The Royal Netherlands navy guided missile frigate HMLMS DE RUYTER (F804) berthed on the River Tyne. Photo: David A Bowley (c)
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Large SRW platform loaded onboard the BIGROLL BERLING On the way from Romania to Norway, above seen passing the Bosphorus.
Mexican Billionaire Carlos Slim's Firm Acquires Stake in Zama Offshore Oil Field

U.S.-based oil and gas company Talos Energy has completed the sale of its 49.9% interest in Talos Mexico to Zamajal, a subsidiary of Grupo Carso, a company controlled by the family of the Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim. Talos Mexico, now owned 50.1% by Talos Energy and 49.9% by Carso, holds a 17.4% interest in the giant Zama offshore oil field, which Talos discovered in 2017. Talos will remain the controlling shareholder of Talos Mexico.

As part of the sale deal, Talos received $74.85 million in cash at closing, with an additional $49.90 million due upon first production from Zama, for an aggregate price of $124.75 million. In June 2023, Mexico's Comisión Nacional de Hidrocarburos ("CNH") approved the Zama Unit Development Plan, as the Zama oil field also spreads into a nearby block operated by Mexico's Pemex, which is now the operator of the Zama project development. The Zama Unit Development Plan, was filed by Talos Energy Inc. and the other Zama Unit Holders Wintershall Dea, Harbour Energy plc, and Petróleos Mexicanos ("Pemex").

"Talos is working with the Zama Unit's Integrated Project Team to progress the front-end engineering and design and other workstreams required to reach a Final Investment Decision ("FID"). Talos will co-lead the planning, drilling, construction, and completion of all Zama wells and the planning, execution, and delivery of Zama's offshore infrastructure," Talos said Wednesday.

Talos President and Chief Executive Officer Timothy S. Duncan said: "We are excited to partner with Carso on Zama, one of the largest global shallow water oil discoveries in recent years. We expect that Talos's strong operational track record combined with Carso's critical local presence and global commercial reputation will enable us to further advance Zama toward FID and first production." The Zama development plan includes two offshore fixed platforms, 46 dry-tree wells, and oil and gas transportation to new facilities in Terminal Maritima Dos Bocas. Zama is being developed to produce up to 180,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day, which represents over 10% of Mexico's current oil production. According to the Zama partners, production is expected to be comprised of approximately 94% oil of excellent quality, with API gravities of between 26° and 29°. Source: offshore engineer

The shape of things to come... The BBC Chartering fleet is about to get two more F500-type multi-purpose heavy-lift vessels this year. The BBC PHILIPPINES is in the final stages of outfitting, almost ready to leave the shipyard and will be delivered to her owners Briese Schiffahrts GmbH & Co. KG in October. The BBC ODESA, according to current plans, will follow suit roughly one month later. Both vessels will enter a long-term charter with BBC Chartering shortly after delivery to their owner.

Transocean raising cash to pay for its newbuild drillship

by Melisa Cavcic
Transocean Aquila Limited, a wholly-owned indirect subsidiary of Transocean, has kicked off a multi-million dollar private offering of senior secured notes due 2028. The firm will use the net proceeds from the notes to partially finance the construction, acquisition, and improvement or alteration of a newbuild ultra-deepwater drillship and to fund the initial debt service reserve. Transocean signed a purchase agreement at the end of last year as part of a joint venture – together with Perestroika and funds managed by Lime Rock Management – for the acquisition of the Deepwater Aquila (ex-West Aquila) seventh-generation drillship for $200 million from Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering (DSME). This drillship is one of two rigs that were originally ordered in 2013 by Seadrill. Transocean Aquila Limited revealed the start of a private offering of $300 million in aggregate principal amount of senior secured notes due 2028 on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, while explaining that the timing of pricing and terms of the notes were subject to market conditions and other factors. Later that same day, it was confirmed that Transocean Aquila Limited had priced an offering of $325 million in aggregate principal amount of senior secured notes due 2028. This is being undertaken in a bid to partially fund the construction, acquisition, and any adjustments to the Deepwater Aquila drillship, including repaying any indebtedness incurred for that purpose, and to fund the initial debt service reserve. Transocean Aquila expects to receive aggregate net proceeds of approximately $319 million from the offering, after deducting estimated offering costs. The notes will be guaranteed by Transocean Ltd., Transocean Inc., and a wholly-owned indirect subsidiary that will initially own the drillship. This will be secured by a lien on the rig and certain other assets related to it. According to the offshore drilling giant, the notes will bear interest at the rate of 8% per annum and will be callable after September 30, 2025. The offering is expected to close on or about October 11, 2023, subject to customary closing conditions. If certain collateral and other security are not pledged on or prior to the issuance of the notes – including the mortgaging of the Deepwater Aquila rig by Transocean following delivery of the rig – an amount equal to the gross proceeds from this offering will be placed into escrow pursuant to an escrow agreement until the escrow release conditions are satisfied. Following the acquisition of the Deepwater Aquila drillship, Transocean will own and operate eight of the twelve ultra-deepwater, 1,400 short-ton hookload drillships in the world. The rig is expected to be delivered from the shipyard in October 2023. The drilling giant recently secured a three-year contract award for the Deepwater Aquila rig. The deal, which is expected to start in the third quarter of 2024 offshore Brazil, represents approximately $486 million in firm backlog, excluding a mobilization fee of around 90 times the contract day rate. Transocean expanded its contract backlog with multiple new deals during the second quarter of 2023, bringing it to $9.2 billion. At the end of August 2023, the company secured another long-term deal for an ultra-deepwater drillship offshore India. Source: offshore-energy.biz

Carnival Corporation’s nine brands enjoyed full ships in the third quarter of 2023 as the company delivered a profit of over $1 billion and record revenue. The ships on average were 109 percent full. Cruise ship occupancy is calculated by having two people in each stateroom, bringing a ship to 100 percent. Any additional guests, such as children, will push a ship over the 100 percent mark. The company said that the 109 percent occupancy number was better than its own expectations and marked a return to historical levels, compared to just 84 percent in 2022 and 113 percent in 2019, the last normal year prior to the pandemic. “On the European front, occupancy came in better than anticipated for Costa and AIDA, with both brands hitting 119 percent occupancy in August. Not to be outdone, P&O Cruises achieved its highest

Carnival Corp Posts 109% Occupancy in Third Quarter
occupancy in over a decade,” said Josh Weinstein, president and CEO, on the company’s third quarter earnings call. “And so I can’t say that their yields were higher. But I can tell you that their occupancy is back, and they are well on their way, and that’s absolutely as expected,” said Weinstein, commenting on the company’s P&O brand.

Source: cruiseindustrynews

Vroon Completes Restructuring With Sale of 40 Offshore Vessels

Offshore vessel operator Vroon has completed a plan to restructure its fleet by divesting a total of about 40 vessels to multiple operators around the world. Vroon has sold 30 offshore vessels to Britoil Offshore in Singapore, along with its offices in Singapore and Genoa. Norway’s GEOS purchased five more, and Dutch shipping company Groen decided to buy two. The vessel sale proceeds will be used to reduce the company’s debt, supporting its financial restructuring process and a shift in its market focus. Going forward, Vroon plans to focus on its deep-sea fleet, including product tankers, ERRVs and livestock carriers. This combined fleet will number about 65 vessels, and the firm will retain a staff of 1,400
employees. For most of the firm's offshore-sector personnel, the sale process comes with continuity of employment. Most of the regional supporting offices were included in the sale and will continue to employ most of the workforce, in line with the value Vroon placed on finding a good solution for its employees. Only the supporting office in Den Helder will have to be closed.

"Together with the new owners, we will take care of a smooth and seamless handover of our vessels, crews and supporting offices to ensure continuity for our customers. These transactions mark the final conclusion of an intensive process and the beginning of a new chapter for Vroon," said CEO Martijn Schouten. The announcement has been a long time coming. An ill-timed investment in offshore vessels in the early 2010s left the firm poorly prepared for the 2014 oil market collapse, and Vroon was left with a burdensome $1 billion in debt in a down market. From 2016 onwards, it was heavily in the red. In late 2021, the owners decided to hand a majority stake to the firm's bankers in exchange for debt relief. The agreement reduced Vroon's debt load to just $400 million; in exchange, a consortium of 18 banks became the firm's majority shareholders. Source: MAREX
Vale, Port of Açu ink MoU to pursue decarbonisation

By : Rakin Rahman

Brazilian logistics operator, Vale, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Port of Açu to study the development of a Mega Hub to produce hot briquetted iron (HBI) using the direct reduction route. The port is located in São João da Barra in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The Mega Hub will initially receive pellets from Vale and could, in the future, include an iron ore briquette plant at site to supply the direct reduction route at the industrial complex. According to the agreement, both companies will seek to attract investors and clients to build and operate the Direct Reduction plant using natural gas which will be available at the port, with the possibility of eventually converting to green hydrogen, producing HBI with near-zero carbon emissions. It is an initiative that considers a technical study coordinated by the Port of Açu and sectorial academics.

The study proposes the use of HBI as partial burden in blast-furnaces, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increasing steelmaking productivity without needing to substitute existing assets, such as the blast-furnaces and steelworks. Currently, HBI is mostly used in electric arc furnaces. Using HBI in this type of furnace will enable a smoother decarbonisation process for the Brazilian steelmaking industry. The agreement with the Port of Açu marks another step in the development of Mega Hubs in Brazil, Vale reported. Mega Hubs are industrial complexes designed to produce low-carbon steel products and Vale has already begun implanting such hubs in three countries in the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, UAE and Oman). “We believe that Brazil has great potential to be a hub for low-carbon steelmaking,” said Marcello Spinelli, Executive Vice-President of Iron Ore Solutions. “The signing of this partnership demonstrates the full industrialisation potential of the Port of Açu, confirming its vocation as the port of energy transition in Brazil.”

This announcement comes in the same week that the Malaysian Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP), a joint venture between APM Terminals (APMT) and the MMC Group, was selected to join the Partnerships for Infrastructure (P4I) initiative. Source: porttechnology

Jan De Nul orders XL cable-laying vessel Fleeming Jenkin

Jan De Nul Group orders FLEEMING JENKIN, an extra-large cable-laying vessel, at the CMHI Haimen shipyard. With an unrivalled cable-carrying capacity of 28,000 tonnes, twice the capacity of any other cable-laying vessel available on the market, the vessel will serve the renewable energy and subsea cable industry in installing cables over longer distances and in deeper waters. The vessel will be delivered in 2026.

Installation assets and human resources for the offshore energy industry are a top priority at Jan De Nul. Offshore wind farms go deeper and further offshore, and the interconnectivity between countries and regions become essential for the
Jan De Nul's offshore installation fleet will count four powerful and diverse cable-laying vessels, next to two offshore jack-up installation vessels, three floating crane installation vessels, five rock installation vessels and two multipurpose vessels. This diverse fleet can not operate without a strong team. Jan De Nul already started recruiting extra crew and staff members to operate Fleeming Jenkin. Supported by an extensive in-house training programme, a multidisciplinary team of dynamic positioning officers, engineering technicians, tensioner carousel operators, cable-laying superintendents, various specialised offshore technicians and engineers in civil and mechanical engineering will be put together and become part of Jan De Nul's leading workforce specialised in offshore energy.

Fleeming Jenkin will be equipped with three (3) cable carousels and a large hold for fibre optic cables, capable of laying up to four cables simultaneously. Two carousels are mounted on deck, with a third below deck. The combined cable-carrying capacity amounts to 28,000 tonnes, which is double the capacity of any other cable-laying vessel on the market. The vessel is designed to install longer and heavier cables, into ultra-deep waters up to 3,000 metres. On the aft deck, the vessel is equipped with a chute and a cable-laying wheel. In combination with the tensioners, the chute allows installation of cables in shallow waters, while the cable-laying wheel makes installation at great depths more efficient. The tensioners enable the vessel to handle and control cable tensions up to 150 tonnes – the weight of the Statue of Liberty.

The vessel is equipped with a powerful DP2 system, enabling her to operate steadily in deep, but also in shallow waters, thanks to an additional third bow thruster.

Wouter Vermeersch, Manager Offshore Cables at Jan De Nul Group: “Fleeming Jenkin bundles all the cable installation expertise we’ve gained over the past decade. This vessel and technologies on board are designed by our in-house specialists. In 2013 we changed the power cable installation market by introducing our cable-laying vessel Isaac Newton with higher carrying capacities than available on the market. Today, we continue our pioneering entrepreneurship by ordering the world’s most advanced cable-laying vessel. We look forward to welcoming this new ability to further satisfy our customers worldwide.”

Fleeming Jenkin will be equipped with a highly advanced dual exhaust filter system which removes up to 99% of nanoparticles from emissions using a diesel particulate filter (DPF) and a selective catalytic reduction system (SCR) for NOx removal. The ULEV system also significantly reduces exhaust gas pollutants. Thanks to the ULEV system, the vessel complies with the strict European Stage V emission standards for inland waterway vessels. Moreover, the NOx emissions are reduced to such an extent that this vessel meets the even stricter EURO VI emission limits. The vessel is powered by engines that can run on biofuel and green methanol, confirmed by the Methanolfuel-dualfuel notation, which significantly reduce CO2 emissions. The hybrid power plant on board also contributes to the reduction of CO2 emissions and optimal fuel usage. It combines the generators with a 2.5 MWh battery and drive technology, designed for peak shaving, load smoothening, spinning reserve and optimized engine loading.

Jan Van de Velde, Director New Building at Jan De Nul Group: “Fleeming Jenkin combines our in-house knowledge of designing and operating cable-laying vessels in close collaboration with our clients. The result is a vessel that is highly...
efficient in operations with a much-reduced environmental footprint. We look forward to starting the project with CMHI, working together towards a smooth construction and timely delivery. Meanwhile contract negotiations are ongoing for key equipment to be delivered from Europe.

Delivery of new W-MAX Class LNG Carrier for Petronas LNG Ltd.

The newly-built W-Max class liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier “LAGENDA SETIA” for Petronas LNG Ltd. is delivered at Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding (Group) Co., Ltd.. The vessel which is the same type as the other two vessels delivered for PETRONAS in May and June 2022*¹, was given her name “LAGENDA SETIA” by Mrs. Sharifah Fauziah Wan Idrus, wife of Mr. Adnan Zainal Abidin, PETRONAS COO and EVP & CEO of Gas Business on 21st of August 2023. Management and staff of PETRONAS, Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding (Group) Co., Ltd., Shenergy (Group) Co., Ltd., ICBC Financial Leasing Co., Ltd. and Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, Ltd. also attended the naming ceremony. “Lagenda” is a Malay word for “legend” and “Setia” is for “loyalty”. “Lagenda” which is also used as the name of the sister vessels represent loyalty and dedication of the LNG-supplying vessel, as well as the long-term relationship with charterers. Together with two sister vessels, she will engage in transportation of LNG from Malaysia (Bintulu) to China (Shanghai) for Shenergy (Group) Co., Ltd. In our Medium-Term Management Plan published on May 2022, “K” LINE defines LNG carriers business as one of the top priority area for driving growth, “K” Line will flexibly and proactively respond to customer’s needs, including growing needs for environmental and digital solution to maximize its corporate value.

LNG Croatia kicks off work to boost regas capacity

State-owned LNG terminal operator LNG CROATIA said it had started all the necessary actions to boost the capacity of its FSRU-based Krk LNG terminal. Earlier this year, Finland’s Wartsila won a contract to supply one regasification module for the 140,000-cbm FSRU LNG Croatia as part of Croatia’s plans to boost the capacity of the LNG terminal. Under the contract worth about 22.9 million euros ($24.1 million), Wartsila Gas Solutions, a unit of Wartsila, will build the regas
module with a maximum capacity of 250,000 m³/h. The current three LNG regasification units have a maximum regasification rate of 451,840 m³/h. Following the upgrade, the Krk LNG facility will have a capacity of about 6.1 bcm per year in 2025. In the coming weeks, the project engineering of the new regasification module will be completed, and its production will begin, LNG Croatia said in a social media post on Thursday. “For the needs of the regasification module operation and due to the specifics of its installation technology as well as the specifics of the operation, a contract was signed for the procurement of a seawater pump with the company Framo, which is one of the leading manufacturers of seawater pumps for LNG and offshore industry,” the company said. “The pump will supply the heat exchanger for the needs of heat exchange between seawater - glycol as an intermediate fluid and LNG,” it said.

73 LNG cargoes

Last month, Croatia’s FSRU-based Krk terminal received its 70th LNG cargo since the launch of operations in January 2021. The 2017-built 174,000-cbm, Maran Gas Ulysses, delivered the cargo from the US. The FSRU mainly receives shipments from the US, but it also received cargoes from Qatar, Nigeria, Egypt, Trinidad, Indonesia, and reloads from European terminals. Hungary’s MFGK and a unit of Switzerland-based trading firm MET Group are some of the users of the facility. From the start of commercial operations, the LNG terminal regasified more than 9.92 million cubic meters of LNG and shipped more than 6.16 billion cubic meters of natural gas into the Croatian system, according to LNG Croatia’s website. The FSRU received in total 73 LNG cargoes up to date.

Source : LNG prime

The 2005 Hyundai Samho built 5047 TEU MSC BARBADOS (ex Zim Beijing, ex Atlantic Altair, ex CSL Atlantic) inbound for Antwerp navigating the River Schelde

Photo : Jaap Janse ©

Report: U.S. Offshore Wind Ports Will Need $36B in Financing

The nascent U.S offshore wind industry is grappling with uncertainty caused by rising costs, but it may be that port infrastructure could be the most significant bottleneck for the sector’s advancement, according to the Business Network for Offshore Wind (BNOW). In a new white paper, BNOW contends that the U.S must invest a staggering $36 billion over the next decade to address the country’s offshore wind port infrastructure gap. These funds would flow to no less than 110 port sites across the East Coast, West Coast and the Gulf of Mexico to support the full buildout of the offshore wind industry.

The group suggests that without a concerted effort to change the trajectory of offshore wind port investment, the U.S is likely to fall short of the Biden administration’s short term goal of 30 GW by 2030 – as well as long term ambitions to deploy 110 GW by 2050. Government funding and policy support will be needed to incentivize port operators to bridge the gap.

The federal government has already been working in this direction, but at a fraction of the scale BNOW recommends. In an effort to meet industry needs, the U.S has committed more than $2.5 billion to 35 new offshore wind port projects over the last five years. According to BNOW, most of the projects under development are now facing financing gaps due to rising construction costs, which have risen by about 30 to 40 percent over the last three years. As the industry scales up and expands to new regions of the U.S., BNOW believes it will need up to 84 more port infrastructure projects to support service and installation. The price tag for filling the capital gap for these ports (accounting for inflation) would come to an estimated $36 billion. The need for more wind ports may be tempered by changing economic realities. The U.S offshore wind industry is grappling with steep material cost hikes and rising interest rates, and multiple developers
have raised concerns about the viability of the projects they pursued with ambition just a few years ago. Ørsted – the biggest offshore wind developer in the world – has raised the possibility that it might pull out of some of its U.S. projects altogether. Source: dredgewire

Seaway 7's heavy lift vessel m/v ALBATROSS loaded with the Jack up ARGENT 3 at Freeport-Bahamas

Photo : Vadym Vozniuk ©

Spirit of Vancouver Island set to sail through Thanksgiving weekend after temporary repair

Temporary repair to a cracked ballast tank will allow the vessel to remain in service until after the long weekend, but Coastal Renaissance remains out of service

By : Carla Wilson
A temporary repair to a cracked ballast tank will allow SPIRIT OF VANCOUVER ISLAND to remain in service until after the Thanksgiving long weekend, B.C. Ferries says. But COASTAL RENAISSANCE, which has been tied up since Aug. 17, is not expected to be back in service on the run between Duke Point in Nanaimo and Tsawwassen until mid-December, after a $3-million motor repair and an annual refit have been completed. With the temporary repair, SPIRIT OF VANCOUVER ISLAND will be able to continue to sail on the long weekend on the Swartz Bay-Tsawwassen route, which it shares with two other ferries.

The company anticipates the system will carry 380,000 passengers and 175,000 vehicles on a total of 3,000 sailings between Oct. 5 and Oct. 10. After that, SPIRIT OF VANCOUVER ISLAND is scheduled to go into drydock until Oct. 18, leaving two vessels on the route. No relief vessels are available, B.C. Ferries said.

The crack in the ballast tank, which helps keep the vessel stable, was discovered by ship engineers carrying out routine pre-sailing checks on Spirit of Vancouver Island, said Brian Anderson, B.C. Ferries vice-president of strategy and community engagement. Divers carried out a temporary underwater repair, and Transport Canada has given permission for the vessel to sail through the long weekend, Anderson said. After that, a total of 14 sailings will be removed from the route’s sailing schedule while the ferry is in drydock, he said. As for COASTAL RENAISSANCE, Stephen Jones, B.C. Ferries executive director of engineering, said the vessel’s motor was removed on Sept. 15 and the ship was towed to Nanaimo, where it remains for now. Its motor was shipped to Indiana for repairs, Jones said. The rotor will be replaced and its stator, a component of the motor, will be repaired. The motor is expected to be back in B.C. in early December and the vessel’s refit is scheduled to be completed on Dec. 14. Motor repairs and the refit will take place simultaneously. No impact to service is expected after the refit ends, said Jones. B.C. Ferries is submitting an insurance claim for the repair.

Since COASTAL RENAISSANCE is one of three Coastal-class vessels in the fleet, B.C. Ferries is concerned the motor problem could arise on the others, but testing so far has been inconclusive, Jones said. “What we anticipate is that we will be doing extensive testing on the damaged rotor at the contractor’s to establish what exactly was the cause of the failure and that will play into how to manage the remainder of the fleet.”

COASTAL CELEBRATION which serves the route between Swartz Bay and Tsawwassen, was taken out of service for part of July, resulting in sailing cancellations at the peak of summer season. In that case, an oil leak was discovered after the vessel was in drydock at Seaspan Vancouver.

The leak was caused by a glued blade-seal o-ring being installed as opposed to a one-piece moulded o-ring, B.C. Ferries spokesperson Deborah Marshall said. The correct moulded o-ring was installed when the ferry returned to drydock. “We are still trying to establish how these parts entered the supply chain,” Marshall said. All work on the propellers during the refit was done under the supervision of Schottel Marine Technologies, original manufacturer of the propellers, Marshall said. The German-based company is a sub-contractor of Vancouver Dry Dock, owned by Seaspan. The companies are still in talks about the cost, she said. Foot traffic is predicted to be particularly high over Thanksgiving because of post-secondary students going home for the holiday. B.C. Ferries is warning of possible foot-passenger waits. It urges all travellers using major routes to make a reservation, since standby space will be limited. All ticket booths will be open at major terminals, traffic-management plans are in place at all terminals to guide travellers, Anderson said, with parking ambassadors present in the lots.

Source: times Colonist
The 2014-built 4771 TEU-capacity container ship WIELAND passing Borsele Sloehaven outbound Antwerp with destination Sloehaven. Expecting her to turn into the Sloehaven she however went to the anchorage awaiting a free berth in the Bijleveldhaven, Vlissingen, where she eventually arrived at 10:00 in the evening.

Photo: Dirk Nootenboom (c)

Marcos says Philippines is not looking for trouble but will defend waters against Chinese aggression

BY JIM GOMEZ

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The Philippine president said Friday that his country does not want a confrontation but will staunchly defend its waters after its coast guard dismantled a floating barrier placed by China at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea. It was the first time President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has spoken publicly against China’s installation of the 300-meter (980-foot)-long barrier at the entrance to Scarborough Shoal which was dismantled at his order.

“We’re not looking for trouble, but what we’ll do is to continue defending the maritime territory of the Philippines and the rights of our fishermen, who have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years,” Marcos said in response to a question at a news briefing in southern Surigao del Norte province. The latest flare-up between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, one of the world’s busiest trade routes, comes after Marcos decided earlier this year to allow an expansion of the U.S. military presence in the Philippines under a 2014 defense pact.

The prospect of more American forces in local military camps in the northern Philippines across from Taiwan and southern China alarmed and infuriated Beijing. After the Philippine coast guard dismantled the rope and net barrier at the mouth of Scarborough Shoal, Filipino fishing boats entered the shallow lagoon and caught about 164 tons of fish in one day, Marcos said. “That’s what our fishermen lose, so there should not be a barrier there, and it’s clear the area is within the Philippines,” he said. “Our fishermen have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years so I can’t understand why that has changed. A Philippine surveillance aircraft deployed Thursday spotted two Chinese coast guard vessels closely guarding the shoal’s entrance, making it still difficult for Filipino fishermen to gain entry into the fishing lagoon, Philippine coast guard spokesman Commodore Jay Tarriela said during a news conference Friday. Amid China’s effort to play down the Philippine coast guard’s disabling of the barrier, Tarriela showed journalists one of two metal anchors he said Filipino coast guard personnel removed recently from Scarborough’s entrance to knock the barrier down. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a news briefing in Beijing on Wednesday that the shoal “is China’s inherent territory.” “What the Philippines (has) done is nothing but a farce that entertains itself. China will continue to safeguard the territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests of Huangyan Island,” he said, using the Chinese name for Scarborough. Although Marcos has tried to nurture normal ties with China, the long-simmering territorial disputes have put the Asian neighbors on a potential collision course, with the Philippine leader vowing his country would not yield even “an inch” of territory in the strategic waterway. Marcos’s more confrontational stance contrasts with that of his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who nurtured cozy ties with China and Russia while often criticizing U.S. and Western security policies. Under Marcos, who took office last year, the Philippines has intensified its efforts to fight China’s increasingly aggressive actions in one of the world’s most hotly contested waters. The Philippine coast guard often invites journalists to join its patrols in an effort to expose what it calls Chinese bullying in the busy waterway. In addition to China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan are also involved in the territorial conflicts in the South China Sea, which has long been regarded as a potential Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the U.S.-China rivalry in the region. Washington lays no claim to the sea passageway but U.S. Navy ships and fighter jets have carried out patrols for decades to challenge China’s expansive claims and promote freedom of navigation and overflight. It has
warned that it’s obligated to defend the Philippines under a 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under attack, including in the South China Sea. Source: AP

Hudong-Zhonghua: LNG Geneva completes trials in record time

CSSC Shipping’s liquefied natural gas carrier, **LNG GENEVA**, has completed both its sea and gas trials in five and a half days, setting a record for the shortest trials of a large LNG carrier, according to Chinese shipbuilder Hudong-Zhonghua. The 174,000-cbm LNG carrier returned to the yard on September 27 after completing the “two-in-one” trial, Hudong-Zhonghua said. This is the fourth and the final LNG carrier Hudong-Zhonghua built for CSSC Shipping, the financial leasing unit of China State Shipbuilding Corporation, in this batch. Hudong-Zhonghua started building this 174,000-cbm vessel in June last year and held a keel-laying ceremony in November. It launched this LNG carrier on May 4 this year, meaning it took only five months for the vessel to complete the trials since it left the dock. The shipbuilder also said the dock construction cycle was two months shorter than that of foreign shipyards. Hudong-Zhonghua already built two 174,000-cbm LNG carriers for CSSC Shipping as part of a contract signed in December 2019, while the two firms signed a shipbuilding contract for the third LNG carrier in July 2021. Also, the fourth vessel is part of the original 2+1+1 contract signed in 2019. Last month, CSSC Shipping’s Wen Cheng, the third vessel in this batch, completed its gas trials. The first vessel Mu Lan serves PetroChina under a charter deal, while the second vessel Gui Ying, works for Geneva-based trader Gunvor. Hudong-Zhonghua said in the statement that the charterer of LNG Geneva is a European company, but the yard
did not reveal the name of the firm. Sources told LNG Prime that Gunvor would take on charter this vessel as well. Source: LNGprime

HAL’s ZAANDAM moored in Halifax Photo: Ernst Lohmann www.ernstlohmann.nl ©

Japan’s MOL orders more LNG-powered car carriers

For illustration only (Image: MOL)

Japan’s shipping giant MOL has ordered two more LNG-powered car carriers at compatriot Nihon Shipyard. A spokesperson for MOL confirmed the order to LNG Prime on Friday for two LNG-powered vessels with a capacity of 7,000 units. MOL now has six LNG-powered car carriers with a capacity of 7,000 units at Nihon, the spokesperson said. The spokesperson did not provide the delivery dates for the vessels or any additional information. Brokers said that Nihon is expected to deliver these two new carriers in 2026. Besides these six vessels, MOL also has four LNG-powered car carriers with the same capacity on order at Shin Kurushima Dockyard. In August 2021, MOL placed orders for four LNG-powered vessels at the two compatriot yards and added four more in May 2022. MOL will take delivery of these vessels between 2024 and 2025. VesselsValue data shows that MOL will pay $95 million per vessel for the order at Nihon in May 2022. MOL said that all of these car carriers will adopt the “Blue” series name and new hull color design. The shipping firm previously said that it plans to have 90 LNG-fueled vessels in its fleet by 2030. However, these 90 vessels now also include methanol-powered ships. MOL recently signed a basic agreement with Kambara Kisen to charter a newbuilding methanol dual-fuel bulk carrier.  Source: LNGprime

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Now in her thirty fourth year the Wismar-built ro-ro **KAUNAS** is operating between Tanger Med and Algeciras.  

**Photo : Simon Smith (c)**

### New CFO for Van Oord

by Eldin Ganic

Van Oord’s Supervisory Board, in consultation with the Executive Committee, has decided to appoint Ms. Katja Otten as the new CFO. She will start on 1 January 2024.

Katja Otten is 52 years old and for the last 6 years has been CFO at APM Terminals. She also has 20 years of experience in various financial positions at Shell, said Van Oord. Van Oord N.V. is a public limited company with its registered office in the Netherlands. MerweOord B.V., the Van Oord family’s holding company, owns 78.5% of its shares. The remaining shares are held by Ulran S.A. (10.75%) and ConsOord B.V. (10.75%).  

**Source : dredging today**

### 150,000 Empty Containers Piled Up in Russia

By Gavin van Marle

The huge trade imbalance between China and Russia since the invasion of Ukraine has led to some 150,000 teu of empty boxes becoming stranded in Russia. According to new analysis from online box platform Container xChange, the surge of Chinese exports into Russia since it launched its war on Ukraine, has left Chinese exporters scrambling to find available equipment, while the price of second-hand of containers in Russia has crashed.

“There is significant cargo movement from China into Russia, but very scarce movement back,” said Christian Roeloffs, co-founder and CEO of Container xChange. “Containers are piling up in Russia, which means that second-hand prices are very low there – you see a 40ft high-cube container on sale in Moscow for less than $1,000, while in other parts of the world it is almost double, or more.” The latest data shows the difference in second-hand box prices to be even starker: immediately prior to the Ukraine invasion, the average price of a 40ft high-cube container in Moscow was $4,175, whereas at the beginning of this week it was $580, and Mr Roeloffs said this was reflected by the growing stacks of empty containers, apparently marooned in Russia. “Currently there are around 150,000, and everybody is looking for an
opportunity to return containers back to China. All containers from Russia to China go with a pickup charge,” he said. “Many Chinese companies are selling containers below market price to get rid of them, since it doesn’t make sense to send them back to China. From Moscow to Shanghai, the offline market offer is around $1,500 for new containers. If cargo-worthy containers are in good condition and cost less, they prefer to sell the boxes in the local market,” he explained. Container xChange added that this had led to severe congestion at Russian rail terminals, and that some local transport managers had described the situation around Moscow as “critical”. Source: The Loadstar

Equinor ‘More Optimistic’ About Proceeding with Bay Du Nord Offshore Project After Delay

By: Rod Nickel

The head of Canadian operations for oil producer Equinor said on Tuesday he is more optimistic the Norwegian company will proceed with its Bay du Nord offshore project, four months after delaying the project for up to three years due to
soaring costs. “That’s our sentiment now, we really want to make this happen,” Tore Løseth, Equinor’s Canada country head, said in an interview at the World Petroleum Congress in Calgary. “In many ways I feel more optimistic.”

Bay du Nord, far off the Atlantic coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, would be one of Canada’s biggest oil projects in years. It already has the rare support of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government, which has said Bay du Nord would produce relatively low emissions. Equinor had planned to produce first oil by the late 2020s, and its 500 million barrels of recoverable reserves could last 20 years. The last publicly released cost estimate for Bay du Nord was C$16 billion ($11.9 billion) before the decision to postpone it, and Løseth said the estimate privately had grown significantly higher.

“We know we need to reduce the cost quite a bit,” he said. The International Energy Agency’s head said last week that global oil demand would peak by 2030, leaving some assets at risk of being stranded. Løseth said he is confident Bay du Nord has a place in the energy mix long-term because of its low emissions. Equinor is not looking at selling part of its 60% stake in Bay du Nord to lower its costs, Løseth said. BP PLC owns 40%. Newfoundland Energy Minister Andrew Parsons said Equinor has not made financial requests of the provincial government since putting the project on hold. He, too, is feeling hopeful. “We’re feeling probably more optimistic than we have in a while,” Parsons told Reuters, after meeting with Equinor officials on Monday. He said he based his optimism on the fact that Equinor is still drilling exploration wells offshore. That drilling will help Equinor clarify where it should exactly it should extract oil in Bay du Nord, boosting the project’s economics, Løseth said.

Source: Reuters - Reporting by Rod Nickel in Calgary, Alberta; Editing by Lincoln Feast

Türkiye’s drillship kicks off drilling ops in Black Sea

On a mission to unlock more hydrocarbons and further strengthen Türkiye’s energy security, the country’s national oil and gas giant, Türkiye Petrolleri A.O. (TPAO), has started drilling a new well in the Black Sea, Offshore Energy reports. Türkiye has been actively working on bolstering its energy independence, as illustrated by the arrival of its first drillship, Fatih, in 2017, Yavuz in 2018, Kanuni in 2020, and Abdülhamid Han in 2021. The first of these drillships discovered the giant Sakarya gas field in August 2020.

This same drillship is now undertaking more drilling activities in the Black Sea. According to TPAO, the Fatih drillship has started drilling in a new location in the Black Sea by spudding the Filyos-1 well. With the aim of new discovery, Türkiye’s energy player confirms that drilling activities continue unabated.

After the Fatih drillship made a natural gas discovery in December 2022 at Çaycuma 1 block, Türkiye’s natural gas reserves of 540 bcm were revised to 652 bcm, bringing the country’s total natural gas reserves in the Black Sea to 710 bcm.

The country’s pride and joy known as the Sakarya project was expected to deliver the first gas in the first quarter of 2023, most likely in March. However, the massive earthquakes, that hit Türkiye and Syria, caused delays for various projects, thus, the timeline for the first Black Sea gas was bumped to April 20, 2023. Furthermore, Melih Han Bilgin, TPAO General Manager, revealed at the opening of the 21st International Petroleum and Natural Gas Congress and Exhibition (IPETGAS 2023) on September 28, 2023, that the capacity in the Sakarya gas field would be gradually increased. Currently, the field produces approximately 4 million cubic meters of gas on a daily basis.

“There is a planned capacity in the Sakarya gas field. We will move forward by optimizing this capacity and the realities of the reservoir by better understanding it. The entire facility is online and we are developing it by increasing production,” outlined Bilgin.

While highlighting that Turkey’s domestic hydrocarbon production has exceeded its foreign production, Bilgin added: “All production increases are actually production sizes achieved through organic growth. The successes we have achieved here are obvious as we have concentrated on more exploration and production. Our target is 98,000 barrels.”
“We have achieved the domestic production target as all Turkish Petroleum Joint Stock Company personnel. We are proud of all our colleagues in this effort, but let it be known that the road ahead is more difficult, Turkish Petroleum Joint Stock Company will be a production company that talks about million barrels.” Source: Portnews

The 1888 built tjalk DANKBAARHEID at the slip at the museumharbour at Willemsoord in Den Helder. Photo top: Wim Albers (c)

As noticed by newsclippings reader and contributor Wim Albers in the local newspaper that the owner of the vessel named Dirk Bruin which sailed in the past as engineer with the famous company Smit bought the vessel for 2500 guilder in the past so long the engine was operating end the engine did so Dirk became the owner.

Alma Clean Power, Odfjell and DNV to start testing of SOFC system for deep-sea shipping

At the Singapore Norway Innovation Conference (SNIC) 28th-29th of September, Alma Clean Power, Odfjell and DNV announced a new milestone in the development of a solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC) system. The fuel cell system will be installed on a chemical tanker by the end of 2024, aiming to demonstrate the potential for significantly lower fuel consumption and CO2 emissions for deep-sea shipping. As the maritime industry faces major challenges adjusting to zero emissions over the next decades, fuel cells demonstrate a promising potential for scalable use for longer distances and
larger energy needs in shipping. It is therefore vital to start gathering practical onboard experience with fuel cells, without compromising on safety. Solid oxide fuel cells (SOFC) are fuel flexible, and can convert fuels like ammonia, LNG, methanol and hydrogen to electricity with a potentially higher energy efficiency than internal combustion engines. With a maritime solid oxide fuel cells solution, shipping companies will be able to reduce emissions short term and operate emission-free once alternative fuels become available. The project partners intend to place an 80KW natural gas fuelled solid oxide fuel cell container on board one of Odfjell’s chemical tankers, to demonstrate SOFC as an efficient energy converter for deep-sea shipping. In January 2023, Alma Clean Power was awarded DNV’s Approval in Principle (AiP) for their design of a 1MW ammonia fueled SOFC system. Alma Clean Power and Odfjell have a long-term collaboration in joint development projects and are excited to start the marine demonstrator project together with DNV. “We are very excited about this collaboration with Odfjell and DNV. Odfjell, for continued support through years of development and recognizing this project as a great opportunity for innovation and testing on board their vessel, and DNV for bringing in the broad expertise of a classification society, applying their rule framework and ensuring a thorough risk-based approach to the design, construction, installation and operation onboard the vessel,” said Bernt Skeie, CEO of Alma Clean Power.

Alma Clean Power delivers Solid Oxide Fuel Cell (SOFC) systems for ocean industries. The company’s technology builds on more than 30 years of experience with research and development of SOFC systems which are characterized by high efficiency and fuel flexibility. Alma’s SOFC technology has great potential to decarbonize deep-sea shipping as it can operate on transition fuels such as LNG, with or without carbon capture, and enable zero-emission operations with future fuels. The modular design enables innovative ship designs, and the electrochemical technology ensures silent operation with no vibrations.

Odfjell is a leading global shipping company specializing in the transportation and storage of bulk liquid chemicals, acids, edible oils, and other specialty liquids. With a history spanning over 100 years, Odfjell operates a modern fleet of vessels, combining performance, innovation, and sustainability. The Odfjell fleet comprises of approx. 70 chemical tankers that trade both globally and regionally, while the tank terminal division consists of four tank terminals at strategic ports in the US, Korea and Belgium. Odfjell is headquartered in Bergen, Norway, and employs around 2300 seafarers and shore colleagues around the world. The company is committed to minimizing its environmental footprint and actively supports the industry’s transition towards decarbonization. For more information, please visit: https://odfjell.com

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CASUALTY REPORTING

Subsea module sinks to seabed off Australia due to crane incident

by Nadja Skopljak

A subsea module, associated umbilical lines and a crane wire have sunk to the bottom of the sea offshore Australia due to a wire failing on the main crane of a vessel. UK-headquartered energy services provider Expro reported that on
September 19 an incident occurred in Australian waters in which the wire failed on the main crane of a third-party-owned vessel while it was suspending the subsea module of Expro’s vessel-deployed lightwell intervention (LWI) system. At the time of the failure, the subsea module was suspended approximately 15 meters above the seabed. As a result, the subsea module, associated umbilical lines, and the severed crane wire descended to the seabed. Luckily, no personnel were injured during the incident and an initial ROV survey has confirmed that the equipment came to rest at a safe location on the seabed. Expro has suspended vessel-deployed LWI operations and is working with the relevant stakeholders and independent experts to assess the incident and plan the recovery operation. According to the company, the plan is to conduct a thorough investigation of the incident and provide additional information, including the financial impacts of the incident, as part of its quarterly reporting process. Expro will also evaluate LWI service delivery alternatives and then determine a path forward for its vessel-deployed LWI business, focusing on how sustainable risk-adjusted returns can be achieved. “The safety and wellbeing of people and the environment remains core to all activities at Expro, and we are thankful that there were no injuries or release of wellbore hydrocarbons reported in connection with this recent incident,” said Michael Jardon, CEO of Expro. “While the introduction of Expro’s vessel-deployed LWI system has been characterized by start-up and commissioning delays and several issues with the third party-owned vessel and vessel-related equipment, customer interest in cost-effective subsea interventions and vessel-deployed LWI solutions remains strong.”

Source: offshore-energy.biz

Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS BUNKER HILL (CG 52) was recognized for more than 37 years of naval service during a decommissioning ceremony at Naval Base San Diego. Fair winds and following seas as we bid farewell.

Greece’s First FDI HN Frigate Technically Launched

By Naval Group

French shipbuilder Naval Group today conducted the “technical launch” of the first Kimon-class (FDI HN) for the Hellenic Navy. The launching ceremony with Greek and French officials will take place on October 4 2023.

Dimitris Mitsopoulos  28 Sep 2023

Today marks a significant historical moment for Greece and the Hellenic Navy: The lead ship of the new Kimon-class (FDI HN) frigates was technically launched at the Naval Group Shipyard in Lorient, France. This outcome stems from the agreement signed in March 2022 between Greek officials with French manufacturers Naval Group, MBDA and Thales. The agreement calls for the procurement of three (plus one optional) Defense and Intervention Frigates (FDI) in their Hellenic Navy (HN) configuration, along with their weapons package and integrated logistics support (ILS). The three ships will carry the names of famous Greek generals and admirals. The ceremonial launch of the first Greek FDI HN will take place on October 4, 2023 in Lorient in the presence of Sébastien Lecornu, French minister of the Armed Forces, his Greek counterpart, Nikolaos Dendias and the Chief of the Hellenic Navy General Staff Vice Admiral Ioannis Drymousis. The lead...
ship, Kimon (F601), is expected to join the Greek Fleet in the first months of 2025. For the record, the keel laying of the ship took place in October 2022 highlighting a fast construction pace.

KIMON's hull in the water for the very first time. Naval News photo.

The new ship will be the first new major surface combatant after 25 years when the last Hydra-class (MEKO 200HN) frigate Salamis was commissioned. The entry into service of KIMON in 2025 will mark the beginning of a new era for Greece's naval capabilities as several characteristics of the new frigate are introduced for the first time in the Navy. However, the most crucial addition the new frigate will introduce to the fleet is the integration of the ASTER 30 SAM system paired with the cutting-edge SEAFIRE radar. It has been about 20 years since the decommissioning of the last of the four obsolete former United States Navy C.F. Adams-class destroyers (D218 Kimon) armed with 40km-range SM-1 SAM, the only ships that could provide a large defensive umbrella over a fleet operating in hostile areas, as the current the frigates rely on ESSM Block 1 (Hydra-class) and NSSM (Elli-class) for air defence.

It’s noteworthy that the commencement of steel cutting for the second FDI HN, NEARHOS (F602), occurred ahead of schedule, on July 13, 2022, deviating from the contract's initial estimate of October 31, 2022. A similar scenario unfolded for the third FDI HN, Phormion (F603), with the cutting of its inaugural steel plate taking place on July 12, 2023, as opposed to the originally projected date of October 31, 2023. Naval Group reported their accomplishment of a 36-month construction timeline. The first two FDI frigates will enter service in French configuration (Standard 1) because they were initially destined for the French Navy (Marine Nationale) which has ordered five vessels of the type. The Kimon-class frigates, will replace non-modernized Elli-class (Kortenaer-class) frigates. By 2026, PHORMION (F603) will enter service and will be the first ship in the powerful Hellenic Navy (Standard 2) configuration, that includes among others 16 additional ASTER 30 SAM, 21-cell RAM CIWS and decoy launching systems by Lacroix. The first two FDI HN will be converted to Standard 2 configuration by 2027.

Boasting an array of state-of-the-art sensors and weapons capable of facilitating a wide spectrum of modern naval operations, the FDI HN unquestionably will be one of the most powerful surface combatants in its class and one of the most sophisticated designs on a global scale. Bringing together the best of naval technologies on a compact platform, the 4,550-ton FDI HN is a powerful, multipurpose and innovative frigate with the highest degrees of automation and control, designed to meet the evolution of threats.

The original plan of Greece outlined the procurement of four new frigates. However, it remains uncertain whether the Greek government will choose to exercise the option for a fourth vessel, which, if pursued, is likely to bear the name of one of the most famous naval heroes (and politicians) in Greek history, THEMISTOCLES.

Source: Naval News- Editing by Xavier Vavasseur

Powerful Algerian MEKO-200AN Frigate To Exercise With French Navy

An Algerian Naval Force Erradii-class (MEKO-200AN) frigate pulled into the French Naval base of Toulon on Monday. EL MOUDAMI R (911) is in France to conduct an exercise with the French Navy.

By: Xavier Vavasseur

Contacted by Naval News, the French Navy said that frigate EL MOUDAMI R will take part in exercise RAIS HAMIDOU. It is a Franco-Algerian operational cooperation exercise which takes place from September 25 to October 5. “This operational cooperation activity, organized alternately on each side of the Mediterranean, helps strengthen the level of cooperation and mutual knowledge between the navies of the two countries which share a common interest in the
stability of this area and can, if necessary, be required to operate jointly in the event of a crisis situation at sea (anti-pollution fight, drug trafficking, search and rescue, maritime security, maritime surveillance)” a French Navy spokesperson said. This year, French units participating in the exercise include first ship-in-class LAFAYETTE (and its helicopter), a Falcon 50 maritime surveillance aircraft, and a staff element from the French Mediterranean Command (CECMED). The MEKO A-200AN of the Algerian Navy are powerful surface combatants.

The MEKO-200AN vessel was spotted by photographer Gilbert Gyssels © on 25 September 2023 arriving in Toulon.

The design is based on the MEKO family of warships, which are modular and adaptable vessels designed by the German shipbuilding company Blohm+Voss (now part of ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems). These frigates are known for their flexibility in design, allowing different navies to customize them to meet their specific requirements. There are two ships in the class: ERADII (910) commissioned in April 2016 and EL MOUDAMI R (911) commissioned in May 2017. The “A-200AN” designation indicates that this particular variant of the MEKO A-200 frigate was built for the Algerian Navy (“AN” stands for Algerian Navy). These frigates typically have capabilities for anti-submarine warfare, anti-air warfare, and anti-surface warfare. The Erradii-class frigates are 121 meters long, have a beam of 16.4 meters and a draft of 4.4 meters. The 3700-ton frigates are powered by a CODAG (combined gas turbine and diesel) propulsion system, which includes a GE LM2500 gas turbine and two MTU 16V 1163 TB93 diesel engines that give the ship a top speed of 28 knots. The frigates are heavily armed with an impressive 16 Saab RBS15 Mk 3 missiles (4x4 launchers) and a 32-cell VLS (Vertical Launching System) with Umkhonto- IR Block 2 surface-to-air missiles. The main gun is the 127 mm Leonardo naval gun capable of firing Vulcano extended range guided munitions. The frigates have also have 2x3 torpedo tubes firing MU90 lightweight torpedoes. The sensor suite includes the Saab Sea Giraffe AMB medium-range 3D radar surveillance system, two Saab CEROS 200 optronic directors, and three Sperry Bridgemasters. For anti-submarine warfare, the Erradii-class frigates are equipped with a Thales Kingklip/UMS 4132 hull-mounted sonar. The ship has a helideck and a hangar to accommodate a Super Lynx helicopter (itself fitted with Thales FLASH dipping sonar).

Saudi Arabia & China to conduct joint naval training Blue Sword 2023 next month

According to information published by Chinamil on September 29, 2023, China and Saudi Arabia are set to conduct their “Blue Sword-2023” joint naval special operations training this coming October in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province. According to information published by Chinamil on September 29, 2023, China and Saudi Arabia are set to conduct their “Blue Sword-2023” joint naval special operations training this coming October in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province. Follow Navy Recognition on Google News at this link The upcoming exercise will emphasize overseas maritime counter-terrorism operations and will include training in sniping tactics, boat maneuvers, helicopter landings, and joint rescue missions. This marks the second collaboration of its kind between the two naval forces. The initiative seeks to bolster the ongoing pragmatic and cordial military cooperation between China and Saudi Arabia, while also enhancing the combat readiness of their troops. For some years now, cooperation has not been limited to exercises. There were concrete developments in the realm of defense technology and procurement. Reports highlighted China's collaboration with Saudi Arabia in the production of ballistic missiles. This was seen as a testament to China's soft military approach towards the Middle East, where it sought to establish itself as a reliable defense partner without overtly upsetting the existing geopolitical balance. The naval cooperation between the two nations wasn't just a bilateral affair. It was intricately linked with broader regional dynamics. The presence of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in the region was increasing, aligning with Saudi Arabia's “Look East” strategy. This strategy was Saudi Arabia's approach to diversify its diplomatic and economic partnerships, reducing its over-reliance on Western allies.
Nippon Steel shuts historic Kure plant in western Japan

Nippon Steel on Saturday shut down all facilities at its Kure plant in Hiroshima Prefecture, closing the curtain on 72 years of operations at the historic site where the Imperial Japanese Navy had its main shipyard until the end of World War II. As part of drastic business reforms, drawn up in response to falls in domestic steel demand, Japan's largest steel-maker said in February 2020 that it would close its 130-hectare Setouchi Works Kure Area. The steel-maker wrapped up shipping its products from the plant on Sept. 14. Nippon Steel said it plans to dismantle all the facilities at the site over 10 years or so and will decide on how to use the land in consultation with the local government. The company had already ceased operating blast furnaces at the Kure site by September 2021. There were around 3,300 workers employed by Nippon Steel and its partner companies at the Kure plant in early 2020 when the steel-maker announced the closure. Japanese steel-makers have been forced to scale down their output since their clients, which include manufacturers and automakers, shifted production overseas.
Nippon Steel now has 11 blast furnaces still running in Japan. It also plans to stop operations at a furnace in Kashima, Ibaraki Prefecture, by the end of March 2025, cutting its annual crude steel production from 50 million tons to 40 million tons.

Its rival JFE Holdings halted operations at a blast furnace on Sept. 16 at its Kawasaki plant, reducing the number of blast furnaces the company operates in Japan to seven.

While scaling back production of general-use steel, major steel-makers have been reallocating their resources to make high-tensile and electrical steel, the latter being an iron alloy offering high magnetic permeability that is used in electrical equipment, including electric motors.

Ferguson shipyard: Ferry costs rise again after safety changes ordered

The costs of two CalMac ferries being built at the Ferguson shipyard have risen again after regulators ordered safety changes. Completing GLEN SANNOX and GLEN ROSA will now cost at least an extra £24m, the yard's boss has told MSPs.
The delivery date for the second ship has been pushed back by five months, to May 2025. The passenger capacity of the ships may also be reduced from 1,000 to 852 to satisfy emergency evacuation rules. The two ships, which were meant to cost £97m, are now 3.5 times over budget and will be delivered six years late. Ferguson chief executive David Tydeman told Holyrood's net zero committee the yard was continuing to face "design gaps, associated re-work and surprises". He believes this is due to errors made in the past, both before and after the Port Glasgow shipyard was nationalised in 2019.

The latest costs increase is partly driven by changes required by safety regulator the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The ships will not be allowed to carry passengers unless improvements are made to emergency evacuation routes.

**Weeks of sea trials**

Plans to widen corridors and fit extra staircases on each ship have now been agreed with the MCA, but discussions are ongoing about about "eleven vertical exit routes" from the car decks. Talks are also taking place with CalMac and ferries procurement agency CMAL on reducing the passenger capacity of both ships by 148. The delivery date for Glen Sannox is scheduled for 31 March next year, but several weeks of sea trials will be required by CalMac so it may miss the start of the summer season on the busy Arran route. Delivery of the second ship Glen Rosa, formerly known as Hull 802 and also destined for the Arran route, has been pushed back by five months until 31 May 2025. The second ferry **GLEN ROSA**, until recently known only as Hull 802, is still on the slipway.

When government-owned ferries procurement agency CMAL placed the order with the Inverclyde shipyard nearly eight years ago, the two ferries were expected to cost £97m and were due for delivery in 2018. The latest increases mean the ships will cost nearly £380m if written-off government loans to the shipyard are included in the figures, as suggested by Audit Scotland.

As well as a £24m increase for completing the ships, the latest update also suggests an increase of about £20m in worst case contingency funding in case there are further problems. Sea trials of Glen Sannox and the commissioning of the ship's LNG propulsion system, which is not due to begin until after Christmas, could also lead to further problems, Mr Tydeman acknowledged in his letter. "It would be very unusual if there are not issues of equipment or systems failing or breaking or highlighting some of the specification changes needed, particularly with the first of class aspects of the LNG system," he wrote.

'Repeated interference'

When the ferries contract was awarded in 2015, the yard was owned by Jim McColl, a successful businessman who had rescued it from administration just weeks ahead of the previous year's Scottish independence referendum. His company Ferguson Marine Engineering Ltd (FMEL) beat off competition from some of Europe's leading shipbuilders after CMAL officials judged its proposed design to be the best in terms of "quality" despite being the most expensive. But the project soon ran into trouble as design challenges led to mounting costs and delays.

CMAL has blamed this on "catastrophic contractor failure", while Mr McColl maintains the problems stemmed from CMAL's flawed concept design and repeated interference in the design process. FMEL fell into administration in August 2019, and the yard was later nationalised by the Scottish government.

A BBC Disclosure documentary last year presented evidence that the procurement process carried out by CMAL may have been "rigged" in favour of FMEL. A leading lawyer has been appointed by the CMAL board to investigate the Disclosure allegations, and is expected to report shortly. The BBC understands Barry Smith KC has been asked to examine whether "fraud" occurred but his remit does not extend to examining whether procurement rules were broken. **Source : BBC**

**Dongara Marine awarded large patrol vessel contract**

**New vessel essential to supporting the sustainability of WA's fisheries**

Dongara Marine is delighted to confirm we have been awarded a multi-million dollar contract to build the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's new Large Patrol Vessel. Commenting on the project, Dongara Marine's Managing Director, Rohan Warr, said: "The award of this project is great recognition for the work our staff, subcontractors, and suppliers have been doing building many different types of new vessels for government agencies, commercial operators, and private buyers.

"We look forward to working with DPIRD to deliver a similarly successful shipbuilding project. In addition to a highly capable patrol boat that will bring lasting benefits to fisheries compliance operations, that success will also be evident in employment, training, and economic benefits that will flow from its construction.” Dongara Marine expects that Western Australian industry, including many suppliers and subcontractors based in the Mid West region, will be able to contribute to the project. “We have a highly qualified and skilled workforce and supplier base in place but are always on the lookout for people and businesses who can add value to our projects and operations,” Warr said. Established in Port Denison in 1975, Dongara Marine opened a purpose-built shipyard in Geraldton earlier this year. It currently employs over 60 staff. The company expects to complete a total of 11 new vessels and two major refits this year.
Award of the contract was officially announced by the Western Australian Minister for Fisheries, the Hon. Don Punch MLA, while visiting the Dongara Marine shipyard in Geraldton today (September 27, 2023). The Minister released the following statement.

Dongara Marine will build the vessel to a design from WA naval architecture firm Southerly Design Mid West business. Dongara Marine has been awarded the tender to build a new modern fisheries patrol vessel to protect Western Australia's northern waters.

The Cook Government is investing $13.7 million into the project to replace the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's ageing Patrol Vessel (PV) Walcott. A fit-for-purpose fleet of research and patrol vessels is essential to the ongoing sustainability of the WA fishing industry and the State's Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification.

The new 24 metre patrol vessel will have a longer fuel range to conduct extended voyages, low engine emissions, and improved living conditions compared to the existing 25-year-old PV Walcott.

**The new patrol boat will primarily operate in northern waters**

The vessel will be able to conduct extended voyages of up to 14 days with accommodation and food storage for 10 people, has a more efficient hull design with twin keels to provide improved stability and reduced roll, the latest navigation equipment, and infra-red night vision to support search and research and night-time patrols.

It will also have a 5.5 metre tender to conduct inspections and boardings at sea. When completed the patrol vessel will be based in Broome and used for a range of core government roles including domestic fisheries compliance, marine park management, shark incident response, marine safety, sea search and rescue, whale disentanglement and illegal foreign fishing interception. Work is expected to commence this month (October) with the aim of being completed by September 2025.

The Large Patrol Vessel will carry a smaller tender on an integrated stern launch and recovery ramp. Dongara Marine will also build the sea boat as part of the contract. Comments attributed to Fisheries and Regional Development Minister Don Punch: "Research, stock assessment and monitoring, and compliance work underpins the sustainability of our State's valuable fisheries and it is vital that we have a fit-for-purpose fleet of patrol and research vessels to support this work along WA's 12,000km of coastline. "In WA we have some of the best small to medium sized boat builders in the country and I am pleased to be at Dongara Marine today where the new patrol vessel will be built. "Investing in projects which support regional manufacturing also helps to generate local employment, in this case in the boat building and maintenance industry in the Mid West."

**ROUTE, PORTS & SERVICES**

**AVIOR TURNS 23**

It seems that Avior was around only a few years ago. But do you actually know when Avior Marine's birthday is? For more than 20 years, Avior Marine has played a significant role in the maritime industry as a sea-based manning agent, providing Filipino officers and ratings onboard ships. Our achievements over the past 20 years have been fueled by the support, unwavering loyalty, and dedication of our clients, partners, seafarers, and employees. Avior service has grown significantly over the last two decades. Since then, Avior has become large enough to gain advantages from economies of scale and to establish and sustain dedicated pools while remaining flexible enough to meet the particular needs of principals.
Our business model emphasizes customization and supports each principal's individuality, enabling us to develop dedicated pools of seafarers adapted to their specific demands and policies. We made it our commitment to tailor our services to client needs and collaborate on mutually beneficial agreements for the partnership.

Avior was established on September 20, 2000, as Elmira Shipping Phils Inc. and had its office at Muntinlupa City, Alabang, in Metro Manila until it was renamed to Avior Marine Inc. on August 9, 2011 and maintained two offices, additionally in Makati City, Metro Manila. On September 17, 2013, the two (2) offices were merged into its current office, occupying the entire 4th floor of about 800 square meters at Fly Ace Corporate Center, 13 Coral Way, Central Business Park, Pasay City, 1300 Philippines. Our office facility has been thoughtfully constructed to foster open communication while maintaining a professional atmosphere and promoting our principal identity. Avior commemorated its 23rd anniversary celebration with a simple Thanksgiving mass at its office, followed by a simple lunch served to all colleagues and visiting seafarers. During the celebration, Avior president Capt. Greg Sevilla emphasized the importance of providing the best courtesy to the seafarers and their families, the importance of communication, and maintaining the right balance between meeting the employer’s (principal’s) expectations and providing them guidance on the best crewing practices for its Filipino seafarers.

The COSCO SHIPPING VIRGO outbound from Antwerp navigating the Westerschelde Photo: Hans van der Meer ©

Holland America: Full Fleet Shore Power Ready

Following the shore power installation on the Volendam, Holland America Line’s entire fleet is now equipped for shore power connectivity. The VOLENDAM recently completed its installation in Vancouver, British Columbia, and was connected to the port’s shoreside electricity for a full day on September 27.

“At Holland America Line, our legacy of exceptional onboard care extends to caring for the planet, and having our entire fleet capable of shore power connection is a tremendous milestone in our sustainability efforts,” said Gus Antorcha, president of Holland America Line. “We have committed to reducing our carbon emission intensity by 20 percent by 2030 from our 2019 baseline, and we’re on our way to reaching that goal through a variety of initiatives that include shore power. We look...
forward to more global ports embracing shore power capability in the future and are ready to work with them to connect.”

Ports that the cruise line’s ships visit with shore power include Juneau, Alaska; New York; San Francisco and San Diego, California; Seattle, Washington; Halifax, Montreal and Vancouver, Canada; Bergen, Ålesund and Kristiansand, Norway; Kiel, Germany; and Shanghai and Xiamen, China.

Holland America Line began converting ships for shore power connectivity in 2006 with its four Vista Class ships. The cruise line’s Pinnacle Class ships (the KONINGSDAM, NIEUW STATENDAM and the ROTTERDAM) all were built with shore power systems installed, while the EURODAM and NIEUW AMSTERDAM were launched with a partial installation that has since been completed. In addition to shore power, the company has also adopted a variety of environmental practices such as banning single-use plastics onboard and using biodegradable or paper-based alternatives. “We’ve made our packaging changes in a thoughtful manner to ensure that we can both reduce our footprint and also maintain our outstanding guest experience,” added Antorcha. Source: cruiseindustrynews

European Seaport Operators’ Margins Are Under Pressure

European seaport operators face a dual challenge of rising costs and lower revenues following macroeconomic headwinds, which will squeeze their margins in the short and medium term, Fitch Ratings says. We expect profitability to gradually recover, supported by the longer-term economic rebound and steady tariff increases. The European container throughput index has dropped 15% from its peak in 2Q21, while the global index has stagnated. Slowing economic growth and a decline in goods consumption post-pandemic with consumers reversing to spending on services have affected ports’ performance. This has been exacerbated by slowing trade in Europe due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The main European gateway ports, such as Hamburg, Rotterdam and Antwerp-Bruges, recorded a decline of 5%-15% in throughput in 2Q23. Given a bleak demand outlook for Europe, Drewry forecast in 3Q23 that average utilisation of European ports will be just 55% in 2027 (56.3% in 2022).

Port congestion eased considerably in 2022 and early 2023, and we expect this to continue in late 2023, reducing additional storage revenue from which port operators benefited during the pandemic. Operators are likely to lose economies of scale due to lower volumes as utilisation rates will become suboptimal, resulting in reduced earnings per move. A high proportion of ports’ revenues are based on annual contracts, where prices are agreed in advance. CPI-linked price uplifts therefore take effect with a time lag, compressing operator margins in the short term as high inflation has already increased ports’ costs. Furthermore, we do not expect ports to be able to fully pass on inflation to shipping companies through tariffs in the near term due to a steep decline in freight rates from their pandemic highs seen in 2021. Smaller and secondary ports even need to offer discounts to attract volumes, so their profitability margins will be more affected. Port operators also face rising labour expenses as the cost of living crisis and nearly full employment have led to demands for higher wages and increased risks of strike actions, potentially extending dwell times and increasing costs per move. Fitch expects port operators to reduce or postpone uncommitted capex plans due to pressures on profits and
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cash flows. For instance, we cut DP World’s capex and M&A outflows in our 2023 rating-case projections by 15% from our 2022 rating-case projections, and by 34% for ABP. Existing leverage headroom and the ports’ flexibility to adjust spending when needed are also supportive for our rated portfolio. We expect a gradual recovery in profitability and cash flows for our EMEA portfolio, driven by the gradual economic rebound, which should support higher shipping volumes and the greater ability of European ports to increase tariffs. Source: Fitch Ratings

The 1998-built general cargo/heavy load carrier ANNEMIEKE pictured off Terneuzen inbound Antwerp. Photo: Dirk Nootenboom ©

APM Terminals Malaysian J V on course to lead maritime decarbonisation in Asia

The Malaysian Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP), a joint venture between APM Terminals (30%) and the MMC Group, has been selected to join the Partnerships for Infrastructure (P4I) initiative. This is a government-to-government decarbonisation scheme between Malaysia and Australia that supports PTPs ambition to become a green bunkering hub for alternative fuels.

The P4I project aims to spearhead Malaysia’s decarbonising effort in the maritime industry and to foster inclusive growth through sustainable infrastructure in Southeast Asia. Malaysia has the potential to develop into a regional green fuel Partnership for Infrastructure (P4I). The study also found that methanol is the green fuel option receiving the most investment from shipping lines.

Green refuelling sites

The study was undertaken in response to a request from Malaysia’s Transport Ministry (MoT) to better understand zero-carbon bunkering and explore the potential for green refuelling sites in Malaysia. “We hope that the successful implementation of this initiative will become a game changer in transforming the regional maritime industry and further promote opportunities for Malaysia to lead in this area of maritime decarbonisation,” said PTP Chief Executive Officer, Marco Neelsen.

“Given the size and strategic location of PTP, it has the potential to play a key role regionally and globally in supporting maritime and trade decarbonisation,” commented Executive General Manager Commercial at Port of Melbourne, Shaun Mooney.

Lofty ambitions

Shipping accounts for nearly 3 per cent of global emissions, with International Maritime Organization setting a goal to halve annual emissions by 2050 and establish green shipping corridors for vessels using zero-emission fuel. In support of this, for APM Terminals fully controlled Ports and Container Terminals the company has made an industry leading commitment to reduce its total emissions by 70% by 2030 compared to 2020 and be fully net zero by 2040. PTP’s own decarbonisation goals are to reduce 45% of its emissions by 2030, having already shaved 30% off its carbon emissions by 2021 compared with its 2011 baseline. Over the next five years, says Neelsen, PTP will be spending RM3 billion to step up efforts to upgrade its current terminal footprint, including automation, digitalisation and other port functions.

Electrification - reduced emissions - increased efficiency

PTP has electrified and digitalised many of its assets, resulting in emissions reductions, increased efficiency and less waste, according to the company. For instance, it will electrify all its rubber tyred gantry (RTG) cranes — mobile cranes that stack and transport containers — and yard by the end of this year. The port is also testing electric prime movers,
which are the trucks that move containers, and electric or hybrid fuel tugs and pilot boats. PTP’s digital transformation also involves tracking its assets and using digital twins. Functioning as computer-based models, digital twins offer real-time visualisations of the port’s operations, infrastructure and assets to, for example, calculate optimal routes for its trucks and boats to save on fuel. “Digitalisation, operational efficiency and sustainability are all moving as one transformation activity. It’s something that we can see having a positive impact. Rather than working on your own, we do the transformation together,” says Khairul Amalin Abd Rahman, Senior General Manager at PTP.

**Technology push**

One of the technologies used at PTP is the vessel traffic management system. The VTMS is connected to the Marine Resource Management System (MRMS) and Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System (VTMIS) — both of which are used to step up measures to become a “green” port. It improves the efficiency of vessel traffic movements and the safety of navigation. The MRMS is able to integrate the entire process, from booking a berth to populating shipping registers, ordering pilots and providing vessel arrivals and departures. In 2022, PTP handled 10,608 vessel calls. All this costs money. But Neelsen believes it makes business sense. Rising fuel prices and carbon taxes will be costly to those who do not transition. “There will be an extra cost in the future, so we need to start incorporating it,” he says. “Our customers, which are the shipping lines, forwarders, warehouses and their customers, have different demands than they had 10 years ago. Therefore, this is part of our transformation journey. It has been requested by customers, whose children are asking questions [about how sustainable their products are]. The logistics [industry] has to adapt to it,” concludes Marco Neelsen, CEO of PTP. Source: APM Terminals

…. PHOTO OF THE DAY ..... 

the "**BOKALIFT 2** outbound from Amsterdam passing the IJmuiden locks, on its way to Invergordon, Scotland"

*Photo: Reinder Buren ©*
Your feedback is important to me so please drop me an email if you have any photos / articles that may be of interest to the maritime interested people at sea and ashore.

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