

# Middle East line opens intra-Asia loop to link western India ports

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Oman-based Asyad Line is set to launch a container service connecting the Far East and West India, according to information collected from industry sources.

To be marketed as the Far East Express One (FEX1), the service has been designed with stops in China, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia, in addition to India.

On the Indian leg, the string will have three ports of call: Hazira, Mundra and Nhava Sheva.

The full port rotation is Mundra, Hazira, Nhava Sheva, Haiphong, Shekou, Laem Chabang, Port Klang and Mundra. The first vessel is due to dock at Mundra on 30 March.

Estimated transit times from Mundra will be 13 days to Haiphong, 15 days to Shekou, 20 days to Laem Chabang and 24 days to Port Klang.

Established in 2020, Asyad Line was formerly known as Oman Container Lines (OCL). In India, Seabridge Marine Agencies, reportedly part of Mumbai-based Parikh Group, will be acting as a sole representative agent for Asyad Line, according to available information.

The move comes as Far East imports into India have seen strong traction in recent months, because of growing demand for raw materials and semi-finished goods to meet manufacturing expansion in the emerging economy. This increasingly noticeable pattern, according to trade observers, is rooted in the so-called trade diversification that has the potential to propel reshoring or near-shoring supply chains.

Several other niche intra-Asia carriers have introduced more connections out of India to tap the growth potential. A new crop of emerging feeder/regional lines, including SeaLead Shipping, TS Lines, Sinotrans and SITC, have joined Pacific International Lines (PIL), Evergreen Marine and Regional Container Lines (RCL) in expanding intra-Asia networks connecting to India.

French carrier CMA CGM recently also opened a direct connection between West India and China. The Asia Subcontinent Express 2 (AS2) offers a rotation of Shanghai, Ningbo, Shekou, Singapore, Colombo, Mundra, Nhava Sheva, Singapore and Shanghai.

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