

## DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2007 – 021



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News reports received from readers and Internet News articles taken from various news sites.

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**Artist impression of the EURODAM at present under construction at the Fincantiere shipyard in Marghera (Italy)**

**Photo : HAL ©**

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## EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



The 1996 built **WEISSHORN** seen in Rio Grande (Brazil).  
Photo : Marcelo Vieira ©

## SMIT Contracted to Salvage Dockwise Vessel

Dockwise has contracted SMIT Salvage to salvage the **Mighty Servant 3**. Dockwise has chosen Smit for their experience and the fact that they have equipment ready near the North Angolan coast where the vessel is resting at the sea bottom in approx. 203 ft. of water after it sank in December 2006. Over the last weeks SMIT Salvage already conducted a complete diving survey to investigate the situation and remove the vessel's bunker oil and pollutants that were on board. Now all the bunker oil is removed, the salvage operation can start. The **Mighty Servant 3** will be recovered with the aid of the sheerlegs cranebarge **Taklift 7** and by pressurizing the various compartments with compressed air. The salvage operation will likely take a few weeks. The cause of the incident will be further investigated once the vessel is lifted. As soon as the vessel is fully recovered Dockwise intends to award a repair contract to a yard still to be nominated. The company expects to have the vessel back in operation in the first quarter of 2008.

## Fairplay Towage strengthens its Rotterdam tug-fleet

„Fairplay Towage“ of Hamburg is further strengthening its fleet by chartering the former tug „MICHAEL“ of Johannsen & Sohn, Lübeck on a long-term bareboat-charter. The tug has just undergone some preparatory works such as repainting in the Fairplay-colours, reflagging procedures from German to Antigua-Barbuda-flag and renaming her to „FAIRPLAY XII“.



The „Fairplay XII“ after completion of her yard-stay in Rendsburg short before leaving for Rotterdam

Photo : Fairplay ©

Built 1994 at the J.G. Hitzler Yard in Lauenburg/Elbe she has served the Port of Lübeck ever since. However, the tug has also been a well known guest in the German Baltic ports of Wismar and Rostock, where she frequently was operating under the management of Fairplay's local office in Rostock. The „FAIRPLAY XII“ will forthwith be serving in the Port of Rotterdam as an additional tug to the existing Fairplay-fleet.

„Fairplay XII“ with an LOA/width of just under 30m/9,50m is a Schottel-driven ASD-tug (SRP 1010) with 41ts bollard pull. Two Deutz engines (SBA6M628) with a power output of 1250kW each produce a free running speed of 13kn. She is equipped with a single drum bow winch with max 400m of 42mm towing wire.

In April 2007, Fairplay Towage is expecting its first new Spanish built 60tbp harbour tug. The „Fairplay III“ is the 2nd tug out of a series of four units of which two are for URS Antwerp and two for Fairplay. Astilleros Armon will deliver the 4th tug „Fairplay I“ in late summer this year. Another pair of sisterships with 80 tons bollard pull – also built by Astilleros Armon - will follow in spring and autumn 2008.



**FAIRPLAY-Towage, one of Germany's leading tugboat-providers with a 100 years history is active in harbour-towage-services in the Port of Hamburg, River Elbe ports, German Baltic ports, in the Port of Rotterdam and in the Polish Port of Szczecin. Offshore-support services as well as worldwide towage services are further segments of Fairplay's core-business. Fairplay is a founding member of the "ARGE Kuestenschutz", a pool of the three largest German tugboat operators, providing the German Government with 3 ETVs stationed in the Northsea and the Baltic. Last but not least, Fairplay is 50% shareholder in the reputable Belgian towage- and salvage company URS, being active in Antwerp, all River Schelde-ports as well as Zeebrugge and Oostend.**

## **Winds Threaten Vessel Further**

Salvage teams are battling to secure a damaged container ship grounded off the English coast, with 200 tonnes of oil and other hazardous materials threatening the coastline.



The **MSC Napoli** was deliberately run aground in waters close to Sidmouth, southwest England, after it was damaged during a storm on Thursday. Gale force winds have frustrated the efforts of salvage crews to secure the vessel. Oil has spread across the water's surface.

Navy helicopters rescued the ship's 26 crew members in rough seas, 70 km off Lizard Point on England's southwest tip, shortly after it reported difficulties.

French maritime officials said the ship was carrying 1,700 tonnes of dangerous materials, including battery acid, explosive and flammable material.

The containers also hold motorcycles, car parts and oak barrels. Britain's transport department said more than 200 containers from the ship, which was listing at a 30-degree angle, slipped into the sea as new gales struck the English coast late Saturday.

Paul Coley, a maritime and coast guard spokesman, said two of the containers that went overboard contained hazardous materials including battery acid and perfume products. He said the risk they posed was "minimal".

He said: "About 200 tonnes of oil has been lost. We still believe that no major tanks have been breached."

Robin Middleton, the government's salvage adviser, said a greater threat was posed by the ship's 3,000 tonnes of diesel and fuel oil, some of which had leaked out through a crack in the vessel's port side.

Middleton said only one fuel tank appeared to be ruptured, with no more than 200 tonnes of oil likely to leak.

He said salvage workers would attempt to stabilise the ship to prevent it capsizing, pump out the fuel oil and remove the containers.

The 16-year-old vessel is registered in London and was last inspected by the coast guard agency in May 2005, when officials said it met safety standards.

## **Filipinos Held**

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Kidnappers grabbed seven foreign workers off a merchant ship Saturday (20 Jan) in the latest hostage-taking in Nigeria's restive southern oil-producing region, officials said. The expatriates are understood to be Filipino.



Photo : Ricardo van Liere ©

The ship, "**BACO Liner 2**", was stopped and boarded around 9:30 a.m. Saturday morning as it plied the Chanomi Creek, a tributary that connects the Escravos and Forcados Rivers. It reportedly was bound for Warri in Bayelsa State.

The militants who abducted the ship's crew members were said to be from Okorenkoko, the same group that kidnapped several Wilbros workers last years. Wilbros subsequently ceased working in Nigeria.

There are rumors among the expatriate community in Port Harcourt, that the ship was still occupied by militants as late as 8:00 pm local time last evening. The captain and some crew members were said to be held, but authorities have not verified those rumors. Many families of foreign workers in the Niger Delta states of River, Delta, and Bayelsa, left the area before Christmas.

Helicopters, normally used to ferry workers to and from offshore facilities have, for the most part, been grounded since the beginning of the year, due to the unusually long period of Harmattan winds the region is experiencing. The winds bring blowing sand storms to the delta. When visibility is decreased to under 1500 feet, flying is suspended.

Crew changes out of Port Harcourt and Onne Port are being performed by crew boats. This is considered somewhat risky because many boats have been attacked by militants near shore. Some boats working the Niger Delta are now carrying Nigerian Naval sailors armed with 50 caliber machine guns, according to workers in the Port Harcourt area.

Militants seeking to pressure the national government into giving more local control over the area's oil resources have stepped up kidnappings since launching a wave of attacks on oil facilities in early 2006 that have cut oil exports by Africa's biggest oil producer 25 percent.

A spokesman for Nigeria's Delta state, Ozoene Sheddy, said the seven workers were taken off a merchant ship as it traveled in the coastal region of swamps and creeks.

Sheddy couldn't give nationalities of the captives and had no further details. But Philippines nationals were believed among the captives, two private security officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak with journalists.

Militants behind dozens of kidnappings in recent months couldn't immediately be reached for comment on the latest incident.

Nearly 100 foreign hostages, mostly oil workers, have generally been released unharmed, usually after a ransom is paid. However, a Briton and a Nigerian died in crossfire during a gunbattle between militants and Nigerian security forces trying to free the hostages.

On Thursday, militants released five Chinese hostages and one Italian who had been taken in separate incidents. Two Italians and one Lebanese remained in captivity.

The conflict stems from the deep poverty that afflicts the people of the Niger River delta despite the area's production of tens of billions of dollars in oil revenue every year. Violence has cut oil production below 2 million barrels a day, compared to the previous 2.5 million.

## **Drunken Crew Blamed for grounding**

Drunk crewmembers have been blamed for running a ship aground off Latvia's north-western coast on Jan 21.

Latvia's naval coast guard service head Hermanis Cernovs told LNT television that five of the nine crewmembers of the Malta-registered ship were under the influence, including the captain.

"The weather conditions were good at the time, therefore the main reason of the accident is negligence of the crew," said Cernovs.

The small cargo ship **Nijord** ran aground at about 11 pm on Jan 21. The ship was carrying no cargo and had a small amount of fuel which did not leak. Nobody was injured in the accident.

Before the accident the crew of the ship had been warned to change course, but did not react to warnings and radio messages. Currently representatives of the coast guard service, border guard and police are on the ship, A tug-boat has also been sent to the place of the accident to tow the ship away.

Latvian Interior Minister Ivars Godmanis voiced his indignation on the second accident on the sea in the past days. He said in an interview to LNT on Monday morning that "it is dangerous to let these seamen out of the country".

Godmanis underscored that sailing the ship under the influence of alcohol must be criminally punished. In minister's words, if a person had been caught driving a car under such an influence, he would be arrested for 10 days and deprived of the driver's license for two years.



## **FEWER PIRACY ATTACKS FOR THIRD YEAR RUNNING**

IN an optimistic appraisal of the global piracy situation the International Maritime Bureau says: "More reporting and greater awareness leading to increased government reaction is proving a successful strategy in the battle against piracy." But it warns that the fall of the Islamic Courts in Somalia could lead to the return of piracy there.

Worldwide piracy attacks fell for the third year in a row according to the latest annual report from the ICC International Maritime Bureau.

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In 2006, there were 239 attacks on ships, compared to 276 in 2005 and 329 in 2004 says the annual report, which is based on statistics compiled by the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) in Kuala Lumpur.

This shows a systematic decline not witnessed at any time since the PRC began its analysis in 1991 that, the IMB says, should be seen as a cautious sign for optimism and a signal that continued action can go a long way towards solving the problem of piracy and armed robbery at sea.

In a cautious note the IMB says: "Somalia's recent removal of the Islamic militia that had been taking such a hard stance on piracy was also of concern he said, adding that within days of their influence being removed there had been an attempted attack on an American bulk carrier in Somali waters, the first for a number of months. Now that a recognised central government has been re-established in the country, it must start to exert control over the militias – something it failed to do previously – or else face the prospect that pirate attacks will resume their previous levels."

The IMB paid tribute to the work of the PRC and reiterated the critical role it plays in identifying high risk areas, raising awareness of the issues and forcing governments to react to them.

"I cannot emphasise too much the importance that reliable and meaningful statistics have played in recent years in opening up the debate on piracy, in bringing it to the attention of a wider audience, and in getting governments to take action," says IMB Director Pottengal Mukundan.

"Before the PRC, most governments did not appreciate the nature or magnitude of the problem. Now they do, many countries realise it is something they cannot ignore. As a result they have become more willing to take action and this is really starting to pay dividends.

"We have to keep up the pressure by encouraging more ships to report attacks, getting ever more accurate figures, and increasing awareness. The strategy is working and there are now signs the war against piracy can be won. We just have to keep doing what we have been doing," he adds.



The **SEAWHEEL MERCHANT** seen departing from Rotterdam

Photo : Ruud Vermeer ©

## Salvage Squad

Dozens of members of the public were today continuing to "salvage" goods washed ashore from a grounded and heavily listing ship off the coast of Devon.

People used torches to search beaches off the Sidmouth coastline last night as goods floated ashore in containers that had fallen from the stricken **MSC Napoli**.

The ship was carrying items including wine, car parts, haircare products and nappies. One group at Branscombe Beach, near Seaton, used a tractor to carry off a new BMW motorbike, still partially-wrapped in cardboard.

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Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) workers were today intensifying attempts to curb the impact of pollution from the broken-backed vessel, which has lost around 200 containers into the sea. The agency today confirmed that 200 tonnes of oil had leaked from the ship, which was deliberately run aground near Sidmouth after its side was holed during last Thursday's storms.

A sheen of oil, believed to have leaked from the engine room, has spread around five miles. The RSPB said the oil had affected some birds, but coastguard officials said the slick was beginning to break up and disappear.

An operation to pump the remaining fuel oil - around 3,000 tonnes - from the ship will begin today. However, it could take several days to complete, and there are concerns about the problems that could be caused by worsening weather.

The MCA said there was increasing confidence that major fuel tanks had not been breached, and two vessels chartered to receive the oil were on their way to the **MSC Napoli** today.

Fears over pollution to the internationally famous Jurassic coast - Britain's first natural World Heritage Site - grew yesterday as it became clear the leaking oil had evaded booms surrounding the 62,000 tonne ship.

After the fuel is drained, barges and cranes will be brought in to offload around 2,400 containers remaining on board.

Hundreds of people flocked to cliffs on the Sidmouth coast over the weekend to view the stricken ship as the MCA warned members of the public to stay away from any displaced containers and report sightings to Portland coastguards.

However, it is legal to salvage goods under certain conditions in the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, and some have been enticed by reports that goods on the Napoli included motorbikes, hundreds of bottles of wine and other luxury items.

At least 20 containers have been beached and scattered along the coastline, while others are bobbing in the surf. A small proportion of the containers hold hazardous substances such as battery acid, pesticides and perfume.

Police have been handing out forms to salvagers on which they must declare the items taken. The forms will then be sent to the official Receiver of Wreck, who will resolve the question of ownership.

Inspector Sean Pepper, of Devon and Cornwall police, told the Press Association the Act meant it was illegal for people to conceal cargo they had taken or refuse to surrender it if ordered to.

"Our area of concern is public safety," he said. "There are a lot of containers bobbing about and there is a real element of personal safety and making sure we don't have public order issues."

The British-flagged **MSC Napoli**, built in 1991, was on a voyage from Belgium to Portugal when it was damaged last Thursday. Its 26 crew members were winched to safety by a helicopter.

The **Jurassic Coast** was last year named by the government as one of 32 marine environmental high risk areas in which shipping faces restrictions under measures recommended by Lord Donaldson after the **Braer** tanker disaster off the Shetlands 13 years ago.

## CASUALTY REPORTING

### Ten People Missing after Ships Capsize

Four people were rescued but ten are still missing after two ships capsized in two separate accidents off east China, local public security sources said yesterday. A fishing boat with three aboard capsized in high waves off Pinghai in the coastal city of Putian in Fujian Province, according to Putian public security sources.



One of the fisherman was rescued by local residents and police but the other two are still missing. A cargo ship loaded with sand anchored at sea en route to Xiuyu port in Putian. The ship sprung a leak in the early hours of Saturday morning and sank. Three of the 11 sailors on board, who were sleeping when the ship began to capsize, managed to survive using a life raft, but the others are still missing. Local maritime, fishing and public security authorities are still organizing the rescue operations for a team of 20 ships.

## **PACIFIC PARADISE AGROUND IN PRINCE RUPERT HARBOUR**



**Photo : Harry Mose ©.**

The **Pacific Paradise** grounded in Prince Rupert Harbour, Mon, 15 Jan 2007. The vessel lucked out running aground primarily on mud, narrowly missing the rocks seen just off her bow in several pictures. No reported damage. Underwater inspection not yet conducted. With sustained winds in the 30 Knot range with gusts in squalls reaching 61 Knots (70 Knots reported by vessel)

## **Pilot Boat Capsizes, One Dead**

The body of the missing man from the pilot boat that capsized was located 3 miles south of the Galveston Jetties. A T & T Dive Team went into the water this morning and searched the capsized pilot boat, locating the missing pilot still inside. The man's body was taken to Coast Guard Station Galveston, where the captain of the Texas City Pilots Association was waiting. The pilot boat capsized Saturday afternoon after picking up a pilot from a research ship anchored in Galveston Bay. Another pilot boat in the area spotted the capsized boat and called in a mayday to the Coast Guard. A rescue boat from Station Galveston and a helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Houston conducted searches Saturday evening and again this morning. The Coast Guard is investigating the cause of the incident.

## **Ship Sinks off Cyprus**

Six sailors were rescued on Monday while another is missing after a Syrian merchant ship sunk 85 miles off the southern coast of Cyprus, reports AFP.

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A marine police official said search and rescue authorities were notified of the shipwreck by a patrolling German warship at 05.40 (02.40 GMT).

A patrol boat and helicopter were sent to the scene where they found five shipwrecked sailors inside a liferaft.

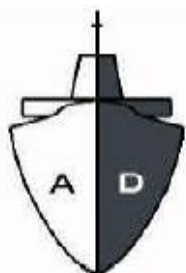
The helicopter plucked the five sailors from the water, while a sixth sailor was picked up by the German naval vessel. The five sailors were treated at Larnaca General hospital for hypothermia and released, Larnaca Assistant Police Chief Christakis Papadopoulos told AFP.

The sixth sailor remained aboard the German warship, police said. A patrol boat was Monday combing the area where the ship went down in hopes of finding the missing sailor. Police said the ship was on its way from Egypt to Syria. They did elaborate on the cause of the shipwreck. 'As far as we were told the ship is a Syrian flag bearing the name **Hajjamal**,' the police official said.

### NAVY NEWS

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The **DDG 94 NITZE** seen during her port visit in Valletta (Malta)

Photo : Lawrence Dalli ©

## **SHIPYARD NEWS**

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Dockwise **YACHT EXPRESS** seen getting skidded into her element at the Yantai - Raffles Shipyard in Shandong (China) January 22<sup>nd</sup>

Photo : Dockwise ©

## Six Injured in Blast

Six workers at a repair yard in Swinoujscie, Poland, have been injured in an explosion on a general cargoship.



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The blast last week occurred on the 6,150-dwt, Swedish-flagged "**Skagern**" (built 1983), which was being repaired following a collision with the 804-teu boxship "**Samskip Courier**" (built 2006) in the UK in June last year.

The accident happened during welding work on a ballast tank, TradeWinds reports quoting the Scandinavian Shipping Gazette. Five of the injured were taken to hospital with serious but not life-threatening injuries.

The cause of the explosion was being investigated, but insufficient ventilation after painting work could have been a factor. "**Skagern**" operated by Barber of Hong Kong, suffered a breach to its N1 cargo hold in the collision last year.

## Tankers Caught Fire in Novorosiysk

On January 2007 as a result of lightning strike oil vapours caught fire on board two tankers moored at Shaekharis in Novorossiysk, the Cyprus-flagged "**Yannis P**" and the Singapore-registered "**Eagle Phoenix**".

According to the Novorossiysk Commercial Seaport press service, the fire was extinguished within 25 minutes, no victims and damage are reported.

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The **CMA CGM BIZET** seen in the port of Zeebrugge

Photo : Henk Claeys ©

## Abu Dhabi Charters Two Cruise Ships as Floating Hotels

Abu Dhabi's Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC) has chartered two cruise ships which will be berthed in the UAE capital as floating hotels from tomorrow until the end of February to ease heightened accommodation demand in the city as a result of major events and exhibitions.



Photo : Bert Pellegrom ©

The 401 room **New Flamenco**, operated by Florida's Elysian Ship Management Inc, and the 274 room **Ocean Majesty**, operated by Majestic International Cruises based in Greece, complete with a combined crew complement of around 450, will offer convenient accommodation during their berth at the capital's Mina Zayed Free Port. The port is just five minutes from the city center and 15 minutes from the new Abu Dhabi New Exhibition Center

## ISU PROPOSES EU SPILL STRATEGY

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THE International Salvage Union (ISU) is seeking a meeting with EU Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Commissioner Joe Borg to present its case for the adoption of new measures to reduce the risk of another spill disaster in European waters.

In a response to the EU's Green Paper on Future Maritime Policy, the ISU proposes an "Action Plan for Spill Risk Reduction in EU Waters". This plan centres on reinforcing salvage as the first line of defence against ship source pollution.

The ISU says that data collected by ITOPF shows that more than half of the world's worst oil spills over the past four decades have occurred in European waters. It adds: "The consequent release of one million tonnes of oil devastated coastal communities in France, Spain, the UK and other member states." The scale of the damage would have been much worse but for the action of ISU salvors, who have recovered some 10 million tonnes of oil from tanker casualties throughout the world over the past decade.

According to the ISU, this Action Plan would provide the EU with an effective environmental shield – better protecting European coastal waters from ship source pollution. ISU President Hans van Rooij comments: "We look forward to a constructive dialogue with the Commissioner, who has already indicated that he appreciates the significance of a highly effective salvage service for Europe."

The ISU Action Plan focuses on new measures to establish more effective marine emergency response in Europe. Specific proposals include:

? Commercial arrangements between the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and salvors, to run in parallel with steps already taken by EMSA to reinforce spill clean-up capability in the EU.

? Establishment of a European Fund for Environmental Awards, to reward salvors who, as a consequence of rendering salvage assistance to shipping casualties, prevent or minimise pollution in EU Coastal Zones.

? The use of this fund to compensate and reward coastal communities providing places of refuge for ship casualties. This would recognise that they have a greater exposure to pollution damage.

? The introduction of EU-wide responder immunity for salvors. The IMO's Bunker Spills Convention excludes responder immunity, despite the fact that salvors have to confront the threat of environmental damage from bunkers in almost every salvage case.

In addition, the ISU Action Plan puts forward proposals to enhance the performance of salvage and pollution prevention in EU waters. These proposals include:

? EU adoption of Guidelines on Marine Casualty Management. These best practice guidelines – first proposed by the ISU – are to be drafted by the ISU, together with the MSUO (Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation). It is hoped that and EMSA will participate in this work.

? Reduced reliance on the chance availability of a "tug of opportunity" in emergency situations. New measures should ensure that standby salvage tugs provide a guaranteed level of protection in all EU Coastal Zones.

? Real-time monitoring of tug status and availability in EU waters. Such a system would provide instant access to data on the location and capabilities of all salvage vessels within reach of the casualty.

? Construction of an EU-wide Marine Salvage Inventory of vessels and equipment available for casualty response. The ISU says that this would make it easier and faster to match the mobilisation of assets to the scale of the threat.



## GEM TAKES DELIVERY OF 8TH SHIP

DUBAI-headquartered product tanker operator Gulf Energy Maritime (GEM) - has taken delivery of the second of 13 double-hulled tankers on order with Korea's Hyundai Mipo Dockyard.

The US\$57m **Gulf Elan** is the eighth double-hulled tanker in GEM's rapidly growing fleet, which is expected to triple within the next three years and take GEM's asset value to US\$1.1bn. The company is to receive another 11 of the total order book of 13 ships valued at US\$590m by the end of 2009.

The **Gulf Elan** will join its sister ship, **Gulf Esprit**, on 15-year time charter with Oman Methanol Company, a subsidiary of Oman's OMZEST Group.

GEM ceo Ahmed Essa Hareb Al Falahi said: "Our rapid fleet expansion is testament to industry growth and demand for quality-driven and safety-conscious operators, backed by carriers that are environmentally friendly and of the highest operational and technical standards. GEM is already the Middle East's largest commercial tanker operator, and will continue to grow and fill an expanding global niche for independent, refined petroleum transportation. The company already has long term charter contracts – current and future - for 11 of its tankers, securing revenues of up to US\$400m."

## Port of Houston reports record year in 2006

The Port of Houston Authority has reached record-breaking totals for operating revenue, container volume and tonnage for 2006. The announcement was made by PHA Executive Director H. Thomas Kornegay during the port commission's monthly meeting Monday.

Kornegay said the PHA's unaudited figures showed earnings of \$164.7 million in 2006, an increase of more than \$10 million from a year earlier. The totals would mean the port has set a new record for revenue for the seventh consecutive year and the 10th year in the past 11.

## Urker KNRM-boot zeker week uit vaart

Een gescheurd uitlaat-spruitstuk is de veroorzaker van de brand aan boord van de Urker reddingboot **Koningin Beatrix**. De bemanning van de boot moest afgelopen weekeinde door collega-KNMR'ers van boord worden gehaald, op het IJsselmeer.

De **Beatrix** was op weg naar binnenvaartschip **Orlando** uit Zwolle toen de brand uitbrak. Althans: het leek er op dat er brand woedde in de machinekamer. Een kapot spruitstuk zorgt echter voor dezelfde symptomen: veel rook en roet en grote hitte.

De machinekamer werd luchtdicht afgesloten, de bemanning wachtte op dek op de komst van collega's.

Deze week wordt de **Beatrix** naar een werf in het Friese Woudsend gesleept. Daar wordt de schade in ogenschouw genomen. 'We weten nog niet of door de hitte schade is ontstaan aan bedrading', zegt KNRM-woordvoerder Cees Brinkman. Valt het mee, dan kan de reddingsboot binnen een week terug zijn op Urk.





Boven : KNRM reddingboot **CHRISTIEN** – Photo : Piet Sinke ©

In tussentijd neemt de **Christien** de taken van de Urker reddingsboot waar. Ze is een half zusje van de **Beatrix**, maar lijkt zo op haar dat de bemanning van het KNRM-station op Urk zo met haar de haven uit kan varen.

## Australian oiler sold for FPSO

The Royal Australian Navy is the latest tanker owner to cash in on the demand for offshore conversion.



**HMAS WESTRALIA**

New York-listed Helix Energy Solutions Group Inc and newly Oslo-listed AGR Group have jointly purchased the 34,000-dwt naval oiler **Westralia** (built 1979).

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After conversion at "a secure shipyard facility" in Indonesia as a floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) vessel, the Cammel Laird-built **Westralia** will be renamed **Shiraz**.

No price has been announced. In spring 2006 a request for proposals for disposal of the oiler was issued. In 2004, New York-listed Tsakos Energy Navigation (TEN) had already sold its 37,000-dwt Mipo newbuilding **Delos** (built 2004) to the Royal Australian Navy for AUD 50m (then worth \$34.5m) as a replacement for **Westralia**.

The unusual handysize FPSO is meant as a way of getting around the tight drill market, says newly listed AGR in an announcement to Norwegian investors.

**Shiraz** "will also allow operators with limited financial capacity to realise early cash flows from their assets at a cost which is a fraction of competing systems", said the company.

AGR Group chief executive officer Sverre Skogen said the deal "presents oil companies with a solution that allows discoveries to be put into early production or production tested without a large up-front capital spend".

The **Shiraz** deal follows AGR Group's acquisition of Upstream Petroleum of Australia earlier this month, which was characterised as specifically aimed at regional opportunities of this type.

## VEERBOOT RAMT HAVENBRUG

Een veerboot die met een enorme dreun de havenbrug ramt, waardoor passagiers van de trappen vallen, auto's verschuiven en een klep wordt doorboord. Niemand kan daardoor de boot meer af. Door de loeiende storm moet worden teruggevaaren naar de vertrekhaven Texel. Onderweg wordt dan ook nog onthuld dat de boot 'niet kon afremmen'. Paniek! Scene uit een rampenfilm? Nee, realiteit in de veerhaven van Den Helder.



De **MOLENGAT** – Photo : Jan Steehouwer ©

De aanvaring van de Texelse veerboot **Molengat** met de wal, afgelopen donderdag, heeft een heftige impact gehad op passagiers. Dat blijkt uit een reconstructie op de website 'scheepvaartnieuws'. (<http://scheepvaartnieuws.punt.nl>) Kim Beekman, passagiere op de stormachtige ramtocht, doet uit de doeken wat er gebeurde toen het schip Den Helder naderde op die woeste middag.

„Vlak voor de veerboot de kade in Den Helder ramde, werd omgeroepen dat de passagiers zich naar hun auto moesten begeven. Zodoende zijn enkele van hen van de trap gevallen. Auto's botsten op elkaar door de enorme klap. Twee van de drie platen van de klep van de boot werden doorboord door de oprijbrug.”

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De **Molengat** kon niet meer lossen en moest terug naar Texel. Beekman: „Tijdens de terugreis werd omgeroepen dat het ongeluk was veroorzaakt door een technische storing, waardoor de boot niet had kunnen afremmen. Dit bericht maakte de terugweg door de storm extra angstig."

### SMOOTH SAILING

A NEW luxury cruise ship has included Bahrain in its tours following a successful maiden port call to the country yesterday.

US-based Zegrahm and Eco-Expeditions, which organises small-ship expedition cruises around the world, is to continue bringing tourists from all over the world to Bahrain as part of its Sands of Time Tour.

About 100 tourists, mainly from the US, Europe and South Africa, onboard the French-flagged ship, **Le Levant**, were taken on two buses for a tour around Bahrain by Tourism Affairs shortly after the vessel docked at Mina Salman at about 7am yesterday.

Mathias Middle East (MME), which is Zegrahm's Bahrain agent, said that more small ship expedition cruises would be including Bahrain as one of their stops.

"This is the first time that MME has organised such a visit and this is the next big thing, the next good thing, to come to Bahrain and this is a very exciting time," said company managing director Richard Mathias.

"It is also a pleasure working with the Tourism Affairs, who are only more than happy to accommodate these tourists and ensure that they have a great time during their visit." Tourism Affairs senior marketing specialist Mirza Al Nasheet said that Bahrain was planning to attract more tourists on cruise ships.

"Bahrain is enjoying the success it is having so far with cruise ships visits," he said, referring to the 3,000-plus tourists, mainly from Europe, that arrive in Bahrain every week on two large cruise ships.

"Hopefully, the tourists who come here will be impressed with what they see that they will visit Bahrain again soon."

Since late last year, German ship **Aida Cara** and Italian ship **Costa Classica** have been bringing about 1,500 tourists to Bahrain each on a weekly basis.

They are to continue doing so until March. **Le Levant** is expected to return to Bahrain for another Sands of Time tour in March and once again in September.

The visitors were yesterday taken by their Bahraini tour guides to the Bahrain National Museum, Al Fateh Mosque, the Bahrain Fort, a camel farm and the burial mounds.

"They are very interested in Bahrain's history and were very impressed with what they have seen," said Mr Al Nasheet.

Sands of Time is a journey of visual contrasts, deserts, mountains, ancient cultures and modern metropolises, said Zegrahm expedition leader Mike Messick. "**Le Levant** sails from Muscat, Oman, to Musandam Peninsula," he added.

"We have expert naturalists and historians who accompany our guests throughout the tour, which takes them to the island of Sir Bani Yas (Abu Dhabi), the suqs and mosques of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Qatar, as well as the seaside of Dibba (Fujairah).

"The tour duration is two weeks. "We keep the number of travellers on each expedition small to allow members personal contact with their leaders and naturalist experts, making each trip truly expeditionary in nature."

Le Levant, an elegant expedition vessel with a crew of 55, picked up its guests from Muscat, Oman, on January 15.

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Prior to arriving in Bahrain yesterday it also visited Qatar. The 330-foot ship, which left Bahrain at 4pm yesterday, is to arrive in Sir Bani Yas, Abu Dhabi, today and continue on to Dubai and Dibba before returning to Muscat.

More luxury cruises are expected to include Bahrain in their tours of the region this year, bringing to the attention of holidaymakers from around the world the history, people and tourist attractions of the country, Tourism Affairs marketing and tourism promotion acting director Isa Jassim Alobaidly had told the GDN.

Prior to leaving Bahrain, guests aboard Le Levant said that even though it was brief, they enjoyed their visit to the country. "The visit makes you want to come back again," said American Gary Bommelaere, a retired physician.

"I particularly enjoyed the visits to the museum and the Bahrain Fort. "I saw similarities between the fort and ruins found in New Mexico, where I am from."

Sherrel Bender, a native of Chicago, Illinois, US, said that she had always been fascinated with the Middle East.

"I had planned to come visit a long time ago with friends but it never materialised until now," she said.

"I thought now was the perfect time and it is safe to come, so why not? "I just think this part of the world is so interesting and more tourists should come."

## MOVEMENTS

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The **HUAL SEOUL** seen assisted by the **SD LOIRE** in the port of Le Havre

Photo : Pascal Riteau ©

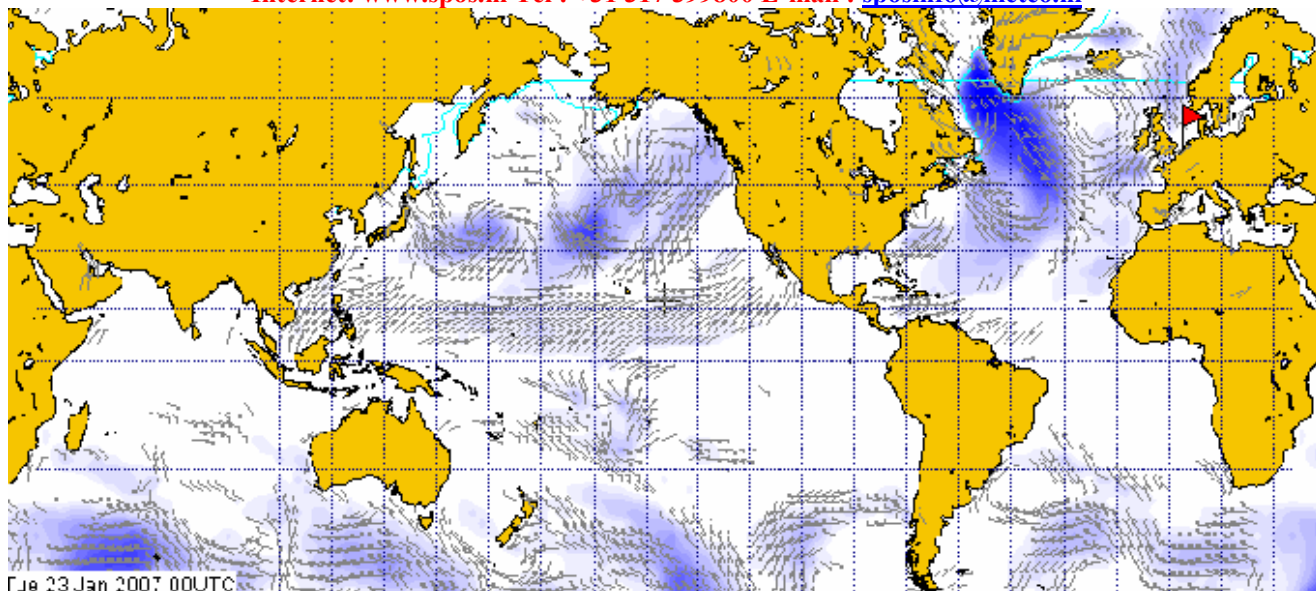
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## .... PHOTO OF THE DAY ....



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The 258 mtr long **FPSO Nabarima** departed from Curacao harbour to the gulf of Paria on 15 January 2007 with a draft fwd of 6.1 mtr and at the stern 9.2 mtrs. **Nabarima** was piloted by senior pilot **M La Roche** with assistance of two first class pilots **Harold Sint Jago** on starboardside and **Jan Geerings** on Port side of the barge. Four tugs were used to manoeuvre the barge safely out of the port.



**Photo's : Michael Comenencia (Junior pilot). ©**

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