

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2005 – 104



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**The ABELLE FLANDRE seen in a drydock in Brest, after been relieved by the new ABELLE BOURBON the ABELLE FLANDRE is getting ready to shift to the port of Toulon
Photo : Jacques Carney ©**

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EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS

Bosporus reopens after grounding

THE Canakkale strait was closed today after a steering gear failure aboard the 39,000dwt **Chinook** caused the product tanker to swerve out of the fairway and run aground. "From the evidence we have received so far, the vessel's steering capability was considerably flawed," Klaus-Peter Timsries, chartering & insurance manager of the ship owner Ernst Jacob, told Fairplay. The strait partially reopened at 1430 today and a full reopening is expected at 2100 tonight. The 2001-built tanker is currently being checked by divers for damage to the hull. None of the 23 crew of the **Chinook**, which had been on voyage charter carrying gasoline out of Novorossiysk in Russia were injured in the event and no pollution has been reported. The tanker is operated by BP Shipping and is flagged in the Cayman Islands.

Grandeur of Seas strikes dock



ROYAL Caribbean's **Grandeur of the Seas** has been damaged after striking the dock at Mexico's Costa Maya port on 20 April. According to RCCL, the collision ripped a "football-shaped puncture in the bow on its starboard side", about 13m long and 1.5m at its widest point. The puncture is in the first deck, 1.5m above

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the waterline. No one was injured in the incident, which occurred when the ship was attempting to dock in 15kt winds and a 3kt current. An RCCL statement released last night said repairs were already 25% complete and the vessel is expected to depart from Costa Maya tomorrow evening after a safety inspection. The **Grandeur** is expected back in New Orleans tomorrow evening and its subsequent cruise will be delayed until 1800 on 25 April. [Photo's : Koos Fockens © MV Maasdam](#)



NCL answers TV allegations

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has denied that the Norwegian Dawn's scheduled appearance on the TV show 'The Apprentice' had anything to do with the ship sailing through severe weather. Critics have implied that NCL sailed the Dawn into a storm – in which it was struck by a 21m rogue wave – because it had a \$1M-plus deal with show requiring its presence in New York the following Sunday. Yesterday, after NCL was partially released from a non-disclosure agreement with the show's producers, it confirmed that it was scheduled to shoot the episode on 17 April, but stressed that the Dawn sailed the same track it does every week, and that the TV appearance had "no influence whatsoever on the choices the captain made". NCL said it made no pre-payment to the show's producers and was subject to no financial penalty for failing to appear, thus "monetary considerations were simply not a factor" – and even if they were, "monetary factors would never, under any circumstances, be a consideration when the safety of passengers and crew is at issue".

Greenpeace begins stir against toxic ship

Environment watchdog Greenpeace has stepped up its protest to prevent the arrival of a ship from Denmark at the Alang ship breaking yard in Bhavnagar district fearing the release of several hazardous substances.

The ferry ship **Kong Fredrik IX** left Denmark on March 16 and is expected to reach Alang within the next two days even as the Danish government has themselves alerted Indian authorities about the arrival of the ship, said toxic campaigner for Greenpeace Ramapati Kumar.

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Mr Kumar said the Danish environment minister Connie Hedegard had also told the Indian government that the ship had not intimated the Danish government before setting sail, as it had wanted the ship to be decontaminated before allowing it to be sent for shipbreaking.

Officials of the Gujarat maritime board when contacted said they had not yet got any official intimation from the Centre or the Greenpeace about the Danish ship but would certainly look into the matter.

Syria: Israeli navy didn't search for shipwreck

Syria denied on Thursday that Israel's navy helped search for crewmen from a ship that sank in international waters in the Mediterranean, saying the disaster happened too far from Israel's coast.

Three crewmen - two Syrians and an Egyptian - have been rescued and four are still missing, said an official at Syria's port of Tartous, where the Syrian-owned ship was heading. The Korean-flagged ship sailed from Egypt's Mediterranean port of el-Arish, but the official did not when.

Israel's military said Wednesday that its navy vessels and helicopters joined US and French naval units in the search for the crew of a ship that it said sank about 56 kilometers (35 miles) off the coast of northern Israel.

"Israeli military boats did not take any role in the search," the Syrian official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

He said the ship sank about 100 miles (160 kilometers) off the Israeli coast. It was not clear why the Syrian and Israeli officials gave different locations.

The official said the ship was carrying 1,400 tons of cement. He said the three crewmen were saved by the Turkish crew of a Panamanian ship. They were later transferred to a French military vessel before being handed over to a Syrian ship on its way to Tartous.

Three Syrians and an Egyptian are still missing, he said.

An Israeli military spokesman said Wednesday that the search for the four missing men was suspended after several hours due to darkness and sea conditions and was to be renewed at daybreak Thursday.

On Wednesday, an Israeli military spokesman said the three survivors were picked up by a nearby cargo ship and later transferred to a nearby Syrian vessel.

Ferry official pleads guilty

In a dramatic development Friday, the former head of the Staten Island Ferry service pleaded guilty to negligently causing the death of 11 people in the Oct. 15, 2003, crash of the [Andrew J. Barberi](#).

Patrick Ryan, 53, now faces a sentence of no more than 12 months, a plea deal that some of the families of the victims labeled a "disgrace."

The families, some of whom were in federal court in Brooklyn as Ryan entered his plea, also believed that higher-ups in the Department of Transportation, particularly Commissioner Iris Weinsall, bore responsibility for the fatal negligence. "She feel asleep behind her desk," Kathy Healy, 43, said.

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Healy's husband, John, 44, died when the ferry slammed into a Staten Island dock. She is now raising four children. "It's a disgrace," said Deborah Canini of Staten Island of the expected 12-month sentence. Canini lost her husband, Pio, in the crash.

In a long hearing, Ryan pleaded guilty to one count of seaman's manslaughter covering all 11 deaths, as well as one charge that he made false statements to U.S. Coast Guard investigators.

By admitting he willfully and knowingly caused the negligence that led to the Barberi crashing, Ryan put the city's attempt to defend itself against billions of dollars in claims on shaky ground. Lawyers for the families of those who died or were injured said they would be taking steps to get the city's defense to the \$3.2 billion in claims thrown out.

Ryan, in a statement to Judge Edward Korman, admitted that he didn't enforce the two-pilot rule, which required that there be two competent operators at the helm at all times when a vessel was under way. He said he didn't disseminate a rule revision and didn't assure that people were trained.

Pressed by Korman as to why, Ryan shrugged. "I have searched my soul and heart," he said, "I can't tell you why."

For several tense minutes it looked like the plea might fall apart as Korman showed skepticism about whether Ryan was admitting he was willfully negligent, as required by the law. Government prosecutors Andrew Frisch and Sarah Coyne, as well as Defense Attorney Thomas Fitzpatrick, took a recess and were involved in animated discussions.

Ryan finally addressed Korman again and said he didn't get the revised rules out to the various crews and didn't train his people. "I didn't do it correctly," he stated.

A pensive Korman then accepted the plea. "I am going to find there is a factual basis for the plea," Korman said. Ryan also admitted he lied to investigators when he said last June that he followed the two-pilot rule nearly all of the time when he was a ferry captain. He admitted that in good weather he let his assistant captain pilot a vessel.

The city took legal action last year to limit its liability for the crash to \$14.2 million under federal maritime law. But attorneys for the families say Ryan's plea undercuts that move.

"We are going to file a motion for summary judgment to dismiss the city's limitation proceeding," said attorney John J. Hession.

"Under maritime law, we believe that, notwithstanding the guilty plea and considering all the relevant facts, the city was not negligent," said Corporation Counsel Michael Cardozo.

To date the city has settled 85 of 176 civil claims filed.

In a statement, Weinshall said the city continues to revamp ferry service.

Navies to limit ships in disputed area

Malaysia and Indonesia agreed to limit the number of ships in the disputed maritime border in the Sulawesi Sea to reduce tensions following the collision of two navy ships from both countries recently.

Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) chief Laksamana Datuk Seri Mohd Anwar Mohd Nor said both countries had agreed that each will station only one ship at the disputed border.

He said the agreement was reached in a meeting with his Indonesian counterpart Laksamana Madya Slamet Subidyanto in Batam last Friday.

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Mohd Anwar would not disclose how many navy ships are patrolling the area at the moment but said the limit of one ship per country can help reduce tension between both countries.

"Aside from that, we also wish to stop any suspicion that may arise between both countries if there are too many military assets stationed in the Sulawesi Sea.

"In my meeting with Slamet, both of us agreed that the incident can be solved through negotiations as suggested by our leaders.

"The RMN and Indonesian Navy had signed an agreement in 2000, in which both countries had agreed not to take any action that may give rise to tension should there be any incident involving our ships," he said at his office in the Ministry of Defence here today.

On April 10, **KD Renchong** and the Indonesian warship **KRI Tedung Naga** collided while patrolling in the disputed area causing damage to both vessels.

Malaysia and Indonesia have competing claims over an oil-rich area in the Sulawesi Sea.

China need own oil tanker fleet - experts

As China becomes a large oil importer, experts say building the country's own oil tanker fleet to ensure oil security in the future is an urgent task.

The fleet should be capable of handling at least 50 percent of China's total oil imports, Friday's Beijing-based Economic Information Daily quoted shipping industry experts as saying

Based on this estimation, the oil tanker fleet should be able to handle 75 million tons of the oil imports by the year 2010. The figure would rise to more than 130 million tons by 2020, the newspaper said.

Currently, the majority of China's oil tankers are on average six years older than the oil tankers of other countries, the report said.

The oil tankers are small and each can carry less than 100,000 tons of oil, compared with the 270,000-ton and 300,000-ton oil tankers commonly used in the international market.

Meanwhile, China's two largest oil importers, the China Petro- Chemical Corp. and the China National Petroleum Corp, do not have their own oil tankers. During the past couple of years, the oil imports shipped by China's oil tankers made up only 10 percent of the total, and 90 percent were shipped by leasing foreign oil tankers.

Although the government has worked on building up strategic oil reserves, the work to build a large tanker fleet has been overlooked, according to Yao Ping, deputy general manager of the China Yangtze River Navigation Group.

He cites Japan and Republic of Korea (ROK) as an example, saying Japan has large oil tankers with a total tonnage of 20 million tons, which can ship 80 percent of the oil imported by Japan.

The oil tankers of the ROK can carry a total of 6.6 million tons of oil, accounting for 30 percent of the country's total oil imports.

China mainly imports oil from the Middle East, African, American and Southeast Asian countries, said Li Peirong, director of the information department of China National Offshore Oil Corp. This means that it will have to hinge on sea transportation to import large quantities of oil in the future.

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Building China's own oil tanker fleet will also help stabilize ocean oil shipping prices, which rose steadily over the past few years, acknowledged Zhu Ning, general manager of the Nanjing Yangtze River Oil Shipping Company.

According to the report, the China Ocean Shipping Companies Group, the China National Offshore Oil Corp, and the China Yangtze River Navigation Group have worked out policies concerning the construction of an oil tanker fleet. And the government, nevertheless, still has no concrete measures to support the development of the sector.

Starting in 1993, China became a net oil importer and its oil imports have risen steadily. Last year, it imported 123 million tons of oil, while its annual oil consumption stood at 280 million tons.

The International Energy Agency forecast that China will import 150 million tons of oil in the year 2010, and the number will climb to 250 million by 2020.

Six Viet sailors return 8 months after ship seizure

Six of 12 Vietnamese crew who were detained along with their cargo ship in Tanzania more than eight months ago, have returned home, the vessel's owner Sea Saigon Shipping Company said yesterday.

The sailors arrived back on Tuesday and negotiations were still under way to secure the return of the other six and to resolve the issue, a company official said. The vessel Can Gio was seized with its 12 crew on July 27 last year after docking at Dar es Salaam.

In November, Vietnam had lodged an official protest with Tanzania after the seizure of the ship, which stemmed from a dispute over another Vietnamese company four years ago. In 1999 a Tanzania-based company paid an advance of US\$1.7 million to Vietnam's Thanh Hoa Co for some 6,000 tonnes of rice and four rice-husking machines.

Thanh Hoa then rented a vessel to transport the shipment, but the ship never arrived at its destination. The Tanzanian firm filed a suit against Thanh Hoa and the Vietnamese government. Tanzania's Supreme Court ordered the ship's seizure.

CASUALTY REPORT

Ship Aground

It took three tug boats to pull the **Liberty Glory** off a sand bar in the Columbia River early Friday morning.

Coast Guard officials say the 625-foot bulk carrier hit a sand bar about 12 miles downstream from Portland and 88 miles from the mouth of the river. No one was injured and no fuel or other toxic substances were released.

Petty Officer Bridget Miller says the captain was making a slight turn in the channel when the engine shut down unexpectedly. About 100 feet of the ship was protruding into the navigational channel, but Miller says there was plenty of room for other ships to get by.

The ship was on a relief mission to Africa with 45-thousand tons of wheat. After the incident, the ship was headed for Vancouver, Washington, to undergo an inspection before continuing on its journey.

SEDOV AGROUND IN IJMUIDEN



Around noon April 22nd, 2005, the **Sedov** departed to sea from Cruise Quay, IJmuiden and ran aground at the low tide. Tugs **Svitzer Marken** and **Titan** quickly came to assist. **Svitzer Marken** connected and refloated the vessel. The **Sedov** continued her way to sea. **Photo : Maarten Helwig ©**

NAVY NEWS

Portuguese navy orders two submarines with Siemens fuel cell technology

The Siemens Industrial Solutions and Services Group (I&S) is fitting two new U 209mod submarines for Portugal's navy with the latest propulsion and I&C equipment. The order is worth EUR 58 million and handover of the submarines to the Portuguese navy is scheduled for 2010. The contract also includes an option for the same equipment to be built into a third submarine. This option is worth around 23 EUR million.

The submarines will be built at the Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft GmbH (HDW) and at Nordseewerken in Emden. Both shipyards belong to ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems. Siemens' scope of supply includes provision of a Permasyn permanent-magnet electric motor with PEM (Polymer Electrolyte Membrane) fuel cells for supplying power, switchgear and the Nautos automation system. The electric propulsion units with permanent-magnet synchronous motors for supplying direct current are characterized by extremely low signatures, high availability, compact design and ease of operator control. A PEM fuel cell system supplies the energy, thus enabling air independent propulsion (AIP) when the submarines are submerged below water level. The AIP system comes from HDW, while Siemens is providing the fuel cell modules as well as the control and monitoring devices. The "Nautos" integrated automation system controls, monitors and coordinates all the engineering systems. Operator control and visualization are carried out from the

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engineering control console. This relieves the operator of all the routine tasks, facilitates operation of the submarines and increases their reliability and safety. The scope of supply also includes submarine-specific switchgear, electronic documentation, a pier monitoring system and a shore test facility.

The equipment being supplied by Siemens is the latest technology for non-nuclear submarines. After orders received from Germany, Italy, Greece and Korea in preceding years, Siemens has now been contracted to equip a total of 15 (16 counting the option) conventional submarines with this innovative technology.



The new Chilean submarine **O'Higgins** started sea trials and seen here in April 12th, the new submarine is built at the DCN Cherbourg yard and is of the new "**Scorpène**" type.

Photo : Jacques Carney ©

D: 1,668 tons surf./1,908 tons sub. **S:** . . . kts surf./20+ kts sub.

Dim: 66.40 × 6.20 × 5.8 (surf.)

A: 6 bow 533-mm TT (18 DCN-WASS Black Shark wire-guided torpedoes and Aérospatiale SM 39 Exocet missiles)

Electronics: Radar: 1 Kelvin-Hughes Type 1007 nav./surf. search

Sonar: Thales . . . suite, with passive flank and towed arrays

EW: ArgoSystems AR-900 intercept

M: diesel electric: 4 MTU diesels (840 bhp each), Jeumont axial-flux permanent magnet electric motor; 1 prop; . . . shp

Range: 6,500/8 surf.; 550/4 sub. **Endurance:** 50 days **Crew:** 6 officers, 26 enlisted

Hidden depths

HMS Rame Head is past retirement age. For the last four years, the 10,000-ton escort vessel has sat at anchor in Portsmouth harbour patiently enduring Royal Marine teams testing out their assault techniques. She's due to be decommissioned, but Orkney dive boat operators aim to spare her the indignity of the breakers yard - they intend to give her a warrior's burial in Scapa Flow which will boost visitor numbers to the area through watersports.

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Around 4,000 sports divers visit Orkney every year, and diving instructors, including Amy Cromarty from Scapa Scuba, greet the idea of a theme park style wreck with enthusiasm.

"It's a brilliant scheme," says Cromarty. "It'll open up a new niche where wreck diving can be accessible to less experienced folk, while more qualified divers can penetrate right inside a vessel, knowing the inlets and outlets comply with specified safety standards. It's the way forward, really."

Nobody's arguing about that. But in the UK the idea of legally causing a wreck means coming up against official bodies like the Crown Estate Commission, and for the Orkney Dive Boat Operators Association, turning their plans into reality has been a long slog.

"The biggest hurdle has been the question of liability," says secretary Bob Anderson, "but finding the Rame Head has provided answers to a lot of official questions. She has a sister ship which has been sunk in Canada and they've established a set of standards over there, so there's protocol we can follow since we're dealing with the same class of vessel".

Liability can be limited, he says, by having a properly costed business plan outlining the financial implications of cleaning the vessel and removing all hydrocarbons, as well as complying with a long list of safety measures. Seven figure costings to ensure this all happens will be followed by five figure insurance premiums.

"Yes, it is a daunting prospect, but it's coming together at last and we're really looking forward to getting everything up and running," he adds.

The present-day plans to scuttle warships in Scapa Flow are far removed from the last time this happened. When Admiral Ludwig von Reuter consigned the German High Seas Fleet to the bottom of the sea at the end of the First World War in 1919, the idea was to stop the British from using captured ships for their own navy. In turn, the British made a fortune out of breaking up the sunken vessels and selling them for scrap. Nobody considered the environmental aspects of 74 rusting hulks full of fuel and averaging 20,000 tons littering the seabed in an enclosed anchorage. Talking about hydrocarbons was confined to people in science labs. And insurance for divers stripping the wrecks wasn't even a consideration.

Fifty years of salvage left three battleships and four light cruisers out of the original 74 ships. They formed the backbone of Orkney's lucrative tourism diving industry over the next 30 years. By the end of the century, they were still a huge attraction, but after 80 years on the seabed the deteriorating wrecks weren't generating the excitement they once had.

"There's a limit to how much you can milk history," says Orkney diving operator John Thornton.

New attractions had to be added to beat off competition from a rapidly expanding international diving market and local dive operators decided that combining conservation with diving theme parks was the way forward.

"We could see that creating a safe habitat for wildlife by sinking wrecks was a good way of boosting tourism in an environmentally conscious day and age," says Thornton.

Former director of harbours and local councillor Bob Sclater agreed it was a feasible option, and so did other councillors. "There are 50 square miles of water out there in Scapa Flow, and provided a wreck complied with all the procedures for cleaning and de-contaminating, it could work."

In 2000, Heriot Watt University undertook a feasibility study, and stories circulated about a Second World War destroyer lying in Newcastle, ready for the taking.

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"We knew there were a lot of hurdles to overcome, but we hadn't reckoned on the obstructions the Crown Estate Commission would put in our path," says Thornton. "They wrote letters about responsibility for removing the wreck if things collapsed; about liability for this, for that, and for the other."

Meanwhile, at the other end of the country, a similar group have just successfully fought an equally lengthy battle to sink **HMS Scylla** in Whitsand Bay near Plymouth.

"It took us five years, but we did it," says organiser Nick Murns, who visited Orkney earlier this year to give first-hand advice. "We've been up and running less than a year, but already we've seen an increase in divers and we reckon it'll add a further £1 million to the local economy annually."

Anderson agrees. "The German wrecks are a unique attraction, but the thing about a custom-made wreck is that you get to choose the positioning, the depth and the tidal conditions. You've got a controlled environment and you can reduce the diving load on the existing wrecks. In 20 or 30 years' time there won't be a diving industry up here if we don't do that."

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SHIPYARD NEWS



Monday April 25th the Breskens KNRM lifeboat **ZEEMANSHOOP** is expected at the DE HAAS shipyard in Maassluis for a maintenance period, the lifeboat **CHRISTIEN** replaced the **ZEEMANSHOOP** in Breskens

Photo : Henk de Winde ©

Conversion of Normand Clipper

Ulstein Verft is currently working on a contract to convert Solstad's cable-laying vessel **Normand Clipper** into a pipe-laying and offshore construction vessel. The conversion work is as extensive as the building of a new platform supply vessel and the rebuilding will be finished by the end of May when the vessel will go straight to work in the English sector.

Shipyards to bid for two Navy contracts

TWO Birkenhead shipyards, including the former Cammell Laird site, said yesterday they were considering bids to build or assemble sections of two Royal Navy aircraft carriers.

Southampton-based A&P, owner of the Cammell Laird yard, and Northwestern Shiprepairers and Shipbuilders are both looking for a piece of the contracts, worth a total of £3bn.

The 50,000-tonne vessels - the **Queen Elizabeth** and the **Prince of Wales** - are scheduled to enter service in 2012 and 2015. A&P said any work could create "significant employment opportunities" for the yard which once employed thousands of people. The Ministry of Defence said the yard has the experience, facilities and people capable of working on its Future Carrier Programme.

A&P's other yards in Southampton and Hebburn in the North East also have the capacity to build sections of the new carriers. A spokesman said: "A&P has been identified by the MoD as one of the organisations who have the people, experience and facilities to bring the project to a successful conclusion by 2015." MoD officials say the vessels could be built in five super blocks at separate dry docks, then floated to another location for assembly.

A&P confirmed its Birkenhead dry dock is big enough to build a super block. Northwestern's planning manager Alf Povell said last night that it was a natural progression for the firm to move from working on smaller to larger vessels. He said: "The major parts of the work haven't yet gone out to tender, but we would definitely be interested." Mr Povell added that any work could be done here on Merseyside and at the firm's other site in Glasgow.

Northwestern, which is 50% owned by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, was started by former Cammell Laird director John Syvret after the firm's collapse in 2001. Just weeks ago, it won three major Ministry of Defence contracts worth a total of £4m. The company is one of the UK's leading ship repair and conversion companies and employs a 250-strong workforce.

Hyundai Heavy orders up 14%

Hyundai Heavy Industries Co, the world's largest shipbuilder, said it won 14 per cent more contracts for building ships, engines, production platforms and other engineering products in March than a year earlier.

Hyundai Heavy won contracts valued at US\$1.9 billion in March, compared with US\$1.7 billion the previous year, the Ulsan, South Korea-based company said in a filing to the Korea Stock Exchange.

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CMA CGM wil in Antwerp Gateway

De Franse rederij CMA CGM wil deze week de onderhandelingen afronden om een minderheidsaandeel in de containerterminal Antwerp Gateway te nemen.

De Fransen zouden na P&O Ports, P&O Nedlloyd, Cosco Pacific en de haven van Duisburg de vijfde aandeelhouder worden. De website ci-online meldde begin deze week dat het akkoord zo goed als rond is. P&O Ports wil geen commentaar geven voor er een officieel persbericht is.

New island ferry routes launched

A delegation of French dignitaries will arrive in Guernsey on Thursday to launch a new ferry link between the Bailiwick and France. [Manche Isles Express](#) will run two services starting this summer.

The first ferry will run between Guernsey, Alderney and Dielette. The second will provide routes from Sark, Jersey and Carteret. The Bailiff, Deputy Minister and other States members will greet the 50-strong French delegation. The launch party will be at the Old Government House Hotel. One of the vessels, the [Marin Marie](#), will be in St Peter Port Marina from 1200 BST until 1600 on Thursday.

P&O Ned strengthens Brazil service

P&O Nedlloyd subsidiary Mercosul Line is to add another vessel to its Brazilian cabotage service and extend that service down to Montevideo in Uruguay. One of the main reasons for this extension and upgrade is the growth in the Argentine economy and its trade with Brazil. Montevideo is across the River Plate from Buenos Aires. P&O Nedlloyd is unlikely to go direct to Buenos Aires yet because costs are high, there is extra sailing time involved and the ports not efficient enough. Dick Meurs, general manager for P&O NedLloyd in Brazil, said that from June Mercosul Line would also be upgrading the frequency of the coastal service from every 14 days to every 10 days in order to offer a better service and also to serve the line's recently upgraded deep sea services from the East Coast of South America.

Plans drawn up for ferry connection from Kotka to Estonia

Russian island of Suursaari is hoped to be opened as intermediate port. Plans have been drawn up to open a ferry connection from the Finnish city of Kotka to the Estonian port of Sillamäe, close to the town of Narva. Talks on the project will continue today, Thursday, as the Estonian representatives arrive in Kotka.

The ferry connection is scheduled to be opened in the spring of 2006. The matters are slightly complicated by the plans to include the Russian island of Suursaari as an intermediate port.

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Suursaari was one of the eastern territories that Finland ceded to the Soviet Union at the end of the Continuation War in 1944. For a long time the island was totally closed to outside visitors. At present, landing on the island is possible but complicated, involving special permits from Russian authorities.

There have been negotiations about opening Suursaari for tourism for quite some time now. As a reaction to Estonia joining the European Union, Russia withdrew an almost finished agreement. Currently there are talks between the EU and Russia about the practicalities related to border-crossings.

"At the moment, these talks have stalled. Unfortunately nothing related to Suursaari can be considered a certainty, until it becomes reality", frets Pekka Linnainen, project manager of the ferry connection undertaking. Opening Suursaari for ferry passengers would require the establishing of an official frontier crossing point by the Russian government, and a proper harbour.

Linnainen believes finding funding for the harbour project will not be a problem once the related bureaucracy has been overcome. Depending on the amount of goodwill from the Russian side, the compulsory visas could also be replaced by so-called cruise visas. In Kotka, the proposed ferry connection to Estonia is part of a larger project to enliven the old city harbour.

"There are plans to transform the old harbour area into an events venue offering cultural activities, sports, and education. A ferry connection to Estonia would invigorate the city. Adding a visit to Suursaari into the travel programme would act as an additional enticement", explains Henry Lindelöf, city manager of Kotka.

Calling in at Suursaari would also avail passengers of duty-free services. According to preliminary plans, traffic between Kotka and Sillamäe would commence in May 2006 on the car ferry St. Ola, with a capacity of 400 passengers and 140 cars.

Hazira LNG begins operations

SHELL'S Hazira LNG terminal will become operational when the LNG carrier **Gemmata** offloads at the new 2.5M tonnes per annum terminal. Shell is a strong opponent of the Director General of Shipping's draft guidelines which say that LNG carriers calling at India should be both Indian flagged and at least 26% owned by Indian companies. But, 10% of imports can be shipped in by foreign carriers, hence the arrival of the Singapore-flagged, Shell-owned and operated Gemmata. Unless the guidelines are amended, which were developed after work began on this LNG terminal, Shell India is expected to forge an Indian joint venture to comply. Shell has entered into a gas purchase agreement with Gujarat State Petroleum Corp, and is in final discussions with several other clients, including the Essar Group. Essar Steel has just become a partner in the company formed by Shell India to develop a container and bulk port at Hazira, which will be built alongside the LNG terminal.

MOVEMENTS

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The tug **WESTSUND** departed Friday afternoon with the loaded **EMSPONTON 2** from Rotterdam via St.Petersburg to Baku where the transport is expected to arrive at end of May, on the river the tug **EN AVANT 31** assisted the transport

Photo's : Piet Sinke ©



TONIGHT AT 23:00 HRS THE LATEST ADDITION TO THE P&O NEDLLOYD FLEET, NAMED "P&O NEDLLOYD MANET" IS EXPECTED IN ROTTERDAM EUROPOORT. THE MANET IS A SISTERSHIP OF THE MONDRIAAN WHICH WAS CHRISTENED LAST MONTH IN ROTTERDAM, AFTER BEEN DISCHARGED AND LOADED AT THE ECT-DELTA TERMINAL THE P&O NEDLLOYD IS EXPECTED TO DEPART AGAIN TUESDAY APRIL 26TH 04:00 HRS

AIRCRAFT / AIRPORT NEWS

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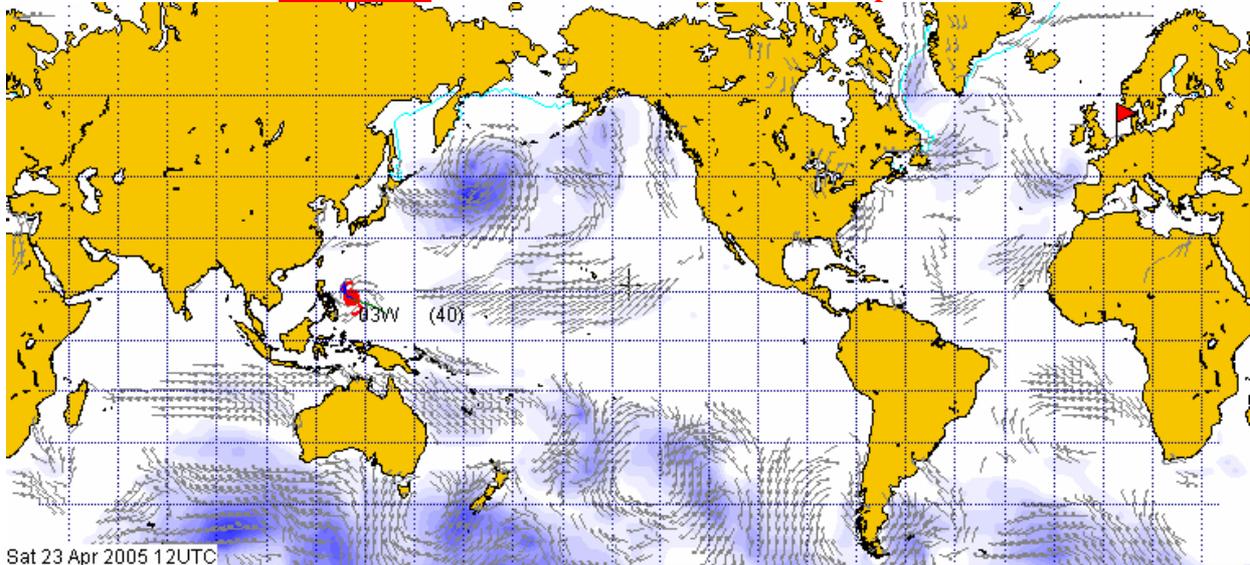
The first A380 double-deck super jumbo conducts tests at Toulouse-Blagnac airport, southwestern France on Friday April 22, 2005. The Airbus A380 is expected to make its first test flight next week. The most closely watched debut since the supersonic Concorde first roared down the runway in 1969, the A380 will fly straight into the history books as the first airliner bigger than the Boeing 747 jumbo, which debuted four decades ago

MARINE WEATHER

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Sat 23 Apr 2005 12UTC

Today's wind (+6Bft) and wave (+3m) chart. Created with SPOS, the onboard weather information & voyage optimisation system, used on over 500 vessels today.

PHOTO OF THE DAY

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The brandnew all aluminum high speed ferry **BENCHIJIGUA EXPRESS** which is enroute from the builders yard in Australia to the Canary Islands, at the picture the new ferry enters Cape Town to take bunkers
Photo : Ian Shiffman ©

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