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FLIGHTS TO RESUME AT 5 NIGERIAN AIRPORTS

by Ships & Ports

The Director-General of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, Capt. Musa Nuhu, on Thursday hinted of plans to reopen some airports in the country for resumption of flight operations.

Speaking during a webinar organised by an aviation think-tank group, Aviation Roundtable and Safety Initiative with the theme, "COVID-19: The Challenges and Opportunity for Nigeria's Aviation Value Chain, During and Post", Nuhu said, "We may resume domestic operations with four or five airports and we expand as we get better. We don't want to rush everything at the same time and get it choked up.

He said stakeholders comprising airlines, ground handlers and service providers had put forward relevant recommendations for the safe resumption of flights to the Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, for approval. Also speaking during the webinar, the Chairman of Air Peace, Allen Onyema, solicited government intervention to save jobs in the aviation industry.

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AMAECHI INAUGURATES GOVERNING BOARDS OF NIMASA, NPA

by Steve Agbota

The Minister of Transportation, Chibuike Amaechi, has called for harmonious working relationship among members of the Board of Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA), Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and the management of both agencies in order to promote security as well as economic activities in the maritime sector.

Furthermore, in reference to the coronavirus pandemic, the minister said: "We are in unusual times but we can't afford to shut our seaports. The activities must continue so that the trade can take place so that the people can feed."

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NIGERIAN PORT RECORDS 25% DROP IN CARGO TRAFFIC

by Shulammitte 'Foyeku

The immediate past Port Manager, Tin Can Island Port Complex, Umar Abubakar, has said that cargo traffic at the Tin Can Island Port, which is Nigeria's second busiest seaport, has dropped by 25 percent due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Abubakar, who disclosed this in an exclusive interview with SHIPS & PORTS in his office on Thursday, said the effect of the pandemic was however not peculiar to Nigerian ports, as it is a global phenomenon.

He said, "What we used to receive (cargo) before COVID-19 came down by 25 percent. This is not peculiar to Nigeria or Tin Can Port; it is worldwide because shipping is an international business. What is happening now is not an assessment of what is happening to Nigeria but an international problem. "We know that while the airport had to be shut down, the seaports were not shut down because of its key status but definitely importers also are not travelling so that has affected the cargo throughput."

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NATURAL GAS IS LOSING ITS SHINE FOR SHIP OPERATORS

by Costas Paris

LNG tankers were drawing big investment until recently, but the coronavirus pandemic is hitting demand and pushing back new U.S. export projects. Natural gas tankers in recent years provided a seemingly surefire way for shipping investors and vessel operators to tap into changing energy markets and the raft of U.S. export projects aimed at meeting demand in Asia.

But the coronavirus pandemic is hitting the market for natural gas hard, undercutting hopes for a rich new vein for profits on the water. It is making the business of transporting liquefied natural gas look more like other sectors that have been sending operators of oceangoing cargo ships through wild peaks and valleys.

Some gas projects are now being put on hold on the back of record low prices and brimming storage facilities, and some operators are pushing back orders for the new vessels they had been counting on as big profit engines.

With the world economy now projected to shrink by 3% this year, according to the International Monetary Fund, shipowners are having second thoughts about spending billions on new tankers.

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WEST AFRICA MARKET COULD SUPPORT TANKER RATES

by Nikos Roussanoglou

rude tanker owners could use some good news, as they are preparing to enter a period of uncertainty, following the expiry of the contango effect, which boosted their earnings in the short-term. In a recent weekly note, Banchero Costa detailed the current trends in the West Africa market.

According to the shipbroker, "seaborne crude oil exports from West Africa have seen steady growth this year, apparently unaffected by the virus pandemic and by the collapse in oil prices. Trade patterns, however, continue to shift, in ways both expected and unexpected. In the first 4 months of 2020, the West Africa region exported at least 75.1 mln tonnes of crude oil by sea, according to vessel tracking data from Refinitiv. This represents a net increase of +3.2% y-o-y, compared to the 72.8 mln tonnes exported in the same four-month period of 2019. Of this, 33.2 mln tonnes were loaded in Nigeria, 23.5 mln tonnes in Angola, 4.7 mln tonnes in Congo (Brazzaville), 3.6 in Cameroon, 3.3 in Ghana, 3.2 in Gabon, 2.0 in Equatorial Guinea, 0.9 in Togo

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The Asia Vision LNG carrier ship sits docked at the Cheniere Energy Inc. terminal in this aerial photograph taken over Sabine Pass, Texas. Photo: Lindsey Janies/Bloomberg News

IMO, ICAO AND ILO IN URGENT PLEA ON CREW CHANGES, KEY WORKER STATUS

by Marcus Hand

The heads of UN agencies for maritime, labour and aviation have issued a joint urgent call for action on crew changes and designating seafarers and air workers as key workers.

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Labour Organization (ILO) noted that by mid-June nearly 150,000 seafarers a month would require international flights either for repatriation or to join vessels as replacement crew.

"For humanitarian reasons – and the need to comply with international safety and employment regulations – crew changes cannot be postponed indefinitely," the statement said. "We are seeking the support of Governments to facilitate crew changes, operations essential to maintain the global cargo supply chains and operations related to humanitarian aid, medical and relief flights."

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