

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2007 – 124



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Telephone: (+31)105018000
(+31) 105015440 (a.o.h.)

Fax : (+31)105013843

Internet & E-mail

www.vlierodam.nl
info@vlierodam.nl



**The ZAANDAM seen cruising through Glacier Bay
Photo : Bridge team Zaandam ©**

SVITZER OCEAN TOWAGE

SVITZER
OCEAN TOWAGE

Jupiterstraat 33
2132 HC Hoofddorp
The Netherlands
Telephone: +31 2555 62711
Telefax: +31 23 557 1896
E-mail: smitwijs.sales@svitzerwijsmuller.com

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EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



The **ZAANDAM** seen during her maiden call at Skagway

Photo : Bridge team Zaandam ©

South African ship arrives on maiden voyage

THE tenth of 12 Kanda class handysize bulkers on long term charter to Island View Shipping (IVS), **IVS KITTIWAKE** arrived in Durban at the weekend on her maiden voyage carrying a project cargo consisting of factory components destined for Zambia.

The 32,000-DWT ship is also carrying cargo for the port of Beira after which she will head for northwest Europe.

It was pure coincidence that the ship was able to carry cargo on her maiden voyage for Durban, South Africa, the home of Island View Shipping's head office, said a IVS company spokesman on board the vessel yesterday.

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"The chances are that a ship like this, which is employed in the Lauritzen/IVS Pool, could take years before visiting a South African port, let alone Durban."

The 12 Kanda class ships of which **IVS Kittiwake** is the tenth are all owned by Japanese interests and placed on long-term charters to IVS of seven years with options to purchase and/or renew. Each vessel is deployed into the pool with Lauritzen Bulkcarriers.

Another of the pool vessels, this time a ship owned by the Grindrod Group, the 32,544-dwt **DURBAN BULKER**, called at Durban in April with a cargo of grain for discharge

Pirates steal UK cargo ship

Machete-wielding pirates boarded a British cargo ship over the weekend, forced its crew to disembark and stole the ship, the vessel's captain said on Monday.

A UN helicopter saw the 3 500-ton ship being towed away and one person was arrested in connection with the incident, UN spokesperson Ben Malor said. Two boats towed the vessel deep into neighbouring Ivory Coast's waters, Malor said.



The **TAHOMA REEFER** on fire off the Liberian coast August 2006 – Photo : US Navy ©

The ship, the MV **Tahoma Reefer**, ran into engine problems off Liberia's coast and docked in Monrovia, where the crew was awaiting mechanical help, said Volodymyr Shteynberh, the ship's captain.

Four days after it docked on Saturday, two fishing boats approached the cargo ship and around 25 pirates jumped aboard brandishing machetes, Shteynberh said. The captain said three crew members were injured before the ship was towed away in the direction of Ivory Coast. "Two received cuts on their heads," Shteynberh said. The ship was carrying several thousand tons of fuel used to power the vessel.

Shteynberh said he was worried that if the fuel spills into the ocean, "it will cause serious ecological problems for the coast and for the region." The ship was sailing under the flag of the Caribbean nation of St Vincent and the Grenadines.



The **ZUIDERDAM** seen departing from Vancouver
Photo : Crew Noordam ©

Royal Caribbean Names First Female Captain



The **Monarch of the Seas**

Royal Caribbean International has named Swedish mariner, **Karin Stahre-Janson**, captain of **Monarch of the Seas**, making her the first female captain in the line's 21-ship fleet and the first woman in the industry to command a major cruise ship. As the Captain of **Monarch of the Seas**, Captain Stahre-Janson is responsible for the safe navigation of a ship that is 880 feet long, 106 feet wide, has 14 guest decks and routinely carries 2,400 guests and 850 crew members. Captain Stahre-Janson recently completed her first tour of duty as captain of the Los Angeles-based ship, which sails three- and four-night cruises to San Diego, Catalina and Ensenada, Mexico. She resumes her command in August. Prior to joining Royal Caribbean, Captain Stahre-Janson worked for nine years in cargo shipping, primarily on petroleum and chemical tankers, where, ultimately, she served as Chief Officer. Captain Stahre-Janson has been an officer on Royal Caribbean's ships since 1997, when she joined the company. Starting out as First Officer on **Viking Serenade** and **Nordic Empress**, she became Chief Officer while on **Vision of the Seas** and continued that role on **Radiance of the Seas**. Adding still another stripe, she was named Staff Captain on **Brilliance of the Seas**, and also served in that capacity on **Serenade of the Seas** and **Majesty of the Seas**.



The **MAASDIEP** – Photo : Fred Claessen ©

S. Korea sends ships to search for missing sailors

South Korea dispatched two patrol boats and one helicopter Tuesday to search for 16 missing crew members of a South Korean ship that sank in China's east sea following a collision with a Chinese freighter, coast guard officials said.

The Chinese authorities allowed the South Korean patrol boats to travel to the area of the accident, a spokesman for the Korea Coast Guard said.

The boats are expected to reach the waters, 61 kilometers southeast of Dalian off China's northeastern province of Liaoning, at about 8 p.m. Korean time.

The crew, including seven South Koreans, eight Myanmarese and one Indonesian, went missing when the 3,800-ton freighter, Golden Rose, sank after colliding with the Chinese container ship Jinsheng in heavy fog early Saturday.

The search for the missing crew members continued for a fourth day Tuesday, but no survivors or bodies have been found, according to the spokesman.

They said the search operation will intensify with the dispatch of the South Korean rescuers. The Chinese maritime authorities have mobilized more than 200 ships and numerous aircraft for the search but to no avail.

The authorities rejected South Korea's offer to dispatch patrol boats for the operation saying the primary responsibility for the search is theirs. China's delayed response to the incident has caused an outcry among South Koreans.

Local news reports said that the Chinese ship informed Chinese maritime authorities of the collision only after it arrived safely at its destination, Dalian, seven hours after leaving the scene. No emergency rescue efforts were made by the ship's crew.

It took an additional 14 hours for the Chinese authorities to notify the South Korean embassy in Beijing, according to South Korea's foreign ministry.

The ministry said it will deal with the issue after the search and rescue operations come to an end, but some officials said China's belated notification may have violated the international convention on consular relations that requires nations to inform without delay a state whose vessel or aircraft suffers an accident in their territory or territorial

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waters. The officials believe the crew of the Chinese boat may also have violated international convention on the law of the sea, which requires all nearby ships to render immediate and full assistance to any person found at sea or in danger of being lost.

Meanwhile, relatives of the 16 missing sailors and some employees of Bygwang Shipping Co., a South Korean company that operated the ship, flew to Yantai, a city near the accident site, to inspect the location as well as the Chinese ship.

In a briefing on the accident held by the Yantai Maritime Safety Administration (YMSA) later in the day, the YMSA told the crew's relatives, "Given the type of sinking of the **Golden Rose**, chances are very low that the missing crew is alive." "The South Korean cargo ship may have sunk directly below the sea due to the weight of 6,000 tons of steel products, so chances are high that no air remains inside the ship's hull," it added.

"As the temperature of the sea around the Bohai Bay averages 13.6 degrees centigrade, the chances of the missing crew's survival are close to zero, drifting for two days," the YMSA said.

The YMSA also said that it wonders about the delayed reporting on the accident by the Chinese freighter, responding to the relatives' questions about why the Chinese cargo ships reported the accident to the Chinese authorities eight hours after it took place.

"The outcome of the investigation into the accident will show the exact facts related the accident," it added.

China's official Xinhua News Agency said the sunken ship was located Monday afternoon, quoting Shandong provincial maritime authorities. The location was 38 degrees 14.45 minutes north latitude, 121 degrees 41.92 minutes east longitude, the news agency said.

A search of the sunken ship will be launched Wednesday by South Korean patrol boats, said a South Korean government official who attended the briefing. On Wednesday, the relatives are scheduled to visit the site of the accident.

Federal probe begins in Alaska cruise ship grounding

Federal investigators have started probing why a cruise ship equipped with state-of-the-art navigation technology apparently hit a rock and ran aground.

National Transportation Safety Board spokeswoman Kitty Higgins said the team hoped to gain further insight from the Empress of the North's voyage data recorder, similar to the black boxes carried on aircraft.

The grounding occurred early Monday about 50 miles southwest of Juneau as the ship was traveling from Skagway to Glacier Bay. It severely damaged the ship's hull and prompted the evacuation of all 206 passengers and a portion of the 75 member crew.

The NTSB investigation will likely take about a year to answer how the ship — which has had previous groundings — could land in such trouble, Higgins said.

"It has all the technology that is there to help make this kind of trip successful. But obviously there have been a number of events, and that is something we will have to look at," Higgins said.

The NTSB said it would send divers down again to try to videotape the damage. Salvage divers did an initial survey of the damage Monday, but visibility in the silty waters was poor, said Scot Tiernan with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

Tiernan said they found several punctures in the side of the double-hulled ship, including one 8-foot gash and a 4-foot-by-3-inch hole. The investigation team plans to study the ship's mechanical, electrical and propulsion systems and look into its history and the company that operates it, the Seattle-based Majestic America Line.

The ship, which was built in 2002, was involved in two other groundings along the Columbia River in recent years. In November 2003, the ship developed steering problems near The Dalles, Ore., and ran aground, causing minor injuries to a passenger and two crew members.

In March 2006, it again ran aground on a sandbar near Washougal, Wash., while trying to avoid a barge. Nearly 200 passengers were evacuated.

CASUALTY REPORTING

Vietnam-Flagged "Hoang Dat 36" sank in Saigon River

One has died and 7 others are missing after "**Gas Shanghai**" carrier collided with a small vessel which subsequently sank off Vietnam on May, 15. A pilot was onboard the 3,500-cbm "**Gas Shanghai**" at the time of the collision as the vessel made its way out of the Saigon River having discharged its cargo in Ho Chi Minh City.

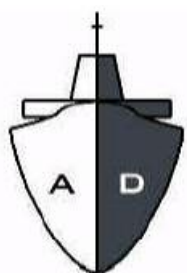
The 2,152-dwt general cargo vessel "**Hoang Dat 36**" (Vietnam) sank within an hour of the collision. 8 other crew members onboard at the time of the incident are believed to have been rescued.

The Vietnam-flagged "**Hoang Dat 36**" was on route from Jakarta to Vietnam with 2,000 tons of tin sheets.

NAVY NEWS

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ANGLO DUTCH SHIPBROKERS bvba



Waterstraat 16
2970 SCHILDE
BELGIUM
Tel : + 32 3 464 26 09
Fax : + 32 3 297 20 70
e-mail : anglodutch@pandora.be

S.Korea to launch new submarine & destroyer

South Korean Defense Ministry said Tuesday that new submarine and destroyer equipped with an air defense combat system will be launched soon to boost the country's navy.

According to the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA), a 1,800-ton diesel-electric submarine will be launched early next month following a previous one launched last June.

The submarine has been developed in partnership with Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft AG, the DAPA said, adding the submarine named '**Jeongji**', will be commissioned around November 2008.

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"**Jeongji**" was a military leader of the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392), who led a series of victories in battle with the Japanese Navy, local reports said.

South Korean Navy spokesman said the country's first Aegis combat system-enabled destroyer will be launched next week. After the launch of the destroyer, KDX-III, made by Hyundai Heavy Industries, South Korea will become the fifth nation in the world to own such a ship equipped with the Aegis combat system, South Korean Navy said.

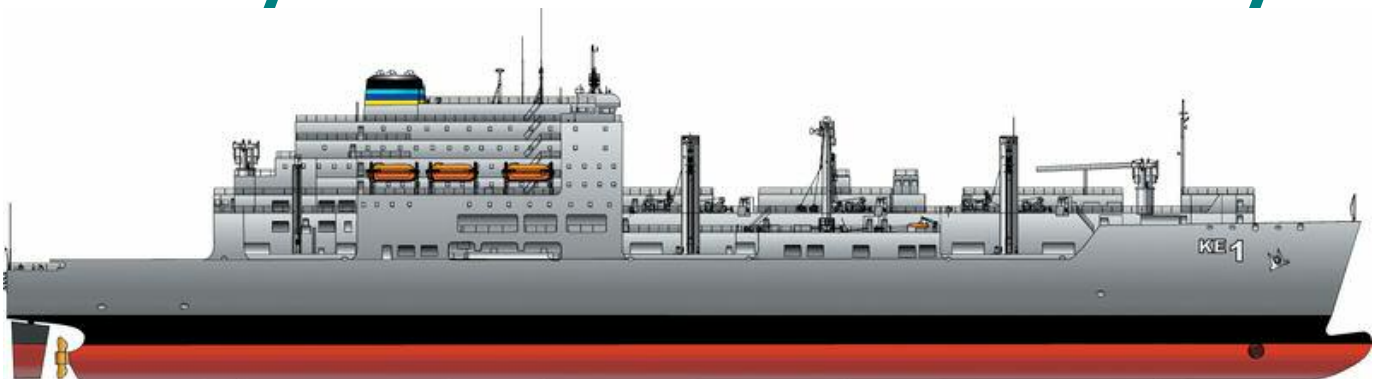
USNS Sacagawea Arrives in Norfolk



USNS Sacagawea, the latest in a line of Dry Cargo Ammunition Ships (**T-AKE 2**), arrived at its new homeport, Naval Station Norfolk, May 11. **T-AKE 2** ships are replacing the Kilauea class (T-AE 26), Mars class (T-AFS 1) and Sirius class (T-AO 187) to combine the services of ammunition and cargo delivery to U.S. Navy ships at sea and in foreign ports. Sacagawea's crew is comprised of 11 active duty Sailors serving with more than 100 civil service merchant mariners. Their primary mission is to carry dry cargo, ammunition and fuel. It's a multiproduct ship that will combine

the functions of combat logistics store ship vessels (AFS class) and ammunition ships (T-AE class).

US Navy to Christen USNS Richard E. Byrd



The Navy will christen the **USNS Richard E. Byrd** on May 15. The launching ceremony for the newest ship in the **Lewis and Clark class** of underway replenishment ships will be held at General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company, San Diego. The ship honors Rear Adm. Richard E. Byrd (1888-1957), an explorer famous for his Antarctic expeditions and for leading the first expedition to fly over the North Pole. Like the legendary explorers, Meriwether **Lewis and William Clark**, for whom the first ship of the class was named, Byrd bravely volunteered to explore one of the most remote and harshest places on earth.



The Portuguese patrol vessel **P 1161 SAVE**
Photo : Jan van der Klooster – www.scheepvaarthoek.nl

Asia-Pacific to boost maritime defences

NAVIES in the Asia-Pacific are expected to spend US\$108 billion (\$163.9 billion) to boost submarine and other maritime defences over the next 10 years, organisers of a defence conference said yesterday.

They said the spending would outstrip maritime defence expenditure in the United States and Europe.

Nearly 30 per cent, or US\$30 billion, will go to acquiring submarines, while the rest will buy anti-submarine vessels, patrol ships, fast attack craft and amphibious vessels, organisers of the IMDEX Asia 2007 maritime defence show said.

Regional countries are expected to acquire a total of 841 vessels by 2016, they said.

Of these, 83 will be submarines, with the most orders coming from emerging Asian power China. This would include five nuclear-powered missile submarines and 30 attack submarines to add to its current fleet, figures released by the organisers showed.

Senior US officials have spoken critically of China's military budget, expressing concerns that the Chinese are under-reporting the size of their spending and that it is expanding too quickly.

China announced in March a 17.8 per cent rise in military spending for this year to US\$45 billion.

"The projected US\$108 billion expenditure makes the region the number one market for naval procurement over the next decade," said Roger Marriott, managing director of IMDEX Asia, the region's biggest maritime defence show.

Projected naval spending for the US over the next decade is at a slower US\$105 billion, and US\$99 billion for Europe, he said. "Of this investment figure (for Asia Pacific), US\$84 billion will go towards the acquisition of submarines and vessels with anti-submarine warfare capabilities," Marriott told journalists on the eve of the four day exhibition and conference.

He said construction programmes are underway to build the 83 submarines ordered by China, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Taiwan. To counter the submarine threat, 14 countries have embarked on programmes to acquire a total of 151 vessels capable of anti-submarine warfare, Marriott said.

Huron was sunk Monday by artillery fire.

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But HMCS **Huron** was headed for Davy Jones' locker anyway. "**Huron** sank May 14th, just after 1 p.m. local time after a series of gunnery exercises," said Lt.-Cmdr. Mar MacIntyre of navy public affairs.

The Canadian navy spent more than \$7 million to dispose of the 35-year-old destroyer, with about \$4.4 million on just the 18-month cleanup that was needed to meet new federal environmental standards ensuring no toxic material was left aboard.

Environment Canada certified the ship was clean and issued a permit March 31 under the Environmental Protection Act

It took nearly two days to tow the engineless, weaponless hulk to a position about 100 kilometres off the coast of Vancouver Island and then only five hours to send it two kilometres straight down to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

"Huron stood up to a wide variety of gunnery," said MacIntyre, which included artillery barrages from both Canadian and U.S. warships involved in a joint naval exercise known as Trident Fury.

SHIPYARD NEWS

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info@disamaritime.com
www.disamaritime.com

Ketelaarstraat 5c
B-2340 Beerse
Belgium
Tel : + 32 (0) 14 62 04 11
Fax : + 32 (0) 14 61 16 88

DISA
CIVIL
info@disacivil.com
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HUGE, HIGH, HEAVY INSTALLATION AT KEPPEL-VEROLME



Tuesday May 15, 2007 two enormous floating cranes lifted and installed a huge brandnew drilling tower onto the Drilling Rig **Blackford Dolphin**. The 65 meters high Drilling Tower that was constructed at the Keppel-Verolme Yard, had to be hoisted by the **Matador 3** and **Rambiz** from the shore and lifted 55 meters high to place the 850 tonnes weighing Drilling Tower onto the top of the Drilling Rig **Blackford Dolphin**.

Photo : Hans de Jong ©

Bourbon Offshore orders Damen ASD tugs

Bourbon Offshore and Damen Shipyards Gorinchem, Netherlands, have signed a contract for the construction and delivery of four Damen ASD Tugs 3213.

Damen says this tug is its latest development and "the top of the range with a bollard pull of in excess of 83 metric tons." The tugs are well equipped and designed for both offshore and terminal operations including fire-fighting equipment based on Fi-Fi I requirements.

The delivery of the first two vessels is scheduled for July 2009 and the remaining two vessels will be delivered in December 2009.

Daewoo Looks to Start Shipbuilding in North Korea

Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering (DSME), said that it wants to produce ship blocks in North Korea if all conditions are met. Mentioning a development plan for the North's Najin Port, which is located close to the North Korea-Russia border and designated as a special economic zone for international enterprises, Cha said there has been no agreement between the North and China on the issue, saying that it would be a great opportunity to develop the port in cooperation with the South. Members of the South Korea economic delegation visiting Pyongyang met with their North Korean counterparts and discussed ways to boost inter-Korean economic cooperation in light industries, railroads, roads, glass, and automobiles, sources said.

Fincantieri Delivers Costa Serena

The latest addition to the Costa Crociere fleet, is **Costa Serena**, a ship inspired by the gods of Classical Mythology. **Costa Serena** was delivered by Fincantieri at its Sestri Ponente shipyard in Genoa.



Like her sister ship **Costa Concordia**, which entered service in July 2006, the **Costa Serena** is the largest passenger ship flying the Italian flag and the largest European liner in terms of capacity: 114,000 gross tonnage, 292 meters in length and accommodation for up to 3780 Guests in 1500 cabins.

"The delivery of the **Costa Serena**," announced Costa Crociere SpA Group Chairman & CEO Pier Luigi Foschi, "fills us with great pride and satisfaction. She is an innovative ship, a showcase of cutting-edge technology that will set Costa even further apart from other tour operators. Also, with the arrival of the **Costa Serena** the Costa Crociere

fleet is now 12 strong, enabling us to consolidate our brand leadership in the rapidly expanding European market. We're now nearing the one million mark, which was our set objective for the end of this year: in just 5 months in 2007 we have already clocked up about 880,000 bookings, equaling the entire volume of Guests carried in 2006. With three more ships already ordered and all due for delivery by 2010, another record-breaking milestone for the Costa Crociere brand is already taking shape: 1.5 million Guest reservations in 2010." "Our relationship with Costa Crociere goes far beyond that of a customer and supplier – commented Giuseppe Bono, Fincantieri's Chief Executive Officer – it is a true partnership. I am confident that this alliance will last over the course of time and will enable our companies to further strengthen the leading positions we have reached within our respective markets."

The interiors of the **Costa Serena** are designed by the Joe Farcus, their central theme being Greek and Roman mythology. This is also the leitmotiv running through the many artworks on board (5990 works, including 440 originals), contributed by 34 international artists (Omar Galliani, Aldo Spoldi, Nicola Salvatore, Stefano Pizzi, Fernando De Filippi and Wal, among many others). Starting from "L'Olimpo Spattacolosso" (Spectacular Olympus), a monumental artwork including 16 "Sculpture Costumes" by Alberto Nodolini (made using Rubelli-Lisio materials from the Sartoria Fiore), inspired by Roman Mythology, and installed in the Pantheon Atrium in a stunning visual scene.

Samsung Signs for 6 Containerships

Korea's Samsung Heavy Industries has won a deal from an unnamed European owner for 6 big containerships, reports TradeWinds. The 8,500-teu vessels will be delivered by 31 July, 2010, it said in a statement. They are costing KRW 713bn (\$771.5mn).

Novoship to Increase Its Fleet

On May, 14 2007 Samsung Heavy Industries (South Korea) delivered a new tanker of Aframax class to the Russian customer - Novoship, JSC.

The new vessel named "**NC Lider**" is the first one of the series of 4 identical Aframax. Deadweight - 115 thousand tons, length - 250 m, breadth - 43.8 m, hull height - 21 m, speed - 15kn.

Besides, on May, 16 of the current year at the shipyard Hyundai Heavy Industries will be held the namegiving ceremony of another Aframax ship (deadweight - 105 thousand tons) for Novoship. It is planned that on May 22 the tanker "**NC Columbus**" will join the fleet of Novooship, JSC.

It should be pointed out that with "**NC Lider**" and "**NC Columbus**" the Aframax tanker fleet of the company will total 23 vessels. Moreover in the second half of the current year 6 new tankers (including 4 Aframax tankers) will join the fleet of the company.

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TOTAL VESSEL MANAGEMENT

K.P. van der Mandelelaan 34 - 3062 MB Rotterdam (Brainpark) - The Netherlands

Telephone : (31) 10 - 453 03 77
Fax : (31) 10 - 453 05 24
E-mail : mail@workships.nl
Website : www.workships.nl



The **VEENDAM** anchored of Santortini – Photo : Hjalmar Fontijn ©

MOL introduces new tanker simulator for crew training

MITSUI OSK Lines, Ltd has introduced a new tanker cargo handling simulator at the MOL Training Center in Montenegro, based on the most advanced double-hull very large crude carriers (VLCCs).

The type of the simulator provides senior officers with realistic training on pre-discharging cargo pipe pressure tests and pre-docking cargo pipe cleaning, in addition to normal loading/discharging operations.

Trainees can simulate opening/closing of local valves that are operated on deck and in the pump room, by touching the valves of the cargo piping diagram on three large plasma displays. This simulates communication between the cargo control room and the site of the actual equipment. Thanks to the large, clear plasma display, trainees can view still and moving images or computer graphics of cargo machinery and valve operation for an authentic training experience.

In addition to equipment and machinery images and the piping diagram, the new simulator can also easily display selected drawings of the equipment to help the trainees with self training.

According to MOL it is also considering introducing this simulator at seafarer training centers in Japan and the Philippines that provide tanker cargo handling training for officers and crew members. Practical training will be incorporated with the simulator in the training curriculum.

Varun Shipping Company Limited Acquires AHTS

Varun Shipping Company Limited announced that it has taken delivery of second 16000 BHP Anchor Handling and Towing Supply Vessel with Bollard Pull in excess of 180 tons.

Bergesen Worldwide sells Genmar stake

Back on August 15, 2006, Sohmen-family-controlled Bergesen Worldwide announced it had acquired a 12 percent stake in General Maritime Corporation.

The 3,860,000 shares were previously held by Frontline, and acquired by BW at \$40 per share marginally above the closing price on Monday 14 August 2006. By our reckoning that's a total consideration of \$154,400,000,

Today, a filing with the SEC disclosed that on May 14, 2007 Bergesen Worldwide agreed to sell the 3,860,000 shares to Morgan Stanley & Co. Incorporated for an aggregate consideration of \$112,326,000 at a closing that occurred on May 14, 2007.

By our reckoning that's a loss of \$42,074,000. Following the consummation of the sale of the shares, neither the Sohmen Family Foundation nor Bergesen Worldwide Limited beneficially own any securities of Genmar.



Above seen the transport of the **Salus** recently fixed by **WorldWise Marine Brokers BV**. The **Salus** of Harms Bergung towing the dredger "**Zeearend**" of Baggerbedrijf de Boer from Dordrecht to Haifa. The tow left on 28 April 2007 and is due to arrive next Saturday, Warranty surveyor was Bureau Vogtschmidt.



S'pore port's April box volume up 13%

Singapore's port operators, including PSA International Pte, handled 13 per cent more containers last month in the world's busiest port, helped by growing trade. Singapore's port handled 2.22 million 20-foot standard containers in April, compared with 1.96 million boxes a year earlier, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said on its website yesterday.

Shipping lines such as AP Moeller-Maersk A/S are moving more containers as Asian countries sell more low-cost goods to the United States and Europe. Global export volumes may rise 7.5 per cent this year, as Asia's developing economies grow at a faster rate, according to the Asian Development Bank.

In the first four months, Singapore handled 8.8 million containers, 14 per cent more than the same period last year, according to the port authority. Singapore overtook Hong Kong as the world's busiest container port in 2005, the first time in seven years, as competition from Shenzhen and other Chinese ports slowed growth in Hong Kong port.

Japan donates dredger ship to Mozambique

The dredger ship that will operate in the access channel to Mozambique's Beira port will Tuesday be officially handed over at a ceremony in Japan, according to Mozambican newspaper, Notícias.

The ship, which is financed by the government of Japan, is due to arrive at Beira port in June, relieving Mozambican dredging company Emodraga which, currently, operates with just one dredger after another, named **Rovuma**, went down.

The new dredger, named **Alcantara Santos**, is valued at US\$20.4 million, and has a 1,000 cubic meter capacity and 4.00-meter draught, with a dredging depth of 20 meters. In a statement, Emodraga said that South African company **Sub-Tech** had won the public tender for removal of the **Rovuma** dredger. The **Rovuma** was due to be put out of commission in June, as it was considered to be too old, as it had been in operation for some 45 years, against the 15 to 20 years set for the normal working life for vessels of this kind.



The lengthened **STENA HOLLANDICA** seen departing from Hoek van Holland bound for Harwich, correction on the figures given a few days ago, the **HOLLANDICA** is measuring now GRT 55.050 and is having a length of 240 mtr

Photo : Jacques Verheijen ©

Pakistan develops huge deep sea port

By the azure waters of the Arabian Sea, a remote Pakistani fishing town is being transformed into a massive deep sea port to cash in on the inexorable rise of the Chinese economy.

Gwadar port, a US\$250 million project that is 80 per cent Chinese funded, is expected to start operations later this year to capitalise on its strategic location between South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East.

The port lies near the Straits of Hormuz through which about 20 per cent of the world's oil is moved. Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz recently claimed Gwadar could 'change the map of shipping in the world' and serve as a regional energy hub for shipping and refining oil from the Gulf.

But the development of this barren peninsula has received a hostile response from impoverished tribesmen who say it is depriving them of fishing waters and bringing no economic benefit to locals.

Tribal insurgents are suspected in the killings of six Chinese workers in the Baluchistan province since the project got off the ground five years ago - including a May 2004 bombing that killed three Chinese engineers.

China's interest is driven by concerns about energy security. It is seeking a place to anchor pipelines to secure oil and gas supplies from the Persian Gulf.

Beijing also believes that helping Pakistan develop will boost economic activity in its far western province of Xinjiang and dampen a simmering, low-intensity rebellion.

'It will greatly benefit China's trade to Europe, Africa and Middle East,' said Moonis Ahmer, an international affairs professor at the University of Karachi. 'It will also give a boost to the economy in south-western Pakistan.'

Some international security experts speculate that the Chinese navy may use Gwadar for port calls, although current arrangements do not explicitly provide for that.

China, which has long-standing ties with Pakistan, has financed US\$198 million of the total cost of US\$248 million to build the port, with the rest covered by the Pakistan government.

State-owned China Harbor Engineering Company did most of the port construction, bringing in 350 Chinese engineers, technicians and other skilled workers. With most of the port construction complete, only a few Chinese workers now remain in Gwadar.

Much of the transport infrastructure needed to link Gwadar with Pakistan's northern neighbour is yet to be built, but potentially, it will nearly halve the overland distance from China's landlocked western provinces to the sea. The first stage of a 900 km road is under construction that would eventually link this south-western tip of Pakistan with the country's north-south Indus Highway, facilitating overland transport from Gwadar towards China.

The link road should be completed within five years, says Ahmed Baksh Lahri, chief of the Gwadar Development Authority.

In March, President Pervez Musharraf presided over the ceremonial inauguration of the port, although officials say it will be several more months before the three shipping berths open for business. Singapore's PSA International last year won a bid to operate the port for 40 years, and the government has exempted it from corporate tax and all import duties on equipment and machinery.

China did not bid to operate the port. Khurram Abbas, the chief of PSA's operation in Gwadar, said PSA plans to invest between US\$5 billion and US\$8 billion over the 40-year period. He forecast that the port would generate revenues of between US\$17 billion and US\$31 billion during that time.

North Sea market still buoyant says broker

Offshore Shipbrokers Ltd (OSL) says the North Sea spot market in April was another buoyant month for owners with the highest AHTS rate during 2007 being set at £120,000, though still below the levels seen during 2006 and no doubt to be broken again in the coming months.

"The start of April was relatively quiet though rates remained healthy at around the £40,000 level for AHTS and circa £25,000 for PSVs. The second week of the month however saw rig move activity increasing with rates quickly reaching the £70,000 level and by the third week of the month had reached, and in some cases exceeded, the £100,000 level, which hasn't been seen since mid-January 2007," said OSL in its latest monthly report.

"This peak was short lived with rates quickly dropping off towards the end of the month, and by early May AHTS rates had fallen to as little as £15,000 for rig moves," OSL noted.

The PSV market also suffered the same fate after remaining fairly steady between £30,000-£40,000 during April but by early May had fallen to circa £11,000 for spot cargo work.

"This current lull in the market is undoubtedly only temporary, with a busy summer rig move schedule and further PSVs departing the spot market, it is only a matter of time before availability tightens once again," said the broker.

"Whether we see the rate levels reached during 2006 is as yet uncertain, but with the number of newbuild vessels heading for the market this year it may well be owners last chance to top up the coffers," OSL concluded.

China begins building out its supertanker fleet



China has begun an ambitious effort to build a fleet of more than 90 supertankers to improve its control over oil imports, vital to sustaining a booming economy, shipping industry experts say.

Government strategic planners in Beijing have set a target that half of the oil imports should be carried on Chinese-owned tankers. No deadline has been set to meet this goal, but Chinese shipping companies are expected to order up to 65 supertankers worth an estimated \$7.1 billion by 2012, according to transport analysts.

These ships, in addition to the country's existing fleet of 25 supertankers, would have the capacity to deliver about half of projected imports by about 2015.

A tanker fleet of that size would not put China in the same league as Japan, Norway or Greece, but it would be a sharp improvement in its oil shipment capacity.

"It is all about national energy security," said Yang Baohe, principal naval architect at the Marine Design & Research Institute of China in Shanghai, a subsidiary of the sprawling China State Shipbuilding Corp. "We have to be able to use our own ships to transport oil."

Maritime security analysts say one of China's greatest fears is that its oil deliveries could be threatened at a time of international tension or conflict. Supertanker construction is now a top priority for state-owned shipyards as China becomes increasingly dependent on imported crude, mostly from the Middle East and Africa.

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China now imports almost half its crude. About 90 percent of these imports come by sea, but Chinese-owned tankers deliver less than 20 percent of this, according to reports in the official state media.

Japan, which is totally reliant on imported oil, ships up to 90 percent of its crude in Japanese-registered supertankers, which the industry calls very large crude carriers, or VLCCs.

"Japan has more than 100 VLCCs in its national fleet, which means its oil is carried on its own tonnage," said Matthew Flynn, managing director of WorldYards.com, a Hong Kong-based shipbuilding consultancy.

Bjorn Haugland, regional manager for greater China for the Norwegian maritime classification society, Det Norske Veritas, said China's action reflected a desire for security.

"The main purpose is to make sure that you have a stable inflow of energy," said Haugland, who is based in Shanghai and works closely with the major Chinese shipyards. "If you rely on other countries' vessels, you do not have the same control over the fleet."

The two major state-owned shipbuilding groups, China State Shipbuilding Corp. and China Shipbuilding Industry Corp., have invested heavily in technology and massive new dry docks to build supertankers.

Work started on the first supertankers in the late 1990s, and there are now six shipyards building these ships for local and foreign owners.

In a measure of the importance attached to building supertankers, Yang and his fellow naval architects in March were awarded a prize of 300,000 yuan, or \$39,000, for designs that their parent company tendered to win orders for 24 supertankers. The bonus will be split with about 30 of his fellow designers.

"It's a nice amount of money," a smiling Yang said in an interview in the design institute's office overlooking Shanghai's sprawling Jiangnan Changxing Shipyard. "This is a good period in China where there is rapid development in shipbuilding."

Major Chinese shipping companies, including China Merchants Group, China Ocean Shipping Co., CSC Nanjing Corp. and China Shipping Group, have all placed multiple orders for supertankers, with more in the pipeline.

However, energy security and the government's plans to build out the supertanker fleet remain sensitive subjects for Chinese shipbuilders. Both major shipbuilding groups did not respond to repeated requests for interviews.

Some maritime analysts say that China's desire to control its own supertanker fleet is understandable but that its sense of vulnerability may be exaggerated.

"There is a whole school of thought these days that flags and ownership of ships are almost irrelevant," said Sam Bateman, a maritime security expert at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. "The argument is if you can pay the price, you will get the ship and the oil."

Bateman and some other experts question whether this reasoning would apply during war or intense competition for oil. Chinese energy planners appear to share this lack of faith in the free market and have decided to build a national fleet.

"That's a worthy objective and quite understandable," Bateman said.

China is already the world's third biggest oil importer, behind the United States and Japan, and its demand for oil is soaring as an energy-hungry economy continues its headlong expansion.

The economy grew 11.1 percent in the first quarter according to government statistics, exceeding the average 9.9 percent growth over the past four years.

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The thirst for oil is increasing almost as fast. In its April 12 forecast, the International Energy Agency, a United Nations body, said China's oil demand this year would increase to 7.6 million barrels a day, a rise of 6.8 percent.

China imported 162.87 million tons of oil last year, accounting for about 47 percent of Chinese consumption, according to official figures. This proportion is expected to increase to 50 percent by 2010, when imports were expected to reach 200 million tons, according to a forecast in April from the Chinese oil giant, China National Petroleum Corp.

If dramatic increases in car ownership continue in line with current projections, China could be importing about 10 million barrels of oil a day by 2020, on a par with current U.S. imports.

Imports are expected to make up a steadily increasing proportion of oil consumption because domestic output has stagnated for more than a decade despite intensive efforts to find new fields.

Based on current trends, competition for dwindling oil reserves could become intense in the decades ahead, with all of East Asia's major manufacturing economies heavily dependent on imports.

Some analysts predict that anxiety over oil deliveries could arise suddenly if conflict in the Middle East were to constrain output.

Chinese military thinkers have also raised the possibility that the United States might attempt to block oil shipments to China if conflict arose over Taiwan. The United States has a longstanding pledge to support Taiwan in the event of an unprovoked attack from the mainland.

More than 60 percent of China's imported oil is shipped from the Middle East and Africa along extended sea lanes that pass through a number of vulnerable choke points, including the narrow Malacca Straits between Malaysia and Indonesia.

For the Chinese government, the accelerated construction of supertankers is just one of the measures it has adopted to enhance energy security.

Chinese state-owned oil companies have scoured the globe for oil reserves, investing more than \$15 billion over the past five years to secure supplies in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, Russia and Latin America.

Beijing also plans to complete the construction of strategic oil reserve facilities by 2010 that will hold 100 million barrels, about two weeks' supply at current consumption levels, according to senior government officials.

As China increases its imports of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, shipping experts predict that it will also seek to exercise control over these deliveries.

"China has already started to build its own LNG carriers, and you will see more and more of these vessels ordered by Chinese owners," Haugland of Det Norske Veritas said.

One of the most far-reaching consequences of China's insecurity over energy could be the rapid expansion of a navy that could be deployed to protect oil tankers. Senior Chinese military officers say that developing the capability to protect seaborne trade is now a priority for a navy that until recently was mainly concerned with coastal defense.

Double-digit increases in spending over most of the last 15 years have allowed the Chinese military to deploy an increasingly powerful fleet of surface warships and submarines capable of operating along distant sea lanes.

Apart from meeting the government's energy security goals, the heavy investment in supertanker construction has delivered a major lift to China's domestic shipbuilding industry, which is now ranked third in the world.

China's ability to win orders for supertankers from local and foreign owners is widely seen as an important milestone in China's plan to overtake Japan and South Korea to become the world's dominant shipbuilder by 2015.

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"The Chinese are now very competitive with South Korea and Japan in terms of tankers," Flynn of WorldYards.com said. Chinese shipyards delivered vessels with a combined displacement of 14.52 million deadweight tons last year, about 20 percent of the world's total output, according to official government statistics reported in the state-run media.

In 2000, the combined output of Chinese shipyards accounted for just 6 percent of global deliveries.

MOVEMENTS

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MULTRASHIP Towage & Salvage

Scheldekade 48

4531 EH Terneuzen

The Netherlands

Tel : + 31 – 115 645 000

Fax : + 31 – 115 645 001

Internet

commercial@multraship.com

<http://www.multraship.com>

The latest addition to the FAIRPLAY fleet in Rotterdam, named FAIRPLAY III is expected to arrive in her homeport Rotterdam today (Thursday) between 16:00 and 18:00 hrs.



The **KOTA KAYA** seen in Santos – Photo : Bruno Pricoli ©



The **CAPE PROGRESS** seen arriving in Rotterdam-Europoort

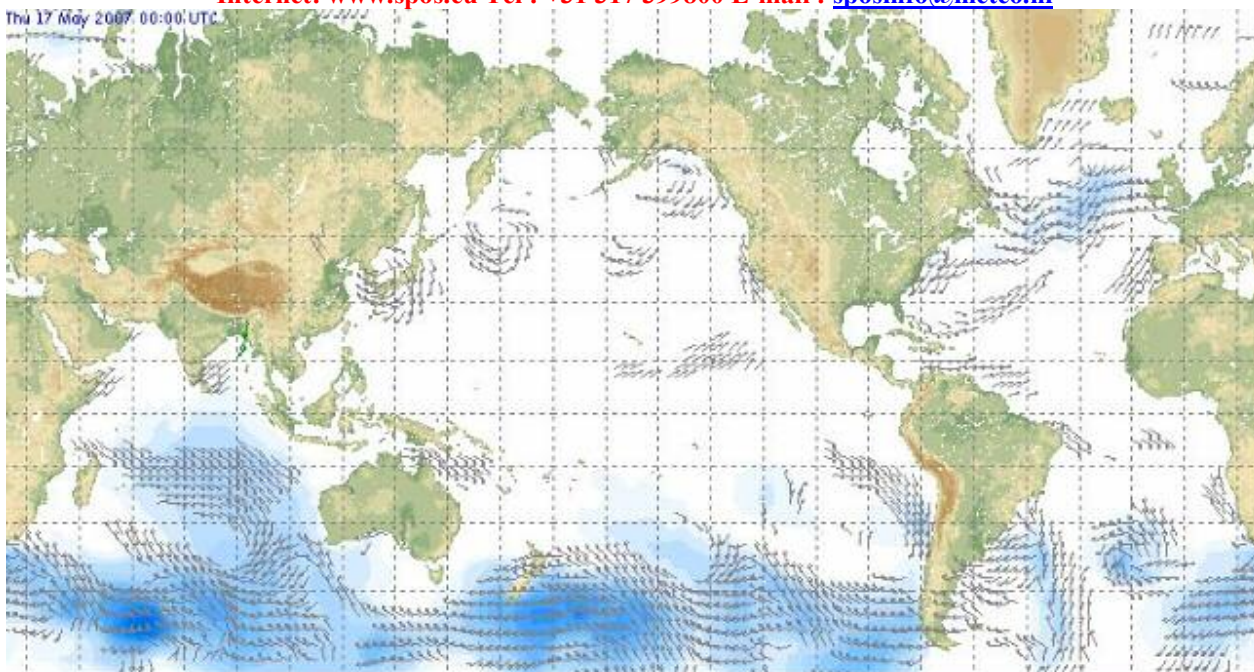
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MARINE WEATHER

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Internet: www.spos.eu Tel : +31 317 399800 E-mail : sposinfo@meteo.nl



Today's wind (+6Bft) and wave (+3m) chart. Created with SPOS, the onboard weather information & voyage optimisation system, used on over 1000 vessels today.

.... PHOTO OF THE DAY



The new Svitzer tug **Svitzer Khoramshahr** off Singapore on trials.

Photo : Ian Edwards – Sydney ©

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