

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2007 – 004



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The AL DEEBEL seen passing the Suez Canal – Photo : Jaap vd Meeberg ©

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EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



The **ORANJEBORG** seen enroute Rotterdam – Photo : Ferry van Rijsbergen ©

Tourist fury over ferry failures

A group of more than 40 disgruntled Gauteng tourists threatened to storm a Robben Island ferry by force on Monday after they were informed that they could not travel to the island because of mechanical problems with ageing vessels.

The group was among hundreds of tourists who had paid for their trips months ago but were turned away by the Robben Island Museum on Monday because it didn't have the capacity to run the tour.

The last trip to the island was made at 1pm on Monday, but a museum official hastily arranged another trip at 3pm to accommodate the Johannesburg group from Bahahlaodi Tours. The holidaymakers said they had booked the tour in April. Only three of six scheduled official trips were made to and from the island on Monday, carrying about 140 passengers a time. The problem has persisted since last Thursday.

Robben Island Museum spokesperson Shoni Khangala said the 50-year-old boats could not cope with tourist volumes.

"We are not happy with what has happened, but it is the reality of the situation that the historic boats can't cope with peak season demand." Khangala said a new ferry, which would carry 300 passengers at a time, would be ready for service by March.



Ferries moored at Robben island – Photo : Piet Sinke ©

When the Cape Argus visited the **Robben Island Gateway** at the **V&A Waterfront** at midday on Monday, queues of irate tourists were told that, at best, they could expect a refund for the R180 ticket.

Officials made regular announcements that the next available trip to the island was January 12 - too late for many.

Tour operators and tourists were upset that they had not been timeously informed about the breakdowns.



"It costs us R70 000 to bring this group here and thousands of rands more for the hotel. They did not come here for Table Mountain; they came here for Robben Island. We will go by force if we have to," said Johannes Mazibuko, the tour leader of Bahahlaodi Tours.

Photo : Piet Sinke ©

Basetsana Raborifi, a teacher from Evaton, said she had put all her savings into making her first trip to Cape Town. She planned to take photos for her Grade 4 pupils, who would probably never get

the opportunity to visit the island.

The Naidoo and Govender families from Durban had extended their first trip to Cape Town by a day in the hope of doing the tour, but were turned away for the second time yesterday.

Their original booking on Thursday was also cancelled. Among the spurned tourists yesterday were four family members from Perth, Australia, who said they were unlikely to visit Cape Town again and so would be unable to visit the famous island.

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V&A Waterfront spokeswoman Maureen Thomson said yesterday that the company would take up the issue with the **Robben Island Museum** if it was not delivering a satisfactory service as a tenant. "We will try to find out what they plan to do to improve the situation," she said. "At this time of year, it is all about service and planning."

Mechanical problems have dogged the ferries of the museum since it ended its contract with a private ferry company in September. Khangala said the museum could not issue a new contract to hire vessels in the interim without a tender process.



The editor received more pictures of the launch of the **PRA-1 jacket** by Heerema during the last day of 2006. On top the **HUSKY** and **RETRIEVER** seen getting ready for the launch with the **THIALF** in the background, and at the picture below the empty barge is seen after the launch – **Photo's : via Henny de Vries o/b Thialf**



Weer twaalf overlevenden schipbreuk veerboot gevonden

De Indonesische marine heeft woensdag twaalf overlevenden gevonden van de schipbreuk van vier dagen geleden in de Java Zee. De twaalf hebben zich in de nacht van vrijdag op zaterdag, toen hun veerboot in een zware storm verging, op een onbemand olieplatform weten te hijsen. Volgens een woordvoerder van de marine zijn de twaalf, allen mannen, verzwakt, maar er verder redelijk aan toe.

Tot dusverre zijn rond de tweehonderd van de ongeveer vierhonderd opvarenden van de veerboot die vermist werden levend gevonden. Er wordt door reddingswerkers met boten en vliegtuigen en door vissers nog altijd gezocht naar overlevenden.

Een deel van de overlevenden zat in reddingsboten. Velen wisten zich vast te klampen aan brokstukken van het schip die op de golven dreven. Ook werden mensen gered die zwemmend de kust hadden weten te bereiken, zei minister van verkeer Hatta Radjasa.

Medewerkers van het ziekenhuis van Rembang hebben tenten opgezet om als nood-mortuarium dienst te doen. Inmiddels zijn ook tientallen lijken gelokaliseerd.

De veerboot **Senopati Nusantara** was in de nacht van vrijdag op zaterdag vanuit Kumai op Borneo onderweg naar Semarang op Java, maar verging op driehonderd kilometer ten noordoosten van Jakarta. Overlevenden vertelden dat passagiers vochten om zwemvesten. Het schip sloeg opeens over naar een kant en de tv en de ijskasten vielen om. Volgens een overlevende duurde het ongeveer twee uur voordat het schip volledig was gezonken.

Het schip was in 1990 in Japan gebouwd en geschikt om 850 passagiers te vervoeren. Er waren vrijdag 628 mensen aan boord. Volgens de autoriteiten was het schip in goede staat en is de ramp te wijten aan de slechte weersomstandigheden. Indonesië kampt al wekenlang met hevige regenval en harde windstoten. Er hebben zich verscheidene overstromingen en grondverschuivingen voorgedaan. Ook zijn verscheidene ongelukken op zee gemeld.

Vijf vissers gered na 40 dagen op zee

Vijf Costa Ricaanse vissers zijn zondag gered na veertig dagen op de Stille Oceaan te hebben rondgedobberd, meldt het ministerie van Openbare Veiligheid van Costa Rica.

Kapitein Gregorio Collado (41) en vier andere vissers in de leeftijd van 15 tot 18 jaar kregen op 23 november motorpech met hun boot. De kustwacht van Costa Rica zocht enkele dagen lang naar het vaartuig, maar zonder resultaat. Op 31 december werd de vissersboot op 200 km buiten de kust van El Salvador opgepikt door een Pools schip. De vissers zijn in goede gezondheid, maar ze zijn naar het ziekenhuis overgebracht voor onderzoek, aldus het ministerie. De vijf overleefden hun avontuur door het meegebrachte water en voedsel te rantsoeneren en vooral veel vis te eten.

CASUALTY REPORTING

Ro-ro refloated

A diving inspection is underway on the 4,636-gt cargo ro-ro **Tananger** (built 1980) after the vessel was pulled off rocks at Bjoa Fjord south of Bergen.

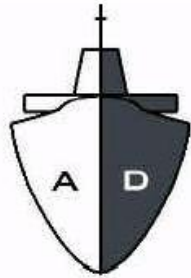
The cause of the grounding, which happened in the early hours of today, is still being investigated by the Norwegian authorities. The **Tananger** is part of the fleet of Bergen based shipping company, Rederiet Harald Saetre, operating in the Nor Lines service. The vessel has protection and indemnity cover from the Oslo based Skuld club.

Nor Lines runs a Norwegian coastal liner service with vessels also trading to Sweden and Denmark.

NAVY NEWS

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FIFTH MEKO A200 FOR SOUTH AFRICA ?

According to reports the South African Navy is a step closer towards placing an order with the German shipbuilding consortium for a fifth Meko A200-type frigate, following the nod by government to reopen negotiations with the

German consortium. Two of the four frigates from the original order, **SAS Amatola** and **SAS Isandlwana** have been commissioned into service with the navy and the other two, **SAS Spioenkop** and **SAS Mendi**, which are fitting out at Simon's Town, are due to follow during the course of this year.

The **SAS SPIOENKOP** seen fitting out at Simonstown Naval base.
Photo: Piet Sinke ©



Navy vessel' largely for the benefit of African navies unable to operate such ships on their own accord. It is not known whether this option still exists or whether South Africa wants to take it up. An addition Meko type frigate will cost considerably more than the R1.5 Billion price tag for each of the first four – up to R2.5 Bn has been mentioned.

The South African Navy has also expressed some interest in a new support type vessel along the lines of a helicopter carrier capable of also carrying a marine contingent of troops. The thinking in this regard is that South Africa will increasingly require facilities for peace-keeping exercises in the future and requires naval vessels to help accomplish this.

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Caspian repair yard for Kazakhstan

Caspian Services, Inc. says it has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a vessel maintenance and repair facility with joint venture partners Nico International and Kazmortransflot JSC. Nico International is a Dubai based international ship repair and ship building company with 30 years experience in the industry. Kazmortransflot JSC is the state marine transportation company of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The maintenance facility will be built at a marine base currently under development by Caspian Services at the port of Bautino on the Caspian Sea coast of Kazakhstan and the joint venture will become the first tenant operating at Caspian Services' Bautino marine base.

The maintenance facility will be designed to provide dry docking and floating repair capabilities for vessels up to 60 meters in length and 600 tons. The maintenance facility will also have the capability to dry berth eight vessels at a time. Nico International will provide the operational management of the maintenance facility on behalf of the joint venture.

John Scott, COO of Caspian Services, commented, "We are pleased to be part of the joint venture with Nico International and Kazmortransflot to develop a key maintenance facility on the Caspian Sea. We believe their interest in becoming our partners in this joint venture confirms our belief in the important contribution that marine repair and maintenance services will provide to the rapidly developing offshore oil and gas industry in the Kazakh sector of the Caspian Sea."

Caspian Services, Inc. is an oilfield service company providing a broad range of services in the Caspian Sea region of western Kazakhstan. The Company provides geophysical and seismic data acquisition and interpretation services; maintains a fleet of vessels that it commissions to oil and gas exploration companies engaged in exploration and development activities in the north Caspian Sea and other oilfield services such as lodging and desalinated water in the Port of Bautino. The company has corporate offices in Almaty and Aktau, Kazakhstan and Salt Lake City, Utah.

ABG bags cement carrier order

India's ABG Shipyard Ltd has secured a \$9.9 million repeat order, from Gujarat Ambuja Cements Ltd (GACL). It is for construction of a 4,000 dwt self loading/ unloading bulk cement carrier.

GACL, currently owns seven vessels, all built by ABG. This will be its eighth ABG-built vessel. The 97 m vessel is slated for delivery by June 30, 2008

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The SD-14 **NORDANA** seen passing the Suez Canal – Photo : Jaap van de Meeberg ©

The SD-14 type general cargo ship **NORDANA** served under a lot of names during her live, built as the **LLOYD ARGENTINA** under yard number 145 at the CCN yard in Niteroi (Brazil) during 1981, the 14806 DWT ship was renamed **MIT RIO DE JANEIRO** during 1989 and in 1990 she was renamed again in **STELLA F.**, during 1997 she got the name **ANTARES III** followed by the name **LADY STEEL** during 2002, in 2004 the 141 mtr long vessel was renamed in **GASPARD**, followed by the name **DALIA 1** during September 2006, in November 2006 the vessel got her present name **NORDANA** and at the picture the vessel is seen passing the Suez canal enroute from Turkey to Port Sudan.

Consortium wil cruiseterminal in Scheveningen

Scheveningen moet de grootste cruiseschiphaven van Nederland worden. Dat vinden althans AM Vastgoed, woningcorporatie Vestia en cruiseterminalspecialist Züblin Grenada.

Zij hebben hun plan vlak voor de kerst aan de Haagse wethouder Marnix Norder (Bouwen en Wonen) gepresenteerd. In de toekomst moeten per jaar minimaal honderd cruiseschepen de Scheveningse haven aandoen als het aan het consortium ligt.

Door de ideale ligging aan zee en centrale positie voor excursies in de Randstad moet de Haagse haven de concurrentie met Amsterdam en Rotterdam makkelijk aankunnen, legt Dick van Dijk dinsdag namens de bouwpartners uit.

De gemeente Den Haag is naarstig op zoek naar een nieuwe bestemming voor het Norfolkterrein in de Scheveningse haven, nadat het overslagbedrijf eind vorig jaar naar Vlaardingen verhuisde. Op uitnodiging van Norder presenteerden vier bouwmaatschappijen afgelopen najaar hun visie op de herontwikkeling. De wethouder noemde ze interessant, beloofde niets aan de vier ontwikkelaars en zei begin 2007 met een eigen plan te komen.

Het nieuwe bouwconsortium vond dat er in de vier plannen te weinig aandacht was voor het maritieme aspect, dat samen met de Norfolkline eigenlijk verdwijnt. De bouwers willen de toegangsgeul verdiepen om de haven toegankelijk te maken voor de grote cruiseschepen.

Met het gebaggerde zand kan zeewaarts een nieuw stuk land gecreëerd worden. Daar komt dan onder meer de haven voor de cruiseschepen, 1500 (socialesector) woningen, een cultureel centrum en natuurgebied.

Een woordvoester van Norder liet dinsdag weten dat de wethouder het plan serieus gaat bekijken. In de loop van januari presenteert Norder zijn eigen visie, met als basis de vier eerdere plannen en dit laatste idee.

French line introduces new Asia to Africa service

The French shipping line CMA CGM and its subsidiary Delmas has announced the introduction of a new service on the Asia – Africa route with the launch of a third line to be known as Africa Express (AFEX).

According to CMA CGM the new line will be dedicated to north Asian markets while at the same time the group's WAX (West Africa Express) services are to undergo further reorganisation. This involves reallocating some ships and calls between the three loops as well as commissioning a 9th ship on the WAX line.

The new services will be organised as follows:

Service dedicated to Northern Asia

The new AFEX service will deploy initially eight 1,700/2,000-TEU ships and will link Northern Asia (Northern China, South Korea) to the centre and north of West Africa with calls in Port Louis/ Mauritius and Durban/ South Africa en route.

Service dedicated to Central and South China

The new WAX service will deploy ten 1,700/2,000 TEU-ships directly serving the major ports in the centre and north of West Africa: Ghana, Benin, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire.

Service dedicated to central and south Asia

The new ASAF service will connect the south and centre of West Africa (Angola, Congo, Brazzaville, Gabon, Cameroon) with nine 1,700-TEU ships.

The changes come into effect in early January 2007 and will make possible an extended coverage of the markets in question; will speed up transit times through direct services and will increase frequency, with a view to rolling out 3 weekly services in the longer term, says the company.

"By introducing a new collaborative model between highly complementary lines and brands, CMA CGM and its subsidiary Delmas intend to consolidate their service offering and improve the quality of their services between Asia and West Africa in order to meet the strong demand for container transport triggered by the boom of Chinese exports to those markets."



The Police patrol vessel **P 6** seen operating in Rotterdam-Europoort

Photo : Jan Oosterboer ©

First Ship Built for Greenland Cruising

Norwegian Coastal Voyage's **MS Fram**, currently being built by Italian shipyard Fincantieri, is on schedule for its maiden voyage in April, 2007. The eight-deck ship is the first cruise ship built exclusively for sailing in Greenland from May through September.

The ship is named after the polar ship built and used by Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen on a three-year expedition around Greenland in the late 1800s.



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FROM TUG TO YACHT



Top, launched as the tug **DIMANT** during 1974 at the **IHC Verschure yard** in Amsterdam under number 819, the tug was renamed during 1976 in **GIGANT** under which name the tug sailed until 1995 when the 73.5 mtr tug was renamed in **GIANT** until 2000 when the vessel was renamed in **GIANT 1** and converted into an exploration yacht.

Photo above : collectie sleepvaartmuseum - Photo below : Jaap van de Meeberg ©



Da Nang receives 750 tourists on first day of 2007

On the first day of the New Year 2007, the central city of Da Nang received 750 international tourists, which is being considered a good omen for the city's tourism development in 2007.

On the morning of January 1, 2007, Tien Sa Port in Da Nang City received the first cruise of 2007, the Italian Costamarina, and the nearly 750 international tourists on board.

The first callers of the year were warmly received by Da Nang leaders. After docking at Tien Sa port, the travellers were lead to Champa Museum, Ngu Hanh Son (five mountains) in Da Nang, Hoi An ancient town, My Son Sanctuary and Old Imperial Capital of Hue.



The **AMADEA** spotted in the Suez canal – Photo : Jaap van de Meeberg ©

In 2006, Da Nang received 774,000 tourists, an increase of 17.4% over 2005, of which international tourists accounted for 33% (up by 13.2%). They came primarily from Japan, Russia, the US, EU and ASEAN nations. The room occupancy was reportedly at 60-65%, up by 3.4% over the previous year. Many international cruise firms, including **Asuka**, **Oriana**, **Pacific Venus**, **The World**, and **Amadea**, have had ships dock at Da Nang's port. Da Nang plans to open a new international air route linking Da Nang with Macau in an effort to promote tourism in the city.

Big international groups are planning to kick off a lot of big investment projects in tourism in the city with the capital of several hundred million dollars each. These include Vinacapital's \$200mil trade centre - office - hotel - apartment complex, the \$150mil Hoa Hai golf course - sea resort complex, and Indochina Land Holding's \$60mil high-grade resort. The Republic of Korea's Daewon is also planning to build the Da Phuoc golf course and an urban area which has the estimated investment capital of more than \$300mil.

Da Nang is striving to attract 2mil tourists per year by 2010, including 800,000 international tourists, which will represent the annual growth rate of 15-17%. Also on January 1, 2007, the Da Nang port also held the ceremony on unloading the first consignment of goods at the port in 2007. It was the first container consignment of the Me Linh ship.

In 2006, the total volume of goods going through Da Nang port was 2,370mil tonnes, an increase of 5% over the previous year. 2006 was also the year the Da Nang Port received the biggest volume of goods going through the port. Da Nang Port Director Nguyen Thu said that Da Nang port was striving to reach the growth rate of 12% in 2007.

Olympic orders two large AHTS/construction vessels from Ulstein Verft

Olympic Shipping in Norway has ordered two large anchor handling/construction vessels from Ulstein Verft.

The vessels are of the ULSTEIN A122 design from Ulstein Design, which will be the largest anchor handling vessels ever built and delivered by Ulstein. The value of the contract is approximately Nkr 1.3 billion.

"We are satisfied with the two ships we received earlier from Ulstein, and have two newbuildings under construction there now. All of these vessels are operating, or will operate, in anchor handling and subsea operations. Now, as we order two combination vessels, it is to strengthen our skills towards the market we operate in," said Stig Remøy, President of Olympic Shipping.

"The vessels are environmentally friendly because they have Clean Design and halve the energy consumption in important operations. Much labour has been put into creating safer working conditions on deck. These are important focus areas to us".

Gunvor Ulstein, CEO of Ulstein group, said she was "very happy" that Olympic has once again chosen Ulstein to build advanced anchor handling vessels.

"The new contracts demonstrates that the solid relationship between Olympic and Ulstein is important when developing vessels for tomorrow's demanding marine operations. Ulstein's strength lies in keeping design, engineering, electronic and production in one group. Being able to coordinate our resources to create projects like these make us an interesting cooperating partner," she said.

The vessels will be the first with a hybrid propulsion system developed by Ulstein Design. The hybrid system allows the vessels to switch between diesel mechanical and diesel electric propulsion, and to combine the two in hybrid mode in order to achieve maximum pulling power. This makes the vessels more economical and environmentally efficient.

"The ULSTEIN A122 is a multi-purpose vessel for many different operations," said managing director in Ulstein Verft Karsten Sævik. "A vessel of this kind spends a considerable amount of time waiting for its next job, and then there is much to save by using diesel electric propulsion. When the vessel sails in transit, it is an advantage if it uses its diesel mechanical propulsion as it loses less propulsion effect at medium speeds."

"When Olympic gets the new vessels in March and October 2009, they will receive highly modern vessels to execute demanding jobs. Both vessels will be equipped with a highly impressive winch from Rolls-Royce with a huge 500 ton drum and two 450 ton drums. The vessels are prepared for a 250 ton offshore crane and two different kinds of A-frames. They have DP2 (dynamic positioning) and an ROV garage. The vessels can accommodate 68 workers," explained Harald Møller, deputy managing director at Ulstein Verft.

The Ulstein group will also undertake extensive work on the electrical side: Ulstein Elektro will deliver ULSTEIN COM, ULSTEIN IAS, switchboards, desks, motor control centres (MCC), engine starters and navigation and communication components for the newbuilds.

The vessels will be 93.8m long and 23m wide, with bollard pull of more than 250 tons.

Angola: Cabinda - Port Handles Over 200,000 Tons of Cargo in 2006

Angola's northern Cabinda port last year handled some 230,000 different cargos, and a total of 13,387 containers, said over the weekend the institution's director, Osvaldo Lobo de Nascimento, at a ceremony of yearend compliments.

The official noted that the production plan, initially scheduled for 2006, reached 197,000 tons of cargos and 12,220 containers, but the number increased thanks to the current dynamics and security conditions in mooring and unloading platforms.

"By the half of 2006, we had to correct these indicators, expecting to reach, in late 2006, more than 210,000 tons of cargo and over 13,000 containers," he stressed.

Port's director also recognized the commitment of Cabinda Port Company (EPC) workers and others working directly with operations of that institutions as having contributed to the attainment of satisfactory levels.

He also underlined that by 2007, Cabinda Port will carry out some projects of impact for strengthening security of ships.

According to him, until late 2008, local port's management will obtain certifications in two leading points of the Port, which includes the Quality in Maritime security and environmental management.

Crystal Pool sold

The Finnish Crystal Pool which specialises in operating chemical carriers in severe ice conditions is to be sold to the UK based company Euroceanica.

Five stainless steel chemical carriers are also changing hands as part of the transaction which is due to be completed before the end of February.

Euroceanica plans to expand Crystal Pool with the immediate addition of a further two ice class vessels with four newbuildings under construction for delivery from late 2008 also earmarked for the venture.



Photo : Piet Sinke ©

Crystal Pool specialises in carrying Russian chemical exports shipped under contracts of affreightment through Gulf of Finland ports, but the intention is to expand its business beyond its current trading focus. Some spot market deals also contribute to the 2m tonnes of hazardous cargo carried on Crystal Pool's ice class 1A vessels each year.

The Crystal Pool business is owned by former Finnish shipbuilder, Hollming, which is now mainly an engineering and marine equipment company. The value of the transaction has not been disclosed. Euroceanica is acquiring the 9,950-dwt **Crystal Topaz** and **Crystal Diamond** (both built 2006) and the 8,143-dwt **Crystal Amethyst**, **Crystal Emerald** and **Crystal Pearl** (all built 1994) from the end of 2006 with the sale of the Crystal Pool business due to be completed by 28 February.

The two Euroceanica ice class chemical carriers to be injected into the Crystal Pool operation are the 9,887-dwt **Euro Amaranto** (built 1999) and the 9,554-dwt **Euro Skye** (built 1998). Euroceanica said Crystal Pool's operations would remain in Helsinki and additional staff would be taken on in the near future to accommodate expansion. Vessel operations will continue as before. "This announcement further strengthens Euroceanica's chemical activities with one of the strongest brand names in the chemical sector. Crystal Pool Ltd has an excellent reputation for service and we

now have the critical mass needed to expand the business both in the Baltic and elsewhere, with a growing quality fleet and experienced organisation," said Euroceanica managing director, Peter Costalas. Following completion of the deal Euroceanica UK will own and operate a fleet of 12 vessels with the newbuildings set to bring further expansion.



The **ABEILLE PIRIAC** seen in the port of Brest – Photo : Jacco van Nieuwenhuyzen (c)

End to Piraeus Port strike

The Piraeus Port is open again after the dispute between OLP and the workers unions has entered into an agreement after the Minister of Merchantile Marine Manolis Kefalogiannis managed to postpone the strike for a time of 4-months, until new agreement come into light. Under this agreement the Ministry postpones the new measures of selling OLP to the private sector, under the pressure of foreign container companies imposing increased charges in all cargoes. This is an uplifting event for Piraeus Port as it suffered great losses from the consecutive strike.

Durban port manager suspended

In yet another surprise development involving senior port management at a South African port, port manager Basil Ndlovu found himself on unexpected leave a couple of days before Christmas, with no confirmation if or when he will return to duty. Ndlovu replaced Nosipho Sithole as port manager at Durban in 2003 after Sithole was transferred on promotion to head office in Johannesburg. Before that Ndlovu had seven years of experience as port manager at Richards Bay and Saldanha ports.

One of the regular complaints of port users is that, for whatever reason, management at the ports seldom has a chance to settle in before it is changed. "There are some highly qualified and competent people but unfortunately many don't get the opportunity of gaining the necessary experience in the ports before they are either head-hunted or they leave for other reasons," Ports & Ships has been told by several important NPA clients. The reason for Ndlovu's suspension (or unexpected leave) has not been made public and Ports & Ships has so far been unable to obtain any official comment. According to sources a letter was circulated among staff on or about 20 December advising that he was going on leave until further notice, so we don't know the reason and nor do we know how long this unexpected leave of absence will last. Or indeed if he will return.

In the interim Mr Ricky Bhikraj has been appointed as acting port manager of Durban. Other suspensions and unexpected 'leaves' involving senior port personnel in the National Ports Authority have lasted months before becoming either permanent or seeing the person concerned return to duty.

December is becoming something of a fateful month for senior Durban port managers. Durban Harbourmaster Captain Derrick Cooke found himself on the receiving end of a 'don't come back' letter a few days before Christmas about four or five years ago, as did port engineer Pat Raw in late December 2004.

SOFALA OFF-CHARTER



The **SOFALA** seen moored in the port of Walvis bay – Photo : Piet Sinke ©

One of the regular coasters in service between Durban and the Mozambique coast, Ocean Africa Container Line's **SOFALA**, has gone off charter and has been renamed **ADRIA CELESTE**. The 8,386-gt container ship now flies the Italian flag and will presumably soon depart African waters for the Mediterranean.

The coaster has been replaced on the OACL service by **MAI RICKMERS**, another vessel from the Rickmer Reederei group of Hamburg, Germany. **MAI RICKMERS** at 10,743-gt offers increased capacity for OACL on an expanding service and is set to become a regular sight in southern Africa ports.

MOVEMENTS

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AL HURREYA seen arriving in the port of Durban , Built at the Alexandria Shipyard in 2005, this Ro-Ro cargo ship is owned by the Egyptian Government, operated by Egyptian Shipbuilding and flies the flag of Egypt. She also called to top up her bunkers in Durban.

Photo : Shiphoto International ©

AIRCRAFT / AIRPORT NEWS

Helicopter maker picks Malaysia for S-E Asia hub

Italian-British helicopter manufacturer Agusta Westland, which has operated in Malaysia for more than 24 years, has chosen the country as its regional hub serving the South-East Asian region.

Fulvio Maurogiovanni, the company's vice-president for South-East Asia and China, said Agusta Westland was allocating up to RM60mil to upgrade its facility at the Subang airport into a full-fledged regional hub for maintenance, sales and service.

"We have already invested RM20mil to expand our facility in Subang into a regional hub," he said. When the facility went into full capacity this year, the company's investment would reach RM60mil, he told Bernama.

Maurogiovanni said Malaysia was attractive to Agusta Westland because of its strategic location in South-East Asia, its political stability, dynamic economy and favourable financial climate.

"We believe that Malaysia is well placed to serve as the hub for maintaining and servicing our helicopters regionally," he said.

He also said the setting up of the regional centre in Malaysia was testimony to Agusta Westland's commitment to support the Government to further grow the local aviation industry.

The full-fledged service centre in Subang, which will work in synergy with other Agusta Westland's hubs in China, Japan and Australia, is expected to begin operations in early 2007.

Maurogiovanni said that if there was a need to expand, the company would consider opening a service centre in another location. At present, the existing Subang service centre is maintaining an **A109** helicopter for the Malaysian armed force.

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The facility in Subang, managed by the company's unit Agusta Westland Sdn Bhd, will have two huge hangars, complex office, training room, presentation room, fire operational room, workshop and work storage for tools and spare parts. Maurogiovanni said Agusta Westland would recruit local engineers to be in charge and repair all its helicopters in the region, including Malaysia.

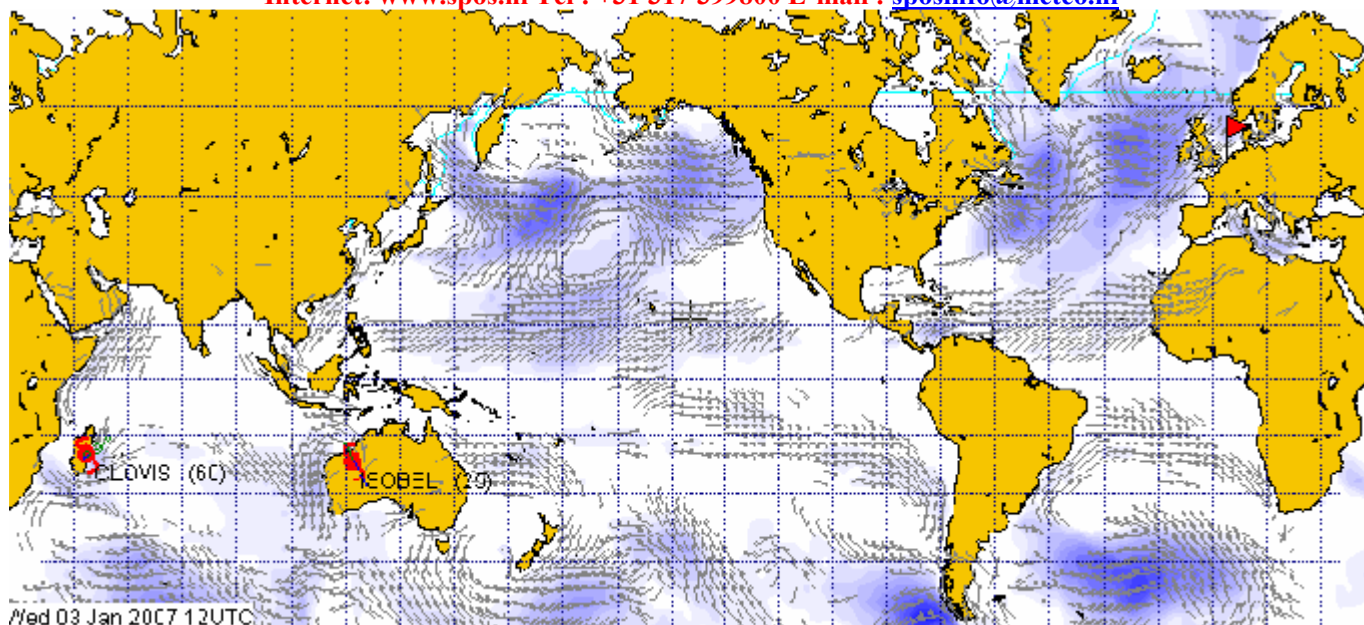
He said the company would also be looking into expanding its customer base in Malaysia, which comprises mainly the Government, to include the private sector and individuals.

MARINE WEATHER

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The **ABEILLE SPARTEL** seen during trials in Rotterdam area.
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