

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2007 – 059



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The NAVION BERGEN seen at Dubai Drydocks
Photo : Reinier Meuleman ©

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EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



The **BERGE ARROW** seen at the Westerscheldt river – Photo : Henk de Winde ©

A week of bad news for sea safety

READING news reports over the past few days has been particularly depressing for anybody interested in the safety and welfare of seafarers and passengers. It was bad enough to hear that another Indonesian ferry had suffered a nasty accident. It was almost beyond belief that journalists and officials died when somebody tried to hold an impromptu press conference on the burnt-out hulk when it was brought close to Jakarta.

And then there are reports of yet another hijacking off the Somali coast, ending a prolonged period of inactivity. Once again seafarers are being held at gunpoint and prospect for a return to the murky world of haggling over ransoms looms.

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Taking the Indonesian ferry disaster first, the fire on 26-year-old passenger and car/vehicle ferry **Levina 1** last Thursday came just two months after another Indonesian inter-island passenger ro-ro, the **Senpopati Nusantara**, sank with the loss perhaps 400 or 500 lives. That vague estimate of the casualties is symptomatic of the problems facing the authorities in the archipelagic country that is so dependent on sea transport.

In the case of the **Levina 1**, which caught fire when the vessel was on passage from Jakarta to Bangka Island, 307 passengers were listed and 274 survivors were reported rescued. But it is clear that the number of passengers was higher from the enquiries the local police are getting from distraught families. Once again the pervasive practice of crews accepting illegal passengers, for a massively discounted 'fare' has been a factor in a ferry tragedy.

The subsequent accident involving the journalists is a textbook example of how not to do it. Journalists always want to go where it is not sensible to allow them and they are always blaze about safety.

The public relations officer who handled the **Herald of Free Enterprise** disaster 20 years ago tells me he had been inundated with 'demands' from journalists to go aboard the ill-fated ferry which lay on its die off Zeebrugge. Sensibly, P&O Ferries steadfastly kept the press at bay, allowing them a trip on a boat close to the vessel but nobody was allowed on. That was for the very good reasons that it was extremely dangerous and highly unpleasant to be on board.

The hulk of the **Levina I** probably appeared deceptively safe but there should have been somebody in authority with the professional judgement to know how dangerous a vessel that has just suffered catastrophic fire is likely to be. In fact, according to some reports, the journalists were warned not to board, but the warning wasn't heeded. They were also offered lifejackets, which weren't worn.

Combating the prevailing casual attitude to maritime safety in Indonesia would be a massive undertaking and there is little reason to believe much will happen despite the recent tragedies.

Now to turn to piracy and Somalia. The UN-chartered, St Vincent and Grenadines-flagged general cargo ship Rozen has been hijacked off Somalia, just after discharging a food aid cargo of grain. The hijacking was the first for several months and follows the overthrow of the Islamic courts which had suppressed piracy along the country's coast.

Unusually, the incident has occurred off the north-east coast of the semi-autonomous and generally quiet Puntland province. The 1976-built ship, operated by Mombasa-based Motaku Shipping, is reported to be at anchor within territorial waters with its crew of 12 Kenyans and Sri Lankans still on board.

The director of the ICC International Maritime Bureau Pottengal Mukundan said: 'We call on the interim government in Somalia to take appropriate actions against these pirates.' At least as significantly, as this column was being written, a US warship was reported to be closing in on the hijacked vessel.

It is possible that by the time this column is published that the situation would have been resolved. Possibly the US warship will take decisive action even though that would mean entering territorial waters. If that happens, the message will go out loud and clear that it is not worth trying to revive the piracy business around the Horn of Africa. But if the situation drags on, we could easily be back to the bad old days when ships were being attacked up to 200 miles off the coast.

No inquiry into Napoli beaching

The clear-up could take up to a year to complete, A public inquiry will not be held into the beaching of the **MSC Napoli**. The announcement was made by Transport Minister Stephen Ladyman during a Commons debate called by East Devon MP Hugo Swire. Mr Ladyman said there would be an investigation but a lengthy and costly public inquiry into the grounding was considered "inappropriate"

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The 62,000-tonne vessel was beached a mile off the Lyme Bay World Heritage Coast site on 20 January. In relation to compensation, Mr Ladyman said the insurers would provide a fund of £14.5m and everyone would be treated equally.

He said claims for compensation would have to be fought through the courts, although local councils might get government help towards the clean-up.

It followed fears expressed by Mr Swire that money "would run out" and the ship and container owners would be dealt with before those who had to clean up the damage. But Mr Ladyman said under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 and international conventions the limitation fund established in the UK could include claims for property damage and cleaning up cargo and oil.

He added that applications for compensation by local authorities "would be dealt with as quickly as possible".

The **Napoli** was deliberately beached amid fears she could sink during a tow to Portland, having suffered hull damage in a Channel storm during which her 26 crew were rescued.

More than 110 containers went overboard - 73 of which were washed ashore. Scavengers descended on Branscombe beach, taking away goods from the containers, including motorbikes, wine, face cream and nappies.

Another 30 containers were presumed sunk and not located, 11 submerged containers were traced, and two were lost in French waters. Debris from the stricken vessel has been washed up from Torbay in south Devon to the Isle of Wight.

The deck has now been cleared of containers and salvage experts have begun work to remove the remaining 1,350 containers from the hold of the cargo ship. The risk remains of more containers being lost in severe weather but Mr Ladyman said police would shut off access to any containers that came ashore and arrest anybody trying to remove articles from beaches affected.



Navy patrols as Somalia starts to nab pirates

Somali authorities have arrested six suspected pirates in the hijacking of a U.N.-chartered cargo ship delivering food aid, officials said Tuesday.

Four heavily armed pirates still had control of the vessel and were holding 12 crew members hostage, said the U.N. food agency. The ship, the **MV Rozen**, had been contracted to deliver aid to Somalia, where around 1 million people are suffering from a drought that hit the region last year.

Four suspects were seized after they went ashore to buy supplies, Peter Goossens, the head of the World Food Program in Somalia, said in a statement. Sa'ïd Mohamed Raage, the regional fishing minister, said police arrested two others separately.

"The arrest is welcome news, but the safe release of the crew and the vessel remains our chief concern," Goossens said. "We very much hope this ordeal will finish soon."

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The pirates are armed with AK47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers, said Andrew Mwangura, head of the Kenyan chapter of the Seafarers Assistance Program, an independent group that monitors piracy in the region.

"Negotiations are underway to try and secure the release of the vessel," he added. The condition of the six Sri Lankan and six Kenyan crew members was unknown.

The ship had just delivered about 1,900 tons of food when it was seized Sunday. It has been anchored six miles off the coast of the semiautonomous Puntland region in northeastern Somalia, near Bargal.

Last March, the same ship managed to escape an attempted hijacking by five pirates. Motaku Shipping, the owner of the MV Rozen, has had all four of its ships seized by pirates in the last two years, according to a report in The Shipping Times.

Three Somali police speedboats were surrounding the **MV Rozen** and a U.S. military vessel was patrolling the area Tuesday to monitor the situation.

"We are appealing for the safe return of the crew and the vessel as soon as possible, and for people to respect the need for humanitarian delivery corridors," Goossens said. "Somalia is one of the poorest countries in the world, and there are families whose lives depend on our ability to get food aid through."

Somali pirates are trained fighters, often dressed in military fatigues, using speedboats equipped with satellite phones and Global Positioning System equipment. They are typically armed with automatic weapons, anti-tank rocket launchers and various types of grenades, according to the U.N. Monitoring Group on Somalia.

The bandits target passenger, cargo and fishing vessels for ransom or loot.

The 1,860-mile coast of Somalia, which has had no effective government since warlords ousted a dictatorship in 1991 and then turned on each other, has become extremely dangerous for ships.

In southern Somalia, fisherman Mohamed Abdi said U.S. Marine or Navy officers took fishermen from eight boats to their ship about 500 miles off the coast to question them about ties to the pirates and Somalia's Islamic movement that was ousted in December.

"We urge government officials to plead our case to the U.S. government because the interruption affects our earnings," Abdi said by phone from Marka, a port 56 miles southwest of Mogadishu, the Somali capital. "We use boats for fishing, but not for other illegal purposes. We are not sea pirates and we are not sympathizers of terrorists."

Fishing Marine Resources Minister Hassan Abshir Farah said the U.S. officials' actions were acceptable because Somalia does not have its own coast guard and its coastline "has been considered one of the worst waters in the world."

Associated Press writers Salad Duhul and Mohamed Olad Hassan in Mogadishu, Somalia, contributed to this report.

P&I Club Looks To Pull Plug at Solar 1

The Protection and Indemnity (P&I) Club in the centre of the "**Solar 1**" recovery is allegedly set to recall the budget it gave to the provincial office of the Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) for its "fish festival", as it is understood to be too late to hold the festival.

The aim of the Festival was to primarily promote, "the bounty of the Guimaras waters".

A source said the Club wants to collect some P600,000 budget for the festival. The budget was given to the provincial office of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) last year. At first, the provincial government wanted to act as event organizer for the festival. However, the Club wanted the BFAR to spearhead the activity.

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The same source said the P&I Club had been waiting for too long and yet nothing happened. Earlier, in one of the briefings of the Task Force SOS, fisheries officials from the province of Guimaras said the festival will be held in February this year.

The source said it is already too late for the festival to be held as the removal operation for the remaining oil inside the tanks of MT **Solar I** would be conducted second week of March. The source observed that the fishermen had went back to the sea for a catch few months after the oil spill.

M/T **Solar I** sank in Guimaras last August 11, 2006 and spilled tons of industrial fuel oil. The oil spill in Guimaras is the worst oil spill recorded in the country. The spill affected the lives of the islanders particularly the fishermen, pond and resort owners. To recall, the provincial government of Guimaras wanted the fish festival to be held after the joint team of different line agencies declare a clean bill of health.

However, experts from the National Poison Management and Control Center said they could not declare the island as free from any toxic fumes but can only downgrade the level of toxicity in the affected areas.

Geen toenadering in staking Smit

De vakbonden en de directie van Smit Towage lijken donderdagavond nog ver van elkaar verwijderd. De twee partijen staan lijnrecht tegenover elkaar in een conflict over een nieuwe cao voor de medewerkers.

De slepers van het Rotterdamse bedrijf staken sinds woensdag. De directie heeft haar eerdere voorstel voor aanstelling van een bemiddelaar donderdag nog eens schriftelijk toegelicht bij de bonden.

Desgevraagd reageerde een woordvoerder van FNV Bondgenoten: "We willen geen bemiddelaar, zeker niet als Smit niet bereid is stappen te zetten." Vrijdagochtend wordt wederom bepaald of de staking wordt verlengd.

De staking begon woensdagochtend om tien uur en was uitgeroepen voor 24 uur. De slepers besloten donderdagochtend nog een etmaal door te staken. "Als we horen dat de bonden en de directie eruit zijn, dan gaan we wel meteen aan het werk."

Het conflict gaat over de cao. De bonden willen een eenjarige cao met onder meer een loonsverhoging van 45 euro per maand bruto, een eenmalige uitkering van 2000 euro bruto en prijscompensatie.

Ook willen zij een betere ouderenregeling. Smit stelt een tweejarige cao voor met een loonsverhoging van twee keer 8 procent: twee keer 4 procent structureel en twee keer 4 procent als eenmalige uitkering.

De manier waarop deze eenmalige uitkering moet worden verstrekt is een breekpunt in de onderhandelingen.

Het Havenbedrijf Rotterdam volgt de staking met argusogen, maar grijpt nog niet in. "De haven lijdt er ongetwijfeld schade onder. We kunnen niet veel doen behalve met de betrokkenen om de tafel zitten", aldus het Havenbedrijf.

Volgens een woordvoerder van de belangenvereniging voor de Rotterdamse haven Deltalings kunnen tientallen schepen niet worden "afgewikkeld". Volgens hem is de staking niet alleen een enorme financiële schadepost, maar schaadt zij ook het imago van de haven.

Aan het einde van donderdagmiddag lagen tien schepen te wachten die de haven in willen en twaalf schepen die de haven uit willen.

Gemiddeld gaan dagelijks 85 schepen de haven van Rotterdam in en uit. Het is nog onduidelijk hoe groot de schade is voor de haven.

Action Hindering Vessel Operations in Rotterdam

By the end of the afternoon of March 1, 10 vessels were waiting to get in and 12 vessels were reported for departure but were hindered by the industrial actions at Smit Harbour Towing.

On average, 85 vessels are coming in and 85 are leaving every 24 hour the port of Rotterdam. But notice that the larger vessels need towage assistance, so in tonnage the hindrance is larger.

The port authority hopes that the employer and employees will come to an arrangement that end the actions as soon as possible in order to avoid further direct and indirect (image) damage, reports the Port of Rotterdam press service.

Panama Nuclear Fuss

Panamanian environmentalists gathered recently at the entrance of the Panama Canal to protest against the expected passage of a ship carrying radioactive material.

The activists carried flags and distributed flyers to warn the Panamanians of the risks caused by the British-registered ship which is heading for Japan with vitrified residues aboard.

Alberto de Jesus Mercado with the Friends of the Sea Movement said the vessel was endangering maritime security of Panama and the Caribbean nations through which it passes. The Panama Canal Authority says that until now there have been no accidents in the Canal caused by the ship, which first traveled through in September last year.

The ship, "**Sandpiper**", is owned by the British Nuclear Group, Areva NC and the Overseas Reprocessing Committee, which transports material between Japan and Europe. It is scheduled to arrive in Japan in late March.

Group attacks whaling ships

Paul Watson flies the Jolly Roger from his ship and boasts of ramming more boats than any living seafarer, part of an anti-whaling crusade that even Greenpeace calls too radical. Watson and his group came under withering criticism this season, summer in the Antarctic, for tactics that some say put the lives of whales above the lives of people.



A Japanese whaling ship caught fire after being chased and harassed by Watson's fleet, the ships and volunteers of the **Sea Shepherd Conservation Society**, which not only rammed the whaling boats but fired smoke canisters and ropes to entangle the propellers.

Japan announced Wednesday it was ending its whaling season early because of the fire, which killed a crewman. Although the blaze came a day after Watson's group pulled back and there's no alleged connection, Japan calls Watson a terrorist.

The **Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's** ship **Robert Hunter**, left, shadows Japanese ship **Nisshin Maru** in the Antarctic. The ships collided twice during clashes over a pod of whales, and Japanese officials accused the group of attacking the whaling ship like pirates.

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But the 56-year-old Canadian, who founded the society 30 years ago, dismisses the complaints. "Call for a boycott of tuna fish these days and they call you a terrorist," he said.

Watson has spent his adult life as a conservationist, beginning with Greenpeace. The turn to radicalism came, he says, when he made eye contact with a harpooned whale as it rose above his dinghy before falling back into the sea.

"Paul recognized a flicker of understanding in the dying whale's eye. He felt that the whale knew what they were trying to do," the Sea Shepherd Web site says.

The society bought a ship with donated money in 1979, allowing members to disrupt seal hunting in eastern Canada. Later that year, the group rammed its ship into a whaler in a Portuguese harbor, and the pattern was set. Sea Shepherd claims responsibility for ramming six whaling ships and for playing a part in 10 others going out of the whaling business.

Watson says his whatever-it-takes tactics threaten lives no more than whaling itself. He points to the Japanese whaling factory ship **Nisshin Maru**, which was crippled in February for 10 days in ice-strewn Antarctic waters after the fatal fire.

"I think the Japanese are extremely reckless taking a floating factory down to a pristine and fragile ecosystem with the potential of causing a major oil and chemical spill and of course killing endangered species," Watson said.

The **Nisshin Maru** and its five support ships were Sea Shepherd's main targets this whaling season. Sea Shepherd's attack ships, the **Farley Mowat** and the **Robert Hunter**, circled the Japanese factory ship, dispensing Zodiac inflatables into the seas for the close-in attack. Society volunteers used nail guns to fasten plates over the **Nisshin Maru's** drain outlets, which spill whale blood into the sea.

The attack ended when one of the Zodiacs cracked its hull in a collision with the Japanese ship and the Zodiac's two crew members, Australian Watson Karl Neilsen and John Gravois of Los Angeles, became lost for more than seven hours. Other tactics include hurling smoke and stink bombs at the whalers' decks.

"These are not mere acts of sabotage, but literally an attack. We call these an act of terrorism but I don't think it is an exaggerated phrase," Hajime Ishikawa, deputy director of the Japanese government-linked Institute of Cetacean Research.

The society boasts volunteers from 14 countries. "I've never seen a whale die since I started Sea Shepherd in 1977 and we've never hurt anyone by effectively preventing this crime," Watson said.

BERGE STAHL IN NIEUWE KLEUREN IN DE EUROPOORT

Donderdagmiddag 1 maart, 15.00 uur, duwden vier sleepboten de **Berge Stahl** tegen de kant van de EECV (Ertsoverslagbedrijf Europoort) op havenummer 6250. Sinds het laatste bezoek in juli 2006 heeft 'het vlaggenschip van de Rotterdamse haven' nieuwe kleuren (rood, wit en blauw!) gekregen in de Chinese haven Qingdao. Bovendien is het schip in december 20 jaar oud geworden.

Met zijn lengte van 343 meter, breedte van 63,5 meter en draagvermogen van 365.000 ton is het vaartuig de grootste 'bulk carrier' ter wereld. De Berge Stahl is toegestaan de Rotterdamse haven in te varen met een diepgang van 74 voet (22,55 meter; flatgebouw van acht etages). Sinds 5 december 1986 vaart het schip jaarlijks circa negen tot tien keer op en neer tussen Ponte da Madeira (Noord-Brazilië) en Rotterdam. De ijzererts aan boord is bestemd voor de Duitse staalindustrie. Agent is ThyssenKruppVeerhaven te Brielle.

Het schip is van kleur veranderd vanwege een fusie van zijn rederij Bergesen met de rederij Worldwide Gass. De nieuwe naam van de scheepseigenaar is Bergesen Worldwide Gass ASA.

Bullets on cruise ship trigger inspection

Coast Guard inspectors and Customs and Border Protection officers conducted an expanded security inspection on the Carnival Cruise Lines' ship **Celebration** after two .22-caliber bullets were found there Thursday morning.

A passenger turned in the ammunition at an information desk after she found it in a lobby on the ship while passengers were disembarking, according to a Coast Guard news release. The **Celebration's** chief security officer reported the incident to Customs and Border Protection, which notified the Coast Guard.

Coast Guard inspectors and CBP officers verified that X-ray machines and metal detectors at security check points on the ship and at the JAXPORT Cruise Terminal are working. The Coast Guard delayed the embarkation of passengers for about one hour while the Coast Guard, CBP and **Celebration** security officer insured it was safe to board.

The Jacksonville-based, Panama-flagged **Celebration** can carry 1,486 passengers and has a crew of about 679 people.

Doctor honoured for tanker rescue

A doctor who went to the aid of injured crew on board a tanker in the Pentland Firth has been honoured. Christine Bradshaw has been awarded the RNLI's bronze medal for gallantry.

The Orkney locum GP was winched onto the tanker **FR8 Venture** in atrocious conditions last November to aid a severely injured crewman. Two crewmen died when the tanker was hit by a massive wave, but the rescued man survived and has now made a full recovery. The RNLI said her bravery was of the highest order and that her actions undoubtedly saved the life of the crewman.

Douaneduikers vinden cocaïne onder schip

Douaneduikers hebben op zondagochtend 25 februari 20 kilo cocaïne aangetroffen. De drugs zaten verstopt onder de waterlijn van een schip in de haven van Rotterdam. Het HARC-team Rotterdam heeft een verdachte aangehouden. Dit heeft het ministerie van Financiën donderdag bekend gemaakt.

Die zondagochtend werd door roeiers een man in duikpak gesignaleerd op Heijplaat. De roeiers meldden deze informatie aan de Douane en de Zeehavenpolitie. Het duikteam van de Douane startte onmiddellijk een onderzoek aan schepen in de buurt van Heijplaat en dit leverde twintig kilo cocaïne op die onder een schip was bevestigd.

Heijplaat werd ondertussen in de gaten gehouden en enige tijd later werd de duiker weer gesignaleerd. Hij werd, nog steeds in duikpak, ter plekke aangehouden door het HARC-team, een samenwerkingsverband van Douane, FIOD-ECD en Zeehavenpolitie. De man is woensdag voorgeleid aan de rechter-commissaris en voor veertien dagen in bewaring gesteld. Het HARC-team heeft de zaak nog in onderzoek.

Holland America Line comes home to Rotterdam

Premium Cruise Leader's New Sales and Marketing Office Will Focus On Netherlands Market ,

From its start 134 years ago as a Rotterdam-based shipping firm, Holland America Line - the premium cruise leader - comes home to Rotterdam today. The Seattle-based cruise line returns in grand fashion, opening a sales and marketing office considered key to increasing the company's share of the growing Dutch cruise market.

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Located in the Kop van Zuid section of Rotterdam on Wilhelmina Pier, the new office will eventually house approximately 30 Holland America Line staff members, responsible for shipboard hiring, purchasing, and sales and marketing. The new office is only 100 meters from the site of Holland America Line's original office on Wilhelmina Pier in what is now Hotel New York.



The **WESTERDAM** seen arriving in Willemstad (Curacao)
Photo : Kees Bustraan ©

"For a number of years, we've considered the benefits of an increased sales and marketing presence in the Netherlands," noted Stein Kruse, president and chief executive officer for Holland America Line Inc. "The time is right. The Dutch market is strong and shows great potential for growth, and Holland America Line's market identity is strong as well. We expect this new office to play a significant role in increasing our share of the Dutch cruise market."

Manuel van Engelen, Holland America Line director of sales for the Netherlands, manages the new Rotterdam sales and marketing division, supervising the creation and management of Holland America Line's Dutch market activities.

"When guests step aboard a Holland America Line ship, they're stepping onto Dutch soil," said van Engelen. "We tell our guests that our ships take a piece of Holland all over the world."

Holland America Line intends to increase its visibility in the Rotterdam community with a program to develop community involvement opportunities in such events as the Maritime Museum, the Ronald McDonald House and more. City officials welcome the prospect of Holland America's participation in city events and activities.

"We welcome Holland America Line's return to Rotterdam and embrace the company as a neighbor and friend to our city," said Ivo W. Opstelten, Lord Mayor of Rotterdam. "We anticipate a helpful partnership that will help the company achieve its business goals."

Originally founded in Rotterdam in 1873 as Nederlandsch-Amerikaansche Stoomvaart Maatschapp (NASM), a shipping company, Holland America Line underscores its historic relationship with the Netherlands with the opening of the new office. Ships in the Holland America Line fleet have long flown the Dutch flag, serving as an ambassador to the Netherlands to more than 10 million guests. During World War II, Holland America ships served as the headquarters for the exiled Dutch government and after the war, a Holland America Line ship delivered the first cargo of Marshall Aid to Europe. Today, many of the fleet's captains and officers are Dutch nationals, reflecting the Netherlands' legacy as a seafaring nation.

CASUALTY REPORTING

Norwegian chemcarrier leaks fuel oil in Elbe

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Norwegian Anders Utkilen chemical tanker **Fostrau**, 2,900 DWT and built 1991, leaked fuel oil into the River Elbe at Butzfleth yesterday, and a number and oil prevention units were mobilised to contain the oil and prevent it from reaching the sea. During the accident all traffic on the Elbe was stopped. The vessel is covered with Gard and classed with DNV.

Russian Crew Rescued

A ship manned by a Russian crew sank in the Indian Ocean on Thursday (01 March), the South African maritime rescue operations coordinating center has said.

All sailors are reported to have been saved. The incident occurred a thousand miles off South Africa. According to early reports the lost ship, the **Garcia**, belonging to a Greek owner, flew the Maltese flag.

SWIFT ARROW AGROUND IN PARANAGUA



Gearbulk's **SWIFT ARROW** ran aground Feb 28th at 17:30 hrs during the sailing maneuvering.



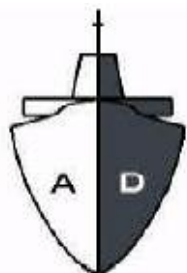
Most probably a wrong manoeuvre done by the Pilot of the MV "**SWIFT ARROW**" caused the accident with the vessel in a rock with depth of about 7 meters in the Port.

The expectation of the Port authority is that the vessel can be removed "Mar 01st at 02:00 hours", on the high tide.

NAVY NEWS

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The 1983 built US Navy Perry class frigate **FFG 49 Robert G. Bradley** seen departing from the Peruvian port of Callao

Photo : Luis Giampietri ©

Australia : Spain leads for \$7bn navy contract

SPAIN is poised to win the contest to design the navy's new air warfare destroyers, destined to be the biggest and most advanced warships in its fleet.

As the race to win the contract to design the three vessels enters its final weeks, state-owned Spanish naval builder Navantia is heading its US rival on price and delivery time.

The \$7 billion program will be Australia's second-biggest defence project in the coming decade, after the \$14 billion joint strike fighter for the air force.

Long regarded as simply a stalking horse for a new warship designed by US firm Gibbs and Cox based on the US Navy's Arleigh Burke class destroyers, Spain's modified F100 warship is now an even-money bet to win the contract.

The Spanish ship is much cheaper and would be delivered about two years earlier than the US design submitted by Gibbs and Cox.

Gibbs and Cox has been the Howard Government's preferred designer for the air warfare destroyers, but the firm's bigger and more capable warship exists only in its preliminary design phase.

And final target cost estimates due to be handed to the Defence Department tomorrow are expected to put the Spanish F100 warship ahead on price by more than \$500 million, according to government and industry sources.

The Government has committed \$450 million to the project's start-up, with the cabinet due to take the final decision on the winning design in July.

In August 2005, the Government announced that the Gibbs and Cox "evolved design" would compete with an "Australianised" version of the F100 for the right to be chosen as the navy's new frontline warship.

The new ships will be equipped with the US-made Aegis combat system, giving them the ability to track hostile aircraft and missiles at ranges beyond 150km.

Adelaide-based shipbuilder ASC has already been chosen to construct the vessels, while Raytheon will be the systems integrator, as part of a novel alliance with partners ASC and the Defence Materiel Organisation.

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Spain's belated recognition that its F100 could be selected has resulted in a last-minute lobbying push by the Spanish Government.

The Spanish F100 air warfare destroyer Alvaro de Bazan arrives in Perth today at the start of a three-week visit designed to highlight the ship's advanced capabilities. Spain is also sending its naval chief and senior government officials to Australia this month in an effort to clinch the AWD contract.

The design offered by Gibbs and Cox is a more powerful warship than the Spanish F100 air warfare destroyer, and remains the navy's preferred choice.

Gibbs and Cox believes the heavily modified Arleigh Burke offers better all-round combat capability and better growth options for future technology upgrades than the F100.

But with four F100s already in service with the Spanish navy, Navantia argues that its destroyer offers a low-risk and highly capable solution for the Royal Australian Navy.

The first of the navy's new frontline destroyers is scheduled to be delivered in 2013, but the US design is not likely to be in service before 2015.

NR-1 Arrives in Texas For Gulf Exploration

Nuclear Research Submarine NR-1, towed by Submarine Support Vessel (SSV) **Carolyn Chouest**, pulled into Galveston, Texas, on Feb. 25 to take part in an expedition to survey the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary and other sites of interest in the Gulf of Mexico. "This mission is going to be exciting and full of new challenges for the **Submarine NR-1**, and the crew of **SSV Carolyn Chouest**," said Lt. Paul M. Kutia, operations officer for **NR-1**. "We've been preparing our people to make sure this mission is going to be a full success." The Navy will work in collaboration with The Institute for Exploration, the University of Rhode Island, Immersion Presents, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Sanctuary Program to broadcast their findings over live satellite. "During our initial visit to Galveston they're going to be loading on scientists and various equipment, including a production van that's going to be on the back deck, which is going to send live feeds out to various colleges, universities and aquariums," explained Kutia. NR-1 and the remotely operated vehicle (ROV) Argus will use high definition cameras to record biological and geological features of the ocean floor and help archeologists locate and examine where shorelines may have been in the past. These sunken shorelines may hold relics and clues of ancient people.

"I think it's a great experience," said Storekeeper 1st Class (SS) Brett Adams, Supply Department leading petty officer for **NR-1**. "Not very often does the civilian world get to see what submarines do, most of our missions are done military intelligence-wise and you don't hear about it once it's done. This experience is going to be a live broadcast aboard **NR-1** and actually show everybody a little bit of what the submarine force is capable of and what we do." Aside from the scientific research, the



Flower Garden Banks expedition will also showcase the Navy's capabilities to a younger audience.

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"The **NR-1** being involved gives the Navy tremendous exposure to a younger public," said Jon H. Skoglund, Merchant Marine captain of the **SSV Carolyn Chouest**. "Kids growing up now don't necessarily think that military service has any other options other than combat and I think this opens their eyes up to a lot of different options and a lot of neat things you can do in the military." **Nuclear Research Submarine NR-1**, the world's only nuclear powered research submarine, has been involved in many different research, recovery and exploratory missions since its christening in 1969.



The largest ship ever built in South Africa, the South African support ship **A 301 DRAKENSBERG** made a stop over in Brest whilst enroute to Emden, the **DRAKENSBERG** will escort the 2nd newbuilding submarine back to South Africa

Photo : Jacques Carney ©

Technical details DRAKENSBERG

D: 6,000 tons light (12,500 fl) S: 20+ kts Dim: 146.30 × 19.50 × 7.90
A: 4 single 20-mm 90-cal. Oerlikon GAM-B01 AA; 6 single 12.7-mm M2 mg; 2 AS.330H/J Puma helicopters
Electronics: Radar: 2 . . . nav.
M: 2 12-cyl. SEMT-Pielstick diesels; 1 CP prop; 16,320 bhp—bow-thruster
Range: 8,000/. . . Endurance: 90 days
Crew: 10 officers, 86 enlisted + 10 SAAF aviation complement + 22 trainees

USNS Sacagawea Delivered to Military Sealift Command

After completing sea trials off the southern California coast, dry cargo/ammunition ship **USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2)** was delivered to the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC) on Feb. 27. The ship, designated T-AKE, is the second in a new class of combat logistics force ships and is able to deliver ammunition, provisions, stores, spare parts, potable water, and petroleum products to the Navy's carrier and expeditionary strike groups and other Naval forces. Designed to operate independently for extended periods at sea while providing underway replenishment services, Sacagawea will directly contribute to the Navy's ability to maintain a forward presence. "This is a great day for Military Sealift Command, the Naval Sea Systems Command and the General Dynamics/NASSCO (National Steel and Shipbuilding Company) team," said **Sacagawea's** Civil Service Master Capt. George McCarthy. "We look forward to joining the fleet and the global war on terrorism."

An advantage of this type of ship is its ability to carry multiple products such as cargo, food and spare parts. The T-AKE will replace aging, single-mission ships such as Kilauea-class ammunition ships and Mars- and Sirius-class combat stores ships that are nearing the end of their service lives. The T-AKE ships will provide logistic lift from supply sources

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either in port or at sea and will transfer cargo that includes ammunition, food, fuel, repair parts, and expendable supplies and material to station ships and other naval forces at sea. The **Sacagawea** is the second of nine ships of its class built by General Dynamic's National Steel and Shipbuilding Company in San Diego. The U.S. Navy has awarded NASSCO six contracts valued at approximately \$2.8 billion for the design and construction of the ships.

TIMBIRA (RE) LAUNCHED IN HER ELEMENT



In Brazil the submarine **SS 32 TIMBIRA** was returned into her element after a large maintenance period

Photo : Luiz Carlos Padilha ©

Technical details TIMBIRA

D: 1,150 tons light, 1,453 tons surf./1,590 tons sub. S: 11 kts surf./21.5 kts sub.
Dim: 61.20 × 6.20 (7.60 over stern planes) × 5.50
A: 8 bow 533-mm TT (16 Mk 24 Mod. 1 Tigerfish wire-guided torpedoes)
Electronics: Radar: 1 Thales Calypso-III search/nav.
Sonar: STN Atlas Elektronik CSU-83/1 suite (DBSQS-21 active; passive flank arrays)
EW: Thales DR-3000U interceptM: 4 MTU 12V493 TY60, 600-bhp diesels, 4 A.E.G. 420-kw generators, electric drive; 1 prop; 5,000 shp
Range: 10,000/8 snorkel; 25/21.5, 50/16, 230/8, 400/4 sub.
Fuel: 116 tons Endurance: 50 days Crew: 33 tot.

SHIPYARD NEWS

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Austal confirms ten ferry order from Macau

Austal has ended the mystery. The previously undisclosed customer behind its previously announced multiple ferry orders is Venetian Marketing Services Limited (VMSL). It has ordered ten 48 m passenger catamaran ferries after a competitive international tender process. Austal was able to deliver a proven solution and the best overall package. This included meeting a challenging delivery schedule for the boats to be in operation in 2007 and 2008.

With the capacity to carry 411 passengers at a service speed of 42 knots, the ferries will provide a link from Hong Kong locations to a new Pac On Ferry Terminal being built by the Macau Government to provide a service to The Cotai Strip on Macau.



The Cotai Strip is the trademarked name of Las Vegas Sands' multi-billion dollar casino resort project in Macau. It is situated on a 1.8 mile plot of land in Cotai, the area of reclaimed land adjoining Macau's two islands, Taipa and Coloane.

The first phase of the Cotai Strip is scheduled to open in 2007 with the grand opening of the \$1.8 billion Venetian Macao.

The new ferries will provide a dedicated transport link to supply The Cotai Strip.

In addition to the 411 passengers carried by each ferry on two decks, special crange and storage for passengers' luggage is also included.

The cabin areas include Beurteaux Club and Executive seats with leather finish accompanied by aircraft style overhead lockers to provide a carry-on baggage capacity.

Electronic ticketing and onboard hotel check-in, will enable the new ferries to provide a seamless final connection for The Cotai Strip's guests and visitors.

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Powered by four MTU 16 cylinder 4000 series diesel engines driving a Rolls Royce / KaMeWa waterjet propulsion system, each ferry is additionally fitted with transom mounted SeaState Interceptors providing an active high speed ride control system for maximum passenger comfort.

The vessels are being built in accordance with the requirements and under the survey of Det Norske Veritas, conforming to the IMO High Speed Craft code (HSC 2000) in conjunction with the Hong Kong Marine Department requirements for high speed ferries.

PRINCIPAL PARTICULARS

Length Overall: 47.5 m
Length Waterline: 43.8 m
Beam Molded: 11.8 m
Hull Depth Molded: 3.8 m
Maximum Draft: 1.6 m
Maximum deadweight: 70 tonnes
Passengers: 411
Crew: 8
Fuel (maximum): 20,000 literes

PROPULSION

Engines: 4 x MTU 16V 4000 M70; 2320 kW at 2000rpm each
Gearboxes: 4 x Reintjes VLJ 930
Waterjets: 4 x Kamewa 63 SII Speed:42 knots

SURVEY

Classification: Det Norske Veritas +1A1 HSLC Passenger R2 EO

Denmark Lends \$40m for Vinashin Shipbuilding Equipment

Danish Export Credit Foundation Wednesday clinched a \$40m credit agreement with the Vietnamese state-run shipbuilding firm Vinashin to cover advanced facilities purchases. The agreement comes as part of comprehensive strategic cooperation between Danish Marine Group and Vinashin, expected to be expanded in the coming time. According to the foundation, Vietnam is a high potential marine equipment and technology importer for Danish suppliers, with plenty of room to develop into one of leading shipbuilding countries in the world.

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The **BICAS** arriving in São Sebastião-Brazil – Photo : Kelso Medici ©

Africa trade boosts Chinese port

Total trade between the Chinese port of Ningbo and Africa exceeded US\$914-million (R6.5-billion) in January, showing a year-on-year increase of 14.5%, according the Chinese news agency, Xinhua.

Imports from Africa stood at US\$555-m (R3.94-bn) while the exports came to US\$359 m (R2.55-bn) - increases of 2.5% and 40.1% respectively.

The major export items included electric products, textiles, and fashion products, in which electric products had the highest volume - accounting for US\$106-m (R752.6-m) with a year-on-year growth of 34.8%.

Imports mainly related to energy commodities – with Ningbo importing US\$544-m (R3.86-bn) of petroleum in the first month, which accounted for 98% of the total import figure with a year-on-year increase of 7%.

TBS to build tweendeckers in China

Hamilton, Bermuda, headquartered TBS International Limited says it has entered into agreements with China Communications Construction Company Ltd. and Nantong Yahua Shipbuilding Co., Ltd. to build a newly designed class of larger multi-purpose tweendeck vessel in China.

The agreement covers six 34,000 dwt vessels at a contract price of \$35.42 per ship.

The vessels will have box-shaped holds, open hatches and fully-retractable hydraulic tweendecks. Each ship will be geared with 35 and 40 tonne cranes and will have a modern fuel-efficient engine that is expected to enable the vessel to operate effectively at 15 knots. The projected delivery dates will be two vessels in 2009 and four vessels in 2010.

The agreements are subject to receipt of satisfactory bank financing for both TBS and the seller. TBS says it is in discussion with the Royal Bank of Scotland with respect to financing and has received indications that the bank is prepared to support TBS in this program, subject to negotiation of satisfactory commitment letters and customary agreements.

TBS Chairman, CEO and President Joseph E. Royce,, stated: "This program to build a new larger class of multi-purpose tweendeck vessels is a significant milestone in the TBS business plan to modernize and expand our tweendecker fleet.

These ships were designed by a TBS team drawn from all phases of our operations specifically to optimize our efficient cargo transportation in our trade lanes, support the requirements of our loyal customer base and enhance the growth of our business. We are particularly pleased that we are able to build these six ships in conjunction with CCC and Nantong Yahua Shipyard."

Awilco Exercises Option for Jackup Drilling Rig No. 8

Awilco Offshore (AWO) has exercised an option with PPL to build a 375-ft. jackup drilling rig with drilling depth of 30,000 ft. The rig will be named WilConfidence. The rig is to be delivered in the second quarter of 2009, and has a delivered cost of \$149m. The delivered cost includes contract price with the yard, site supervision, pipe handling equipment, spare parts and finance costs during construction.



Oceanteam sells 50 per cent of North Ocean 101 to Bourbon

Oceanteam Power & Umbilical ASA has announced that it has signed an agreement to transfer 50 per cent of the shares in the single-purpose shipowning company that owns its first newbuild construction vessel, North Ocean 101, to Bourbon Offshore Norway AS.

The 50/50 owned company will be renamed Oceanteam Bourbon KS and Oceanteam Bourbon AS in due course.

Oceanteam's first newbuild will be renamed **Bourbon Oceanteam 101**.

The newbuild is currently under construction in Vigo, Spain and will be 123m long with a breadth of 27m, has 2,000m² of free deck, a deadweight of 7,000 tonnes, 2 x 100 tonnes heave compensated cranes and accommodation for 120 people.

Bourbon, through its subsidiary SONASURF, and Oceanteam have recently been awarded a long term field support vessel contract with BP Angola for its Greater Plutonio development in Block 18.

Earlier this week the two companies entered into a commercial agreement allowing OPU to market its services through the Bourbon network.

Two other ships on order, **North Ocean 102** and **North Ocean 103**, remain 100 per cent owned by Oceanteam Power & Umbilical through 100 per cent owned single purpose companies.

Panama Canal demand grows

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) has released first quarter (Q1) operational metrics for fiscal year 2007.

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In Q1, there was an increase in net tonnage, total transits and transits of supers (vessels 91 feet or more in beam). Canal Waters Time (CWT), the average time it takes a vessel to transit the Canal including waiting time for passage, increased, as well as booking slot utilization.



These metrics are based on operations from October through December of 2006, the first quarter of the ACP's 2007 fiscal year, and compared to Q1 of fiscal year 2006.

Panama Canal/Universal Measurement System (PC/UMS) tonnage increased 11.7 percent - to 79.9 million PC/UMS tons from 71.5 million PC/UMS tons. In addition to a spike in tonnage, the Canal experienced an increase in traffic. Total Canal transits increased eight percent--to 3,568 transits from 3,299. Transits of supers, larger ships that require greater time and navigation skills to transit the Canal, increased 14.6 percent-- to 1,968 transits from 1,718.

"These metrics illustrate that demand for the Canal is steadily increasing, particularly among tankers, container vessels, vehicle carriers and refrigerated cargo," said ACP's Acting Director of Maritime Operations Captain Arcelio Hartley. "It is clear that the value of the Panama Canal increases as demand rises, services improve and investment continues."

There were no official accidents in Q1, while there was one accident in Q1 fiscal year 2006. An official accident is one in which a formal investigation is requested and conducted.

Overall CWT increased 45.7 percent - to 29.97 hours from 20.57 hours. The rise in CWT can be attributed to the increased demand, the mix in size of vessels that transit the waterway and the fact that this fiscal year there were 11

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days of work on the center culvert at Gatun Locks, which reduced capacity during that time. Additionally, the passenger vessels season which runs each year from October to May, was also at its peak during Q1. CWT for booked vessels (those ships holding reservations) increased by 10.8 percent - from 15.51 hours to 17.20 hours.

Utilization of the booking system increased seven percent--to 95 percent utilization from 88.8 percent. The ACP continues to modify its booking system to respond to new trends. To accommodate its customers, as well as to manage the increase in demand, the ACP temporarily added an additional slot to transit an influx of smaller vessels.

Jan de Nul wint opdracht in Dubai

De Belgische baggerfirma **Jan de Nul** heeft een opdracht binnengehaald in Dubai voor het zogeheten 'Cove **Canal project**'. Het project heeft een waarde van in totaal 70 miljoen euro. Dat heeft de baggeraar donderdag bekendgemaakt.

Het **Cove Canal-project** maakt deel uit van de onshore-activiteiten van het grotere **Dubai Waterfront Project** bij de grens met Abu Dhabi, waarvan het offshore gedeelte - zeven eilanden ter waarde van 1 miljard euro - al vorig jaar werd toegewezen aan **Jan De Nul**. Het werk bestaat uit drie grote delen: droge uitgraving, stenenwerken en de bouw van betonnen walmuren. Er deden vier partijen mee aan de aanbesteding.

Aangezien er met het project geen baggerwerken gemoeid zijn, maakt **Jan De Nul** hiermee zijn intrede in een nieuw segment van de markt van droge civiele werken in Dubai.

CMA CGM Group announces a tender offer for Cheng Lie Navigation Co, Ltd

CMA CGM Overseas (Taiwan) Investment Co. Ltd – a 100% subsidiary of the French CMA CGM Group – today announced a tender offer for 100% of the shares of Cheng Lie Navigation Co., Ltd. , a shipping container company which is publicly listed on the Gre Tai Securities Market in Taipei.

Farid Salem, Chief Executive Vice-President of CMA CGM, declares: "This acquisition would enlarge our scope of business into the Intra Asia trading area. CNC is a well-recognized company with a good reputation and position in the Intra-Asia shipping container market. Operating a fleet of 16 vessels (of which 8 are owned), CNC is active in a variety of trade routes covering Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam.

The combination of CNC's regional strength and CMA CGM's strong global position would allow the Group to offer a complete range of services to its clients. Together there will be ample opportunities to develop new routes, making use of attractive fleet and market synergies. In that process, we of course look forward to continue the cooperation with CNC's current trading partners".

The Group has had a wide experience of operating different shipping companies in specific areas of the world where these companies have added value to the overall Group's operations: ANL in the Oceania trades and Delmas in the Africa trades are the main features. Farid Salem says: "We intend to continue this successful model with the CNC acquisition. The company will maintain its brand and will continue to rely on its experienced and dedicated network of Agencies, terminals, management and staff. It will remain headquartered in Taipei".

Zim to Buy Cargo Ships for \$266.4m

The board of Zim Integrated Shipping Services Ltd. has approved the purchase of two container ships for \$266.4 million and has option on a third, according Globe Online. The ships will be delivered in early 2010. Last June, the company announced plans to buy eight new container ships for \$1 billion from South Korea's Hyundai Shipyards. This purchase will increase Zim's fleet by 30%.

MOVEMENTS

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Vaage Ship Management's **mv "Liv Kristin"** (technical managers; Technical Ship Support), seen arriving at "Verbrugge Terminal", Flushing.

Photo : Paul van Buren ©

YOUR HELP IS REQUIRED



Reader and contributor **Jacco van Nieuwenuyzen** spotted in Gibraltar the **MY IRRATIONAL EXUBERANCE** as seen at the picture above, it looks like the yacht was a tug before, is having one of the readers more information of this yacht, such as former names etc.

YOUR HELP IS APPRECIATED !!!!!

AIRCRAFT / AIRPORT NEWS

Airbus schort ontwikkeling A380 Cargo op

De Europese vliegtuigbouwer Airbus heeft beslist om de ontwikkeling van de cargoversie van de A380 op te schorten. De jongste maanden werden immers enkele belangrijke bestellingen geannuleerd. Het concern zet de prospectie wel verder in afwachting van nieuwe klanten.

Tot november van vorig jaar had Airbus nog drie klanten voor de cargoversie van de A380, maar daarvan werd één bestelling geannuleerd en de andere twee erg ingeperkt. Het Amerikaanse koeriersbedrijf FedEx annuleerde de bestelling van tien A380F's nadat werd aangekondigd dat Airbus twee jaar leveringsachterstand zou hebben. UPS, de grootste concurrent van FedEx, kondigde eind deze maand aan de bestelling van tien toestellen misschien te zullen annuleren. Leasemaatschappij ILFC wijzigde de bestelling van vijf cargotoestellen in één van vijf passagierstoestellen.

Daardoor viel de beslissing nu om de ontwikkeling van de cargoversie op te schorten. De directie hamert er evenwel op dat de prospectie wordt voortgezet, want de cargoversie "blijft een centraal deel van de A380-familie", met naar verluidt een marktpotentieel van ongeveer 400 vliegtuigen tijdens de volgende twintig jaar.

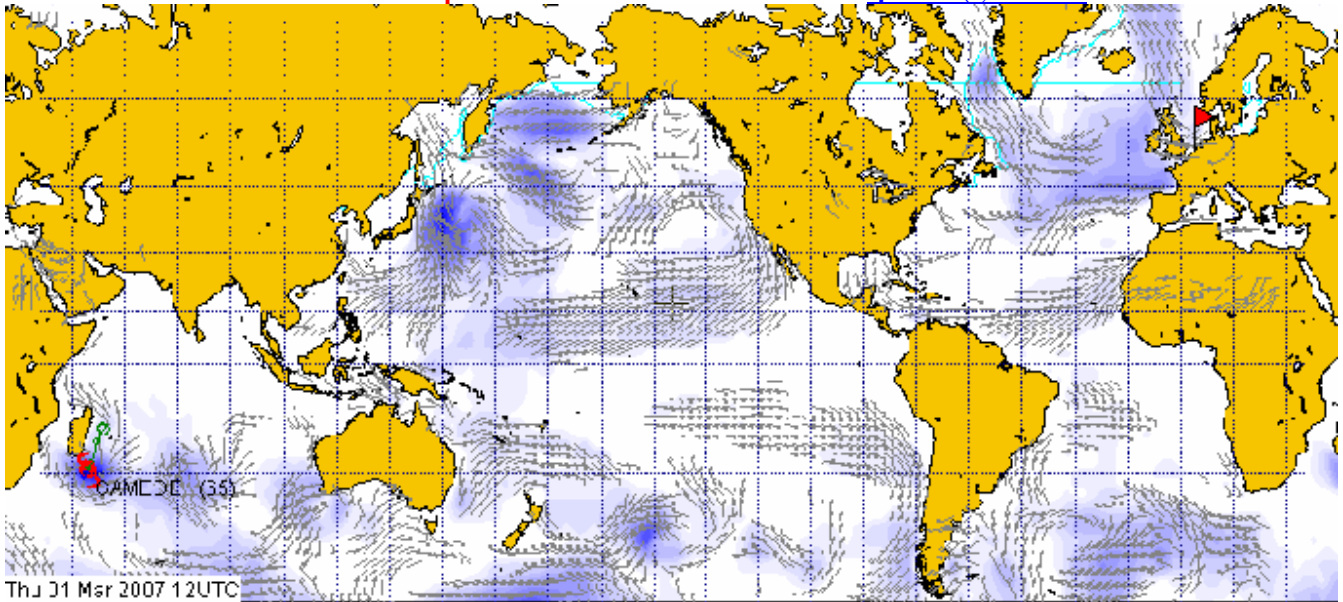
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Today's wind (+6Bft) and wave (+3m) chart. Created with SPOS, the onboard weather information & voyage optimisation system, used on over 500 vessels today.

.... PHOTO OF THE DAY

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This week it is 20 years ago that the ferry **Herald of Free Enterprise** capsized just after departure from the port of Zeebrugge, at the picture one of the first tugs on the scene after the accident, the URS tug **FIGHTER** seen putting a salvage team onboard the ill fated ferry during a later stage of the salvage operation.

Photo : www.maritimephoto.com ©

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