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The TI TOPAZ seen moored in Rotterdam-Europoort
Photo : Henk Wadman ©

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EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS

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Lost at sea

By Tom de Castella

I remember the radio broadcast – three bodies found in the Channel, a yacht missing. But I only took a close interest a few days later when it was reported that accident investigators were examining the hull of the P&O ferry **Pride of Bilbao**. A couple of summers before, I had sailed to Spain on the same ship, watching from its decks as whales cavorted in the Bay of Biscay. Now this leviathan, which leaves hundreds of metres of churning water in its wake, was suspected of running down a yacht called the **Ouzo**. An image flashed up of the yacht at night, of sailors throwing themselves overboard moments before the ferry hit.

Around this time, a photograph was released of the three grinning crew, Rupert Saunders, Jason Downer and James Meaby – close friends in their mid-thirties, who had met at school and university. It was reported that the Marine Accident Investigation Branch was piecing together what was known about the men's last hours.

On Sunday August 20 2006, the three men had arrived in Bembridge, on the Isle of Wight, to sail the Saunders family's yacht, the **Ouzo**, to Devon for the annual Dartmouth Royal Regatta. Around sunset, Bill Mitchell, a boatyard owner who used to look after the **Ouzo**, was walking his dog on the beach. The boat was a quarter of a mile away when he recognised it. "They were heading out through the channel," he remembers. "It was still fairly light and I could see people on board but not who they were." His was the last confirmed sighting of the **Ouzo**. According to radar records of a yacht presumed to be the **Ouzo**, the first two hours of her voyage were slow-going due to the flood tide. By 10.30pm, as the tide turned, the **Ouzo** was in Sandown Bay, believed to be sailing south-south-west towards the open sea. At this point Jason Downer sent a text to his girlfriend, saying that they were under way and that he was about to go below to rest. That was the last anyone heard from the sailors. Two days later, a fisherman spotted Meaby's body 10 miles south of the Nab Tower, and the following evening Saunders and Downer were found dead, floating nine miles to the west.

Two weeks after the accident, Michael Hubble, the **Pride of Bilbao's** 61-year-old second officer – and officer of the watch – was arrested on suspicion of causing the men's deaths, and released on bail. Hubble had retired as a P&O employee earlier in the year but in June he had begun agency work on the **Pride of Bilbao**. Six months after the **Ouzo's** disappearance, he was charged with manslaughter and breaching Section 58 of the Merchant Shipping Act for "conduct endangering ships, structures or individuals". In October 2007, his trial began at Winchester Crown Court.

The essence of the case was simple. On the night that the **Ouzo** set sail, the **Pride of Bilbao** left Portsmouth and had a near miss with an unidentified yacht to the south of the Isle of Wight. The prosecution said the yacht was the **Ouzo** and that it had been swamped by the P&O vessel. The defence argued it was a different yacht and that the **Ouzo** could have tangled with a ship in another part of the Channel. The trial revealed that Saunders and Downer had survived for at least three hours in the water before drowning, while Meaby had been alive for at least 12 hours before succumbing to hypothermia.

Despite two detailed searches of an area of 125 square miles, including the use of a Royal Navy mine hunter and commercial divers, the **Ouzo** has never been found. But by piecing together witness statements, radar and phone

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records, and talking to those connected with the case, it is possible to recreate a picture of the last hours of the three yachtsmen that August night two years ago.

Between the Ouzo's position at 10.30pm and its likely encounter with the **Pride of Bilbao** was a distance of 13.3 nautical miles, which would have required the **Ouzo** to travel at 5 knots. It's known that the tide was becoming favourable and with a force 5 west-south-westerly wind this speed was consistent with the yacht and crew's capabilities. The three men would have been into their usual routine, with one resting down below, the other two in the cockpit. Jamie Saunders, brother of Rupert and a regular member of the Ouzo's crew, says sailing at night was not much different from during the day, except that they were more alert on lookout and in checking their position. "Despite it being dark, you can actually see a fair distance off the boat as your eyes adjust to the darkness. Visibility from the cockpit was excellent."

Meanwhile, in Portsmouth, preparations were being made aboard the **Pride of Bilbao** for its voyage to northern Spain. The ship was delayed for just over two hours by a technical fault. It finally set sail at 11.25pm, heading around the east coast of the Isle of Wight en route to Brittany and the Bay of Biscay. At 12.22am the captain "rang full away" – ordering the ferry's build-up to full speed. A few minutes later he retired to his cabin for the night, handing over to the officer of the watch, Michael Hubble.

Where these two craft ended up in the following 45 minutes was the major point of difference between the prosecution and defence cases. The prosecution argued that the **Pride of Bilbao** came very close to the **Ouzo**; the defence claimed the **Ouzo** could have collided with a tanker called the Crescent Beaune, which was sailing east-west across the Channel. The defence submitted an expert report by Chris Thompson, a lecturer in marine simulation at South Tyneside College. Using the college's ship simulator, Thompson suggested that if the Ouzo had sailed south-east rather than south-west, it could have come into contact with the Crescent Beaune at the same time and 8.8 nautical miles to the east of the incident between the **Pride of Bilbao** and the unknown yacht. Thompson cited echoes from the Southampton radar station in the vicinity of the Crescent Beaune, which he said might have been the Ouzo. The defence also proposed another possibility: that the **Ouzo** might have stuck to its original course but travelled at only 2 knots, which would have brought it close to the Crescent Beaune at 1.40am.

The turning point came when the defence forced the captain of the Crescent Beaune to admit that he had broken the law by not having a lookout at the time in question. Two weeks before Christmas, after a six-week trial, the jury acquitted Hubble of manslaughter. It was unable to reach a verdict on the charge of having put the men's lives in danger.

The trouble with Thompson's theory is that for the **Ouzo** to have ended up near the Crescent Beaune would mean going against reasonable assumptions about the yacht's route and the known wind and tides. If it were to have reached the Crescent Beaune at 1.07am it would have had to have been heading south-east to France, rather than on its stated route south-west to Dartmouth, and sailing against the tide rather than with it. Jeremy Smart, head of enforcement at the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, describes Thompson's mention of radar echoes as "spurious – a vessel the size of the **Ouzo** cannot be picked up at that range by radar". And if it were to have come close to the Crescent Beaune at 1.40am it would have been sailed exceptionally slowly, at the suggested speed of 2 knots. "For it to come into conflict with Crescent Beaune, it has to be heading in the wrong direction or at a speed which is not consistent with the skills of the yachtsmen," Smart says. "Two knots is just unrealistic. At that speed they'd have missed their regatta, so it doesn't make sense." He adds that the Ouzo's sails would have been far easier to spot from the bridge of the low-lying Crescent Beaune than from a tall ferry.

The only independent report into what happened, published by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch in April 2007, is clear: "After careful analysis of the facts, the MAIB is of the firm opinion that the yacht was **Ouzo** and that **Pride of Bilbao** had collided with her, or passed so close that she had been swamped or capsized by the vessel's wash." The report was not admissible in court as MAIB's role is to investigate accidents in order to improve safety, rather than to apportion blame. But a person close to the MAIB says: "No one can persuade me that there were two yachts similarly in distress within 10 miles of each other at the same time. It just isn't credible." But what about the Crescent Beaune? Didn't the court case show that it wasn't looking where it was going? "The bridge was manned, the officer of the watch was there, and he would have been doing collision-avoidance and navigation. All we are saying is that he didn't have a second person on the bridge."

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In the media reporting of the case, the apparition of the Crescent Beaune – “a total red herring” as the source puts it – loomed large. “The reason the media picked up on this was that it was the one day when there was more than one journalist in court,” a prosecution source comments wryly. “If you report only one day’s evidence in a six-week trial it will have a funny slant.” When Hubble was acquitted, the papers’ line was that the Ouzo mystery would probably never be solved.

If it was the **Pride of Bilbao** that collided with the **Ouzo**, we can have a pretty good idea of the last few minutes aboard the yacht. Some time before 1am, the **Ouzo’s** crew would have become aware of a ship catching up with them. But they would have been relaxed about the larger vessel as its course would take it about a kilometre off their port side. The ship was huge, and brightly lit. The men, who had sailed regularly in these waters, may even have known that it was the P&O service from Portsmouth to Bilbao.

What they might not have known was that having passed the Isle of Wight, the ship was about to turn. At 1.01am the **Pride of Bilbao** altered course westwards to allow it to run down to the Brest peninsula. The second officer, keen for the ship not to heel and cause discomfort to passengers, began a very slow course alteration using the autopilot joystick, which took three minutes to complete. So the ferry’s move towards the Ouzo was imperceptible at first, and as it was approaching from behind, the yacht’s crew may not have noticed. By the time they realised it was heading straight at them, it may have been too late.

Meanwhile, all was calm on the bridge of the **Pride of Bilbao**, with nothing showing on the radar. But at 1.07am the lookout, David Smith, spotted a white light on the starboard bow. From the ferry’s Voyage Data Recorder, the equivalent of an aircraft’s black box, and drawing on subsequent interviews by MAIB, it is possible to recreate the scene that followed on the bridge between Smith and Hubble.

Accident investigators believe that the **Pride of Bilbao** passed within 10m of the yacht. The Ouzo measured 7.7m (25ft) long, with its deck a few feet above the water. By contrast the Pride of Bilbao is 176m in length, 32m wide and more than 30m high, with a gross tonnage of 37,583. Its four Wartsila engines, producing 31,280 horsepower, would have been thunderous at such close range. Travelling at 19 knots in the open sea with the Ouzo on the windward side, where the waves would have been greater, the yacht never stood a chance.

Bill Mitchell says it is likely that whoever was on the tiller would have steered away so as to put as much distance between themselves and the ship. However, facing away from the ferry the yacht presented its most vulnerable point to the ferry’s wash. While the hatchway was shielded from the front by a spray hood, it was open to the rear. The wall of water from the **Bilbao’s** bow wave would have crashed over the yacht’s low stern and gone straight down the hatchway, which would have been open on such a clement night. Now unstable, the **Ouzo** would have then been hit by more waves from the ferry’s wash. According to the MAIB’s tests, it would have required between 10 and 30 per cent of the hull to be flooded for the yacht to capsize. The Royal Yachting Association’s technical department estimates that it could have gone under in about two minutes.

Saunders, Downer and Meaby are now in the water. They are wearing lifejackets and yachting clothes. They hope the ferry has seen them. But it does not turn round. They bob in the dark English Channel, watching the ship steam south, a streak of white fading into the night. They wonder if the incident has been reported to the coastguard, and listen above the waves for the faraway rasp of a helicopter. And wait and wait. The MAIB said that if the yacht had carried a life raft or a device that automatically sent out a distress signal, the crew might have been saved. The coastguard calculates that it could have had a helicopter on the scene in 50 minutes and the Bembridge Lifeboat in 70 minutes. The helicopter is fitted with a heat-seeking infrared camera, which can identify a recently immersed body from a quarter of a mile. Add to this the ferry with its powerful lights, and coastguard officials say the men would have been found, probably alive.

We don’t know if they all entered the water at the same time, since Meaby’s body was discovered a long way from the other two. But it is likely they would have tried to stay together where they were. They would have known they were six or seven miles from land and that any swim to shore would be hampered by strong tides.

Their bodies would have rapidly adjusted to the cold – the water temperature was 18°C – and for a few hours the fall in body heat would have been gradual. According to the MAIB’s medical expert, reflex shivering would have started

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after a while, at first in short bursts, and then continuously. The waves would have caused problems for the men and they would have turned their backs to the swell to avoid swallowing sea water.

Did Meaby see the other two die? As first light approached, he might have thought that having survived the night he would soon be rescued. But as dawn broke, that hope would have been slowly dispelled by the unchanging panorama of grey waves stretching to the horizon. According to the medical expert, he probably died around lunchtime on August 21.

The MAIB report showed that the **Pride of Bilbao** had been involved in a comparable incident. On 28 August 2000 at 10pm the ferry almost hit the yacht Aliniel south of the Isle of Wight. In a possible echo of the **Ouzo** case, the ferry changed its course less than a mile from the yacht, and was heading directly at her. The crew of the Aliniel put the engines on and shone a light on to the sails, which alerted the Pride of Bilbao's bridge, and after emergency avoidance action the ferry passed with a margin of 200 yards. The **Pride of Bilbao** apologised, saying that it had lost the yacht on its radar.

In his trial at Winchester crown court, Hubble argued that he had not stopped the ferry because he was satisfied as to the yacht's safety. In fact, the MAIB report says that the Ouzo's battery compartment was well protected so her lights may have stayed on after the crew were washed overboard. But it concludes: "The second officer could not have known accurately how close the yacht had passed, or in fact whether or not the two vessels had collided. This should have given him concern for the safety of the yacht and her crew, and he should have taken positive action to confirm whether it and her crew were safe."

It is well known that when a ship cuts you up, to use the language of the road, sailors will get on the radio and tell the ship's master what they think. The absence of any angry swearing over the radio in the moments after the near miss would have seemed like an eerie silence to most experienced mariners. "If a yacht had survived an incident like that, it's inconceivable that they wouldn't have got on the radio and said what they think to the officer of the watch on the Pride of Bilbao," the MAIB source says.

On the **Pride of Bilbao's** return voyage, Hubble's trial was told, Hubble heard a coastguard broadcast announcing that a body had been found off the Isle of Wight and a search was being conducted. He noted it in the ship's logbook but told no one about the incident with the mysterious yacht. It was only when the accident investigators examined the ship's voyage data recorder that the captain learned of the incident. Sources say that upon discovering how close his ship had come to the yacht, the captain was "absolutely horrified" that he had not been woken. It was the closest his ship had ever come to another vessel while at sea.

During the trial, the role of expert witness Chris Thompson was crucial in suggesting that the **Ouzo** could have come into contact with a different vessel, the Crescent Beaune. When I rang Thompson at his office and mentioned the Ouzo he said: "That's a very sore subject. Our solicitors have instructed us not to say or do anything that could be used in a civil action." But when pressed he insisted that his own calculations using South Tyneside College's marine simulator were more accurate than those of the coastguard, which were based on a system known as Saris (Search and Rescue Information System).

During our conversation, he disagreed with large parts of the MAIB report. Contrary to the view of other experts I spoke to, he asserted that the ferry "has a very low bow wave", that the unidentified yacht was "quite a reasonable distance away" from the ferry, and that the Ouzo could not have been sunk by swamping. "Even if the Ouzo had lain on its side, the yacht would have righted itself in 10 seconds," he said. "It's a mystery of the sea... It's not as cut and dried as some people have made out."

But to many of those involved in the **Ouzo** case, his theory doesn't add up. Jeremy Smart, who as head of enforcement for the coastguard is responsible for prosecuting criminal behaviour at sea, rejects Thompson's point about the technology: "We use Saris as do a large chunk of the world's search and rescue. We need the best systems available and none of us use the South Tyneside tool, which is fundamentally a ship simulator rather than a specific search-and-rescue tool."

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John Third, a partner at marine consultancy Brookes Bell, specialises in collisions between ships and has served as an expert witness for 27 years. He questions the usefulness of simulators. "Ship simulators deliver something that looks very good on paper but you can get many different alternative solutions from them. They won't help you see the most likely answer. The only way of doing that is to look at all the coincidental factors together."

He argues that a bow wave on the **Pride of Bilbao** would carry a huge threat at close range. "The problem for a yacht is that as a ship advances, there's a rising wave. Within 10m from the bow of a ship, the water will start to slope up because it is being pushed up. The yacht is certainly going to heel away. If the hull strikes you, it'll then knock the yacht over."

He has worked both for and against the MAIB in court. "In general, they are excellent. I'd be quite surprised if MAIB truly got something wrong. They are more likely to say they can't reach a decision on something."

The **Ouzo's** loss becomes painfully real when I meet Jamie Saunders for lunch at a pub near his office. I mention hearing that he was originally supposed to be on the yacht. "Yeah, I should've been on the boat..." he says before his voice trails off. The mixture of anger, regret, guilt and loss overcomes him. When he recovers he explains how he'd had to pull out of the trip to keep some holiday back for his wedding. Instead, he arranged to meet the rest of "Team Ouzo" later in the week before the regatta. As he speaks, he clutches his temples with both hands in an effort to stop himself from breaking down again. He wonders aloud if he could have made a difference on the boat that night. "It's just one of those things you think about. What could I have done differently, would I have seen it earlier? You rationalise all these things but you think, 'I am the one to blame because I'm the one still alive.'"

P&O has never contacted the families, presumably because to do so would be to imply some legal responsibility. "I think the view was that once Mr Hubble was cleared, P&O's connection to the case ended," says Brian Rees, the company's media head. He refused to let me see a transcript of the Voyage Data Recorder (I later obtained part of it from one of the relatives) but confirmed that Hubble had not worked for P&O since the incident. Hubble himself made the following statement after the trial: "The families of the men have my deepest sympathy but the demise of those men was nothing to do with me, or any action of mine or the **Pride of Bilbao**."

Saunders is unimpressed. "There's no closure on any of it. I find it difficult to take in that someone somewhere hasn't been held responsible. It's unacceptable that with our judicial system they cannot reach a decision on something as serious as three people being killed at sea."

The Near Miss

Transcript from the Pride of Bilbao's Voyage Data Recorder (with bracketed commentary drawn from MAIB interviews).

Smith: He's showing a red, that one, Mike.

Hubble: It's what?

Smith: (The lookout moves quickly towards Hubble and speaks with urgency.) Head on, head on. It's pretty close.

(Hubble leaves the chartroom and enters the wheelhouse, seeing a cluster of bright white lights close on the starboard bow.)

Hubble: Is it a yacht? - Smith: Yeah.

Hubble: Whereabouts? - Smith: Just right there.

(The lookout sees a small yacht with two white sails pass close to the starboard bow. It disappears down the starboard side of the ferry and he runs over to that side of the wheelhouse. Meanwhile, Hubble turns to port to give the yacht room.)

Hubble: We're clearing.

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(Worried that the stern would swing round and hit the yacht, he then turns to starboard.)

Hubble: Coming to starboard now 15 degrees.

(The lookout, now on the starboard side of the wheelhouse, can see no sign of the yacht.)

Hubble: All right? - Smith: We'll see.

(Hubble now moves to the starboard side of the wheelhouse to look.)

Smith: See a light. (It is a red light about a point [11 degrees] on the starboard quarter.) [This sentence is transcribed as a statement, not a question.]

Hubble: Aye.

Hubble: No you can't, you can't see it can you? - Smith: No.

(Hubble moves quickly back to the centre of the wheelhouse to turn off some decklights at the rear of the ferry, which he thinks are obscuring their view of the yacht.)

Hubble: Where is that bloody light switch, it's over here somewhere isn't it?

(Hubble then rejoins the lookout on the starboard side.)

hubble: Ah, there's a light there. (He sees a red light four or five points off the stern on the starboard quarter of the ferry. He returns to the console and puts the ferry back on its original course. The lookout returns to his position on the port side. Hubble looks back and sees a white light about two points [22 degrees] to port of the stern.)

Hubble: Can't believe he came up that quick, fuck all on radar.

TUG SEPPPO STOLEN



The tug **SEPPPO**, as seen above, was stolen last weekend. **Seppo** was lying at our base at Götaverken Cityvarvet in Gothenburg.

Anybody who has seen the tug or is having more information is requested to contact :

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Many thanks for your help !!

More Filipinos Taken

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs on Saturday (23 Aug) said nine more Filipino seafarers have been seized by sea pirates in the Gulf of Aden.

DFA Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Esteban Conejos Jr. said the figure raises the total number Filipino seafarers being held captive off the Horn of Africa to 54.

In a text message coursed through DFA spokesman Claro Cristobal, Conejos said the additional nine captive Pinoy seamen were part of 13-man crew of the German-owned, Antigua and Barbuda-flagged freighter M/T **BBC Trinidad**.

The said freighter ship was hijacked by suspected Somali pirates on August 21, the same day when chemical tanker MT **Irene**, a Panama-flagged and operated by Japan's Koyo Company, was hijacked with 19 crewmen including 15 Filipino seamen, not 16 as earlier reported.

On Aug. 19, suspected Somali pirates also seized MT **Bunga Melati 2** with 10 Filipino seamen, while 20 other Filipino seafarers were held captives by the pirates when they commandeered MV **Stella Maris** on July 27.

"The DFA has instructed embassies in Berlin and Nairobi to coordinate with ship owners, international maritime authorities and host government, in the efforts to secure the safe and speedy release of the crewmembers," Conejos' message said.

Following the August 19 hijacking, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) warned all ships crossing the Gulf of Aden to look out for two suspicious vessels believed to be used in piracy.

The IMB, a non-profit making organization, which fights against all types of maritime crime and malpractice, advised ship officers to "maintain a strict visual and radar watch" when passing through the Gulf of Aden.

"The description of the suspected trawlers - long white, Russian made stern trawlers with names '**BURUM OCEAN** or **ARENA** or **ATHENA**,'" posted the IMB in its website. It added: "One of the trawlers is believed to be operating at approximately 60 NM NE of Bossasso, Somalia in the Gulf of Aden." **Source : ShipTalk**

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Solution for abandoned Russian trawlers

Norwegian harbour authorities have finally found a solution how to get rid of abandoned Russian trawlers with huge debts.

For several years harbour authorities all over northern Norway have had problems dealing with Russian trawlers arrested for irregularities, and then been left abandoned in the harbour. The ship owners are often either bankrupt or refuse to take responsibility for the ship. Now the authorities have found a solution which will make it possible to sell or scrap the old ships.

Lawyers have concluded that it is the harbour authorities which control and administer the abandoned ships. If the ship represents any danger for the harbour security, the authorities can have it removed on the ship owners charge or sell it, says Harbour Manager in the Norwegian border town of Kirkenes, Oddgeir Danielsen to local newspaper Finnmarken.

The Russian trawler Berkley will be removed from the local harbour this week and then sent to a Russian ship breaker for destruction. Sør-Varanger Municipality will try to find buyers for other ships in the same situation as Berkley.

Source : Barents Observer

Sulpicio's franchise should be suspended, urge maritime investigators

Maritime investigators have recommended the suspension of the franchise of shipping firm, Sulpicio Lines, owner of the MV **Princess of the Stars** that sank off San Fernando Town in Romblon in June.

This, after the Board Of Marine Inquiry found that human error caused the sea tragedy that left more than 700 people dead and missing. Investigators say the ship's captain, who is among the missing, miscalculated the risks of the voyage from Manila to Cebu at the height of Typhoon Frank. The ship passed through the eye of the storm causing it to capsize.

The BMI says Sulpicio Lines is also liable for the incident since it failed to stop its captain from sailing despite bad weather. Hundreds of bodies, as well as a shipment of toxic chemicals, remain trapped inside the sunken vessel.

Source : Seatrade Asia

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The Sail Training Ship **Pelican** seen at London Cruise terminal Tilbury, Wednesday 27 August
Photo : John Morgan ©

SKorean emotions run high over island dispute

A rifle-toting South Korean stands guard on the remote and rocky islet of Dokdo, gazing out over the expanse of blue ocean toward Japan for any potential challenge to his country's control. Kim's Eun-taek is part of a 40-member police contingent that has been on high alert since mid-July, when long-simmering tensions between the two countries over the volcanic outcroppings located roughly halfway between South Korea and Japan, spiked anew.

"I always hated Japan and I've come to hate it more these days," said Kim, whose unit is tasked with safeguarding South Korea's control of the volcanic outcropping, which Japan also claims and calls Takeshima.

The dispute heated up following Japan's announcement it would recommend that a government teaching manual refer to its claim to the area, which is mostly uninhabited but rich in marine resources. South Korea and Japan have been arguing about the islets for decades in a dispute made all the more complex by Japan's colonial rule of the Korean peninsula from 1910-1945.

No incidents, such as the appearance of Japanese coast guard ships, which South Korea says sometimes sail near the islets, were reported Monday during a brief trip for foreign media organizations arranged by the South Korean government.

A group of seagulls peacefully flew in bright, sunny skies over the territory, composed of two main islets and 89 other rocks and reefs. Besides the police, the only civilian residents are an elderly South Korean couple.

"I explode with anger whenever they say it's their territory," Kim Sung-do, 68, who fishes for a living with his wife, said of Japan's claim. It is hard to overstate the emotional impact the dispute over the tiny islets — which if placed in New York's Central Park would occupy just 0.5 percent of its total area — has for South Koreans.

During this year's spat, the country temporarily recalled its ambassador from Tokyo and increased the number of coast guard boats patrolling the islets to three from two. Civic activists staged near-daily protests in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul and South Korean businesses took out newspaper ads backing the government's position.

From South Korea's perspective, the islets were the first Korean territory to be taken by Japan, when they were incorporated into Shimane prefecture in 1905, five years before the entire peninsula was colonized.

Tokyo has cited historical evidence it says back Japan's sovereignty since at least the 17th century. South Korea has countered that it has far older historical evidence. South Korean experts say the squabbling is not a simple territorial dispute but a profound historical matter that can affect the future of bilateral relations. "Japan's past wrongdoing and its colonial rule are condensed in these tiny islets," said Ha Jong-moon, a Japan expert at Hanshin University near Seoul.

North Korea has also joined South Korea's criticism of the Japanese moves, despite rising tension with the South over its government's hard-line policy on the communist country. In Japan, the dispute appears not to arouse anywhere near the same level of public emotion as in South Korea, though it remains a favorite cause of the vocal right wing and among fishermen on Japan's western coast who want greater access to the rich waters between Japan and the Korean peninsula.

The Japanese government says the timing of its announcement on the teaching manual had already been determined long in advance, calling the latest tension with South Korea "clearly undesirable." "Japan is of the view that both sides should respond calmly to this issue recognizing the differences in positions between our countries as differences in positions," the Japanese Foreign Ministry said in e-mailed answers to questions by The Associated Press.

Two major newspapers in South Korea have published war game scenarios, suggesting Japan would eventually defeat South Korea for control of the islets, owing to its superior air and naval power.

Some members of South Korea's ruling party have proposed permanently stationing marines there. Any chance of an armed clash appears remote, at least in the near future, in view of broader economic, trade and cultural ties, as well as the countries' cooperation in trying to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear programs.

Still, Japanese coast guard patrol boats approach the islets about 70-90 times a year without sufficiently explaining their purpose, South Korea's coast guard says.

Following last month's dispute, in particular, Japanese ships have increasingly appeared near the islets at unusual times, such as before dawn or even when a high wave advisory was issued, said Kwag Young-han, skipper of the Sambong-ho, a 5,000-ton-class South Korean coast guard vessel patrolling the islets.

All eventually moved away, though most did not respond to South Korean radio messages, said Kwag, whose ship is equipped with two 20mm Vulcan cannons, 37 M60 machine guns and a helicopter. Kim, the police guard, said he is proud to serve his country, but acknowledged duty on the islets has its challenges.

"The hardest thing about serving here is loneliness," the black-clad Kim said near the lighthouse. **Source : AP**

Buitenland aast op VOC-schip Prins Willim



Wie de VOC-replica **Prins Willim** nog niet heeft bezocht, moet daar niet lang meer mee wachten. Als de verhuurperiode aan de gemeente Den Helder voorbij is, gaat het schip waarschijnlijk naar het buitenland. Woordvoerster Esther Treffers van eigenaar Libéma BV noemt het Midden-Oosten, de Verenigde Staten en 'in de buurt van Rusland' als opties.

Foto : Piet Sinke ©

In 2006 heeft de gemeente Den Helder het in Japan gebouwde schip voor twee jaar gehuurd van projectontwikkelaar Libéma. Op de drijvende bezienswaardigheid wilden gemeente en de provincie Noord-Holland gasten ontvangen tijdens het onlangs afgesloten maritieme evenement **The Tall Ships' Races**. Den Helder wilde Libéma wel uitkopen om weer de regie in handen te krijgen op de Oude Rijkswerf Willemsoord, maar vond het te ver gaan om enkele miljoenen euro's op tafel te leggen om het schip te kopen. Met een provinciale bijdrage van 100.000 euro kon het schip worden gehuurd. **Bron : Helderse Courant**

CASUALTY REPORTING

Disabled in Ghent due to engine failure

m/v **Petr-1** disabled when approaching Ghent Lock, main engine broke down. 22.00 LT – vessel berthed in Ghent port, repairs under way. m/v **Petr-1** – dry cargo vessel, displacement 5810, built 2002, flag Russia, owner Makhachkala Commercial Sea Port, IMO 9256509. **Source : Mike Voitenko**

Oil spill in S.Petersburg port

oil spill from m/v **Sun Emerald** during bunker operations, oil sheen area boomed by crew, chief officer reported small quantity of oil spilled, cleanup under way.

Refrigerator **Sun Emerald** – dwt 9756, built 1983, flag S.Vincent, manager NORBULK SHIPPING UK LTD, IMO 8012310. **Source : Mike Voitenko**



NAVY NEWS

Russian warships enter Abkhazia's territorial waters

A Russian naval task force entered the territorial waters of Abkhazia on Wednesday, Itar-Tass reports.

The warships' are supporting peace and stability in Abkhazia and its territorial waters, commander of the Novorossiisk naval base Vice-Admiral Sergei Menyailo told reporters.

"We control the territorial waters of Abkhazia and adjacent water areas. The vessels' task is to prevent transportation of arms. We're also performing a humanitarian mission. The task force includes landing ships, missile boats and the missile cruiser "Moscow," Menyailo said.

Russian fleet monitoring NATO ships in Black Sea

Russia's navy has been ordered to monitor NATO's growing number of naval ships in the Black Sea, a top Russian general said on Wednesday during a briefing on the conflict in Georgia.

"In light of the build-up of NATO naval forces in the Black Sea, the fleet has also taken on the task of monitoring their activities," the deputy head of Russia's general staff, Anatoly Nogovitsyn, said in a televised briefing. **Source :** Hurriyet

GORDI DEPARTED FROM ZEEBRUGGE



Woensdag nam de Belgische Marine (voorheen de Zeemacht) afscheid van het op één na laatste E 71 fregat. **F911 Westdiep** is als tweede van de Wielingen klasse verkocht naar Bulgarije. Gisteren om 10:00 was het vertrek. De marine had een aantal liefhebbers uitgenodigd om één en ander vanaf het water te fotograferen en had daartoe **A997 Spin** ter beschikking gesteld. Voor alle zekerheid waren twee sleepers -**A952 Wesp** + **A954 Zeemeeuw**- stand-by gehouden, maar die Bulgaren kunnen heel aardig met hun nieuwe speelgoed overweg, en hun assistentie was niet nodig. Het vertrek van **43 Gordi**, dus!

Foto : Willem Kruit ©

SHIPYARD NEWS

STX, Hyundai Heavy plans to vie over Daewoo Shipbuilding

STX may join candidates, such as GS, POSCO and Hanwha, bidding for the takeover of Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering. STX chairman Kang Duk-soo on Tuesday said, "We're undecided, but are still considering it." He attended a luncheon hosted by four business associations for visiting Chinese President Hu Jintao at the Shilla Hotel in Seoul. After lunch, he said, "I won't make the wrong decision." Meanwhile, Hyundai Heavy Industries also expressed its intention to participate in the bid, saying, "We're going to submit a letter of intent regarding the takeover of Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering by the August 27 deadline."

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A Hyundai executive said, "We're planning to dominate the shipbuilding market by taking over Daewoo Shipbuilding and Maritime Engineering." "We're expecting a synergistic business impact by building LNG vessels and marine plant facilities, which Daewoo Shipbuilding dominates." **Source : chosun**



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Indian shipyards in big demand

With leading shipyards in Korea, China and Japan booked till 2012-13, the Indian shipbuilding industry has witnessed more than a 290 per cent surge in orders in the last 18 months. The industry's order book has risen from 0.84 million gross tonnage in 2006 to 3.3 million gross tonnage, taking it to the eighth rank in the world (it was not in the top 20 at the start of the 18-month period) in terms of the order size.

Experts say with Korea, the market leader with an order size of 134 million gross tonnage, booked till 2013, and Japanese shipyards, with an order size of 74 million gross tonnage, booked till 2013-14, Indian shipyards are getting huge orders for bulk carriers and offshore vessels. Indian shipbuilders' order books are full till 2012.

"A surge in demand for oil and increased exploration planned by oil companies has generated a huge demand for offshore support vessels," said Dhananjay Dattar, chief financial officer, ABG Shipyard. He added that the ageing fleet of crude oil carriers was also behind the rise in demand.

International Maritime Organisation (IMO) stipulates that all vessels more than 20 years old have to be replaced while all single-hull vessels have to be replaced by double-hull vessels by 2010.

The new demand for offshore vessels till 2012 is estimated to be 6.3 per cent of the current fleet size of 3.95 million dead weight tonnes (DWT) while the replacement demand on account of the IMO regulations is pegged at 61.8 per cent of the current fleet size. A senior executive with Bharati Shipyard said: "We continue to look at the offshore vessels segment as the most promising area. Around 70 per cent of our order size is accounted for by offshore vessels and we are planning to invest Rs10-12 billion over the next two to three years."

Increase in commodity trade and strong demand for iron ore from China has resulted in a rise in demand for dry-bulk vessels. The new demand for dry-bulk vessels is pegged at 6.8 per cent while the replacement demand is estimated at 10 per cent of the current fleet size. **Source: Business24-7**

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Athens seeks EU ferry subsidies

Athens is courting Brussels to subsidize Greek ferry services on routes considered to be unprofitable by shipping firms and aims to get the European Union to cover as much as 90 percent of ticket costs, Deputy Merchant Marine Minister Panayiotis Kammenos said yesterday.

The aim is to bring ferry costs to the same level as land travel, in line with a "transport equivalent" philosophy which has already been embraced by France and Spain, according to Kammenos, who is discussing the prospect with shipping firm representatives and EU officials.

When this goal is achieved, and EU funding boosts state subsidies, the most expensive ferry ticket on the so-called "agoni grammi" serving remote and sparsely populated islands will be 15 euros, according to Kammenos.

The mayor of Tilos, Anastassios Aliferis, has made strides toward achieving this goal in cooperation with the European Small Islands Network, which lobbies for stronger links between small islands and the mainland. Aliferis visited Brussels earlier this year to push for Greece's inclusion in this procedure. He was also involved in organizing a key conference on the island of Kos last month which brought together representatives of three ministries and EU officials to discuss the prospects and barriers Greece faces in this regard. A biministerial decision made in 2003, when socialist PASOK was in government, granted residents of islands on the "agoni grammi" a 50 percent discount on ferry tickets. The decision applies to residents of all islands with a population of more than 3,100 - a total of some 40,000 people. But, according to complaints by mayors on many islands, not all shipping firms honor residents' right to this discount. According to a complaint lodged by the mayor of Ai Stratis, Haralambos Makris, the shipping firm SAOS is one of the companies that refuses to offer the 50 percent discount.

Pride's New Ultra-Deepwater Drillship Set for Delivery in 2011

Pride International, Inc. announced that the Company has placed an order for the construction of a fourth advanced-capability, ultra-deepwater drillship. The latest drillship, like the Company's three previously announced projects, will be constructed at the Samsung Heavy Industries, Ltd. (SHI) shipyard in Geoje, South Korea on a fixed-price basis and is expected to be delivered in the fourth quarter of 2011, following construction, commissioning and system-integrated testing.

Louis A. Raspino, President and Chief Executive Officer of Pride International, Inc., stated, "We remain intensely focused on expanding our presence in the ultra-deepwater drilling sector, while increasing our already significant competencies in deepwater operations, engineering and construction and project management.

"This attractive shipyard delivery provides a unique opportunity to address a growing base of customers with ultra-deepwater rig needs in the early part of the next decade, while we continue to execute our strategic objective of expanding our premium asset base.



"Because access to the world's premium shipyards is highly constrained, with no known opportunities to provide customers with new ultra-deepwater capacity before the end of 2011 and with several units already ordered with expected deliveries in 2012, we have decided to move forward and commit to our fourth ultra-deepwater construction project with SHI. We believe demand for ultra-deepwater rig capacity extends well into the next decade, providing excellent prospects for contracting this latest unit."

The new drillship, to be named at a later date, is based on an SHI proprietary hull design measuring 750 feet long, 140 feet wide and offering a pay load in excess of 20,000 metric tons. The unit is designed for drilling in water depths of up to 12,000 feet, with a total vertical drilling depth of 40,000 feet, and will have off-line tubular stand building capabilities, as well as feature dynamic positioning in compliance with DPS-3 certification.

The rig, which will be initially equipped for drilling in water depths of up to 10,000 feet, will also have expanded drilling fluids capacity, a 1,000 ton capacity hoisting system and living quarters for up to 200 personnel. The expected construction cost of the rig, including commissioning and system integrated-testing and excluding capitalized interest, is approximately \$745 million. The Company expects to fund the construction of the unit with available cash, cash flow from operations and borrowings. **Source : Rigzone**

FAIRPLAY TOWAGE naming ceremony in Gijon



The Hamburg based company Fairplay Towage has named its latest tug new building on 16th August, 2008 - „**FAIRPLAY 30**“.

Fairplay 30 is the strongest in it's fleet tug and has been built state of the art by the Spanish yard Astilleros Armon in Navia/Spain. With an LOA of 39,00m and a width of 13,00m "**Fairplay 30**" and her sister "**Fairplay 31**", presently under construction, will primarily trade in European waters.

However these two tugs have no trading limitations and can work world wide

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Two 12-cylinder ABC-engines with each 2652 KW at 1000 RPM generate the power for two fixed-propeller Schottel SRP2020 rudder-propellers, producing a bollard pull of more than 85 tons and a free-running speed of 14kn.

Two Volvo 6-cylinder-diesel-engines (Type D12D-A MG) with a power output of each 310 kw are generating the required on-board electricity. Emergency Generator Set Volvo 6-cylinder (D7A-A) power output 116 kw.

For better manoeuvrability a Bow Thruster: Schottel Type STT 110 LK (200 Kw) has been installed. The following deck machinery enables the tug to perform a wide range of highly specialized jobs:

Brusselle Winch Fore: Hydraulic driven combined anchor windlass towing winch Model M 255/ASLH200.59/1S-2-2. Split drum with 180 m Dyneema. Pull 1st.layer 800 kN, Brake 2000 kN. Each Drum cap 54 mm, 400 m.

Brusselle Winch Aft: Hydraulic driven waterfall anchor handling towing winch Model M 256 SLH250.123/2-1-1 Full tensioning system with length and pull control. Steel rope towline length 1200 m/Dia. 54 mm. Second drum split 800/400 m /Dia. 54 mm. MBL 207 tons.

Brusselle Spare towing wire drum hydraulic driven 1200 m/54 mm

Brusselle Tugger windlass (2) Model M 257 HL 15/1-1, Pull 10 t, Brake 50 t.

Karmoy Hydraulic Towing Pins Typ 130853 SWL 160 t

Karmoy Stern Roller SWL 150 t

Karmoy Shark Jaw SWL 200 t

Palfinger Deckkrane PK32080 SWL 12,2 m / 2,0 t

Free Deck Surface appr. 100 m2 with wood protection. Deckcargo abt. 50 t.

Navigation- and communication equipment corresponds to the presently available technical standards. The tug is built according Bureau Veritas with the class-notation: „BV I + Hull + Mach + AUT UMS, TUG, FI-FI1, WATER SPRAYING, UNRESTRICTED NAVIGATION“, ICE 1C

Fairplay has ordered two further tugs with Armon. Delivery is scheduled for summer and winter 2009. These tugs will provide a bollard pull of over 70 tons and will primarily be employed in European ports, The **FAIRPLAY-31** will be delivered about February 2009.

NOL doet minder begerig over Hapag-Lloyd

Rederij Neptune Orient Lines (NOL) heeft zijn interesse in Hapag-Lloyd in het openbaar wat gematigd. NOL gold tot nu toe als serieuze gegadigde voor overname van de scheepvaartdochter van het TUI-concern.

'We hebben nog niet besloten of we een concreet bod gaan afgeven', zegt NOL-baas Ronald Widdows tegen de website van Die Welt. Hij ziet Hapag niet als kans die hij niet mag laten lopen. 'De markt gaat dramatisch achteruit, en daarom wordt het steeds riskanter om een onderneming als Hapag-Lloyd te kopen.' NOL is echter nog wel van plan om door acquisities te groeien. 'Kopen we nu niks, dan doen we dat zeker later', aldus Widdows.

TUI wil tot eind september biedingen ontvangen op Hapag. In oktober moet een beslissing vallen. Behalve NOL aast een consortium van ondernemers onder aanvoering van Kühne + Nagel-baas Klaus-Michael Kühne op Hapag-Lloyd.

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Maersk makes offer for Broström

Consolidation is ahead in the products tanker sector.

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2008 – 224

Denmark's A.P. Møller - Maersk A/S has announced an all cash offer of SEK 57 per share for Sweden's Broström AB (publ) and the Broström board has unanimously recommended that shareholders accept.

The combination of the two companies will form the world's leading product tanker company with a combined owned and long term chartered fleet of more than 130 vessels. The cash offer values the share capital of Broström at SEK 3.62 billion.

It is planned that the combined fleet of tankers below 25,000 dwt --small and intermediate vessels--will trade under the Broström name, managed from Gothenburg, Sweden. According to current plans, the fleet will increase from 87 to more than 100 tankers, including vessels that are owned, managed, on long-term charter and on order. All product tankers above 25,000 dwt (handy and mid-range) are planned to be integrated into Maersk Tankers' commercial and operational vehicle in this segment, the Handytankers Pool. In line with current plans, this fleet will expand from 127 to more than 160 vessels over the next couple of years. **Source : MarineLog**

Finstaship fits 150-tonne MacGREGOR offshore cranes to two multi-service vessels

Finstaship is upgrading two of its multi-service vessels, Botnica and Nordica, by retrofitting MacGREGOR Hydramarine offshore cranes



Cargotec's business area MacGREGOR has received an order from Finstaship to deliver two electro-hydraulic subsea knuckle-jib cranes – each with a 150-tonne SWL active heave-compensated winch system. The cranes will be fitted on the 97m vessel Botnica, built in 1998, and the 116m Polar icebreaker/ tug/ supply vessel Nordica, which also features a MacGREGOR A-frame as part of its original outfit since delivery in 1994.

The new cranes have a hook travel length of 3,000m and a compensation speed of 120 m/min. In addition to the main winch, a second auxiliary high speed winch is installed. This winch also has subsea capacity and active heave compensation. The cranes are scheduled for delivery in the second half of 2010 from the

MacGREGOR facilities in Kristiansand.

MacGREGOR Hydramarine offshore cranes will replace the two existing cranes currently installed on the vessels. The new cranes enable operation in deeper waters and with better performance. The cranes will also be equipped with advanced features ensuring safe operation in harsh environments, making Botnica and Nordica even better suited for arctic offshore duties.

The order includes MacGREGOR's crew training programme. Finstaship provides and develops a versatile range of efficient offshore, icebreaking, fairway, ferry traffic and ship management services for its customers. The primary market area is focused on the Baltic Sea and arctic regions. Finstaship's turnover for 2007 totalled € 72.3 million and it had 485 employees.

In the third quarter of 2008, MacGREGOR's Offshore division has so far received orders worth 31 million EUR.

Source : Marine Norway

Tailwind Financial Inc. Signs Letter of Intent to Acquire 20 Dry Bulk Vessels

Tailwind Financial Inc. a special purpose acquisition company, announced that it has signed a letter of intent with GrandUnion Inc ("GrandUnion"), a shipping company headquartered in Piraeus, Greece, contemplating the acquisition by Tailwind of 20 vessels operating in the dry bulk industry, including nine newbuildings to be delivered in 2010 and 2011. Subject to the completion of the acquisition, the fleet will be composed of approximately 2.0 million DWT, making it one of the leading publicly traded dry bulk shipping operators. The acquisition of the eleven existing vessels is valued in excess of \$600 million and will result in a fully integrated dry bulk shipping company generating EBITDA anticipated to be in excess of \$113 million for 2009.

Vietnam's Da Nang invests in its port infrastructure

Located in the central Vietnamese coastal city of Da Nang, Tien Sa port will be built into a modern container port once the use of Song Han port changes. According to General Director Nguyen Thu of Da Nang port, during the 2008-2011 period, 29 billion VND (US\$1.75 million) will be poured into Tien Sa port's warehouses with the installation of two wharves while the Son Tra port project will be built at a cost of 586 billion VND.

The Da Nang port proposed the city's authorities pave the way for the development of its infrastructural facilities with a view to turning Da Nang into the gateway to the east-west economic corridor linking central Vietnam with central Laos, northeastern Thailand and Myanmar.

It also proposed allowing trucks to enter Song Han port and allow Da Nang port to use land for the establishment of a navigation development centre and tourism service in the central region.

In the first eight months of the year, Da Nang port welcomed 34 ships with more than 20,730 tourists on board, a year-on-year rise of 13.83 per cent, and earned a turnover of 118.5 billion VND. Its total commodity volume handled through the port in the reviewed period is estimated at more than 3 million tonnes.

Da Nang port will reduce its navigation guarantee fees by 25 per cent as well as the fixed container prices with the hope of attracting more container ships. **Source: vnagency**

China Shipping container profit falls

China Shipping container profit falls China Shipping Container Lines Co., the country's second-largest cargo-box carrier, said first-half profit dropped 45 percent after fuel costs surged and the global economic slowdown stunted demand.



Net income fell to 637.2 million yuan (\$93 million), or 0.05 yuan a share, from a restated 1.16 billion yuan, or 0.12 yuan, a year earlier, the Shanghai-based company said in a Hong Kong stock exchange statement late yesterday. Sales increased 4.8 percent to 18.2 billion yuan.

Left : The **UNION PEARL** seen assisting the **CSCL ZEEBRUGGE** in the Belgian port of Zeebrugge

Photo : Henk Claeys ©

8/27/2008

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China Shipping follows Orient Overseas (International) Ltd. and Neptune Orient Lines Ltd. in reporting lower profit because of higher fuel costs and slower demand in the U.S. and Europe. The company also said it's "hard to be optimistic" about the rest of the year because of the world economy and excess capacity in the global fleet.

"The second-half doesn't look great as the economic slowdown will curb Christmas sales," said Jack Xu, a Sinopac Securities Asia Ltd. analyst in Shanghai. "Freight rates are not good as overall demand in Europe and the U.S. is weak."

China Shipping's container volume rose 7.3 percent in the first half to 3.6 million boxes in the first half. Traffic on domestic routes gained 13 percent, European shipments declined 2.1 percent and transpacific shipments plunged 12 percent.

The shipping line fell 1.5 percent to HK\$1.94 in Hong Kong trading, before yesterday's earnings announcement. The stock is down 58 percent this year, compared with the benchmark Hang Seng Index's 24 percent decline. Its Shanghai shares have plunged 70 percent to 3.63 yuan.

China Shipping paid an average of \$540.61 per ton for fuel in the first half, 67 percent more than a year earlier, it said. "The surging oil price cut gains significantly," said Xu. The price of 380 Centistoke bunker fuel, used by ships, hit a record high of \$764.50 on July 15 in Singapore trading. It has since slipped 12 percent in line with falling oil prices. The company will buy its parent's terminal unit for 2.6 billion yuan to add facilities in 14 Chinese ports, it said on Aug. 6. The purchase will enable the container line to reduce handling costs as it grapples with rising fuel prices and slowing export growth.

Neptune Orient, Southeast Asia's largest container-shipping company, reported a 19 percent decline in second-quarter profit, the first drop in five quarters. First-half operating profit at Orient Overseas, Hong Kong's largest container line, fell 27 percent. Net income plunged 93 percent after a year-earlier one-time gain.

Under domestic accounting standards, China Shipping Container's net income fell 43 percent to 699 million yuan.

Source: Bloomberg

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3i Group may put \$229 mln in Indian port operator

Private equity firm 3i Group may invest 8-10 billion rupees (99-24 million pounds) in a south Indian port operator for a stake of up to 26 percent, the Mint newspaper said, citing an official at the Indian firm.

3i has filed for approval with the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), which clears overseas investments into India, the paper cited Chinta Visweswar Rao, chairman of CVR Group, which controls Krishnapatnam Port Co, as saying.

The port operator will sign an agreement with 3i only after it "obtained clearance from FIPB", Rao was cited as saying. The public relations firm for 3i in India said the firm would not comment on any deal until it was done. An FIPB official declined comment, Mint said.

Krishnapatnam Port Co is a developer and operator of an all-weather, deep-water port in southern Andhra Pradesh state, the paper said, and the investment would be the biggest by a foreign private equity firm in the sector.

3i in April said it had raised \$1.2 billion for its India Infrastructure Fund and that it would target about 10 investments. It has already put \$227 million in Adani Power and \$101 million in an engineering and construction firm.

Private equity investing in India rose 3.2 percent to \$6.8 billion in the first half of the year, according to the Asia Venture Capital Journal, as the credit crunch soured deals in most Western economies. **Source: reuters**

Rosatom takes over ownership of Murmansk Shipping Company's nuclear icebreaking fleet



On Aug 27 2008 Murmansk Sea Shipping Company OJSC and Atomflot FSUE (Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation) signed an act of competition of procedures for transferring ships with nuclear reactors and nuclear service ships from the trust management of Murmansk Sea Shipping Company into the economic management of Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation, Rosatom press center informs.

Aug 27 was the last day of the trust management agreement signed by the Government of the Russian Federation and Murmansk Sea Shipping Company in 1998. Now this property has been given to Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation as a federal structure authorized to develop Russia's nuclear industry.

Left : The YAMAL

In Mar 2008 Atomflot FSUE, a company repairing and maintaining nuclear icebreakers, passed from the Federal Sea and River Transport Agency of the Ministry of Transport of Russia into the ownership of Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation.

Atomflot is supposed to be a transport-technological complex for operating nuclear icebreakers for the sake of the social-economic development of the Far North, Siberia and the Far East. Atomflot's

icebreakers will navigate in the Arctic seas and by the Northern Sea Route.

They will pave the way for transport ships, will provide support to scientific expeditions and will implement other tasks related to human activity in the hard climatic conditions of the Arctic reaction.

The reorganization of the nuclear icebreakers management system and its transfer into the ownership of Rosatom is supposed to help Russia to effectively develop its northern regions.

Note

In line with presidential decree Atomflot FSUE has been included in the list of companies to be owned by Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation on behalf of the Russian Federation.

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2008 – 224

Now Atomflot FSUE controls all the nuclear icebreakers of Russia:

— Five icebreakers with two reactors and a capacity of 75,000 hp each: **Arktika** (1975), **Russia** (1985), **Soviet Union** (1988), **Yamal** (1992) and **50 Years Since Victory** (2007).

— Two icebreakers with one reactor and a capacity of 40,000 hp each.

— One containership with one reactor and a capacity of 40,000 hp: **Sevmorput**.

As well as

— **Imandra** and **Lota** floating technical bases

— **Serebryanka** special tanker

— **Rosta-1**, a ship for personnel decontamination and radiation control

Lenin and **Siberia** nuclear icebreakers and **Lepse** and **Vologarsky** floating technical bases have been decommissioned. **Source : Port News**



The **MSC OPERA** seen at Harwich

Photo : Paul Smith coxswain RNLI Harwich lifeboat ©

Punj Lloyd plans to bid for Singapore's LNG terminal

Engineering procurement and construction company, Punj Lloyd, plans to bid for Singapore's Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal for which it has tied-up with an Italian company.

"We have tied-up with Italy's Saipem to bid for Singapore's LNG terminal," Punj Lloyd's Managing Director, Vimal Kaushik, said here.

This LNG terminal in Singapore is a maiden one for the country. The cost of the project is estimated at \$1 billion and is to be commissioned by 2011.

Besides Punj Lloyd and Saipem, three other global players are reported to be in the race for the terminal project. If Punj Lloyd bags the project, it would be executed through its Singapore subsidiary.

"The bidding process for Singapore's maiden LNG import terminal is in the preliminary stage. It is too early to share any details on this," he said.

In India, Punj Lloyd is associated with the Dabhol LNG project and is a sub-contractor for developing two LNG terminals for Petronet in Dahej. **Source: business-standard.**

Hutchison named provisional preferential bidder for port of Thessalonica

As expected, the board of directors of the Port Authority of Thessalonica (OLTH) voted in favor of the proclamation of the consortium comprised of Hutchison Port Holdings, Hutchison Port Investments, Alapis and LYD, as preferential provisional bidders to assume control of the port's container terminal facilities. The board's meeting was scheduled for yesterday and the outcome certainly didn't come as a surprise, since the Hutchison-led consortium had submitted the best offer. Hutchison is expected to assume immediate negotiations to finalize the deal, while officials (Cosco included also) are pressing to put a halt in the government's intentions of securing more private investors for developing the operations of smaller, peripheral ports. Their main argument is that in such a scenario, there would be created an internal competition, which would alter the prospects of the major ports. That is because ports like Elefsina or Lavrio, both located in different parts of Attica region could be developed in attractive counterparts of the port of Piraeus for instance, should a foreign operator was allowed to perform the necessary investments and attract the appropriate lines. The same applies to the port of Thessalonica in northern Hellas, with regards to the ports of Kavala or even more Alexandroupoli, where the new pipeline Burgas-Alexandroupolis will be based. These peripheral ports could potentially attract serious container handling business, which – obviously – is something that Cosco and Hutchinson don't want. For instance, market sources have indicated that Maersk Group is interested in assuming control of the port of Kavala. **Source : Nikos Roussanoglou, Hellenic Shipping News**



The **BOURBON HAMOS** seen moored in Singapore (Loyang)

Photo : Capt. Jelle de Vries ©

Petrobras orders FPSO for Tupi area production

Mitsui Ocean Development & Engineering Co. Ltd. (MODEC) has signed a letter of intent with Petroleo Brasileiro SA (Petrobras) to supply, charter, and operate a floating production, storage, and offloading (FPSO) vessel as the Pilot FPSO in the giant Tupi field area of the Santos basin off Brazil. Under terms of the contract, which involves a 15-year lease with five 1-year options, MODEC will be responsible for the engineering, procurement, construction, mobilization and operations for the FPSO, including topsides processing equipment, hull, and marine system. FMC's Sofec unit will design and provide the spread mooring. MODEC will convert the M/V Sunrise IV very large crude carrier into the Cidade de Angra dos Reis MV22 FPSO. The vessel will be deployed in the Tupi area and will initially gather production from five subsea wells with the capability to handle four additional production wells in the future. The FPSO, which

will have a storage capacity of 1.6 million bbl, will be capable of processing 100,000 b/d of oil or 150,000 b/d of total fluids. It also will be able to inject 100,000 b/d of water. The Cidade de Angra dos Reis MV22, designed to remain in the field for up to 20 years, will arrive in Brazil by yearend 2010 and will be installed in water as deep as 2,150 m. The vessel, MODEC's sixth in Brazil, will be the first permanent FPSO to operate in the Tupi area. MODEC currently is operating the Fluminense FPSO, the Cidade do Rio de Janeiro MV14 FPSO, and the Cidade de Macae MV15 FSO. The Cidade de Niteroi MV18 FPSO and Cidade de Santos MV20 FPSO are under construction and scheduled to be installed in fourth-quarter 2008 and 2009 respectively. Earlier this month, Tullow Ghana Ltd., operator of Jubilee oil field off Ghana, signed a 7-year lease agreement in which MODEC will provide and operate the FPSO vessel for Jubilee field (OGJ, Aug. 18, 2008). **Source: Oil & Gas Journal**

NYK boosts IEX service with extra vessel

NYK Line has announced that it plans to add an extra vessel to the Indian Subcontinent East Coast Express Service (IEX) this month operated through a slot-charter arrangement with Hapag-Lloyd since July 2007. The addition of the new 4,000teu vessel is expected to allow the company to "better meet the customers' strong demand for space in the fast-growing market."

The upgraded IEX will offer a fixed-day weekly service using seven 4,000teu vessels calling at: Port Muhammad Bin Qasim (Karachi), Pakistan (Thu / Fri) – Nhava Sheva, India (Sun / Mon) – Mundra, India (Tue / Wed) – Damietta, Egypt (Tue / Wed) – New York, United States (Sat / Mon) – Norfolk, United States (Tue / Wed) – Charleston, United States (Thu / Fri) – Port Said, Egypt (Wed / Thu) – Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (Sat / Sat) – Port Muhammad Bin Qasim (Karachi). **Source : Seatrade Asia**

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The **GREEN RIDGE** seen at the Westerscheldt River
Photo : Richard Wisse ©



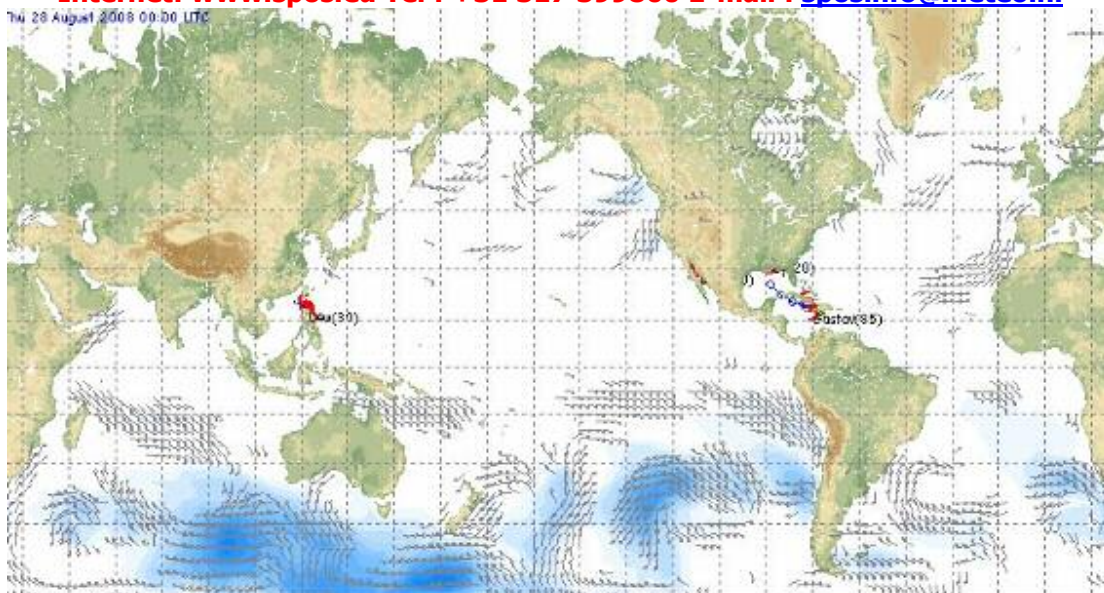
The **BOULARIBANK** seen at the Westerscheldt river
Photo : Rinus Eversdijk ©

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.... PHOTO OF THE DAY



The **BB CONNECTOR** seen in Stavanger
Photo : Marc van der Stok ©

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