lawsuit 'aims to dismantle the port of Oakland'

THE Oakland Athletics baseball team has stepped up its efforts to obtain 55 acres of prime waterfront property at the port of Oakland by filing a lawsuit against the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Oakland Athletics president Dave Kaval said the lawsuit filed in Alameda County Superior Court accused the department of a "failure to impose and enforce environmental law" against Schnitzer Steel, which does bulk and container shipping of scrap metals from its own yard at the port.

For more than a year, the Athletics have promoted plans to move from their present location at the Coliseum baseball stadium, about six miles south of the port, to the proposed new location at Howard Terminal within the port itself.

Classified notices follow