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# GACWORLD



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## Work In Progress



# Momentum....

A guest editorial by GAC Group President Bengt Ekstrand



**F**irstly, my thanks to Editor Stuart Bowie for inviting me to offer some thoughts to GAC World readers.

Contrary to many dark predictions, business is still being done around the world. I know this because GAC people are still actively engaged in meeting the needs of our customers. Crew changes have been the hardest nut to crack. There was one West African nation that offered crew changes at the port but its only international airport was closed. Go figure. Now, with the IMO's set of protocols for crew transfers on and off vessels, a semblance of order is hopefully returning.

## Physics and Economics

Momentum is described in classical physics as the product of mass and velocity. In economics, it describes the tendency of strong performing businesses to continue to do well and poor ones to continue to do poorly. In shipping, I see a lot of momentum among larger players – those that can see beyond the current coronavirus downturn. GAC is fortunate to be among this larger group. We have the momentum and the stability to keep delivering services throughout the pandemic. I see many customers, across a range of sectors, looking to conclude contracts and deals, some for as early as Q3 and many more for Q4 and for 2021.

We should take comfort from the maritime sector's momentum. While airlines slump and even disappear, most of the world's ports remain open. Yes, shipping schedules are being adjusted according to cargo supply and demand, but port lineups have generally remained steady.

## Delivering service

Our cover story looks at how we have all adjusted to new requirements. Staying in touch with customers and striving to meet their needs, answer their queries and solve their problems have been our priorities and we have learned quickly to do this at home, in the office, in the car or on the street. Location has ceased to be an issue as long as communication has remained secure. When speaking with customers, I find them to be similarly engaged in adjusting their ways of operating. Among the lessons we are all learning are those concerned with what we don't need to be doing. This stripping back to the essentials of service and delivery has been a harsh but enlightening education and one that will offer more lessons as we progress through and beyond the virus storm.

## The rainbow

After a storm, we get the rainbow and its promise of a fresh start. The thing I most want on behalf of GAC is to secure and strengthen our relationships with our customers. The true value of those relationships has been demonstrated by this moment of crisis we are passing through. It has shown my colleagues and me that stable relationships benefit all parties and that trust and commitment built up in easy times help us overcome the stress of hard times when they hit. I have also learned that trust and commitment between GAC and our customers must be earned continuously. Our companies around the world have been tireless in their search for solutions for our customers. When you have secure relationships, you can afford to stretch and go that extra mile.

## See you later...

I don't know when I'll be seeing you. I cannot say whether Zoom, or MS Teams or even good old Skype will provide satisfactory contact in the longer term. I cannot say whether international air travel will return to the old standards. I suspect it won't. But one thing is certain. Good business depends on good communication between customer and service provider. We'll be finding out what works best in coming months and I look forward to sharing that journey with you.

## Bengt Ekstrand

Group President



# GAC and UniGlobal collaborate in Bangladesh

**G**AC has signed a Global Network Agent agreement with Dhaka-based Uni-Global Business Ltd. (UniGlobal), expanding its coverage in the Indian Subcontinent and strengthening its global network.

The alliance, operating as GAC-UniGlobal, provides ship agency services to vessels calling at all Bangladesh ports.

Lars Hardeland, Managing Director of GAC Hub Services, says Bangladesh's location at the head of the Bay of Bengal makes it attractive to international shippers.

"It makes sense for GAC to have a presence in Bangladesh," he adds. "Partnering with UniGlobal enables us to contribute to the vast shipping and shipping-related business this maritime nation offers."

## Potential

Lars Bergström, Group Vice President of the Asia Pacific and Indian Subcontinent region, agrees: "As part of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Bangladesh is a country of immense potential and opportunities."



"Having an established partner like UniGlobal will augment GAC's presence in the Indian Subcontinent maintained through more than 30 GAC offices in India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan."

Bangladesh has 9,000km<sup>2</sup> of territorial waters and a 710km long coastline. Whilst the Port of Chattogram is its leading seaport, handling about 90% of the country's trade, the government is starting to develop Mongla port by increasing its container handling capacity.

UniGlobal Managing Director A.K.M. Shahidul Islam says having his company's branch offices at these two major commercial ports means it is well placed to participate in the increasing trade activities.

"With the GAC-UniGlobal partnership, customers will benefit from GAC's global resources and over 60 years of experience in combination with UniGlobal's 30 years of local knowledge and expertise," he adds. **GW**



## Mental health focus earns top prize

**G**AC Shipping Sri Lanka's commitment to the wellbeing of its staff, both land-based and offshore, has been recognised in the country's Corporate Health and Productivity Awards. The company took home the Silver Award in the small-sized companies category.

Organised by the Sri Lanka Chamber of Young Lankan Entrepreneurs (COYLE) in collaboration with Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), the Awards are now in their second year, and recognise and promote corporate cultures which nurture a healthy, happy and committed workforce. **GW**

Reset your mind



Janaka Prasanna, GAC Shipping's Assistant General Manager – Operations, accepts the Award from Samantha Kumarasinghe - COYLE Member & Managing Director of Nature's Beauty Creations Ltd. With them are Chamath Kottage (Senior Vice Chairman of COYLE), Suranga Jinassena (Manager – Administration, Shipping Agency House (Pvt) Ltd.) and GAC Shipping Manager QA & HSSE, Thamara Menerapitya.

# Stockholm's golden bridge arrives

A 143-metre-long golden bridge ("Guldbron") that will connect Stockholm's Gamla Stan island with Södermalm (another island), has safely completed its voyage from China. GAC Sweden managed its arrival in the Swedish capital.

The bridge is a major feature in the City of Stockholm's redevelopment of Slussen, the capital's second largest transportation hub.

In early December last year, COSCO SHIPPING Lines (Sweden) AB appointed GAC Sweden to act as its local sub-agent to manage the delivery of the 3,700 tonne, USD 19.5million steel bridge from the manufacturer's plant in Guangzhou to Stockholm.

## Biggest visiting vessel

The 45 metre wide bridge was welded to the two pontoons of the 227 metre long semi-submersible heavy-lift vessel MV Zhen Hua 33 for the journey. It was the biggest vessel ever to visit the Swedish capital and its cargo exceeded the Stockholm Archipelago's width restriction of 32.28 metres by more than 20 metres.

"Faced with a seemingly impossible task, we began by researching the ship's specifications – engine power, rudder type, wind trap, bow and stern thrusters, and so on," says Björn Fischer, Deputy Managing Director, GAC Sweden. "We then shared this with the Swedish Maritime Administration (SMA) which used simulator technology to create a model for the best way to handle the passage. The results of that exercise were not ready when the shipment left China on 2 January, as the first available

simulation slot was less than three weeks before the ship's ETA in Stockholm on 17 February."

With the SMA simulation outcome pending, the GAC Sweden team met with the construction company and receiver, Skanska Sverige AB, COSCO SHIPPING Lines (Sweden) AB and tugboat company Marin & Haverikonsult AB to plan the unloading operation. They also started work on various permits with the Swedish Transport Agency and the Port Authority, and made arrangements for the temporary International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code zone with surveillance the ship would need when anchored in Stockholm.

## Strict conditions

Less than two weeks before the ship's ETA, the SMA permit was received - with conditions: wind speed of no more than 10-12 m/s, minimum 1 NM visibility, daylight navigation and two pilots for the passage through the busy waterway.

With all the permits in hand, a new challenge hit. Bad weather with waves over 9 metres in the Bay of Biscay forced the ship to anchor off the southern coast of Spain until conditions improved.

She finally arrived, almost a month late, at the pilot point in Stockholm, attracting the attention of TV cameras and hundreds of spectators.

## Meticulous planning

Erik Eriksen, Director/Partner at COSCO SHIPPING Lines (Sweden) AB, says: "The passage through the archipelago and the unloading operation went completely according to plan, thanks to the meticulous planning and close, constant cooperation between GAC Sweden, COSCO, the Swedish Maritime Administration, the receiver (Skanska Sverige AB) and the many other parties involved." **GW**



GAC Sweden's MD Johan Ehn (left) and Björn Fischer (Deputy MD) welcome the 43m golden bridge to Stockholm]

GAC Sweden has overseen the safe arrival of Stockholm's 45m wide golden bridge.





# Reaching new heights

**W**hen GAC Sweden was charged with handling the arrival of a ship carrying equipment for Stockholm's new Norvik Harbour, special arrangements had to be made to accommodate the extraordinary height of the vessel.

Standing more than 100 metres tall in the water with its load of two gantry cranes and six straddle carriers, the *MV Zhen Hua 32* had already had a long voyage from China. It was too high to transit the Suez Canal and had to sail around the southern tip of Africa. When it arrived in European waters, there were more delays due to bad weather.

What's more, because the only viable route into the Baltic Sea was via the Drodgen Fairway which passes close by Copenhagen's Kastrup Airport, air traffic had to be shut down for 30 minutes as the vessel passed.

Björn Fischer, Deputy Managing Director, GAC Sweden, says: "Along with the recent movement of Stockholm's new 143 metre long golden bridge, this is another project that benefited from the close cooperation between all players - GAC Sweden, COSCO SHIPPING Lines, Hutchison Ports Sweden, Stockholms Hamnar, the Swedish Maritime Administration and local tugboat company Marin & Haverikonsult KA."

Norvik Harbour is a completely new facility in Nynäshamn which will be operated by Hutchison Ports Sweden. It will replace the existing container terminal in Stockholm's city centre and reduce entry times by three hours. **GW**





# Contract Logistics in Indonesia: Present Challenges – Future Opportunities



by Ronnie Knowles,  
General Manager,  
GAC Samudera

Contract logistics success in a country comprising more than 17,000 islands depends almost entirely on the quality of the transportation sector. Indonesia's transportation, be it road, rail or sea, is a constant work in progress. From a distance you can see what Indonesia is striving for and if you close your eyes to a squint you can see what it will become. Eventually.





Right now, the country's contract logistics sector is mired in urban congestion, poor land transport infrastructure and equipment, and inter-island shipping services that are well-meaning but far from best practice. One saving grace is the workforce. Indonesians, in my experience, are resilient and committed. They have signed up to the ideal of building a better society and are prepared to work both harder and smarter to get there.

### Market power

Indonesia is a big market. Its population tops 260 million. Economic growth has hovered between 4% and 7% over the past 25 years. There is an expanding middle class driving consumption. In downtown Jakarta, there are about 400 Starbucks outlets. That's a lot of people stopping by for their skinny lattes and frothy cappuccinos.

This rising middle class has led many major consumer product manufacturers to set up local facilities. Indeed, Indonesia can fairly boast of having high quality production centres and equally-advanced storage facilities. But it all counts for little when the motorbike remains the best means of getting a package from a distribution centre to a downtown retail outlet. I have stopped counting the hours I've spent sitting in a car, going nowhere. Much of my work is done while stuck in traffic jams on my way to or from the office.

### Government policy

We should be careful in our judgements however, because the Indonesian government has a clear set of policies aimed at boosting manufacturing and transport infrastructure. There is a firm focus on developing capacity in food, pharma, cosmetics and consumer essentials. It's just that everything takes a lot of time in Indonesia.

### The Toothbrush Test

Old rules and regulations continue to limit growth and efficiency. An example is the toothbrush. A major international pharma company wanted to package toothbrushes with a small tube of toothpaste. However, a toothbrush is classed as a 'medical device' and requires a special licence for packaging with toothpaste. That means going through an approval process which is startling in both its length and complexity.

### The virus effect

Governments everywhere are rethinking their procurement policies and redefining what are strategic goods. Indonesia is part of this process. This rethinking will lead to significant changes in what is imported and what is made locally.

We can expect procurement and manufacturing strategies to disengage to varying degrees from the global model as governments and manufacturers determine their preferred methods for securing strategic goods.

Relationships between governments, manufacturers and service providers are likely to stabilise and strengthen in reaction to the disruption caused by the coronavirus crisis.



**These are definitely difficult times but on the positive side, these are the times when our values, our people and our entrepreneurial skills can make a real difference. It will not just be about who's the cheapest.**

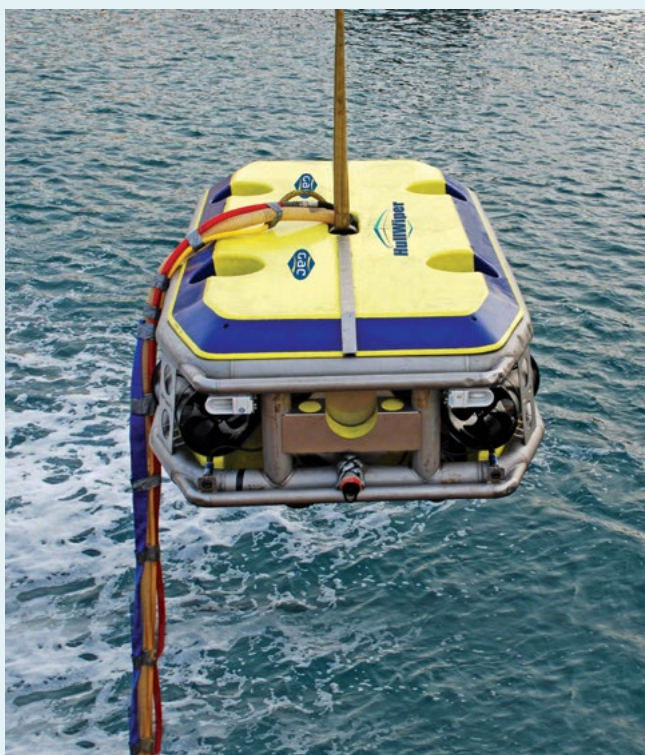
Furthermore, the dynamics of value add are going to ramp up significantly. Partnerships and alliances will foster greater collaboration in delivering products that accord with specific market preferences.

But before then, we can expect more declarations of Force Majeure as distribution companies backtrack or fail to deliver in the current stressed environment.

As the global business model is increasingly challenged, local relationships are going to attract higher value. The shift away from global to more regional and local supply chains will reshape contact logistics across Indonesia, and indeed across much of the world. As such, this is not a time for gloom or despair but for seeing the new opportunities that are arising as we adjust to a post-corona world. **GW**

# First eco-smart hull clean in Qatar

**H**ullWiper's first hull clean has been completed at the port of Ras Laffan, under a new agreement with GAC Qatar to offer hull cleaning to vessels calling at Qatari ports and anchorages. More than six thousand square metres of an LNG vessel were cleaned by HullWiper in just 12 hours.



## Only licensed operator

GAC Qatar is the first and only company to be granted a license by the country's Environment Ministry to operate hull cleaning equipment in its waters. HullWiper's Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) complies with Qatar's stringent regulations covering the safe and secure removal of marine biofouling.

"Our decision to invest in a safe, eco-friendly and proven hull cleaning solution fits with our strategy to expand the maritime services we offer," says Daniel Nordberg, GAC Qatar General Manager. "We appreciate the support from the Ministry of Transport & Communications, the Ministry of Environment and Qatar Petroleum in securing the license."

## No damage, no risk

The HullWiper system uses variable-pressure saltwater jets instead of brushes or abrasives to remove biofouling. There is no damage to expensive anti-fouling coatings and no divers are used, so there is no risk to human life. Cleaning can be conducted day or night, in most weather conditions and during cargo operations.

Hull residues are collected by the ROV's unique onboard filter and deposited into drums onshore for safe disposal at Qatar Petroleum's facility. HullWiper's filter also reduces the risk of contamination of local waters by invasive species.

## Partners

Since 2017, HullWiper has been working with partners around the world through a leasing programme that offers ship owners and operators a clear alternative to traditional hull cleaning methods. Ship owners and operators benefit from a clean hull that lifts vessel performance and fuel savings while lowering CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. **GW**



# GAC named top handler of dry bulk vessels at Tuticorin

**T**he Port of Tuticorin (V.O Chidambaranar Port Trust) has presented GAC India with an Award of Excellence for handling the highest number of dry bulk vessels (excluding thermal coal) as a steamer agent at the port during 2019.

Of the total number of dry bulk vessels to call at the port last year, 14% were taken care of by GAC. The company also acts as agent for a growing number of vessels carrying fertilizers and project cargo.

The award was presented to GAC Tuticorin's Ramesh Raj, Assistant Branch Manager, who has observed increasing volumes at the port: "Demand for steel, iron ore and cement has been rising as a result of the government's infrastructure investments."



*Nearly half of the total number of vessels handled by GAC India last year were dry bulk.*

Of the total number of vessels GAC India handled at ports throughout the country in 2019, nearly 46% were dry bulk.

GAC made its first foray into the Indian Subcontinent in 1983 and, today, it is a leading provider of shipping and logistics services with 26 offices nationwide. **GW**

## Reinforcing relationships

**G**AC Philippines has strengthened its ties with the country's fastest-growing energy company, Phoenix Fuels (PNX), after handling its first shipment at Calaca, Batangas.

This adds to the firm relationship the two companies built up during 2019 with GAC acting as the main agent for PNX's LPG vessels.

The first Calaca shipment was more than 3,000 MT of bitumen from Bangkok, Thailand, destined for PNX sister company Phoenix Asphalt. It was followed by a second shipment and it heralds even more shipments.

GAC Philippines' Commercial Manager for Shipping and Phoenix Key Account Manager Ronald De Leon says: "Working as partners with Phoenix, we look forward to supporting their expansion in the energy sector and their work in manufacturing asphalt as well as their related products by taking care of their integrated shipping and logistics needs." **GW**



# Agent for change

One day in March this year, Microsoft recorded 2.7 billion online meeting minutes using its Teams app. A new record, but one likely to be beaten as online collaboration becomes the norm for people driven by the COVID-19 pandemic to work from home.

But, has the coronavirus crisis revolutionised the way we work, or has it simply accelerated a natural evolution?

## Personal, online

Figures suggest that 70% of people working from home have about 10% more meetings online than when office-based. Humans are social creatures. They thrive on personal contact. But in a time of enforced social distancing, that's not an option.

Many use video links for online meetings enabling them to pick up on looks, smiles and other non-verbal communication clues.

**The number of video calls conducted in Microsoft Teams grew by over 1000% in March.**

Meetings are getting shorter. Those that last less than 30 minutes increased by 22%, whilst those of an hour or more dropped by 11%.





## 9-to-5 no more?

**The 9-to-5 working day is being eroded, as people embrace a more flexible work schedule.**

In March, the average time between a person's first and last use of Teams each day increased by over an hour. They were not necessarily working more hours per day, but breaking up the day in a more productive way in the home setting.

When coronavirus first broke out, GAC China MD Simon Xu asked staff who could to work from home. Others worked in shifts, and flexible work policies and Business Continuity Plans were implemented.

Winnie Du, GAC Wuhan's Office Manager, says: "The 9-to-5 routine became obsolete. With no rush hour or traffic jams to contend with, we had more time to attend to our work beyond the boundaries of the traditional working day."

## Maintaining standards

GAC Logistics Sri Lanka's Customer Service Executive Sahan Wijewardena says: "Bearing up through the curfews and other measures has been draining, physically and mentally. Keeping contact with colleagues and finding something to laugh about helps."

**"We could not have maintained our high level of service without our documentation, operations and wharf teams who are physically present on the frontline, keeping our operations running."**



*Frontline GAC staff at ports are fully equipped with protective equipment as they continue their duties.*



*Pets have been enjoying the benefits of working from home. Among them is Lou Lou, seen here with her human, GAC Netherlands' Logistics Manager Raymon Groen.*



*"Safety is always a top priority for our employees, clients, and numerous vetted contractors. When working remotely, or from home, I am constantly keeping a watch out for the safety of everyone. Although the COVID 19 Virus is an invisible enemy we must all stand guard and keep our (PPE) armour on at all intervals as we conquer this pandemic together." - Adrian Randle, GAC North America HSSE and Compliance Manager.*

"This isn't the first crisis Sri Lanka has faced. It won't be the last. We will overcome this and, as an organisation, emerge stronger and more resilient."

## Back to normal?

The coronavirus crisis demonstrated that business can be done remotely. Even as employees in some countries started returning to work in April, there were still more than double the number of new Teams users each day in China than there were at the end of January. So, is a return to the old normal possible, or desirable?

GAC UK Logistics Manager Gary Stewart was well prepared, having moved his work life to the Cloud in advance. He believes that things will never go back to how they were - nor should they.

"I don't want to go 'back to normal,'" he says. "If there is one thing 2020 has taught us so far, it is that 'normal' is an ever-changing state. We have to evolve and improve based upon our experiences."

GAC Bunker Fuels' Nicholas Browne believes working from home accelerated the inevitable: "It takes the right attitude, tools and discipline to make it work, and we had a terrific platform for training, meetings and more."

"The lines between home and work have become blurred. Whilst there are obvious pitfalls, I think people are working harder and smarter." **GW**



*Even while Thailand was on complete lockdown from 10pm to 5am daily, staff at GAC Thoresen Logistics Thailand's warehouses were still working hard to make sure customers' supply chains were not disrupted.*

Throughout the COVID-19 lockdown, GAC staff worldwide embraced technology and new routines to continue serving their customers.

But what do those customers think? Does service differ when dealing with people based in an office or from home? Will business return to the office-centric model? Should it?

Let us know your views by dropping us a line at [gacworld@gac.com](mailto:gacworld@gac.com).

# Meeting the challenge with cloud technology

**M**embers of GAC's global bunker fuels team kept up with business, kept in touch and kept in shape whilst working from home, thanks to the Cloud.

Like countless office-based workers around the world, they set up workstations at home in the first quarter of 2020. And thanks to GAC's investment in cloud-based software, and mobile apps like WhatsApp, it has been business as usual for the 30-strong team based in Dubai, Singapore, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Greece, USA and the UK.

Global Director Nicholas Browne says the team adapted well and kept up with demand for bunker fuels at ports around the world.

"Everyone has been very positive and we've seen a great team spirit with lots of ideas being bounced across regions. We looked beyond the accepted way of doing things and embraced different ways to communicate." **GW**



Dusan Gojkovic, Dubai Bunker Trader.



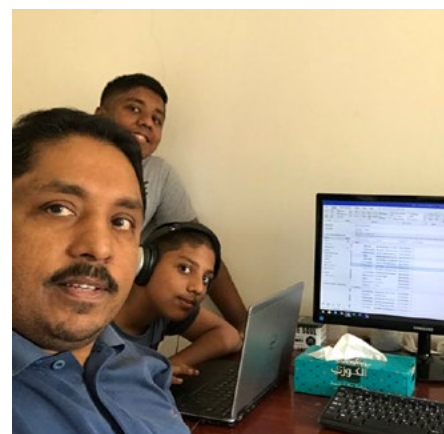
Senior Accountant in Dubai, Jasmin Tagle, working from home with her husband Dominic and daughter Danella Jade.



Moataz Abdel Rahman, Dubai Office Bunker Trader, with his son Yahia.

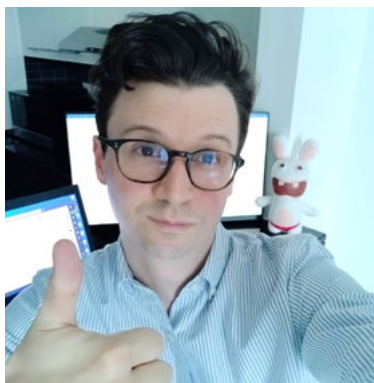


Andy Boichat, UK-based Bunker Trading Manager and his son George getting down to work.



Moni Cheriyan, Senior Bunker Trader Dubai with his sons Georgy and Jeevan.

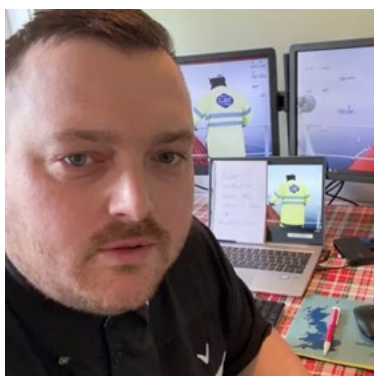




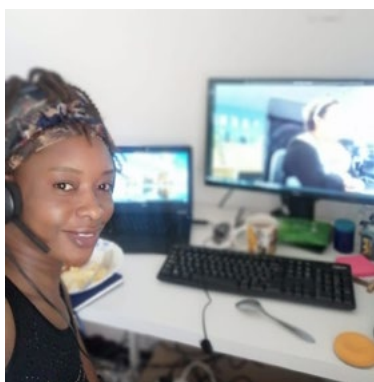
Simon Miller, Credit Manager in Dubai.



Maurice Lara, Bunker Trading Manager for the Americas.



Mikey Horne, one of the Europe Bunker Traders.



Rowesai Kawai, Dubai Office Support, on a call with Receptionist Sylvia.

## Work it out!

Whilst working remotely, the Bunkers team set themselves a daily fitness challenge to keep them in shape and spirits high. Each day brought a new challenge – deep knee bends, push-ups, holding a plank position for a minute, and more – and they've been sharing videos of their efforts.

It quickly became a popular part of their routine, with the participation of family members, children and pets adding a very personal touch. Not only did it build strength, muscle and endurance, it also provided some laughs to keep morale high.

<https://youtu.be/1Rf2tnTfgXI>



<https://youtu.be/IXWvLuCu01g>





## Man vs Digital: It's not a fight



by Martin Wallgren,  
GAC Group Chief  
Information Officer

**T**he story of winners and losers in the COVID-19 epidemic is still being written in real time and it is too early to come to

conclusions, but there are trends to be observed.

I find it interesting how the pandemic changed what constituted a necessary service offering nearly overnight. Home delivery capability, for example, was a “nice to have” that Uber was building alongside its core business up until a couple of months ago. That’s when ride-sharing suddenly became a service no-one needed, and Uber Eats delivery became the service everyone wanted. The ride-sharing competitors did not have a chance, but Uber was prepared.

If you have a good digital platform, you can quickly scale and adjust to the ‘new normal’. But we also see that behind the digital platform you need people that work hard to get the deliveries to the door. Day and night. You also need people that dare to test new things or implement systems with functionality that you might not use in full scale right now.

This proves to me that digitalisation without people is worth nothing. It is not “Man vs Digital” – the question is “Man with or without Digital?”.

So, when will the world go back to the way it was before 2020 and COVID-19?

The answer is probably never. The world will always be a different place after this experience. But I personally think it will be a better place. A place where the consumption of things that have a real value will win and where quality will be more important. Quality not only in the physical product but also in the personal service and digital experiences that deliver it. As an old friend nicely put it “you need hygiene in the physical and the digital world” (thank you Martin Åberg, talking about IT Security)

The customer journey has forever changed. Your digital platform design will help you to quickly adapt to these changes, but it is the people behind it that will make it happen (perhaps with a little bit of help from AI).

Take care, use antivirus software and wash your hands. **GW**

## Dos & Don'ts of remote working

**H**ackers have set their sights on the shipping sector with emails carrying vessel-related subject lines also carrying malware. And, at a time when more professionals are working from home, GAC's Group IT Security Manager Tilak Ratnayake is urging vigilance.

“Users may be connecting to home or public servers which will have many more security loopholes than a company set-up. That’s a golden opportunity for hackers,” he says. “Constant caution is crucial.” **GW**

### PREVENTION



Beware of  
suspicious looking  
domain names



Avoid interacting  
with pop up ads



Keep your  
operating system  
and antivirus up  
to date



Only download  
apps from the  
app stores



Do not click on  
strange links



Stay vigilant,  
and always think  
before you click



# Tailored COVID-19 lay-up & crew logistics support

As countries worldwide have brought in restrictions to control the spread of COVID-19, a growing number of ship and rig owners and operators have sought to lay-up their vessels until the crisis passes. In response, the GAC Group has created a tailored support package to help them weather the coronavirus storm.

By working with key suppliers in safe havens worldwide, GAC can arrange for short- and long-term lay-ups or stacking at a time when a lack of employment can make taking assets out of operation the most viable option. With many countries restricting or even prohibiting crew disembarkation/embarkation, GAC is using its resources to help identify the best solutions for COVID-compliant crew changes and logistics.

One of the options for off-signing crew is the port of Gibraltar, which BIMCO praised for its pragmatism in giving shipping a way to off-sign mariners at a time when crew changes were not possible at many locations. GAC Gibraltar is on hand to guide customers through the process.

GAC USA is also providing full crew change services at all US ports.

Meanwhile, GAC Sri Lanka is working closely with the local authorities to devise procedures and facilities to allow safe transfer of crew to and from vessels - whether passing or in lay-up.

## Informed choice

The support package for lay-up and disembarkation is a crisis-specific extension of services that GAC already provides through its global network. It uses the expertise and contacts of local offices and agents to provide up-to-date and reliable information to help ship and rig owners and operators make informed choices.

Neil Godfrey, GAC's Group Commercial Director, Shipping, says: "At a time when many of our customers are facing uncertainty about how deep the impact of the pandemic will be and how long it will last, they can trust GAC to help them find the best solution if they decide to decommission their vessels, rigs and crew until the worst has passed."

## Rolling news

GAC is also providing a free rolling news service about measures being taken in response to the pandemic. For the latest updates, go to [www.gac.com/coronavirus.gw](http://www.gac.com/coronavirus.gw)

*For more about how GAC is supporting the global shipping industry during the pandemic, contact Neil Godfrey at [neil.godfrey@gac.com](mailto:neil.godfrey@gac.com) (general shipping enquiries) and Simon Morris at [simon.morris@gac.com](mailto:simon.morris@gac.com) (energy sector enquiries).*



## The sweet smell of... sanitiser

**W**hen Oman's ultra-luxury perfume house, Amouage, adapted its factory operations in Muscat to produce hand sanitisers in support of the country's fight against COVID-19, GAC stepped up to support them.

For the past three decades, GAC Oman has handled Amouage's supply chain covering freight forwarding, customs brokerage, warehousing, overland moves and exports to other GCC countries and Europe. When the perfumier switched production to address a shortage of sanitisers, GAC was there to distribute them to key workers in essential services.

The hand-sanitisers are not for commercial sale. In the same spirit, and in line with its policy of corporate social responsibility, GAC Oman provided its clearance and delivery expertise free of charge.

Johannes Ericson, GAC Oman's General Manager, applauds the Amouage initiative, which he is happy to support as part of the country's fight against COVID-19. **GW**



## Bringing seafarers home

**O**ne of the key concerns for the shipping community amid the COVID-19 pandemic has been how to off-sign mariners at a time when many countries are in lockdown and have halted or restricted crew changes.

Around the world, GAC companies are working closely with the authorities and their contacts to find a solution to help seafarers stranded onboard vessels. Among them was GAC India, which arranged the first disembarkation of crew at Cochin since measures were brought in to prevent the spread of the virus.

Although the country initially ruled out crew changes at its ports, protocols were introduced to enable controlled operations to disembark Indian seafarers. Tomini Shipping wasted no time, and asked GAC India to arrange the disembarkation of the crew of their ship 'TOMINI DESTINY'.

### Coordination & compliance

Agents had to coordinate closely with health and quarantine to ensure that state protocol for handling the crew was followed to the letter. All operations staff involved wore additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Once they left the vessel, the seafarers underwent COVID-19 tests and were put in a designated quarantine location for 14 days. They were tested again at the end of the quarantine period before heading to their hometowns. All the passes and permits required by port and health authorities were taken care of by the local GAC team.

As nine out of the ten disembarked crew members were heading back to their homes in India's northern states, a way had to be found to get them there with the social distancing demanded to prevent close contact. GAC responded by arranging a 20-seater bus for the trip.

### Beyond

Being entrusted with the health and safety of the crew - and the wider community - meant the GAC team had to go far beyond the usual scope of ship agency.

Sajinath Manghat, GAC Cochin's Operations Manager - Shipping Services, oversaw the entire process with support from Shipping Services Manager Sankar Narayanan, Operations Assistant Manager Saseendran MR and members of the shipping operations team. He says: "Extreme caution was exercised throughout, from disembarkation to final transportation to the crew members' hometowns, all under the close scrutiny of the Health Authority."

Tomini Shipping's Senior Marine Superintendent, Capt. Manoj Tyagi, expressed his appreciation for GAC's good teamwork to successfully complete the operation. **GW**



# Time Critical services deliver for frontline workers

**N**ine million medical face masks for use by workers in the UK's National Health Service (NHS) have been delivered, thanks to GAC's Time Critical teams in Shanghai and London.

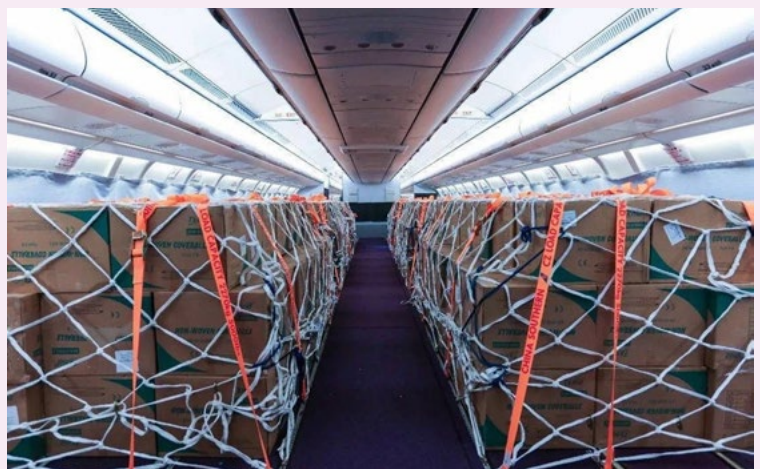
The bumper load of personal protective equipment (PPE) arrived at Heathrow Airport on two flights from China in the first week of May. GAC staff quickly cleared them and had them loaded into a convoy of trucks which in turn delivered them to distribution hubs which supply NHS workers on the frontline.

GAC also helped smooth the process to apply for Economic Operators Registration & Identification required for European Union imports/exports and assisted in claiming the VAT & duty relief granted to incoming shipments of medical PPE.

"We knew how urgent this medical PPE was for NHS frontline workers and our Freight Service team met the challenge head-on in a collaborative show of strength," says Herman Jorgensen, GAC UK Managing Director. "Colleagues from our operations, warehousing and customs departments worked around the clock to ensure full attention to detail so that critical deadlines were met. Teamwork at its best." **GW**

For more about Time Critical services in the UK, contact the team at [tcs.uk@gac.com](mailto:tcs.uk@gac.com)

GAC Time Critical Services deliver for frontline care workers  
<https://youtu.be/nEVVYf8eXxw>





# Rising to the challenge

Restrictions to counter the spread of COVID-19 did not daunt GAC Trinidad & Tobago's operations team when it was called upon to handle the transfer of two large pieces of drilling kit.

The raiser joints, measuring 40ft and 65ft, arrived in port on a rig that had been engaged in offshore operations in Trinidad's Gulf of Paria. A break bulk vessel was waiting to take them to them to their next destination in southern Brazil. The GAC team headed by Operations Manager Michael Teelucksingh handled the transfer of the shipment, including customs and operational formalities, on time and on budget.

The main hurdle the team had to overcome was completing the task on time to keep supply chain costs down at a time when COVID-19 restrictions were limiting operations.

"It was critical to monitor daily sailing schedules and plan carefully," says Michael. "Thanks to coordination with the Customs and port authorities, and with the support and assistance of the GAC Houston logistics team, the job was completed successfully and to our customer's satisfaction." **GW**





# GAC among Singapore's Best Employers 2020



**G**AC Singapore Managing Director Henrik Althén has welcomed news that the company has been included in The Straits Times' list of 'Singapore's Best Employers 2020'.

Compiled by the newspaper and global research company Statista, the list ranks companies from 25 sectors based on the results of a survey of over 8,000 employees.

"Our ranking among Singapore's best places to work is a testament of our belief in sustaining and developing employee satisfaction and engagement," says Henrik. "But even more importantly, it is the result of our strong GAC Spirit and the dedication and teamwork of our staff." **GW**

Check out the full list at

<https://www.straitstimes.com/best-employers-singapore-2020>



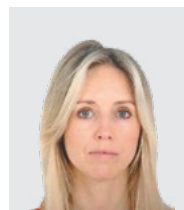
## Ingela On Board

**I**ngela Berntson, GAC Sweden's Key Account Manager Shipping Services, has been elected to the Board of Gothenburg Port. It's an important role that includes monthly meetings focusing on the port's development, tackling any issues of the moment, attracting more business, and much more.

"Gothenburg is Scandinavia's largest port and I'm proud and happy to become part of its Board," says Ingela. "I shall draw on my experience with GAC, and previously as a Commander and Rescue Leader with the Swedish Coast Guard and a ship agent working in the port, to help achieve its goals." **GW**



## Appointments



Elaine Morrissey

**GAC Group  
Headquarters  
Elaine Morrissey**  
Group Compliance  
Manager

Previously: Vast  
experience in the legal  
and compliance sector

## Editorial Information

### Editor

Stuart Bowie, GAC HQ, Jebel Ali, Dubai

### Editorial Team

Greg Newbold and Amanda Millen

### Distribution coordinator

Fongpyng Chin

### Art & Production

Lancer Design Pte Ltd, Singapore

### Correspondence to

Amanda Millen

### Email

[gacworld@gac.com](mailto:gacworld@gac.com)

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### Contacting GAC

Want the contact details for a GAC office or staff member?

Please visit the GAC Worldwide section of [www.gac.com](http://www.gac.com)

Back copies of GAC World are available for download at [www.gac.com/magazine](http://www.gac.com/magazine).



# Here for you. Delivering your strategy.

We hope you, your family and your loved ones are keeping well.

GAC's operations around the world continue amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We will provide you with uninterrupted support for your shipping, logistics and marine needs.

Our global teams remain at your service during this difficult period. No matter how big or small the challenge, we have got you covered. Contact us at [sales@gac.com](mailto:sales@gac.com) or our local offices directly.

Stay safe. Stay healthy.

**Get the latest COVID-19 updates from GAC offices worldwide:** for shipping [@gac.com/coronavirus](https://twitter.com/gac/coronavirus) and for logistics [@gac.com/logisticsupdates](https://twitter.com/gac/logisticsupdates)



**Delivering your strategy.**