

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2010 – 145



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Above seen the newbuilding CERES, IMO 9429211, after her first Kiel-Canal transit on Mai 23rd, 2010. Photo : Michael Brakhage ©

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The **NOORDHOEK CONSTRUCTOR** seen enroute Rotterdam – Photo : Bert Bot ©

Hijacked Malaysian tug and barge recovered

The Philippine Coast Guard says it has recovered a hijacked Malaysian-registered tug and the barge it was towing.

The tug **Atlantic 3** and barge **Atlantic 5** were found at Kinford wharf in General Santos City on the southern island of Mindanao. Coast Guard personnel were on a routine patrol on Wednesday when they came across two newly arrived vessels that fitted the description of the recently hijacked **Atlantic 3** and **Atlantic 5**.

'Our suspicions were further aroused when we discovered the crew in the process of repainting the hulls and cutting away with blow torches the welded names and registration numbers of the vessels, as well as identification marks on the machinery,' said the Coast Guard's south eastern Mindanao commander, Lino Dabi. 'The original names were still intact so we were able to ascertain that these are missing vessels.'

The tug's documents had been altered and its name changed to **Marlyn 8**, he said. The taking of **Atlantic 3** followed the hijacking of Singapore-registered tug **Asta** a month earlier in Malaysian waters.

Several crew members were arrested and the two vessels placed under Coast Guard custody. Officials are now trying to determine the identity of the crew and the people behind the hijacking. 'The modus operandi used in the hijacking points to an international syndicate of pirates victimising ships in the region,' said Coast Guard commandant Wilfredo Tamayo.

In both cases, the vessels were tugs using the busy sea lanes between Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. Heavily armed pirates boarded the vessels, overpowered the crews, set them adrift in lifeboats, and then set a course for Mindanao.

On reaching the island, the ship's identity would be changed so it could be sold to unscrupulous buyers. Philippine authorities said the hijacking syndicate appears to involve several nationalities. Indonesian pirates hijack the ships and Chinese middlemen to sell the renamed vessels to Philippine shipowners and operators. **Source : BusinessTimes-Singapore**



The **SEAFATH II** seen outward bound from Rotterdam-Europoort – **Photo : Jan Oosterboer ©**

Coal ship waiting to be towed back to China

The Chinese coal carrier **Shen Neng 1**, which ran aground on the Great Barrier Reef off central Queensland in early April, arrived at safe anchorage off the Port of Gladstone on Sunday, where it was waiting to be towed back to China.

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A Maritime Safety Queensland spokesman on Sunday said the deep-sea tug **De Da**, which was due to arrive from Singapore in late May, would tow the **Shen Neng 1** back to China. Salvage experts had finished offloading one-third of the ship's 65,000 tons of coal last Thursday, making the Chinese coal vessel light enough to be towed back to China.

The ship was originally moved to Gladstone for salvaging, but was shifted again to an anchorage in calm, protected waters off Hervey Bay last Tuesday. **Source : Xinhua**



Above seen Dockwise **Blue Marlin** ready to discharge the **Ocean America** at Dampier Australia.
Photo : Kees Kuyper ©



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Marine Atlantic chartering retrofitted ships for Gulf run



Marine Atlantic will charter two retrofitted vessels from Sweden's Stena Group of Companies. The ships, like the one pictured here in an artist's rendition, are expected to be in operation by next summer. — Submitted image from Marine Atlantic

Ottawa is attempting to put **Marine Atlantic** on a steadier course, chartering two retrofitted ships to take over the Gulf ferry run effective next summer.

"We're looking at a fix for not one year, two years, five years, but a decade or more," Rob Merrifield, the minister of state for transport in the Harper government, said at a press conference in St. John's Friday.

Joseph and Clara Smallwood on the Port aux Basques to North Sydney, N.S., run.

The two ships will replace the **MV Caribou** and **MV**

The Caribou and Smallwood were built in the late 1980s. Their replacements – **MV Stena Trader** and **MV Stena Traveller** – were built in 2006 and 2007. The two vessels will undergo significant refits at a yard in Germany before taking over the Gulf run. Merrifield called the marine connection between Port aux Basques and North Sydney the "umbilical cord" between Newfoundland and the mainland. But that cord has been fraying in recent years, and was recently the subject of a scathing report by federal Auditor General Sheila Fraser.

Merrifield said Ottawa has "heard loud and clear" complaints about capacity and on-time delivery of services. He said the nearly-new ships will address those concerns. They are each rated for nearly 1,000 passengers, or roughly the same as the current ships. But the new ferries will have 50 per cent more capacity for vehicles and freight. That will help avoid trouble caused by bad weather or maintenance requirements, said Rob Crosbie, chair of Marine Atlantic's board of directors.

"The big issue around service quality and capacity is that if you don't have the capacity to catch up, then the service quality is going to suffer for a long time after the incident," Crosbie said. "So you're never able to catch up. And this extra capacity will allow us to catch up fairly quickly." Marine Atlantic president and CEO Wayne Follett called Friday a "watershed day" for the Crown corporation.

Follett said the average vessel age in Marine Atlantic's fleet will drop to eight years from 21 years when the Stena ships go into service. The charter agreement announced Friday will run for five years. Merrifield also hinted at more announcements coming down the pipe about improvements to Marine Atlantic service. He suggested those plans could include infrastructure changes to docking facilities in Port aux Basques.

Reaction was generally positive Friday, and the feds hope the new vessels will change those negative views. "I look forward to seeing an improved customer experience as these ships come into service," Merrifield noted.

The ferries will be refitted in Germany, during which each will be made 12.5 metres shorter. The change will allow for easier manoeuvres in the harbour of Port aux Basques, Marine Atlantic's main terminal in Newfoundland.

The first ferry will be delivered around Christmas. **Source : The Western Star & cbc.ca**

Eight of 10 tanker orders in 2010 for Suezmaxes

A flurry of activity in tanker new building orders since the beginning of the year has been the norm so far, as ship owners appear more optimistic about the sector's long-term prospects. This bullish sentiment has come hot from the heels of China's appetite for oil, together with an improved overall balance between tonnage and supply demand, as a result of many single-hull tanker scrapings. As a result, more and more tanker orders are pouring in the world's shipyards. According to a relative report by London-based brokers Gibson, "the larger crude tanker market has remained relatively firm over a sustained period when it was expected to come under extreme downwards pressure. As a consequence, new tanker ordering has been brisk since the turn of the year. Therefore it comes as no surprise that more than 80% of the tanker orders placed this year have been for Suezmaxes (23), VLCCs (20) and dirty Aframax (9). Conversely, orders for product carriers have been minimal, reflecting the relatively poor performance of this sector, which has at times struggled to cover daily operating costs" said the report.

Capping on the previous year, Gibson said that it wasn't long ago that many owners were struggling to finance their newbuildings and negotiated with shipbuilders for delays or cancellations. At the same time shipbuilders were wondering where the next tranche of orders was going to come from. "Now we appear to be in a reverse situation with a fresh rush of new orders and we presume with 'water tight' financing in place. Newbuilding prices are believed to have reached their base level and are in fact beginning to gain upward momentum because of rising construction costs and currency issues. After prices hit their peak in 2008, some owners are now reaping the benefits of current 'low' pricing. However, caution remains the keyword as demand for tonnage is dependent on how quickly the economic climate recovers. While the developing Asian economies appear to have weathered the worst of the storm, and forecasts of US growth are strong, the economic environment in Europe and in particular the Eurozone could have a devastating effect. With so much tonnage owned or controlled in the Eurozone, will the cloud over Europe curb the enthusiasm for more orders over the remainder of 2010 or will the current flurry continue? Persistent pressure on the euro will undoubtedly heap even more problems on the banking system and could once again make finance difficult to obtain. Going forward, this current crisis may actually work in favour of the tanker market, once again slowing down the pace of ordering" said Gibson.

Earlier in the year, Hellenic Shipping News Worldwide had interviewed, Mr. George P. Los, Research Analyst with Charles R. Weber Company, Inc., who said that many owners (both Greek and foreign) showed an increased interest for the Suezmax sector, which is likely because from a strictly return on investment viewpoint has become the most attractive sector.

"Many of the Greek buyers approaching the market were keen on the Suezmax sector, likely due to the fact that their rate of return is the most attractive. Compared to VLCCs, over the past two years Suezmaxes have commanded 17% higher average earnings whilst the acquisition cost averaged around 28% lower. Moreover, Suezmaxes tend to enjoy the greatest level of earnings stability and although owners can make very good money playing the volatility of the other sectors, I think Suezmaxes exhibit less risk from a financial perspective, making them more attractive than other classes in an environment more averse to risk than had been the case before the economic crisis" said Mr. Los.

Source : Nikos Roussanoglou, Hellenic Shipping News Worldwide

Seaman arrested after failing to return to ship during port call

A 47-year-old Chinese crew member of a cargo ship was arrested in Yokohama for not having travel documents after getting lost during a port call in Nagoya and failing to return to his ship, police said late Saturday. He was arrested after visiting a police station in Yokohama to ask how he could get to Hokkaido, the ship's next destination, which he was trying to reach by land after the ship left Nagoya port, the police said. He reportedly disembarked on May 14, two days after the ship's entry to Nagoya port, to take a walk, before missing the vessel's departure. The man had arrived

at Yokohama Station, but was at a loss due to his inability to speak Japanese. A passerby who spoke Chinese advised him to go to the police station. He arrived May 16 at Tokyo Station by train, but ended up in Yokohama to the southwest, although he tried to walk northward due to a lack of money, according to the police. **Source : Breitbart**

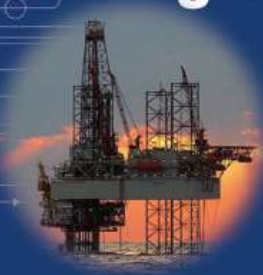
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Carriers Restoring Capacity Faster Than Demand



Photo : Fred Vloo ©

Container ship lines may be "shooting themselves in the foot" by restoring vessel capacity faster than cargo volumes rise, a new report by Axis Intermodal UK warns. "Overall, 2011 is still expected to be a stronger year than 2009 but

the increase in capacity will delay the arrival of a balanced situation, which is now expected to occur, on a sustained basis, at the end of 2011," Philippe Hoehlinger wrote in the latest SeaAxis report. He said effective capacity -- vessels in operation -- is expected to rise 12 percent in each of the next two years as carriers reactive laid-up ships and take deliveries of new vessels. Cargo demand, meanwhile, is expected to grow at only 9 percent a year through 2011.

Although carriers' supply-demand balance is expected to improve this year "there will still be a differential of 3 percent between the increase in the 'effective' fleet and the increase in cargo/volumes by the end of 2010." "By accelerating the redeployment of the idle fleet and not maintaining pressure on shipyards to delay deliveries, the shipping industry is shooting itself in the foot and (inviting) a more pronounced seasonal downturn at the end of 2010," Hoehlinger wrote.

The SeaAxis report said carrier finances are improving as rates and volumes rise after a year in which it was "a miracle" that no major line went bankrupt. But it warned that bunker and other costs have risen from last year and carriers' balance sheets were badly weakened by last year's losses of about \$15 billion for major carriers.

Source: Journal of Commerce

Regulators point to limits in rig inspection process

Federal investigators on Wednesday revealed limitations in the complex web of inspections by various agencies that came in contact with the **Deepwater Horizon** before it exploded and sank last month. They range from outdated Coast Guard guidelines for inspecting offshore drilling rigs to a failure by the Minerals Management Service to test whether a key safety device actually works before it is installed on the seafloor.

In the latter case, the offshore oil industry is allowed to design, build and hook up a huge stack of emergency well-shutting valves called a blowout preventer without any input from regulators, testified Michael Saucier, a regional supervisor for field operations with the MMS.

Saucier said the MMS requires rig operators to perform a function test on blowout preventers every seven days and a more extensive pressure test every 14 days. And MMS inspectors visit drilling rigs monthly to ensure tests have been performed.

"But by the time it's on the ocean floor, isn't that a little too late?" asked Coast Guard Capt. Hung Nguyen at a public hearing in Kenner. Panelists are investigating the blowout that destroyed the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig and started a continuing spill from a BP well in water a mile beneath the Gulf's surface.

In testimony Tuesday, another MMS official said he had failed to check BP's original drilling permit application on the Macondo well for a required statement about the strength of the blowout preventer. That statement should have said whether a component on the device called a shear ram was capable of slicing through and sealing the thick drill pipe used in the well.

A 2003 study by West Engineering found shear rams had difficulty cutting some thick drill pipe used in deep water drilling, investigators noted.

Saucier said investigators won't be able to determine what happened until the Macondo blowout preventer is removed and studied. He said shear rams might not have worked if they encountered a joint in the pipe.

The Minerals Management Service performed a "blitz inspection" of offshore drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico this month following the Deepwater Horizon disaster, with a focus on the integrity of blowout preventers. Saucier said the inspections turned up only a few minor issues.

Capt. Vern Gifford, with the prevention division in the Coast Guard's District 8, testified that it can be challenging to keep up with offshore drilling rig technology, and that regulations governing Coast Guard inspections of mobile drilling rigs date to 1978.

The Coast Guard does annual inspections of the drilling vessels and equipment aboard, though its inspection of foreign-flagged vessels is less rigorous. The **Deepwater Horizon**, owned by Switzerland-based Transocean, which has large offices in Houston, carried the flag of the Republic of Marshall Islands.

Gifford said foreign-flagged vessels receive four- to eight-hour "examinations" to verify more thorough inspections by non-governmental certification societies. Coast Guard inspections of U.S.-flagged vessels can take several weeks, he said.

Investigators questioned whether inspections by the societies can be trusted when the rig operator pays the inspector for the certification, with no additional oversight by the foreign country where the vessel is flagged. Capt. Thomas Heinan, deputy commissioner of maritime affairs for the Marshall Islands, testified that third-party societies follow internationally recognized codes for inspecting drilling vessels.

But he acknowledged neither the societies nor the Marshall Islands inspect the drilling equipment and systems. In the Gulf of Mexico, he said, that is left up to the MMS. **Source : Houston Chronicle**



Indian shipping tonnage at record level

After a two-year slump, the Indian shipping tonnage registered a robust growth to touch the all time high of 9.71 million GT as of 30th April 2010. This buoyancy is expected to continue and the tonnage could well cross the 10 million mark soon as several shipping companies are taking advantage of the very low prices in today's market to acquire second hand tonnage. Besides, others have placed orders for new buildings and are maintaining the scheduled deliveries. The number of vessels that are now registered with the Directorate General of Shipping, Government of India - the regulatory body with whom all Indian ships are licensed as required under the Merchant Shipping Act of 1952 - has also shot up to 1006. This too is a new record figure never achieved. According to sources in the Directorate the number of coastal vessels stands at 677 and ocean going at 329. What is significant about this robust growth is that it is in direct conflict with the fears expressed by the Indian National Shipowners' Association's about Indian shipping companies flagging their ships out. The reason they have been extending is that Indian shipping industry does not have a level playing field vis-à-vis players from other maritime nations where the taxation burden is around zero to 0.5% tax as compared with that for Indian shipping being around 8%.

In the month of April 2010 five shipping companies went in for acquisition with each adding a vessel each to their fleet. These were: Tolani Shipping Company; Goodearth Maritime Ltd.; GESCO; Essar Offshore and Affable Fisheries Pvt. Ltd. Four companies in the coastal trade also acquired one additional vessel during the month of April. These being: Ocean Sparkle Ltd.; Adel Shipping & Logistics Pvt. Ltd.; TAG Offshore Ltd.; and PFS Shipping (India) Ltd. Many shipping majors have firmed up expansion plans. Heading the list is state owned Shipping Corporation of India which has outlined a \$ 4 billion capex to acquire 36 ships, over and above the current order booked for 32 vessels. Great Offshore acquired a second hand rig in March this year and will be taking delivery of another 350 feet jack-up rig and a new multi supply vessel by the end of the current fiscal. Mercator Lines, which already owns eight ocean-going oil tankers of different size and carrying capacity, plans to acquire four second-hand Aframax ships this year. Dredging Corporation of India will soon be taking delivery of two dredgers. Similarly, other companies too are considering market conditions for their vessel acquisition. **Source: Maritime Professional**

PCG to take full accountability

Should the new implementing rules and regulations of the Coast Guard Law be approved, the Philippine Coastguard (PCG) will take full responsibility in case of sea mishaps or vessel sinkings. Further, PCG will be given a wider authority and responsibility.

Under the proposed amendments, PCG will be mandated to conduct inspections on all merchant ships and vessels, including but shall not be limited to inspections prior to departure to ensure and enforce compliance with safety standards, rules and regulations.

The new law is vital in determining the role of PCG especially in times of sea accident. In the previous incidents, there had been "finger pointing" on who is liable for the sinking incident, as PCG was only deputized by the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) to perform some maritime enforcement activities.



The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Tenix Defense Systems, South Coogie, Australia built patrol vessels **3501 ILOCOS NORTE** and **3503 ROMBLON** seen moored in Puerto Princesa City (Palawan) , The construction of four 35 mtr long patrol vessels, with an option for ten more, was authorized 10-12-2001. The design is an updated version of the ADI 315 design built for southeast Asian island countries and for Kuwait. All are aluminum construction designed for search-and-rescue missions with a top speed of 25 knots.

Photo : Piet Sinke ©

Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Wilfredo Tamayo stressed that with the new rules, safety will be the main concern of PCG while Marina is still in charge of franchising.

When asked if PCG will be held liable now that they would perform vessel inspection among other functions, Tamayo's reply was "That's why we are making rules to determine the extent of the responsibility of maritime related agencies like Marina and Philippine Ports Authority. Whoever is accountable must have more authority which also means more responsibility."

He further stressed that ship owners as well must be responsible enough, since they know their vessels and their crew competencies. Tamayo also noted that motorbancas and those 3 gt and below boats are given registrations by the local government units (LGUs).

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"We have been advocating not to patronize motorbancas especially those without clear records, because normally they do not comply with the safety standards and they have no insurance for the passengers," he said.

Based on the proposed IRR, owners, operators, master crew and other responsible persons of juridical entities of all Philippine -registered merchant ships, vessels, watercrafts and off- shore structure or platforms or oil rigs are required by law to adhere and comply with safety standards, rules and regulations hereinafter specified and shall therefore subject their vessels or facilities including documents to PCG inspection and verification at all times. Tamayo said they will also need to build a database containing information of the ships, their permits etc., which can be linked to other government agencies as well as the ship owners.

The draft IRR also provides that "No vessel, watercraft or water conveyances, pleasure craft and the like shall be registered or allowed renewal of their licenses unless the PCG shall have undertaken the mandatory safety inspections to verify compliance to safety standards, rules and regulations."

Tamayo said PCG inspection is not anymore limited to pre-departure and that they can do it periodically, and at random. "Before the vessel get registered by Marina, PCG must check it first because we have to know if there are alterations made, which is one of the causes for vessel sinking. We must know the background of the vessel," he said. PCG can also impose fees and charges under its new mandate. One of them is to collect lighthouse dues to shipping lines.

Stakeholders as well as Marina were asked to submit their position on the IRR not later than June 1. **Source : Malaya**



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Belgian dredging firm getting death threats

Officials of a Belgian firm tapped to help in the dredging and rehabilitation of the Pasig River Thursday admitted fearing for their lives while claiming to receiving death threats from anonymous texters since last April.

The last of the threats, which was sent via text message, was allegedly received by Baggerweken Decloedt & Zn project manager Jeroen De Neve at 6 a.m., Thursday, according to Police Officer 3 Reginald De Los Reyes of the Manila Police District – General Assignment Section.

De Neve, together with at least four other foreign personnel of the Belgian firm, personally went to report the supposed threat of the unidentified pranksters five hours after receiving the text message. In his complaint, De Neve told police investigators that he had been receiving text messages saying, that he and his other foreign colleagues would die if they would not leave the country soon.

"Jeroen, your end is near. You (will) get killed with your wife and all the foreigners on the site. Your coffin is ready," said the text message sent De Neve which he showed to the Manila Bulletin. The Belgian project manager stressed that it was only one of the many threats he got from the unidentified texter since last month.

"Another text I received (from the anonymous texter) said that we will get killed in the Philippines because our working visas are not permanent," he said in an interview. For his part, De los Reyes said that they were now investigating if the threats that the foreigners were receiving had something to do with the recent dismissal of laborers from the firm.

"Whoever that person was, he just intended to sow fear on the foreigners, If that prankster wants to kill them, then they will just strike at them without any warning at all," he told the Manila Bulletin. Baggerweken Declodt & Zn, whose office was at 5th floor, Marzan Building, Bonifacio drive corner second street, Port Area in Manila, was tasked to scoop the remaining 1.3 million cubic meters of silt before year-end.

President Arroyo issued Executive Order 717 in March 2008, declaring the dredging of Metro Manila's main waterway a priority of her administration. The project was deemed urgent because of the frequency of flooding caused by uneven weather patterns brought by climate change, which displaced residents of Metro Manila particularly in last year's streak of typhoons led by Ondoy.

Dredging expects to deepen the river to six meters from its current level of four meters. **Source : mb.com.ph**



The **PRIDE OF HULL** seen arriving in Rotterdam-Europoort - **Photo : Luuk Silvius ©**

Marine onderschept drugstransport

Een drugsbestrijdingoperatie van de Koninklijke Marine in het Caraïbisch Gebied resulteerde in een drugsvangst van 317 kilogram cocaïne. De harddrugs werd aangetroffen aan boord van een verdachte Panameese koopvaarder.

De koopvaarder werd door **Hr.Ms. Van Speijk** onderschept op weg van Colombia naar Honduras. Door de slechte weersomstandigheden was het niet mogelijk om het schip op zee te onderzoeken. En vanwege de lading aan boord waren niet alle ruimtes op het schip toegankelijk. Daarom is uitgeweken naar de Panameese haven Colon, om de koopvaarder grondig te inspecteren. Dat gebeurde door het Amerikaanse 'Law Enforcement Detachment', een boardingteam van de Amerikaanse kustwacht dat speciaal voor drugsbestrijdingoperaties aan boord van het stationsschip is geëmbarkeerd. De Amerikaanse kustwachtcutter **Tampa** verleende ook assistentie bij de zoektocht. Het team trof 10 balen van in totaal 317 kg cocaïne aan in een verborgen compartiment in een brandstoftank. Dit compartiment kon pas ontdekt worden nadat de brandstof uit de tank was overgepompt in een ander schip. Een drugstest wees uit dat het om cocaïne ging. De zevenkoppige bemanning is overgedragen aan de autoriteiten.

Deze actie was de laatste operationele inzet van **Hr.Ms. Van Speijk** tijdens haar termijn als stationsschip van de West in het Caraïbisch Gebied. "Het is motiverend om op de valreep nog een grote vangst te doen", aldus de commandant, kapitein-luitenant-ter-zee Peter Reesink. De **Van Speijk** was eerder succesvol in het Caraïbisch Gebied: op 21 april 2010 verstoorde het schip een drugstransport, op 19 oktober vorig jaar onderschepte het fregat 896 kg



marihuana en het marinefregat was in 2008 verantwoordelijk voor de record drugsvangst in het Caraïbisch Gebied van 4.200 kg cocaïne.

Naast de verdediging van het grondgebied van de Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba, vervult Defensie een belangrijke rol in de handhaving van de internationale rechtsorde. Hierbij moet – door de ligging van de eilanden – vooral worden gedacht aan de bestrijding van internationale drugshandel over zee. Zo is de marine in het Caraïbisch Gebied nauw geïntegreerd in de Internationale drugsbestrijdingoperatie '**Joint Inter Agency Task Force South**' te Key West. De Commandant der Zeemacht in het Caraïbisch Gebied is dan ook commandant van Taskgroup 4.4, één van de taakgroepen van deze organisatie. **Foto's: Koninklijke Marine**

CASUALTY REPORTING

Cruise fire in Norway forces evacuation of 607

A engine room fire on a German cruise ship at a port in western Norway forced the evacuation of 607 people Sunday, rescue officials said. All 364 passengers onboard the ship **MS Deutschland** were evacuated safely, rescue services spokesman Per Fjeld said.

There were also 241 crew members and two Norwegian ship pilots at the ship, which is well-known in Germany for featuring in the prominent German TV-show "Das Traumschiff."

Fjeld said some crew members have not been evacuated yet, but said there were no reports of any injuries. Eye witness Borghild Vik, who works at a hotel in Eidfjord, told The Associated Press she saw large clouds of smoke rising up from the ship that later subsided. Vik said the evacuated passengers have been taken to a hotel and other ships and buses are on standby to transport them elsewhere if needed.



Photo's : bt.no



The fire started in the engine room and firefighters contained it to that area, Fjeld said. But he said the fire was still burning inside the machine room, causing heat to spread through the ship, and specialist firefighters were called in to try to stop it.

MS Deutschland is operated by the German company Peter Deilmann Cruises on its Norwegian Fjord route, which starts from Hamburg. The company could not immediately be reached for comment.

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NAVY NEWS



HMS **Dumbarton Castle** seen arriving on the Tyne 23.05.10 under tow of **Multratug 7** from Portsmouth to A&P, Hebburn yard for refit before being handed over to the navy of Bangladesh

Photo : Kevin Blair ©

Navy to get new course after loss of Cheonan

The conclusion that a North Korean torpedo sunk the naval warship **Cheonan** in March provoked many emotions in South Korea - including chagrin that the Navy was caught off guard in the middle of its own waters, totally unprepared for a surprise attack.

Academics, retired military generals and even President Lee Myung-bak have said the military is on the wrong track in general, and has gotten to the point where it is almost ignoring the enemy under its own nose. Two weeks ago, Lee called for a sweeping reconsideration of the existing military reform plans, dubbed Defense Reform 2020. It was formulated in 2005 and revised last year. The plan is aimed at emphasizing and bolstering South Korea's advanced weapons systems and restructuring all branches of the forces. It also calls for a reduction in military manpower.

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Under the plan, South Korea is slated to spend 600 trillion won (\$503 billion) and its forces are to be reduced from 680,000 to 540,000 by the year 2020. "We need to start with the Defense Reform 2020 and resolve everything so that it reflects the reality [of the security situation on the peninsula]," Lee said.

Kim Eun-hye, a Blue House spokeswoman, noted last week Defense Reform 2020 was conceptualized and written when inter-Korean relations were improved and there was a decrease in threats from North Korea. After the **Cheonan** case, however, the context has changed, and so will the reforms.

The military is moving quickly to make changes, at least in the conference room. On Saturday, Defense Minister Kim Tae-young chaired an eight-hour meeting with key military figures, including Lee Sang-eui, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and chiefs of staff for the Army, Air Force and Navy.

Sources said they discussed how to better prepare against North Korean offensives in the Yellow Sea, and also talked about reforming the existing operation plans against North Korean provocations.

According to sources, the new plans would call for an all-out strike on Northern military bases in case the North launches its coastal artillery or ground-to-ship missiles. The military leaders also discussed how to keep in check North Korean light infantry units based along the border, sources added. The Koreas technically remain at war, since the Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty, in 1953.

But under the Defense Reform plan, the Navy adopted the grandiose goal of becoming a Blue Water Navy, capable of operating across the seas and oceans. Under the reform, the Navy would add advanced destroyers using sophisticated weapons systems.

In that process, Korea may have neglected its own coastal defenses.

"Because of the Blue Water Navy plan, the focus shifted away from the North Korean Navy," said Kim Hee-sang, former head of the now-defunct National Emergency Planning Commission, which handled national crisis management. It was later integrated with the Ministry of Public Administration.

"Retired Navy admirals say the Navy may be the weakest link of our military in wartime," Kim added. There's also a budget issue. In 2009, the Navy's budget was set at 29.6 trillion won, about 10 percent of the overall defense budget. Critics said the Navy was stretched thin trying to develop a Blue Water force.

That reform plan also ignored the asymmetric balance of South and North naval defense, especially in submarines.

According to the most recent South Korean Defense White Paper published in 2008, South Korea had 68,000 Navy and Marine Corps troops with 170 vessels, mostly large destroyers. North Korea had 60,000 troops and operated 810 vessels, mostly small, including underwater destroyers, guided-missile destroyers and torpedo boats. These are the types of crafts that North Korea can use in guerilla-type warfare.

"The **Cheonan** incident raised the question of whether we have even the basic defense capabilities to handle North Korea's asymmetric force," said Yun Duk-min, a professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security. "We should reshape up our Navy and other branches and build strong deterrence. We have to be able to defend ourselves against North Korea before trying to go across oceans."

Professor Kim Yeon-soo at the Korea National Defense University said the **Cheonan** incident was the result of South Korea's "underestimation of North Korean threats amid the engagement North Korean policy" of previous administrations.

By mid-May, the Navy started reviewing its short- to mid-term plans, including improving radar systems on patrol ships and the sound navigation and ranging (sonar) systems. Also, the Defense Ministry put on hold its initial plan to cut the Marine Corps' manpower from 27,000 to around 24,000 by 2020. Ministry spokesman Won Tae-jae said any troop reduction on the west coast will be determined after assessing the security situation after 2020.

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Military experts also argue the South's Navy should be armed with an anti-submarine guided missile called the Red Shark. Developed by the South Korean state-run Agency for Defense Development last year, the vertically launched Red Shark can travel about 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) in the air and is tipped with a torpedo called the Blue Shark, which travels at a supersonic speed underwater.

The Navy has been developing the Future Frigate Experimental (FFX) project since 1998. The Navy is set to spend about 7 trillion won to build 20 multi-functional frigates, with the displacement of about 2,300 tons. The first of the ships is scheduled to be unveiled by 2012. But the Navy has not included the Korean Vertical Launch System (KVLS), which shoots the Red Shark, in the FFX plan. Military experts have said there isn't enough room on the typical frigate to install the KVLS, although others say the Navy left out the system for financial reasons.

One retired Navy admiral, who requested anonymity, admitted that the Navy had paid comparatively less attention to anti-submarine operations in the west, and without the Red Sharks or the advanced sonar system, the South would lack options to counter submarines. "It's possible to equip frigates with the Red Sharks, and the KVLS would definitely increase the range," the ex-admiral said.

Arguments for delaying the transfer of wartime operational control from the Americans to South Korea in 2012 have also gained traction. The two countries reached a deal in 2007 to give the command to Korea, but conservatives and retired military officers have expressed qualms about a security vacuum being created. They say that Korea may not be able to counter North Korea alone two years from now.

Earlier this year, Defense Minister Kim Tae-young said the transfer in 2012 would be "the worst-case scenario for the military" because the North could further bolster its nuclear capabilities by then. In late April, former military generals asked President Lee to "seriously reconsider" the 2012 transfer.

Budgetary concerns may come into play, too. Defense Reform 2020 was built on the premise that defense spending would increase by almost 10 percent annually between 2005 and 2010. But this year's budget went up by just 3.6 percent from a year ago. If South Korea is unable to live up to its own defense revamping plans, the logic goes, then it may need the presence of the U.S. forces here that much more. "Even with advanced weapons systems in place, it will take time to put tactical systems in operation," said a researcher at a state-run think tank. "Postponing the shift of the wartime command seems inevitable." **Source : Joongangdaily**



The Belgian MCM **M 916 BELLIS** seen enroute Amsterdam - **Photo : Cor van Niekerken (c)**

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RAMBIZ seen rigging / preparing the lift of the crane housing from the **Oleg Strashnov** at Mammoet Heavy Lift terminal, the crane housing with a weight of approx 2400 ton will be lifted onboard a barge where the housing will wait to be lifted onboard the **Oleg Strashnov** - Photo : Adam Louwen ©

Chinese shipbuilders to focus on LNG carriers

Two Chinese shipbuilders, Dalian Shipbuilding Industry and Jiangsu Rongsheng Heavy Industries Group, have just announced that they would enter into the LNG carrier market. The domestic demand is predicted to reach 38 LNG carriers in 2010 and over 65 units in 2015. This huge demand will give a big boost to Chinese shipbuilders in the battle against South Korean counterparts. The added value of LNG carriers is much higher than that of traditional vessels, stressed Chen Qiang, president of Rongsheng Heavy Industries. The Chinese private shipbuilder, which plans to go public this year, is now striving to push forward its LNG carrier project.

After the financial crisis, South Korean shipbuilders are suffering from high cost in financing, but Chinese yards are enjoying export buyer's credit lines of domestic banks. It enables Chinese shipbuilders to gain more advantage in the

fighting for new LNG carrier orders, pointed out the president. In March, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL) disclosed that the company would sign a long-term agreement with Exxon Mobil Corporation, under which it will lease six LNG carriers to the latter. To date, two of the LNG carriers have been delivered by Hyundai Heavy Industries and, as for the remaining four, MOL plans to sign building contracts with Chinese shipyards.

The first five Chinese built LNG carriers were completed by Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding, a member of the China Shipbuilding Group Corporation (CSSC). In addition to the 147,000m³ LNG carriers it has built, the shipbuilder is developing LNG carriers larger than 200,000m³, said a source close to CSSC. Earlier this year, Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding received the order for its sixth LNG carrier. from Shanghai LNG Shipping, reported to be a joint venture between China LNG Shipping (Holdings), Shenergy Group, and China National Offshore Oil Corp. (CNOOC). When this newbuilding is delivered, it will be employed in the transportation of LNG from Malaysia to Shanghai for the next 20 years. **Source: Motorship**



Above seen the ongoing repairs of the **KST SAFE** in Singapore

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Above seen the Mersey Side Fire & Rescue Craft on exercise off Birkenhead May 16th Photo : Iain Forsyth ©

Dutch firm picked for Sydney dredging

Although the funding for the project has not yet been secured, the Sydney Marine Group announced Thursday the company from the Netherlands that it hopes will start dredging the harbour this summer.

The group spearheading the commercialization of Sydney Harbour chose the bid from Royal Boskalis Westminster last month, but had kept the firm's name secret until Ports Day. Harry Sanders, an international contracting director from the company, told reporters he sees great potential in developing the port.

"If you look at all the ports here on the East Coast . . . a lot of ports need maintenance dredging," he said.

"Apparently you don't need maintenance dredging here. That's bad news for (Royal Boskalis Westminster), but good news for Sydney." Jim Wooder, of the Sydney Marine Group, said he feels that the company's international reputation helped seal the decision to choose the firm for the dredging.

It has done projects in about 50 countries, including work on the Panama Canal. The plan is to deepen the harbour to about 16 metres so that the largest possible cargo ships could berth here. Two shipbuilding companies have also expressed an interest in setting up business at the port, Wooder said, but each need it to be greater than the current depth of 11 metres. Royal Boskalis Westminster hopes to begin clearing the harbour of debris and a shipwreck in June. The dredging is scheduled to begin in August and be completed by November.

A dredging boat called a suction hopper would vacuum up large quantities of sand from the sea floor and store it in a tank onboard. It would then expel the sand through a pipe to an area near Point Edward, where proponents hope it could be used as a base for a \$200-million container terminal.

But the timeline for the contract to go ahead has a very limited window. It has already been extended once to see if Ottawa and the province will come forward with funding. Sanders said it would be extremely difficult to push the acceptance of the contract past the May 28 deadline. "If you have to extend it again and again . . . it can have many cost consequences," he said. "Full planning is very important. So I wouldn't say May 28 is D-Day, but I'd say we'll stick to it for the moment. "But if one government comes forward on the 28th of May and another said it needs four days more . . . who am I to say no?" Source : [The Chronicle Herald.ca](http://TheChronicleHerald.ca)



The **OCEAN COUNTESS** seen at the river Tyne – Photo : Kevin Blair (c)

Shipping Lines: Liverpool pilots offer free pilotage to historic tug tender

ANTIQUES Roadshow expert Paul Atterbury made his first visit to the 1903-built tug tender **Daniel Adamson** as patron.

While onboard at Sandon Dock he presented a large print of the ship to Liverpool Pilot Service chairman Iolo Thomas, above centre, and pilot colleague Martin James, right, as thanks for the offer of free pilotage on the Mersey when "Danny" re-enters public service from Liverpool Cruise Terminal in 2012.

Stuart Wood, ex-Liverpool chief pilot and now **Daniel Adamson Pres Soc** operations director, said: "This is very generous and important as ships on the river must have a pilot." From 1934 to 1984 Danny was Manchester Ship Canal directors' and VIP inspection boat. Dr Atterbury, who visited the tug prior to filming the Antiques Roadshow at Tatton Park, was delighted with it.

After seeing the tug being restored in Bootle he said: "This ticks so many boxes. It's a fine Edwardian steam-powered tug with an art deco interior. "There's nothing like it. Scotland has the Waverley paddle steamer. But that's always been a public ship. Daniel Adamson is a hidden maritime gem, practically a private yacht which is now only being slowly revealed.

"The scale is right. This is a very 'do-able' project with very dedicated enthusiasts and also professional help." THE row about Liverpool Cruise Terminal not being allowed to handle turnarounds due to EU grants excluding such use will be tackled by Cllr Joe Anderson, newly elected Labour leader of Liverpool City Council, who is a former seaman. He told me: "It's a crazy situation and I promise I shall sort it out as soon as possible. I believe we can find the finances to repay the £10m EU grant. We shouldn't be turning away lines who want to do business with us."

THE Southport Merchant Navy Memorial group will hold its fund-raising black tie Summer Ball at Bold Hotel, in Lord Street, on Sat, June 19, at 7pm, with chief guest Lord Fearn, RNA hon pres. Mike Davies, for the group, said: "We've only got £800 still to raise and proceeds from this should cover what we need to put a memorial on Lord Street."

Source : Liverpool Echo



The **EURO SPIRIT** seen arriving in Rotterdam-Europoort – Photo : Jan Oosterboer (c)

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The TSHD **Josef Mobius** seen dredging in Klaipeda sea port. - Photo : Sergej Kulagin (c)

Wilmar orders up to 12 Kamsarmax bulkers

Kuok Group trading arm Wilmar is splashing out \$127.6m for a quartet of Kamsarmax bulkers at two Chinese yards. Wilmar has ordered two pairs of 82,000 dwt bulkers from Jiangsu Eastern Heavy Industry and Sainty Marine Corp for

delivery in 2011. The Singapore-listed company has options for up to four more vessels at each yard, at the same price. The options have to be exercised by the end of the year. "The acquisition of these vessels will enhance the group's logistics operations and increase efficiency and if the options are fully exercised, the 12 new vessels will cover approximately 30% of the group's shipping needs," Wilmar said. **Source: SeaTradeAsia-Online**



The **AMADEA** seen earlier this year in the port of Rio Grande – **Photo : Marcelo Vieira (c)**

Firm to invest \$100M in Palawan gas project

Oil exploration firm Forum Energy Plc is expected to invest \$100 million (about P4.5 billion) over the next three years to drill three appraisal wells in the oil-and gas-rich Sampaguita field in offshore Palawan.

"Within 18 months, it is expected that the company will shoot further 3D seismic survey, which we have assumed to cost \$10 million before drilling the first well. Our financial model assumes the company drills a further three wells at a cost of \$30 million per well," according to the Edison Investment Research outlook.

According to the document posted on Forum Energy's website, the company is expected to focus its resources in assessing the Sampaguita field, which is estimated to contain at least 3.4 trillion cubic feet of gas, with an upside potential of as much as 20 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Developing the field is expected to cost \$3 billion, according to the report. The field is under Service Contract 72, which covers 880,000 hectares within the Reed Bank basin—some 150 kilometers east of the Spratlys and close to the main island of Palawan. Aside from the large Sampaguita gas discovery, the company said the SC 72 field contained at least eight other potential leads. The resources within SC 72 were believed to be enough to form the foundations of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project, similar to the Malampaya deep water-to-gas power project.

"There are several options available to Forum Energy for marketing the gas produced from Sampaguita [such as] establishing a new LNG export facility, building a pipeline to access capacity in Shell Exploration BV's existing infrastructure at the Malampaya, and selling into the Philippine market," the report stated.

"The outcome is partly dependent on how much gas is proved up. In our valuation, we assumed that Forum will establish its own LNG export facility to serve markets in China and Korea," it added. "However, given the level of

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reserves already firmed up, Forum is likely to attract attention from major oil companies that may well have complementary infrastructure, such as Shell,” the report said.

It was only in February this year that the government granted Forum Energy a service contract for Geophysical Survey Exploration Contract (GSEC) 101. **Source : Philippine Daily Inquirer**



The **Svitzer Maitland (Ex. Mercur) / Svitzer Myall (Ex. Maitland)** seen getting lifted off from the ANNEGRET at the "new" Mayfield 4 berth at Newcastle.

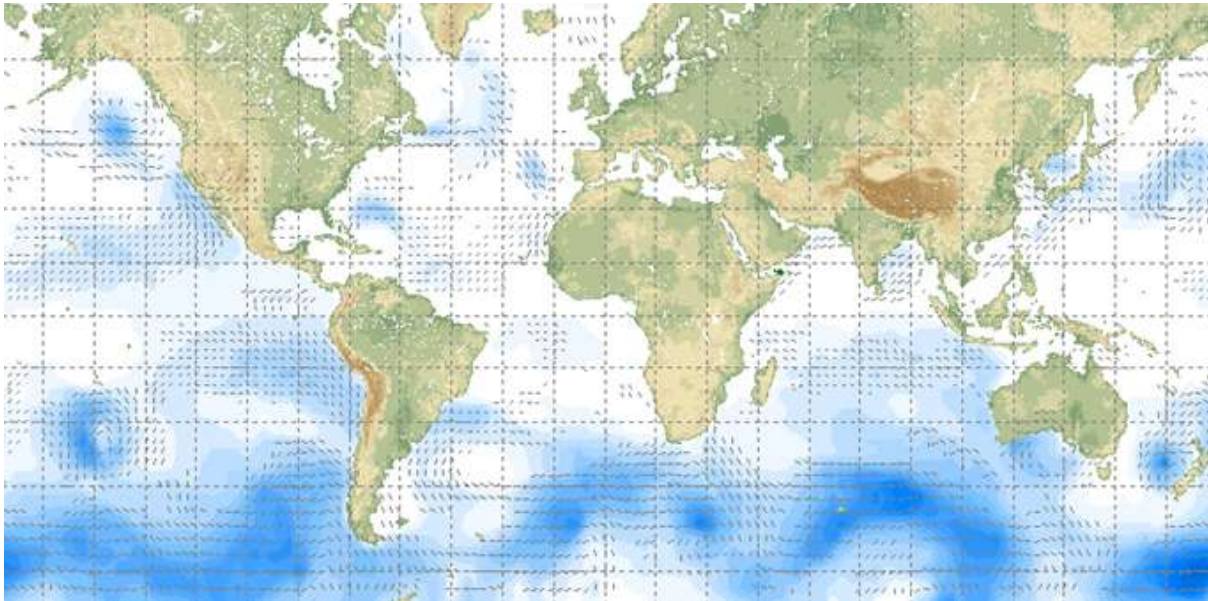
Photo : Marco Lugthart (c)

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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 **BAUGE**, IMO 8027767, on Kiel-Canal transit on its way to Papenburg/Ems, Mai 22nd, 2010.

Photo : Michael Brakhage ©

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