

MR. FARZAD SAFFARZADEH  
OWNER

Week 36 (04 - 10 September, 2017)

### EDITORIAL

Friends, "I am baaack", as the Terminator said. Or perhaps it was "I'll be baaack". Anyhow, its Thursday so prepare yourself for some interesting reading in this week's issue.



Before I elaborate on the contents, let me tell you that I have spent some time studying what makes bureaucracies grow. I started reading an amazing book called "Parkinson's Law". It was published in the mid-fifties by a civil servant who couldn't understand why the bureaucracy of the ministry grew whilst their areas of responsibility diminished. Just give a thought to the amount of embassies around the world for example, with working hours Monday-Wednesday 9:30 - 11:00, closed on Thursdays and Fridays. Not to mention EU embassies, sometimes it makes one wonder what's going on. Take a walk in the embassy district of Sanlitun, Beijing (where I first visited in 1986); at that time there was not much going on, but plenty of luxury cars were always parked outside, like any embassy district in the world. How can we expect rules that are good for business and overall development to be implemented by governments whose rulers are far away from everyday life?

Now for the business at hand: We start off with a country that has been under sanctions for quite some time, Iran, where we get to know a competent local project freight forwarder. We then speak with a shipowner that provides very specialized semisubmersible tonnage with a couple of awesome pictures. Also we have shipping & sector news, photo and video of the week. Finally, from this issue on, we add an ancient proverb to the quote of the week.

Wishing you a pleasant read and, until next week,

Yours sincerely,

**Bo H. Drewsen**

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*First of all let me ask you about the current situation in Iran. There have been sanctions for some years but we understand that recently they were relaxed and that Iran is slowly opening up again. There seem to be more experts talking about your country outside Iran than inside. Could you as an insider tell us about the current business climate and specifically as it relates to the transport/logistics sector?*

Thank you Bo, for this opportunity. After the last meeting of 5+1 countries most sanctions against Iran were lifted and only US sanctions still exist. We are very positive since the foreign trade statistics reports show considerable growth after the lifting of sanctions.

Consider that, during the last year (the first ten months), the foreign trade balance of Iran experienced a 5.08% increase in export value and 3.21% in import.

Moreover, despite the fact that our foreign trade with China, UAE, Korea and Turkey dropped down, the volume with European countries increased. For example, for the same period of last year, the increase of this balance with Germany was about 36.39% compared with the previous year.

Once trade increases we will also see increases in the transport/logistics industry. We also have an inherent advantage due to fantastic location of Iran in the Persian Gulf for connecting to CIS, Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as to the South Quafqas area and Russia.



*What is your professional background and why did you decide to establish a transportation and freight forwarding company?*

I have BS in physics and a Masters degree in industrial engineering from Amir Kabir university. Actually I started freight forwarding with my elder brother who acquaint me with the alphabet of the business. From 2005 I organized my own setup under the Farasoobar Int'l Forwarder and Shipping Agency flag and have now been in this field for more than 28 years. I am also a trainer in the FIATA training school / Iran freight Forwarders Association Training Center. At the IRU academy training center in Iran chamber of commerce I am a DG trainer and instructor of CPC drivers.

At the beginning I never imagined that I could remain in this job, but gradually I discovered that it is very informative and motivating work, requiring understanding and knowledge in several different fields. Eventually I decided to start my own company in order to explore and show my counter parts how freight forwarders have a very important role in the industry in each country and that it's not a simple job of just selling freight.

Freight Forwarders can create markets and demand, facilitating the trade cycle all over the world.



**Iran has a very significant and important geographical position in the world, can you elaborate a bit about the links to/from and via Iran? What is possible practically at the moment? In other words what kind of ports are currently open for international traffic and what solutions via Iran for other destinations are currently feasible without problems?**

Absolutely it is, my country has a wide expanse in the north of the Persian Gulf, with an area of 1,648,000 square kilometers (636,000 sq mi). We have about 670 km of coastal border with the Caspian Sea in the north part of Iran, connecting the B. Anzali and Amirabad ports to Aktau, Turkmenbashi and Astarakhan. In the south of Iran we have 1,770 km connecting the Oman Sea and the Persian Gulf. The unique location of the country makes all modes of transportation (rail, road, air and sea) possible.

From the north we are neighbors with Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nakhchivan, in the east with Afghanistan and Pakistan, in the west with Turkey and Iraq and in the south with U.A.E., Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. In the south of Iran there are several ports including B. Abbas (Shahid Rajeei and Shahid Bahaonar ports), Bik (Mahshahr Port), Bushehr, Khoramshahr, Chabahr, Assaluyeh, and some others. I only mentioned internationally feasible ones. There are road links from these ports to all domestic destinations inside Iran as well as transit routes to further countries as stated above.



Several rail projects are in the pipeline to upgrade and complete the current railway network infrastructure. I am providing a map of rail connection for the ECO Region as well as the Middle East that I hope will be of interest. Currently we can send shipments by rail from B. Abbas to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. There are also rail links up to Astara Iran and the Russia rail network is connected up to Astara Azerbaijan and hopefully in the near future the rail connection will be finished between Astara Iran and Azerbaijan.

The South Quafqkas rail connection is now possible up to Yerevan and liner containers can be sent from European ports up to Yerevan and then by truck to Iran. For this route only a pilot plan is being conducted and the authorities of the South Quafqkas rail organization and the Armenian government are very keen on this route to be more operative.



We also have rail links to Europe through Turkey's rail network via our western borders, this also can be connected to the CIS by changing wagons.

To gain a better understanding of Iran's route advantage I should offer an example. When we ship containers from B. Abbas to Baku the trucker should drive about 2270 km, out of which 1944 km are in Iran. The same advantage exists for other destinations. The other advantage is that we move containers by the same trailers all the way to their final destination and return empty containers back to B. Abbas. This safeguards the goods against multiple loading/unloading in transshipment.

All shipping documents, either domestic or international, can have liability insurance coverage through Iranian Insurers.

As per submitted statistical reports within April-May of 2017 about 1,440,000 tonnes of goods transited via 22 land borders and 10 coastal borders, out of which 1,081,000 tonnes were general cargo and 357,000 tonnes were oil and oil related materials.



**Is customs clearance in Iran normally done in the port for inland bound cargo or can it be done at the final destination, say Teheran?**

Final customs clearing can be done either at the port of arrival or at any domestic inland destination as a bonded shipment, subject to the destination customs having the authority to accept the relevant goods.

I am providing you with a map with a list of final domestic destinations where cargo can be sent, we have a global guarantee contract with customs and can handle such bonded transit transportation.

**We have our agents in following ports and border points in addition of B.ABBAS:**

- KHORAMSHAHR
- BIK (BANDAR IMAM KHOMENI)
- BUSHEHR
- ASSALUYEH
- QUESHM ISLAND
- KISH ISLAND
- CHABAHAR
- DUGHARUN
- SARAHS
- LOTFABAD
- BAJGIRAN
- POL
- MASHAD
- AMIRABAD
- NOUSHAHR
- B.ANZALI
- ASTARA
- BILEHSAVAR
- DJOLF
- NOURDOUZ
- TABRIZ
- BAZARGAN
- KHOSRAVI
- BASHMAGH
- PIRANSHAHR
- TEHRAN
- ISFAHAN
- YAED
- SHIRAZ



**Where do you have your offices established? If you dont have your own presence physically at a certain port tell us how you control/monitor shipments.**

Our head office is located in Tehran and we have our own office in B.Abbas, which is of great importance for us since most transit shipments arrive via this port. We also have agents in all of the listed destinations above, who can handle our requests and operations. Networking is of great importance to us, both for the development of our domestic network and our overseas network. Without a strong network of partners we could not handle and offer different services and operations.

**Is the railway network in Iran well developed? I expect that Iran is part of the Chinese President's One Belt/Road policy of re-opening the old Silk Road, is that something that you can see happening in Iran as well? How is the relationship between China and Iran economically?**

I should remind you that Iran was titled the Bridge of Victory (POL-E Piroozi) during the second world war. Through the Iranian railway network from the south port in Khoramshahr allied troops and equipment was sent to Russia. The Veresk bridge which connects the south railway to the Caspian Sea was moving reinforcement troops and goods to the Caspian sea and then by vessel to Russia. During the second world war Hitler requested Reza Shah to blow up all bridges and tunnels with the promise to reconstruct them after war, but Reza Shah did not accept to destroy such infrastructure.



China and Iran have a very long historical relationship and this country is our major trade partner. Currently China plans to invest in rebuilding the old silk road via CIS, Iran, Russia to Europe and the new sea silk road for reaching the African continent. An investment of 900 billion dollars is expected, currently they have a big project in Pakistan for road constructions from China-Pakistan border to connect to Guader port, and some other projects in Armenia and Georgia. We are very hopeful to have a considerable share of this investments by offering transit and logistics services via Iran.

**There is a sizable population of Iranians living overseas, in places Sweden for example where I live. We even have Iran Air flying in direct. Can you see that with the more open business environment Iranians from overseas are becoming more active with business in their home country?**

Everybody likes the smell of money, it depends where you can earn it, it is the same story everywhere. We hope the economic conditions in Iran get better and encourage the overseas Iranians either to return to their home town or engage in business with Iran.



**What is the language that you speak in Iran and how is the general command of English?**

The official language of our country is Persian (Farsi), with about 132 dialects and Arabic speakers in Ahwaz County.

The new generation are very familiar with the English language, with modern inventions and technology it is an absolute must to have English language knowledge.

**Could you provide us with some examples of project cargoes that you have handled recently in transit via Iran and/or to Iran itself?**

Please see the following photos of some projects we have handled via Iran to CIS. The latest one consisted of two girders from B.Abbas to Baku.



**Whom to contact in your company should any of our readers wish to get a quote from you or wish to get more information about you?**

All the readers can contact us through the following e-mail addresses:

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## GPO HEAVYLIFT – OSLO, NORWAY

### MR. TORBJORN HOLTHE CHARTERING MANAGER

**Tell us about when GPO Heavylift was established as well as its current ownership. Where does the name GPO come from?**

GPO Heavylift was formed in 2015 for the purpose of building and operating four new semisubmersible Heavylift vessels constructed at CSBC Corporation in Taiwan. The present owner of the vessels is a company in Hong Kong, Greenland Heavylift (Hong Kong) Ltd.

The name GPO comes from Greenland Petroleum Operations which is a company the initial owner had available for business when we started up in 2014/15, but this company is not involved anymore, only the GPO name. GPO Heavylift Ltd. is the commercial management company performing chartering, engineering and operation of the GPO vessels from Oslo.



**Are you not afraid that the market for specialized ships is getting saturated now that the oil and gas industry is a bit down?**

Yes and no. There is no doubt that we are in a dip when it comes to freight rates and demand for our type of ships. We have entered this market with a long perspective and believe there will be a good market for these vessels. There are several reasons for this:

- History has shown that the industry we are in is cyclic. Although the oil and gas industry is down, there are still other industries that require our kind of vessels. We believe that transport of heavy and super sized cargo is something we will see more of in the future.
- The existing fleet of semisubmersible vessels are getting old. Our clients in the oil, gas and power industries have high demands for vessel performance and age. We have already seen vessels that are being scrapped as they do not live up to today's requirements and standards.
- Part of the business idea is to build four identical sister vessels. For large module transportation projects, this will be a huge advantage as it gives the charterer more flexibility in scheduling as they can interchange vessels. It also gives a unique redundancy as we will always have an identical sister vessel in case something was to happen to the nominated vessel.
- Based on the above, we believe we will be in a unique position once the market returns. It takes time to design and build vessels like ours. Starting construction when the demand picks up will probably be too late!



**Tell us about your heavylift ships and what they can do.**

Our vessels are designed based on decades of experience from the semisubmersible heavylift business. They are strong, powerful, fast and have several other technical features that make them stand out from the competition. It's worth mentioning the fully redundant main propulsion system, DP2 capability, powerful and versatile ballast system as well as the fully removable aft buoyancy towers. The towers can be shifted by our crew without the need for external cranes. The deck space is 183m x 48m. The beam was chosen due to the new Panama Canal restrictions. The vessels have a service speed of 14kn, but due to the powerful propulsion system we can, in many cases, go even faster. We will be able to keep good speed even in bad weather which allows us to avoid most severe weather, as we are able to go around or outpace it. The first vessel was delivered in July and her maiden assignment was to transport a module weighing more than 10,500 metric tons for the Johan Sverdrup field in Norway from Thailand. The speed potential was proven with an average speed of 13.6kn via the Suez Canal.



**Would your clientele mainly be project freight forwarders or shippers direct, given the very special nature and capability of your vessels?**

It depends on the charterers. Clients who use vessels like ours on a regular basis to transport their own cargo tend to come direct, but we also get a lot of requests from freight forwarders and brokers. We do not have a special preference, as it's up to our clients to decide how to organize their transports internally. Our vessels are also ideal for offshore development and installation projects. We are purely a shipping company, so when it comes to T&I contracts we would rather work with the T&I contractors than compete with them.

**What flag are your vessels flying?**

They are flying the Marshall Island flag.



**You have established your European office in Oslo, Norway, is there a specific reason for this choice as opposed to say London, Rotterdam or Hamburg?**

Both commercial and technical management for the vessels are in Oslo. Key persons in the development of the company have their base in Oslo, which is the reason for this location. The fact that Oslo has a long history with companies involved in semisubmersible heavylift vessels, a strong shipping environment and the oil & gas cluster here makes it an ideal place to get ahold of skilled employees.

**What kind of information do you require before giving an indication or a quote?**

It's like with everything else, the better information we receive, the better quotation we can prepare. As a minimum we need to know what is to be transported, its dimension and weight, origin, destination and the schedule. For larger more complex cargo, our engineering department will always perform a feasibility check. To do this we require the COG data, the draft and drawings of cargo. Protrusions below the hull baseline of the cargo require us to provide special supports under the cargo, which increases the transport cost.



**Mr. Holthe, tell us a bit about your own career in shipping. What made you choose this line of business and did you have previous experience with these kinds of specialized vessels?**

I started my working career in DNV after finishing my masters degree in mechanical engineering. I have always been fond of the sea and spent all my summers in a boat with my family as a kid. I always liked and was fascinated by the sea. In retrospect I should have selected navel architecture at university. When I got the opportunity to head the marine operations department at DNV I grabbed it. After some years I wanted to try to work for a more commercial company and successfully applied for a chartering position at OHT, a company that I came to know from my work at DNV. Later, I left OHT to relocate with my family, but when the chance to join GPO came along I knew I had to go for it. The thing I like about working with these ships is that they provide a great combination of commercial and technical challenges, which suits me well.

**Hopefully this interview will provide insight into GPO. Should any of our readers like to know more, who should they contact?**

First of all, they should visit our website where they will find a lot of useful information as well as contact details.

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## SHIPPING NEWS

### CHINA RAMPS UP INVESTMENTS IN GREECE SPARKING WESTERN CONCERNS

With China Development Bank (CDB) and the Greek Public Power Corporation (PPC) set to sign a cooperation agreement which could be worth many tens of million of dollars, China's has sought to stress the economic and social benefits of investment cooperation between Chinese and Greek companies as they have been cited as a source of concern for some Western countries.

[Read more...](#)

### SWIRE SHIPPING RAMPS UP SERVICES TO TOWNSVILLE

Swire Shipping will bring greater connectivity between Townsville, Queensland, Australia, and Asia through an upgrade of its North Asia Express (NAX) service. The 20-day frequency service offers transit times to/from major Asia and Southeast Asia ports with an eight-day transit to Singapore, a 17-day transit from Shanghai and a 15-day transit from Ningbo. [Read more...](#)

## SHIPMENT OF THE WEEK



Video from the Port of Tampa Bay featuring the arrival of new SkyConnect train cars for the Tampa International Airport (TPA)

## AUTOMOTIVE

### BRIDGESTONE TO BENEFIT FROM £500 MILLION ASTON MARTIN UK-JAPAN TRADE DEAL

Aston Martin Lagonda, will drive trade and investment between the United Kingdom and Japan worth up to £500 million over the next five years of its Second Century business plan. The investment program was announced by Dr Andy Palmer, Aston Martin President and Chief Executive Officer, during his visit to Japan as part of the UK delegation accompanying British Prime Minister Theresa May. [Read more...](#)

## WASTEWATER TREATMENT

### ITN NANOVAION SECURES BINDING ORDER FOR WATER TREATMENT PLANTS IN IRAN

The delivery of the plants is to start still in 2017. Purchaser and contracting party is DOR Water Filtration AG in Liechtenstein. By the order for the Iranian market, the rights of sale have been given to DOR Water Filtration AG. [Read more...](#)

## RENEWABLES

### JOLYWOOD SUPPLYING N-TYPE MONO BIFACIAL MODULES TO 6.7MW PROJECT IN INDIA

India-based renewable energy developer ACME Clean-tech Solutions ordered the high-efficiency bifacial modules for a 6.775MW project, which is expected to lead to follow-on orders for Jolywood. [Read more...](#)

## MINING & MINERALS

### THIESS SECURES \$437M COAL CONTRACT IN INDONESIA

Thiess has been awarded a \$437 million contract at the Gunung Bara Utama (GBU) coal mine in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Under the contract, CIMIC Group's mining services provider will deliver mining solutions from 2017 until 2024. [Read more...](#)

## SHIPYARDS & SHIPBUILDING

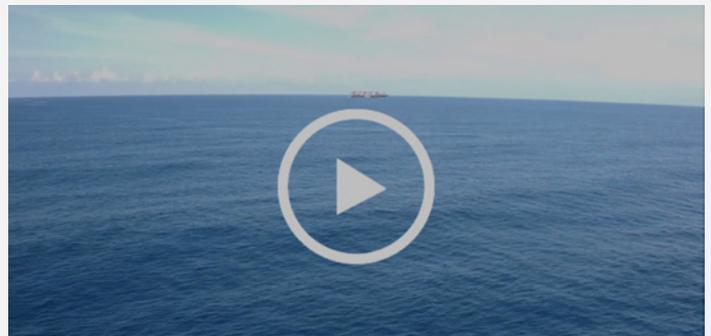
### AUSTAL TO BUILD CATAMARAN DUO FOR TAIWANESE FIRM

Australian shipbuilder Austal has received its first commercial vessel contract, valued at USD 35 million, in Taiwan. The contract is for two 550 passenger, 50-meter high speed catamarans, designed and built by Austal for Taiwan's Brave Line which will be designed by Austal in Australia and built at its shipyard in the Philippines. [Read more...](#)

### ARCTECH HELSINKI SHIPYARD AWARDS CONTRACT TO MELCAL

MELCAL said it has received a new contract from Arctech Helsinki Shipyard for the design and production of two ATEX Zone 1, IIB T3 cranes to be installed onboard an icebreaking arctic tanker. [Read more...](#)

## VIDEO OF THE WEEK



Many flying fish and great weather in the South China Sea, close to Paracel islands

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK



A global network of project forwarders (CLC Projects) meeting recently at the Port of Vungtau, Vietnam

## QUOTE AND PROVERB OF THE WEEK

**"RECESSION IS WHEN A NEIGHBOR LOSES HIS JOB, DEPRESSION IS WHEN YOU LOSE YOURS"**

- Ronald Reagan -

**"WALLS HAVE EARS AS DOORS HAVE EYES"**

- Ancient Indian Proverb -

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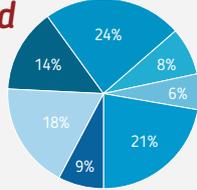
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