

## Up to 700 feared dead after migrant boat sinks off Libya

PALERMO, Italy (Reuters) - As many as 700 people were feared dead after a fishing boat packed with migrants capsized off the Libyan coast overnight, in what may be one of the worst disasters of the Mediterranean migrant crisis, officials said on Sunday.

Twenty eight people were rescued and 24 bodies recovered from the 20 metre-long vessel, which sank around 70 miles from the Libyan coast, south of the southern Italian island of Lampedusa, the Italian coast guard said.

If confirmed, the death toll would bring the total number of dead since the beginning of the year to more than 1,500 as the flow of migrants seeking to flee poverty, war and insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East has continued.

The new deaths fuelled calls for a stronger response from Europe to the increasingly deadly migrant crisis playing out in the Mediterranean. International aid groups and Italian authorities have criticised the European Union's "Triton" border protection operation, which recently replaced the more comprehensive Italian search-and-rescue mission "Mare Nostrum".

"A tragedy is unfolding in the Mediterranean, and if the EU and the world continue to close their eyes, it will be judged in the harshest terms as it was judged in the past when it closed its eyes to genocides when the comfortable did nothing," Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said foreign ministers would discuss urgent action on the migrant issue at a meeting in Luxembourg on Monday.

Italian officials said 17 vessels from the navy and coast guard, merchant ships in the area and a Maltese patrol boat, as well as aircraft from the navy and coast guard, were involved in the search-and-rescue operation, which was being coordinated by the Italian coast guard in Rome.

"They are literally trying to find people alive among the dead floating in the water," Muscat said.

There was still no decision on where the survivors and the bodies that had been recovered would be taken.

The boat is believed to have capsized when the migrants shifted to one side of the overcrowded vessel as a merchant ship approached.

"The first details came from one of the survivors who spoke English and

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who said that at least 700 people, if not more, were on board. The boat capsized because people moved to one side when another vessel that they hoped would rescue them approached," said Carlotta Sami, a spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee.

#### "LOOKING FOR A BETTER LIFE"

Pope Francis, who has spoken out repeatedly on the migrant crisis, repeated his call for quick and decisive action from the international community.

"They are men and women like us, our brothers seeking a better life, starving, persecuted, wounded, exploited, victims of war. They were looking for a better life, they were looking for happiness," he told tens of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square for his Sunday noon address.

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, who returned to Rome from a political event he was attending in Mantua, spoke by telephone to French President Francois Hollande. He was expected to hold a meeting with ministers later on Sunday.

The German government's representative for migration, refugees and integration, Aydan Ozoguz, said that with more arrivals likely to arrive as the weather turned warmer, emergency rescue missions should be restored.

"It was an illusion to think that cutting off Mare Nostrum would prevent people from attempting this dangerous voyage across the Mediterranean," she said.

Aid groups have called for the opening of a "humanitarian corridor" to ensure the safety of the migrants but there were also calls for action to prevent

the boats from leaving.

The leader of the anti-immigrant Northern League party, Matteo Salvini, who has made migration one of the centrepieces of his political agenda, called for an immediate naval blockade of the coast of Libya.

"We need to stop the business of the people smugglers. We need to set up reception centres in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Libya and wherever else is possible," he said.

Libya's lawless state, following the toppling of former leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, has left criminal gangs of migrant smugglers free to send a stream of boats carrying desperate migrants from Africa and the Middle East.

Around 20,000 migrants have reached the Italian coast this year, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates. That is fewer than in the first four months of last year, but the number of deaths has risen almost nine-fold.

In 2013, the previous government initiated the search-and-rescue operation "Mare Nostrum" or "Our Sea" after hundreds drowned in an incident off the coast of Lampedusa. The operation was cancelled last year, because of the cost and because some politicians said it encouraged migrants to depart by raising their hopes of being rescued.

Mare Nostrum made way for the European Union's border control mission, Triton. However Triton, which has a much smaller budget and which only operates within 30 miles of the Italian coast, has been criticised by humanitarian groups and Italy as inadequate to tackle the scale of the problem.

## World Infodesk

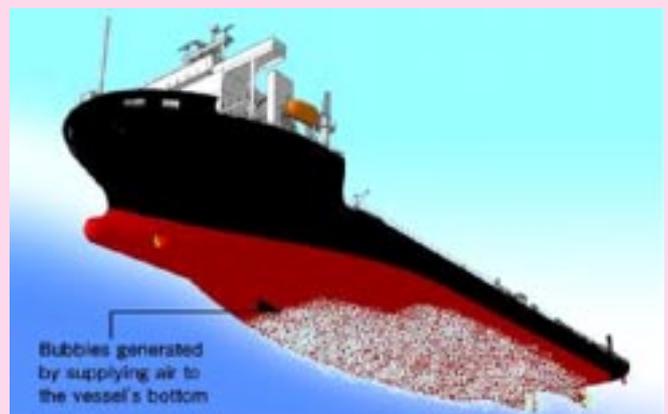
### Various Methods Used to Minimise Resistance on Ship's Hull:

When it comes to increasing ship's efficiency, improving the hull efficiency is one of the most debated topic. Lately a lot of research has been put into developing ways to reduce the effects of friction on the ship's hull.

Ships use large quantities of fuel to provide the necessary propulsive power to overcome resistance in their motion across ocean surfaces. In this article we shall be discussing about the various technologies/optimisation techniques used in the maritime industry to reduce the resistance on the hull of a ship.

#### Air Lubrication Method:

The air bubble distribution around the hull surface is believed to be an important parameter for reducing the resistance working on the hull, and must therefore be predicted accurately. In this method a layer of air



bubbles is applied on the turbulent boundary layer developing downstream on the hull in the water flow. The efficiency of this method was determined by carrying out numerous model tests which proved that the effect of air lubrication helped reduce frictional

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## *From the Editor's Desk*



**Re: Nautilus International: Authorities are blind to the need for seafarers to have adequate rest**

**Alexander Spiewok Lead Auditor at DNV GL, appearing in [www.linkedin](http://www.linkedin)**

**To Malcolm Brown, Sharon Reyes, Tim Carter.**

*THE CAPTION SHOULD BE SHEAR NECESSITY AND NOT THAT Authorities are blind to the need for Seafarers to have adequate rest. TO ENSURE THE CORRUPTED COMMERCIAL WORLD, DO NOT CURTAIL THE LOOPHOLES leave the monopoly to continue (AUTHORITIES blindly favoring the SHIP-OWNERS/ MANAGERS in cutting the manning strength of ship-staff / seamen, in the most unrealistic manner, illogically, thereby men on board continue to suffer sharing the time of those sick, on eventualities of accidents, while living and working with constraints, living with water and food supplies without proper check, sub-standard delivery / delivered at the last moment before ship's departure, while on a profession, living and working out on the deep seas/oceans. They are a neglected WORK-FORCE since out of sight, working and living on the deep seas of the high seas and the oceans.*

*To Malcolm Brown You do not answer to valid points raised in my comments in linkedin. Please note: A Wise ship-management / national maritime administration's should have foreseen and taken into consideration of all the probabilities, in which obviously sickness in human is a common factor. Mere theory nor mere practice does not lead to improvement/development. Self, find many of your similar names Malcolm Brown appearing in Linkedin and can't guess what your veracity is ? since you state "Even ashore, if someone is off ill, the remaining staff are expected to take up the slack", since not knowing as to what help, and from where you get help, in an emergent situation while out on the deep seas, in the middle of the seas/oceans? While these days burdened with documentation and quick-turnaround of vessels. If so, people like you, are exploiting the seafarers by cheap-labour and circumstances, in which the poor seafarers desperately urge the seafarers mission overseas? Authorities do not raise or address seafarers legitimate issues because of people like you, to please the capitalists i.e. Capitalists (ship-owners/partners/shareholders etc) and the Ship managers as the middlemen, to also make money, at the cost of the hard-working seafarers with occupational hazards. Hence to express the gratitude, to the working seafarers, out at sea. It is over 67 years, since we gained independence, one cannot be fooling all the time. In the second Para of your comment, you state " that you provide safety, as far as it doesn't cost money. depicts you are a merciless person who has no iota of concern for the safety of (seafarers) persons working out at sea, with risks and sacrifices, earning foreign-exchange to the country of origin, and keeping the world trade active. You blame the seafarers, saying that they*

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*come without proper training, with the false hope on checklists and risk assessments. If you consider yourself, much more competent, please try to raise the quality benchmark \* which by your own words appear "YOU" are incompetent, but loud mouth but for exploiting the poor seafarers into inhuman drudgery and slavery. How many accidents out at sea are reported? Most of them are suppressed by the Masters and Chief Engineers, since being the Management representatives of the Shipping Company, unless well established shipping company owners consider humanity than just making money like any other business.*

*If you are competent, draw out minimum standards of your requirement for seafarers. My dear friend it is not the language that only works to state that the manning is sufficient "to sail the vessel from A to B" like that of the country boat/dingy. Self a Mechanical Engineer specialized in Marine and Industrial establishments ashore, after almost two decades out at sea and hence cannot digest such expressions of low standards with unrealistic imaginations. As you state "Be interesting to see, if the old style training gave better results than ticking boxes" like suggesting to go back to stone- ages or bullock-cart/ of transportation, so that you indirectly state, that we need to close down all the Maritime Colleges / Academies / Institutions of Higher learning/ Universities, since you are more after greed for more money than the safety of the seafarers out at sea. When the whole world looks forward for new better ideas/innovation in pursuit of progress and development, in all spheres of living and working.*

*PLEASE SHARE YOUR OPINIONS: Human Rights at Sea is pleased to continue to showcase the Missing Seafarers Reporting Programme - [www.missingseafarers.org](http://www.missingseafarers.org) - as a global first supporting seafarers and fishermen and their families. The Programme is designed to keep the issue of seafarers and fishermen lost at sea alive and to raise international awareness by profiling individual cases to maritime authorities, flag states, governments, ship owners/managers, civil society organisations, NGOs and the general public, among others. [enquiries@missingseafarers.org](mailto:enquiries@missingseafarers.org) - tell us what you think and if you want to support us. Brought to you by [missingseafarers.org](http://missingseafarers.org), The 'Missing Seafarers Reporting Programme' ("MSRP" or "the Programme") is the flagship programme delivered to the international and maritime communities by the Human Rights at Sea ("HRAS") organisation. It is a privately funded programme delivered... David Hammond - Barrister/Founder Human Rights at Sea*

**We though belong to a highly populated country 'INDIA' we value the lives of the SEAFARERS working out at sea, which bring foreign-exchange to the country.**

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resistance. The obtained results show that the maximum total resistance reduction was achieved up to 11% in ballast condition and about 6% in the full load condition with the assumption that thrust deduction is constant for with and without bubble injection. It was observed that the reduction rate of frictional resistance was larger on the bottom surface of the hull and its effect was smaller towards the sides of the ship.



During model tests it was found out that the effect of air bubbles in reducing frictional resistance persisted for the whole bottom area. This also helps in increasing the mean propeller inflow velocity with air lubrication from no air condition due to the viscous resistance reduction. Though much of this concept has been limited to theoretical and some practical tests, the efficiency of these tests suggest that the method can be adopted for large scale use for serving its actual purpose.

In fact, sea trials on MT Amalienborg (Tanker) which was fitted with the air lubrication system by Silverstream Technologies showed a net average efficiency savings of 4.3% and 3.8% for the vessel in ballast and laden conditions respectively. Based on these results the Norwegian Cruise line's new build Norwegian Bliss would be fitted with the this technology.

### **Hull Form Optimisation:**

Hull form optimisation has been recognised as a means to improve energy efficiency from decades. With numerous hull forms coming up, each one specialised in its own operation, several hull forms are available to choose from. When assessing hull form optimisation the owner has to consider the following options:

1. To accept the standard hull form design available at the shipyard who has taken your contract.
2. To modify an existing hull form design using line distortion method so as to achieve your desired profile.
3. To develop a new design by carrying out various hydrostatic, hydrodynamic and structural analysis.

We shall not be discussing in depths about the various processes involved in the above three step, however, we will be focusing on the various procedures involved in minimising hull resistance and increasing the overall hull form efficiency. The following are the ways by which we can minimise hull resistance -

1. Fore body optimisation
2. Aft body optimisation
3. Appendage Resistance

### **Fore Body optimisation:**

Fore body optimisation includes development in the design of the forward region of the ship which includes consideration of the bulb design, forward shoulder, and waterline entrance. Potential flow calculation are routinely applied in this optimisation process.

The bulbous bow is designed in such a ways that it reduces the wave making resistance by producing its own wave, out of phase with the incoming wave system. This results in a destructive interference of the waves generated and the incoming waves, hence resulting in a cancelling effect. This was a significant amount of wave making resistance and be reduced thereby increasing the hull efficiency. The shape of the bulb also plays a significant role in doing the same.

A V-shape may be introduced at the base of the bulb to mitigate slamming impact loads. Fuller ships such as tankers and bulk carriers are often arranged with bulbs having a large section area and V-shaped entrance, such that they behave as a traditional bulb at loaded draft and acts to extend the waterline length at ballast draft.



### **Aft Body Optimisation:**

The biggest concerns while designing the aft part of the ship is to mitigate the stern waves, avoid eddies and improve the flow into the propeller. By improving the flow around the stern of the ship the hull resistance can be reduced. Flow improving devices such as stern flaps can be attached to do the same. The other important thing to be considered while designing the stern is the type of stern whether a transom or a cruiser or an elliptical etc. Each of them has its own set of pros and cons therefore, only after a proper CFD analysis or model experiments the appropriate stern has to be chosen.

## Appendage Resistance:

Appendage resistance contributes to about 2 - 3 percent of the total resistance for a cargo ship in calm water condition. Roughly about half the appendage resistance is attributed by the bilge keels and the other half to the



rudder. Resistance due to rudder is experienced usually on directionally unstable ships and can be controlled using skeg. The bow thruster tunnel can also contribute significantly to the overall resistance of the ship, roughly in the range of 1 - 2 percent. Grid bars are frequently placed over the opening perpendicular to the flow direction. They serve to break up laminar flow and reduce vortices. Sometimes anti suction tunnels are used to reduce the pressure variation across the bow thruster tunnel.

Apart from the above stated techniques used for minimising resistance, we can also use interceptor trim planes at the stern of the ship. Duck tail water line extension is often used on cruiser ships or liners and provide a propulsion efficiency of about 4 - 10 percent. This way we can carry out detailed analysis of the various components of the hull and optimise the hull accordingly in order to achieve least resistance.

## **Tripartite Meeting of Experts: Tripartite Meeting of Experts recommends revisions to the Annexes to Convention No. 185 to keep them in line with modern identity document technology**

A tripartite meeting of experts, including representatives of flag and port States, employers' and workers' organizations and international non-governmental organizations, adopted recommendations in Geneva on 6 February to revise the Annexes to the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185).

The Convention is designed to provide seafarers with verifiable identification in order to facilitate their temporary admission into foreign territory for the purposes of shore leave, transit and transfer. It was adopted in 2003, revising the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (No. 108), and takes into account modern-day security concerns. The biometric standards and the procedures to be complied with, which

are set out in the Annexes to the Convention, aim to ensure an interoperable seafarers' identity document that satisfies national security requirements. Importantly, Convention No. 185 provides for a rapid procedure to amend its Annexes, precisely to enable them to keep pace with technological developments.

In light of the advances that have been made concerning border security and identity documents since the adoption of the Convention in 2003, the Governing Body decided at its 320th Session (March 2014) to hold the tripartite meeting, which included maritime and visa experts, to examine those issues and discuss various options concerning Convention No. 185. Ms Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, Director of the International Labour Standards Department, recalled that "The decision to convene a tripartite meeting of experts on this important issue highlights the ILO's recognition of the fundamental rights of seafarers to have easier access to port areas, to transit through countries and to go ashore after weeks or months of working and living on board in an inherently stressful work environment. While ensuring these rights, the Convention aims to strike the right balance with national security concerns. This has been a process of social dialogue among the governments, shipowners and seafarers, and has benefitted greatly from the guidance and support of the ILO's international partners, including the International Maritime Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Organization for Standardization."

Following constructive discussions, the tripartite experts adopted a general conclusion and recommendations to the Governing Body, which recommended that the Annexes to the Convention be amended to bring them into line with the current technology used for ePassports, thus facilitating the authentication by border authorities anywhere in the world of Seafarers' Identity Documents issued under Convention No. 185. If the recommendations are approved by the ILO Governing Body, and corresponding amendments are adopted by the International Labour Conference, seafarers' identity documents issued under the Convention will no longer use a fingerprint template in a two-dimensional bar code, but will include a facial image biometric and a digital signature, stored in a contactless chip, which will permit them to be inter-operable in the infrastructure used by most countries to issue and authenticate ePassports.

The recommendations will be considered by the ILO Governing Body at its upcoming 323rd Session (March 2015).

## **New safety and health guidelines to protect seafarers: Maritime occupational safety and health experts agree on guidelines to bolster the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.**

GENEVA (ILO News) - Recognizing the special needs of seafarers, experts have agreed on guidelines to assist governments to implement occupational safety and health

provisions previously set down in the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006).

Intended to provide supplementary practical information to be reflected in national laws and other measures, the OSH guidelines deal with the special maritime working environment. This includes demanding physical working conditions, potentially hazardous tasks, isolation, long hours of work, rigid organizational structures and high levels of stress and fatigue.

"We are very pleased with the outcome of the work of the expert meeting this week. We believe in promoting compliance with the MLC and the new guidelines that we have agreed will make an effective contribution to this," said Tim Springett, Vice-Chairman for the Employers' Group.

The guidelines were discussed by a total of 102 delegates, including, six government, six shipowner and six seafarer experts, observers and advisers from 42 other governments, and observers from intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

The meeting, held in Geneva from 13-17 October, addressed all areas of seafarers' occupational safety and health, including such areas as alcohol and drug abuse, violence and harassment, and infectious diseases. The document details responsibilities for governments, shipowners and seafarers related to accident and illness prevention practices, implementation, training and emergency and accident response.

Also noting that he too was pleased with the experts' results, Patrice Caron, Executive Vice-President of the Seafarers' International Union of Canada, said, "There will be many challenges to implement occupational safety and health in the maritime sector. The guidelines should provide assistance. Minimizing risk is a fundamental concern to seafarers and for the others persons working on ships."

### "Another building block"

Speaking on behalf of the government group, Julie Carlton, Head of Seafarer Safety and Health Branch at the United Kingdom's Maritime and Coastguard Agency, said, "We are pleased to have agreed these guidelines for competent authorities on the implementation of this important aspect of the MLC, 2006. The final document provides flexibility without compromising on standards of occupational safety and health to protect seafarers, and will be a useful resource for those setting up or reviewing their OSH frameworks in compliance with the MLC, 2006."

Over 40 ILO Conventions have already been adopted and numerous other instruments, codes of practice and guidelines have been drafted on OSH since the ILO's creation in 1919. Some are sector-specific, such as the ILO code of practice on accident prevention on board ships at sea and in port. Further OSH provisions are set out in instruments adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The MLC, 2006 was adopted in February, 2006 by the International Labour Conference. It includes Regulation 4.3 on health and safety protection and accident prevention, and the related Code, "to ensure that seafarers' work environment on board ships promotes occupational safety and health."

The ILO has estimated that 6,300 people die every day as a result of occupational accidents or work-related diseases, adding up to more than 2.3 million deaths per year. Costs can be devastating to workers' families and their communities, while the economic burden of poor OSH practices is estimated at 4 per cent of global gross domestic product each year.

In their concluding document, experts said the OSH measures "should not be seen as an economic cost but as an investment to continuous improvement to the safety and health of seafarers."

Meeting of Experts on Maritime Occupational Safety and Health was organized by the Sectoral Activities Department with the International Labour Standards Department of the ILO.

### **Australia - Investigation report: serious injury onboard the LNG carrier Northwest Stormpetrel:**

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) issued the report of its investigation into a serious injury onboard the LNG carrier Northwest Stormpetrel at Dampier on 8 November 2014. The cargo engineer and an integrated rating were checking the LNG forcing vaporizer steam trap to resolve recurrent drainage issues.

The steam trap was isolated and depressurized so that a new gasket could be installed. Following gasket installation and reassembly, the system was checked prior to pressurization.

As the system was being pressurized, the valve's bonnet came away, spraying steam on the cargo engineer and causing serious burns.

Investigation revealed that the bonnet locking clip (a small item that would have been located in a hard to see location) had not been installed, allowing the bonnet to unscrew.

### **Crews rescued from two scrap ships off Alang:**

Seventeen crew members have been rescued from two ships that ran into trouble on their way to a ship recycling yard at Alang, India.

The ships are described by Indian media as Yemeni- or Omani-flagged. The two vessels were anchored 15 n miles from the Gujarat coast awaiting final clearance to enter the Alang-Sosiya Ship Recycling Yard.

Video footage shows that one was a general cargo vessel with the name Abdullah and port of registry, Panama, roughly painted above a crudely obliterated former name. The other vessel is reported to have been called Ayman

or Amanna. A 271 gt, 1978-built general cargo vessel called Ayman is listed as flagged to the United Arab Emirates.



The three-hour rescue operation began when the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) received reports that Abdullah had dragged its anchor and run aground. At about the same time, Ayman began taking on water and started listing in rough seas and high winds.

Of the 17 crew members rescued by the ICG and Pipavav Marine Police, 10 were Pakistani, five Yemeni, one Indian, and one Iraqi.

ICG Commandant Atul Saxena, quoted by The Indian Express, said: "MV Ayman has capsized 8.5 n miles off Shiyal Bet, the other has run aground. We have sent our team to the spot again to see if there is any oil leakage."

### **SISI releases 2030 China Shipping Development Outlook: China to overtake Greece as top shipping nation by 2030 the report suggests**

The Shanghai International Shipping Institute (SISI) has officially released its 2030 China Shipping Development Outlook report, which has drawn a blueprint for the medium term future of China's shipping industry.

According to the report, by 2030, China's total international shipping volume will reach 6.2bn tons, which



will account for 17% of the world's shipping volume. The growth rate for iron ore and coal demand will slow down and demand for grain and oil import will increase substantially. Export and import container volumes will also reach 200m teu.

The growth of the bulk carrier fleet and tanker fleet will be faster than that of the container vessel fleet in the next 15 years. Bulk carriers, tankers and containerships will account for 70%, 18% and 9.5% of China's shipping fleet.

China is also expected to exceed Greece in terms of total fleet capacity by 2030, and China's ship financing will account for 30% of the world's volume, the report says.

The report also forecasts that China will be the world's largest cruise market and Chinese shipyards are expected to get about 11% of the world's cruiseship orders by the time.

### **Badly timed tackle results in lifeboat accident: Lessons from UK MAIB's Marine Accident Reports.**



The UK MAIB has recently issued the first Safety Digest for this year which includes lessons learnt from maritime accidents. One case refers to a lifeboat accident due to badly timed tackle.

The master of a cargo vessel had instructed the chief officer to complete the 3-monthly routines on the ship's lifeboats and fast rescue craft. The routines included lowering the boats to the water and releasing them from the davit falls. A team of two officers and two seamen was assigned the task of launching the boats. The lifeboats were of the fully enclosed type and required a minimum of three people on the boat: the officer in charge (OIC) and the two seamen to conduct the drill.

To launch the boat, the bowsing tackle needed to be released, which allowed the boat to hang free in the davit prior to being lowered. This particular boat had band type bowsing tackles; it was important that these were released simultaneously in order that the boat swung smoothly into the lowering position. The OIC confirmed that both seamen were confident in operating the bowsing tackles before ordering the tackles to be eased off. The after tackle began to pay out correctly, but the forward one did not release. The OIC instructed both seamen to stop releasing the bowsing tackles; this command was repeated several times but the seaman at the front of the boat continued his attempts to release the forward tackle.

The OIC moved forward to attract the seaman's attention. At this point the forward bowsing tackle released suddenly, causing the boat to swing violently and the OIC

to be thrown head first into the lifeboat cabin. The boat came to rest in the falls, and the OIC suffered a cut to his forehead, which was subsequently treated on board. A ship's investigation found that the bowsing tackle brake tension spring tail was broken, allowing the bowsing tackle to pay out in an uncontrolled manner. The spring was replaced and the bowsing tackle was then successfully tested.

Figure 1: Broken spring tail



Figure 2: New spring

Visual inspection of the spring has now been included in the maintenance system and the equipment manufacturer notified of the problem.

It was recognised that lifeboat launching involved some hazards, so the operation was subject to an operational risk assessment (RA). However, while the risk assessment identified hazards associated with the launching operation, it did not link directly to the operating procedure. Furthermore, it is unclear if the OIC had viewed the RA prior to commencing the launching operation. Notwithstanding this, it was reported that the OIC had extensive experience with the lifeboat and systems.

The seaman operating the forward bowsing tackle was less experienced and English was not his first language, but he was deemed to be proficient in its use as a working language. Both the OIC and the other attending officer on the ship had shouted for the seaman to stop operating the bowsing tackle, but he had not heard the command to stop. Subsequent trials showed that commands issued from the lifeboat conning hatch were inaudible at the forward bowsing position.

**Lessons Learnt:** Accidents involving launching of lifeboats for routine and exercise purposes continue to occur on an all too frequent basis. Training of ships' crews must be thorough and regularly carried out, with safe systems of work in place to support these operations. Crews must 'get it right' during maintenance and training to ensure that they are prepared should an emergency arise.

To be effective, risk assessments must cover all aspects of an operation and, where appropriate, should be supported by a 'standard operating procedure'. These must be utilised for each operation to which they pertain.

Launching routines should form part of the maintenance schedule and include a thorough inspection of all associated equipment.

Launching instructions should be reviewed to ensure that communications between the OIC and bowsing tackle operators are effective.

**Poaching Vessel Thunder Sinks:** Sea Shepherd reports that at 1152 GMT on Monday, the poaching vessel, Thunder, sank at 0° 20' North 05° 23' East inside the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Sao Tome.

The Sea Shepherd ships Bob Barker and Sam Simon are in the process of rescuing the crew of 40, including the captain, officers and deck crew, who were all able to disembark to liferafts from the Thunder before it sank.

Captain of the Bob Barker, Peter Hammarstedt, said, "When my Chief Engineer boarded the Thunder in the hours leading up to the sinking, he was able to confirm that there were clear signs that the vessel was intentionally scuttled. Usually when a vessel is sinking, the captain will close all hatches so as to maintain buoyancy. However, on the Thunder, the reverse was done - doors and hatches were tied open and the fishhold was opened. It is an incredibly suspicious situation, to say the least."

Sea Shepherd has been able to confirm that, at this time, there have been no reported injuries.

The crew of the Thunder have been supplied with food and water, and will now be received by the Sam Simon.

Captain of the Sam Simon, Sid Chakravarty, said, "With the safety of my own crew also in mind, we will now take every precaution to ensure that the crew of the Thunder is retrieved from the lifeboats safely."

The Thunder is one of six vessels which Sea Shepherd calls the "Bandit 6". Sea Shepherd says it is used to engage in Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported (IUU) fishing of vulnerable toothfish in the Southern Ocean.

The Bob Barker has been engaged in a four-month, record-breaking pursuit of the vessel, which has gone from the Southern, to the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans.

On December 25 2014, the Sam Simon commenced retrieval operations to remove the illegal fishing gear abandoned by the Thunder when it first fled from the Bob Barker. More than 72km of illegal gillnet was recovered over a three week period and over 1,400 fish, weighing a total of 45,000 kilograms, were returned to the ocean.

On February 25 2015, the Sam Simon handed over the confiscated fishing gear as evidence of the Thunder's illegal fishing activity to authorities in Mauritius.

In March, another two of the Bandit 6, the Viking and Kunlun, were detained by authorities in South East Asia. The captains of both vessels were arrested for fisheries related crimes.

The poaching vessels are the target of Sea Shepherd's 11th Southern Ocean Defence Campaign, Operation Icefish.

**Transocean Scraps Rigs, Offshore Drilling Woes:** Switzerland-based Transocean announced that it plans to dismantle four of the company's offshore drilling rigs to be scrapped. The company has also announced that it stacked (mothballed) another four deep-water vessels that



had been kept idle. Transocean is expected to pay \$300 to \$325 million in non-cash charges during the first quarter. According to the company, the rigs will be dismantled in an environmentally friendly way. This brings the number of rigs Transocean intends to scrap to 16.

The company currently owns approximately 68 offshore rigs, but it has been reported that 50 to 60 percent of those vessels could be idle this year. Since last June, Transocean's shares have plummeted nearly 60 percent.

Other offshore drilling companies are not faring any better. Since the oil prices for a barrel of Brent crude have continuously risen, new offshore exploration for oil and gas has come to a halt. The low crude prices have made the cost of starting a new drilling project hard to justify with a reasonable rate of return out of sight.

**Yemen ports become focus for rebel attacks:** Ports in Yemen are increasingly coming under attack from Saudi and Gulf Co-operation Council states as they attempt to regain control of areas run by Shia Houthi militias and al-Qaeda jihadis.

The Yemen Times reported yesterday that the strategic port city of Aden, the last stronghold of forces loyal to President Hadi, had fallen to Houthi rebels. The claim was denied by loyalist forces and by the deputy head of the port association, Abd ar-Rabb al-Halyaki.

Houthi commanders have threatened to launch attacks on Saudi Arabia, in response to continuing airstrikes, where there is a sizeable Shia minority. This could result in the conflict widening across the Arabian peninsula.

It was also reported last week that the port city of Al-



Mukalla, just 65km from the Ash Shihr oil terminal and 140km from Total's Balhaf gas terminal, had been seized by al-Qaeda.

The Red Sea port of Al Hudaydah (Hodeida) is within a Houthi-controlled area but is still functioning. Both China and India have been evacuating their citizens through the port. An airstrike on a dairy factory at the port last week caused numerous civilian deaths, and imports and exports have ceased, with Yemen-bound ships being diverted to other ports in the region.

Reuters on Thursday quoted a flour company manager as saying, "It has been a few days now since our imports have stopped and we are not receiving any more wheat." A shipping agency official said that no stevedores are available to unload ships, although reportedly some vessels are awaiting oil cargoes at Aden Refinery.

All the rebel-held areas bordering the Gulf of Aden have become major targets for coalition airstrikes, making delivery of urgently needed humanitarian aid all but impossible. Yemen has to import 90% of its food, most of it by sea.

The worsening bloodshed has also provoked an exodus of foreign workers, who are mostly being evacuated by their countries' naval vessels. Two Shipping Corporation of India passenger vessels, Kavaratti and Coral, have also been commandeered for the evacuation effort.

In the past decade, up to half a million Somalis crossed to Yemen in search of security and work, but now the flow has reversed, with both Somalis and Yemenis fleeing across the Gulf of Aden to find sanctuary in Somalia. Most are arriving on small boats at the ports of Bosaso, in Puntland, and Berbera, Somaliland. However, a large number of refugees are also making landfall in Djibouti, which has asked the international community for help to manage the influx. Ports along the southern shore of the Gulf of Aden are becoming congested with diverted vessels and refugee ships.

There is no immediate threat of the critical Bab al-Mandeb strait being closed to shipping, but ship masters and operators have been warned that the situation around Yemen is extremely volatile and should take appropriate advice.

The UK P&I Club on Thursday issued an advisory stating, "...we recommend members contact their flag state and notify their war risks insurers before proceeding to Yemen. Members should also be aware that in view of the instability, the ability of the club's correspondents to assist with issues arising in Yemeni ports may be severely hampered.

## Ship Manager Fined for Breach of US Sulphur Emissions Regulations:

International Transport Intermediaries Club (ITIC) has confirmed that a ship management company has been fined over a quarter of a million dollars in connection with a breach of clean air regulations in the United States.

ITIC reports that an inspector of the California Air Resources Board, the clean air agency of the state of California, boarded a ship in July 2011 at a terminal in Los Angeles. The chief engineer was asked if he was aware of the revised 2009 California clean air regulations which required vessels to switch main engine, auxiliary engines and auxiliary boilers to low-sulphur fuel when in California-regulated waters. The chief engineer said he was only aware of the requirement to switch auxiliary engines to low-sulphur fuel in accordance with regulations effective from 1 January, 2007.

## Safety & Security Insight: SOLAS migrant rescues catch ships in political crossfire:

Recent European agreement on sea rescues of illegal or 'irregular' migrants in the Mediterranean has put the shipping industry in a precarious position.

At a meeting of EU home affairs ministers, concerns were expressed that search-and-rescue (SAR) operations in the Mediterranean were acting as "a pull factor" for illegal migration, a statement from the UK's Home Office said, adding that the operations "should be brought to a well-publicised end".

Ships, meeting their obligations under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), are playing a key role in rescues, with the Italian coastguard calling on the assistance of 436 ships this year alone. Rescues delay ships usually for a day or more, and put crews at risk of disease and sometimes violence from anxious survivors. There is also the risk of terrorism, with no procedures in place for scanning those who come aboard the ship for weapons.

In Italy, the country's expensive Mare Nostrum SAR programme, which has saved the lives of more than 100,000 people, will be scaled down from the end of October. And at the beginning of November, Triton, an initiative of the EU's border management programme, Frontex, will be launched. However, this will be a far smaller initiative, costing the EU just €2.9M per month, and, it will not be an SAR operation as was Mare Nostrum, and will focus on border control.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) said it is "very concerned" about the scale down and "that search and rescue operations may be reduced in international waters.

"It will clearly be much more difficult for merchant ships to save lives at sea without the adequate provision of search and rescue services by EU Member States. Moreover, whenever a ship performs its legal and humanitarian obligations, it will continue to be incumbent on EU Member States to ensure that those who are rescued can be readily disembarked at the next port of call, even when they may lack documentation," said the ICS.

An EU spokesman told IHS Maritime that Triton was formed at the request of the Italian authorities, and was "tailor made upon the needs they have expressed". He also confirmed that the United Kingdom will not provide assets for this programme. But this non-involvement will not, he said, affect the launch or activities of Triton and that the United Kingdom "will contribute with one guest officer (a debriefing expert) for the month of November".

He explained: "The UK has never previously participated with assets [for] Frontex operations, due to their particular situation (the UK does not participate in the Schengen [agreement])."

Funds for the first phase of Triton have been re-allocated from the Internal Security Fund and from within the Frontex budget.

The spokesman warned that "any increase in the Frontex 2015 budget would have to be agreed by the European Parliament and the Council in order to finance the operation with the same intensity in the longer run".

The Home Office statement said that the United Kingdom and its EU partners have agreed to enhance regional co-operation and to "work with countries of origin to tackle the causes of illegal immigration and the organised gangs that facilitate it and to enhance support for protection in North and East Africa for those who need it".

## Confined Space Deaths Highlight Timber Hazards:

Two men, a Russian chief officer and a Ukrainian chief engineer have died in a hold containing timber while a third, a Filipino second officer who attempted to rescue them collapsed but survived. The incident is under investigation by the UK's Marine Accident Investigation Branch while the report will not be available for some time. The incident does highlight the confined space hazards of timber in cargo holds and the continuing problem of would-be rescuers being overcome while attempting to recover victims. Sally Ann C is a 9000 gt Isle of Man-registered general cargo ship operated by Carisbrooke Shipping, based on the Isle of Wight. At the time of the incident she was carrying a cargo of timber en route to Dakar, Senegal.

All that is presently known is that the chief officer and chief engineer entered one of the vessel's four holds and collapsed. Subsequently the second officer tried to rescue them but also collapsed. He was successfully revived.

Timber in its various forms, from pellets to logs is hazardous. Oxidation of wood reduced oxygen in the atmosphere and produces a range of potentially hazardous gases including carbon monoxide and hydrogen sulphide.

In the Suntis incident in 2014, for example, the Fire and Rescue Service analysis of the atmosphere after the accident showed normal readings (20.9%) of oxygen content at the access hatch; the readings reduced to 10% just below main deck level inside the hatch opening and to between 5% and 6% at the bottom of the ladder into the compartment (Figure 2). Such low levels of oxygen cannot support life. Anyone exposed to such levels will faint almost immediately, followed by convulsions, coma and respiratory seizure within a few minutes. It is likely that the timber cargo caused the

deprivation of oxygen in the cargo hold and access compartments.

In 2010 another chief officer died, along with a member of the deck crew who tried to rescue him, aboard the bulker TPC Wellington. In the case the chief officer had been warned against entry by the bosun but ignored the warning. It took less than 10 minutes for the chief officer and the man who tried to rescue him to die.

New Zealand's Transport Accident Investigation Commission noted: "The dangers of the organic decomposition of logs and other organic cargoes in enclosed spaces are well known in the international maritime community, and were documented on board the TPC Wellington, but in spite of this the high risk this posed to the crew had not been identified, no specific training had been given to the crew members to heighten their awareness of the risk, and no emergency drills had been conducted in recent times for rescue from enclosed spaces".

In 2006 in Sweden 12 people were taken to hospital and five required decompression chamber treatment. Seven people have died and several have been injured under similar circumstances in Sweden over a two year period.

BIMCO issued a warning about the hazards presented by wood in 2005.

Sadly, two out of three confined space casualties are people who tried to rescue the first victim.

Confined space incidents are common and completely avoidable.

All confined space rescue drills should be conducted as realistically as possible. You can use the many confined space accident reports, and podcasts, in MAC to increase your crew's safety awareness.

The rules for surviving are simple:

- Never enter a confined space unless absolutely necessary.
- Complete the permit to work before entry
- Alert rescue teams and the bridge
- Assess the risks, including those presented by any cargo that may be in the space.
- Put appropriate rescue equipment at the point of access.
- Ensure that a safety monitor is in position outside the space who can raise the alarm.
- Ventilate the space thoroughly before entry.
- Test the atmosphere in the hold thoroughly before entry.
- If possible wear an O<sub>2</sub> monitor while inside the space.
- When in Doubt, Stay Out.

**Authorities are blind to the need for seafarers to have adequate rest:** Many reports from investigations into global shipping incidents have found 'fatigue' - more precisely 'tiredness' - to have been a significant factor.

The International Management Code for the Safe Operation



of Ships and for Pollution Prevention (ISM Code) is intended to provide an international standard for ship operation. But what's on the tin does not reflect the contents, due to its subservience to international conventions and codes.

Seafarers' hours of work and rest are determined by the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006, incorporating an earlier International Labour Organisation Convention, which provides for either a 72-hour-working week or one of 77 hours rest, which equates to a 91-hour-working week.

For commercial reasons the shipping industry has chosen, almost universally, a 91-hour-working week. Somewhat perversely, for reasons of safety in line with guidelines from the International Maritime Organisation, this can be increased to a 98-hour-week for up to two weeks, providing it reverts back to a 91-hour-week for double the time the individual has worked a 98-hour-week.

A recent EU-funded study, using workplace simulators for bridge, engine and ship cargo control rooms, has shown that between 20-50% of participants fell asleep at one time during their watch. The working of a six hour on/six hour off pattern was found to be dangerous, particularly between the hours of 00.00 and 06.00.

Seafarers face not only 'acute fatigue', but a build-up of 'chronic fatigue' over time, increasing the chances of personal accident and, additionally, error and accident causing possible loss of the ship and environmental damage. Working such hours also has long-term health effects, including a potentially higher incidence of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.

Accidents at sea caused by fatigue are predictable and preventable. The ISM Code and the regulatory authorities are blind to the need for seafarers to have adequate rest.

**Hijacking and cargo theft continue to threaten to small tankers:** A series of hijackings in Southeast Asian waters since January 2015 represents a continuation of a negative security trend observed since April 2014. A high demand for illicit oil will continue to drive fuel theft and the targeting of small, low freeboard tankers in the region. Regional efforts to penetrate organised crime networks suspected of responsibility for the attacks have failed to deter piracy. The hijackings show no sign of abating, particularly in the Malacca Strait and the eastern and western approaches to the Singapore Strait.

Despite the fact that the vast majority of recorded incidents remain small-scale robberies of vessels at anchor, Malaysian and Indonesian waters saw five serious hijackings involving cargo theft in the first three months of 2015. This marks the continuation of a trend observed between April and December 2014, when at least 17 hijackings targeted small oil and chemical tankers.

Tanker hijackings have put crew at increased risk of violence and have seen thousands of tonnes of fuel oil cargo stolen for the black market. On 9 March, a group of seven pirates armed with guns and knives hijacked a product tanker in Indonesian waters south of Pulau Repong, taking the crew hostage and injuring one crew member, damaging communications and navigational equipment, and transferring all fuel oil cargo to a secondary vessel. On 20 February, a similar group of seven pirates armed with guns and knives hijacked a product tanker southeast of Pulau Aur in Malaysian waters, transferring the tanker's entire fuel oil cargo to another vessel. The pirates held the crew hostage through the night, stealing their belongings the following morning before escaping. Malaysian waters saw two others cases in January and February, while a tanker carrying 7 mn litres of diesel was hijacked near North Sulawesi, Indonesia in late January, with its crew and captain cast out to sea in a life raft. The vessel was recovered three weeks later, having been ransacked at abeach in Mati City, Mindanao, located in the southern Philippines.

These attacks observed over the past 12 months have been concentrated around the Malacca and Singapore straits and the eastern coast of peninsular Malaysia. The Singapore Strait has the highest concentration of incidents, although hijackings have taken place across a wide geographic area. This includes a case near Thailand at the northern approach to the Malacca Strait, as well as further out at sea to the east of Singapore near the Riau Islands, located between peninsular Malaysia and Borneo.

The vast majority of hijackings have targeted tankers with low freeboards, underway along these heavily transited and congested areas that present the best opportunities for pirates to approach and board vessels. The pirate groups typically comprise 5-10 men armed with knives and guns, and crew members are typically taken hostage for the duration of the attack. Attacks can last from a few hours to overnight, generally depending on how long it takes the pirates to siphon the tanker's fuel cargo onto secondary vessels. Crew members have sustained minor injuries and beatings in several cases, and in December 2014 a crew member aboard a tanker off the coast of Pulau Aur, Malaysia, was shot and killed during a hijacking. Fatalities are still rare, but several incidents do demonstrate the willingness to use violence to extort demands.

**Maritime security incidents October 2014 - March 2015:** The attacks are likely linked to organised crime, particularly illicit fuel sales onshore in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. Recent investigations by regional authorities have connected cargo thefts with several Indochinese organised crime groups. There are also indicators that many attacks have been carried out using insider information regarding vessels' routes, ports of call

and cargo. This highlights the importance of protecting company information, ensuring due diligence of outsourced crew and personnel, and protecting information systems against breaches by criminal organisations.

The involvement of organised crime and the high demand for illicit fuel in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand will continue to motivate hijackings and cargo thefts. If sustained, the rate of hijackings witnessed in the first quarter of 2015 will see serious incidents increase during the year to the highest levels ever recorded in the region. Furthermore, regional naval authorities have not demonstrated enhanced capabilities in combating hijackings. Indonesian maritime authorities have warned repeatedly against the likelihood of small-scale robberies carried out by local criminals along the Malacca Strait, but have shown little sustained progress in penetrating and disassembling the criminal groups behind fuel cargo thefts. Failure to address both the criminaldrivers of tanker piracy and response capability - both on and offshore - will mean this trend is likely to continue in 2015.

**Russia Wants Arctic SAR Robots:** Russia's navy commander Admiral Victor Chirkov has called for the development of Arctic underwater search and rescue robots.

"We have formulated our requirements and set the task for manufacturers to create both manned and unmanned underwater vehicles, which can be used to provide search and rescue support with proper effectiveness in the harsh conditions of the Arctic seas," Newsweek reports Chirkov saying.

The robots would be used on naval vessels and icebreakers, and are seen as part of Russia's plan to strengthen its Arctic presence.



Russia is also developing drones as part of its military modernization strategy. It has several projects underway including the Orlan-10 and Chirok drones, and a remote controlled rocket strike system Platform-M was unveiled less than a year ago. This is already in use and is capable of launching grenades and firing a machine gun without soldiers having to make direct contact with the enemy.

Russia is also testing an anthropomorphic robot Avatar. Russian president Vladimir Putin has already observed the Avatar, and the machine is expected to be able to operate vehicles.

**Taiwan Reaffirms Naval Capacity Building:** Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou commissioned Taiwan's first home-grown stealth missile corvette and a new supply ship on Tuesday.

The vessels are part of a modernization program and a demonstration of the country's improved shipbuilding capabilities, said Ma.



The 60m, 500-ton twin-hulled Hsun-hai class corvette Tuo Jiang was built by local shipbuilder Lung Teh Shipbuilding. It is equipped with locally developed Hsiung Feng II and Hsiung Feng III anti-ship missiles, a 76 mm gun and Mark 46 torpedoes. It has a range of 2,000 nautical miles and a crew of 41.

The new 196m supply vessel Pan Shi was built by local shipbuilder CSBC Corporation. The vessel will support naval vessels and provide humanitarian aid. It has a range of 8,000 nautical miles and carries a crew of 165.

Local media reports that Ma restated his determination for a domestic submarine program at the commissioning ceremony. "The submarine is the most significant weapon for a country building its naval defense capabilities. The military absolutely needs to acquire [new] submarines," he said.

In addition to Tuo Jiang and Pan Shi, other domestically built military and coast guard vessels were docked at the naval base to showcase the nation's shipbuilding capabilities, reports Focus Taiwan. Pointing to an empty space in the harbor, Ma reportedly said: "That area is being saved for the nation's domestically made submarines in the future."

Tuo Jiang will be based in Keelung on Taiwan's northern coast, and Pan Shi will be based in the south in Zuoying.

## **Hurricane-Strength Winds Disrupt European Port, Sea Traffic:**

At least four people were killed on Tuesday when hurricane-force winds lashed northern Europe in one of the most severe storms in years, forcing flights to be cancelled and disrupting road, train and marine traffic.

The Dutch meteorological office issued a red warning for the northern and coastal provinces of the low-lying Netherlands, as gusts of up to 120 kph (75 mph) caused damage estimated at several million euros.

German weather service spokesman Peter Hartmann said winds had reached up to 160 kph (100 mph) on higher ground.

"This is one of the worst storms in recent years," he said, noting that such hurricane-force winds were highly unusual for this time of the year.

Two road workers were killed in the western region of Rhineland-Palatinate when a tree fell on their vehicle, while another man was crushed under a stone wall in front of his



house near Magdeburg in eastern Germany.

The fourth victim was in the eastern Dutch town of Ede, where a man was killed when the roof of a warehouse fell on him.

About 140 flights were cancelled at Frankfurt airport, where one runway was shut. Around 90 flights were cancelled at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport.

At Rotterdam, Europe's largest port, two container terminals were closed, with ships forced to queue out at sea. A spokesman said this was a routine precaution when winds rise above gale force seven. Bulk liquid terminals continued to operate.

Dutch authorities warned freight drivers not to travel with lightly loaded vehicles after overturned trucks blocked roads, while in the north some bridges had to be closed.

Near the port of Vlissingen on the Belgian border, authorities were able to refloat a 300-metre (1,000-foot) container ship that ran aground in the small hours.

In Germany, train services were suspended in the northern states of North Rhine Westphalia and Lower Saxony, and disrupted as far south as Bavaria.

In Britain, winds gusted up to 97 mph (156 kph) overnight, with a major bridge over the River Thames closed for several hours because of the bad weather, causing long traffic delays.

In Belgium, the wind uprooted trees and cut power lines to hundreds of homes. In some places, cars and buildings were damaged by flying debris and some rail and road links were briefly obstructed.

## **Japan, U.S. Look to Expand Naval**

**Missions:** Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's push to allow Tokyo to come to the aid of an ally under attack will pave the way for closer cooperation between U.S. and Japanese forces across Asia, a top U.S. commander said on Tuesday.

Expanded training and joint missions could extend from Japan through the disputed South China Sea - claimed in whole or part by China, Vietnam, the Philippines and other nations - into the Indian Ocean.

Neither the United States nor Japan has territorial claims in the South China Sea, but the Seventh Fleet operates in the area. A Japanese naval presence there could irritate Beijing.

Abe's government plans to submit bills to parliament in the coming months to ratify his cabinet's decision last year to allow Japan to exercise its right of collective self-defense. Abe's coalition enjoys a big majority in parliament.



"CSD makes it easier for the Seventh Fleet and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) to exercise and operate across the Indo Asia Pacific," Admiral Robert Thomas, commander of the force said aboard his command ship, the USS Blue Ridge, in Yokohama.

The Japanese "have the capacity and capability for operations in international waters and international airspace anywhere on the globe," he told a media briefing with Admiral Eiichi Funada, commander of the JMSDF.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the Japan-U.S. alliance "should not exceed its bilateral scope, nor should it harm the security of interests of countries in the region."

"We hope that relevant Japan-U.S. cooperation and the development of their relations can play a proactive and constructive role in regional peace, development and stability," she told a daily news briefing in Beijing.

A broader regional military role for Japan is being welcomed by Washington as it pushes its allies in Asia, including Australia, to do more as China takes an increasingly assertive stance in territorial disputes in the region.

Japan and the United States have said they will decide by the end of June on a new set of guidelines for their decades-old alliance that will give Japan a more prominent role.

The most powerful naval fleet in Asia, the U.S. Seventh Fleet, remains the main counterweight to China's growing maritime power in Asia. Centered on a carrier battle group that operates out of Japan, the U.S. Seventh Fleet includes some 80 vessels, 140 aircraft and 40,000 sailors, making it the most powerful naval force in the western Pacific.

Japan's navy consists of around 120 vessels, including more than 40 destroyers and a submarine force of around 20 boats.

### **Illegal Fishing Threatens Resurgence of Somali Piracy:**

A rise in illegal fishing off Somalia could spark a resurgence in piracy, United Nations and Somali fishing officials have warned, nearly three years after the pirates' last successful hijacking in the Indian Ocean.

The last outbreak of Somali piracy cost the world's shipping industry billions of dollars as pirates paralyzed shipping lanes, kidnapped hundreds of seafarers and seized vessels more than 1,000 miles from Somalia's coastline.

Since then, growing use of private security details and the presence of international warships have effectively neutered

the pirates. Yet one side effect of this decline has been a rise in illegal fishing, with trawler captains increasingly confident they can operate with impunity, Somali officials say.

Alan Cole, an official at the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (ODC), said piracy could return as criminal gangs and pirates use the rise in illegal fishing as a pretext to hijack other vessels.

"The international community has spent millions of dollars trying to counter piracy and help Somalia and make sure that (sea) trade is not interrupted, but because of the activity of a relatively small number of illegal fishing vessels, all that is put at risk," Cole said.

The last successful hijacking took place in May 2012 and some 26 sailors are still being held captive by Somali pirates seeking ransom, down from about 750 at the peak of the piracy crisis at the beginning of the decade, U.N. officials said.

Security measures taken by shipping companies and the presence of the 30-country Coalition Maritime Forces (CMF) naval group means any fresh piracy outburst is likely to be contained.

However, the merest hint of a return to the bad old days will once again push up insurance premiums, meaning the cost to the global shipping industry could be significant.

A 2014 report by the Oceans Beyond Piracy group put the total economic cost of Somali piracy -- by far the largest single threat to international shipping in recent years -- at \$3.2 billion in 2013, down from \$6 billion in 2012.

### **Captured Iranians**

The issue of illegal fishing has been rising up the political agenda in Somalia, where several hundred Mogadishu residents this month protested against the practice.

Two Iranian-owned fishing vessels, with 48 Iranian sailors on board, were seized and detained earlier in March by angry fishermen near Somalia's coastline, a regional official said. The sailors were handed over to the local government which is still deciding what to do with them.



There is no official data on illegal fishing, but Yaasin Ali Yuusuf, director general of the Ministry of Fisheries in Puntland, a semi-autonomous region, said many South Korean, Chinese and Iranian vessels have been fishing without licenses or with forged licenses in Somali waters.

South Korea dismissed the claim. What had been previously South Korean vessels have since been sold and the real ownership of the vessels now belongs to countries including Oman and Somalia, said an official at Seoul's ministry of fisheries.

The Chinese foreign ministry said China has always demanded that its citizens fish in accordance to law.

Yuusuf said locals are looking at ways to chase away foreign trawlers -- a move reminiscent of how Somali piracy started in the early 1990s, when successful attacks on fishing boats eventually led to lucrative assaults on oil tankers.

"It's a very serious issue and I'm very concerned ... that it might bring back piracy," said Yuusuf, who added that Somalia could not deal with the illegal fishing problem on its own.

Many Somalis are frustrated naval forces tasked with stopping piracy, as well as the smuggling of drugs and arms, have not detained illegal fishing vessels.

"If they have a mandate to protect the (shipping) lanes from the pirates, they have to protect the resources of these poor people against illegal fishing," said Abdiwahid Mohamed Hersi, chief executive of Global Sea Food International, a Somalia company exporting fish to Oman.

### **EU to Ban South Asian Beach Scrapping:**

European, Turkish and Chinese recyclers are set to benefit from strict new EU rules on breaking up old ships, but the



practice of dismantling them on beaches in South Asia - at great human and environmental cost - will still be hard to stop.

Of 1,026 ocean-going ships recycled in 2014, 641 were taken apart on beaches in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, according to figures from the NGO Shipbreaking Platform, which campaigns for an end to the hazardous practice.

Tankers, cruise liners, and other old vessels are rammed onto beaches and stripped down by hundreds of unskilled workers using simple tools such as blowtorches. Chemicals leak into the ocean when the tide comes in.

There is also a human cost: the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai estimates that some 470 workers have died in the past 20 years in accidents in Alang-Sosiya, the world's largest stretch of ship-breaking beaches, in Gujarat. Some 35,000 people, of whom are mostly migrant and unskilled workers, operate there.

The new rules aim to stop what Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for the Environment and Maritime Affairs, called "the shameful practice of European ships being dismantled on beaches."

They will require that EU-registered ships be recycled only at sustainable facilities, and a list of these is expected to be published next year. It is likely to include yards in China, Turkey, North America and the European Union, but not South Asia.

"The European list will split the market into a safe and substandard market," said Patrizia Heidegger of Shipbreaking Platform.

It will be the first large-scale implementation of the International Maritime Organization's 2009 Hong Kong convention on ship recycling, which until now has only been ratified by three countries -- Congo Republic, France, and Norway.

**Low Standards, High Profits:** The incentive to part with an old vessel at a South Asian facility is huge. Rules for disposing of asbestos, for example, are generally more lax, meaning the profits for breaking up a ship are higher.

Depending on raw-material prices, ship owners can make up to \$500 per ton of steel from an Indian yard, compared with \$300 in China and just \$150 in Europe.

To counter this, the European Commission is looking at ways to reward ship owners for recycling at approved facilities, although details are still to be decided.

Indian shipyard owners see the new rules as a ploy to fill empty yards in Europe. Fewer than 4 percent of all retired ocean-going ships passed through European facilities in 2014.

Haiderali G. Meghani, director of International Steel Corporation, a large ship recycling firm based in Alang, said concerns about poor safety and environmental standards in India were misplaced. "We are almost near to European standards," he said.

The European rules have one big loophole: owners can change a ship's flag or sell it on to a third party outside Europe, who can then scrap it at a non-approved facility. But ship owners are likely to face harsh criticism if they resort to such practices under the new regime.

European shipping groups such as Denmark's Maersk and Germany's Hapag-Lloyd have already adopted policies to recycle only at facilities that meet international environmental standards.

At the Galloo ship recycling yard in Ghent, Belgium -- the largest in Europe -- the volume of ships recycled has more than quadrupled over the past ten years to about 35,000 tons of steel per year.

It employs around only 30 staff, with most of the heavy work done by machines. European groups such as Maersk and French geoscience company CGG have sent ships to be recycled there.

"Large companies have started to come here," said Peter Wyntin, head of recycling. "They just can't afford the bad press any more of dismantling ships on some beach."

## Man Trapped in Capsized Tug for Hour:

A tug capsized at an oil refinery in Southampton, England, on Monday evening with one man trapped in the vessel for over an hour.

The tug, Asterix, attached to an oil refinery at Fawley, capsized and subsequently began to sink just off the refinery's pontoon.

One crew member managed to jump clear and swim to safety, leaving one man still unaccounted for.

There were strong winds and poor visibility at the time of the incident. RNLI lifeboats from Cowes, Lymington and Calshot undertook a coordinated search of the windswept waters, and one lifeboat crew banged on the hull of the Asterix, still visible at this stage above the water, but received no response.



A Fawley emergency employee who was watching the capsized vessel from the pontoon then just glimpsed an arm in a small pocket of air behind a window. Without hesitation the employee leapt into the water, smashed the window and extracted the trapped crew member.

Both were evacuated from the water just before the tug sank. Both the rescuer and rescued, plus the man who had swum clear earlier, received immediate emergency care for hypothermia from attending paramedics. All three men were then taken by ambulance to hospital.

The tug had been under tow to shallower water when rescuers realized the missing crew member was still inside.

Cowes lifeboat crew included Dr. Will King who helped provide medical care to two of the casualties. Joining the three lifeboats in the search was another Fawley tug, Ibex, together with Red Funnel's car ferry Red Eagle and catamaran Red Jet 4.

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) is investigating the accident.

## U.S. Raises Concerns Over China's Unprecedented Reclamations:

U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Harry Harris Jr. on Tuesday addressed the rising concerns surrounding China's unprecedented land reclamation in the South China Sea.

Harris, who spoke Tuesday at the War Memorial in Canberra as a guest of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, stated that the country is creating a "great wall of sand" in



reference to its ever-increasing reclamation in the Spratly Island Chain. China has currently built over 1.5 square miles of artificial landmass, and the pace of the construction is raising red flags regarding China's intentions.

The reclamation has been carried out via dredging vessels dumping sediment on top of live coral reefs in the region, which are then paved over with concrete to create islands. Beijing has already completed construction on some of the Spratly reefs—the Fiery Cross Reef, Cuarteron Reef, and Gaven Reefs—and has reportedly begun the reclamation process on several others.

Harris expressed that this "great wall of sand" has put into question whether China plans to confront or contribute to stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

China's muscle-flexing over territorial claims of much of the South China Sea has ignited trepidation in nations such as the Philippines and Japan, who also claim parts of the Sea. Earlier this month, Japan and Indonesia collaborated in a high-level bilateral "maritime forum" to strengthen cooperation in ensuring sea security, and Indonesian President Joko Widodo, among others, argued that China's nine-dash claim has no legal basis in international law. Both the Philippines and Vietnam have lodged a diplomatic protest with the country regarding its claims in the South China Sea, and last year Australia agreed to aid Japan in boosting military training and cooperation as a safety net against China's speedy reclamations.

China's artificial islands are ideal locations for military outposts and have been constructed with buildings, runways, and wharves. The country has been quiet about the purpose of its vast reclamation but has maintained that its activities are justified and reasonable.

Harris stated that 60 percent of the U.S. Navy will be based in the Pacific Fleet by 2020, and the U.S.'s immediate plan to position Zumwalt stealth destroyers in the Pacific was also discussed. Australia's Defense Minister outlined the country's strategy to focus on building up its naval fleet to more efficiently address South Sea conflicts.

The U.S. will maintain a presence at the forefront of the region to ensure stability and security, and to address any conflict that could potentially arise. Harris said that while they are hopeful China will contribute to stability rather than confront it, the U.S. will continue engaging China and encourage the country to take a responsible stance on the rules and regulations in the South China Sea.

**The Top 5 News Stories of the Month:** The month of March brought with it a variety of exciting news articles from MarEx-many of which went viral across social media. Whether it was the toxic spill in the Houston Ship Channel resulting from the collision of the Carla Maersk and the Conti Peridot, the history and revolution of women in the maritime industry, or the depth of Thailand's slavery problem and the collapse of entire marine ecosystems fueled by the international demand for cheap seafood, MarEx had you covered with the most hard-hitting news across the maritime industry.

However, some stories really stood out among our readers last month.

**Sea Shepherd Establishes Legal Practice:** Sea Shepherd Legal aims to save marine wildlife and habitats



by enforcing, strengthening, and developing protective laws, treaties, policies and practices worldwide.

**Fleecing Maritime Schools and Heritage Organizations:** Since 2005, the government has collected over \$75 million to support maritime programs, schools, and the vessel operations revolving fund, but where has this money gone?



**Tow Boat Sinks on Ohio River:** The U.S. Coast Guard halted navigation on the flood-swollen lower Ohio River near Golconda, Illinois after a tow boat sank near river mile marker 897.5.



**IMO has Ballast Water Eureka Moment:** An IMO documentary looks at how marine invasive species are



affecting our coasts and lives, and the measures taken by the global community to fight against these alien stowaways.

**Drug Bust on Splendour of the Seas:** Argentine



police discovered 15kg (33 pounds) of pure cocaine on Royal Caribbean Line's Splendour of the Seas.

**Shell Jumps Arctic Drilling Hurdle:** The U.S. Interior Department on Tuesday upheld a 2008 lease sale in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska, moving Royal Dutch Shell a step closer to returning to oil and gas exploration in the Arctic since it suffered mishaps in the region in 2012.

"The Arctic is an important component of the Administration's national energy strategy, and we remain



committed to taking a thoughtful and balanced approach to oil and gas leasing and exploration offshore Alaska," said Interior Secretary Sally Jewell.

Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) will next consider Shell's exploration plan and perform an environmental assessment on it, which could take at least 30 days.

Shell lost control of a massive oil rig called the Kulluk in 2012, which eventually ran aground. But in anticipation of returning to the region for the first time since then, Shell has already moved rigs to Alaska.

Many environmentalists oppose energy exploration in the offshore Arctic, saying that once production comes on line any oil spill would be extremely difficult to clean up in a remote area with rough and frigid seas.

Oil industry interests say the Arctic will be important to the U.S.'s energy security in coming decades when output from shale formations wanes.

**Coast Guard Rescues Nine from Tall Ship:**

U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue crews rescued nine crew members from the Canadian tall ship Liana's Ransom 58 miles east of Gloucester, Massachusetts on Monday. The crews involved were from Station Gloucester, Air Station Cape Cod and the Coast Guard Cutter Ocracoke.



Watchstanders received notification at 12:35 a.m. that the vessel's engines were disabled and its sails were wrapped around the mast.

As the weather deteriorated, and seas reached nearly 10 feet, Sector Boston launched two 47-foot motor lifeboat crews from Station Gloucester to tow the vessel back to Gloucester. Once on scene, the boat crews connected the tow, but the rough sea conditions caused the tow line to break.

The motor lifeboats crews directed the crew of Liana's Ransom to don immersion suits and to prepare to abandon ship about 30 miles east of Gloucester and a Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk Helicopter from Air Station Cape Cod was diverted to assist.



The nine passengers were transferred from Liana's Ransom to the Coast Guard motor lifeboats. One man suffered a head injury when leaping from Liana's Ransom and was

airlifted to Massachusetts General Hospital by the Jayhawk helicopter crew.

The Station Gloucester crews returned to the station with the eight remaining crewmembers. A locator beacon was left on Liana's Ransom for tracking and the Coast Guard Cutter Ocracoke is en-route to evaluate towing the vessel to port.

"It was fortunate for the crew of the vessel that the owner reached out to us," said Jay Woodhead, the command duty officer at Sector Boston's Command Center. He said with winds gusting to 30 knots, it was unsafe for them to stay aboard.

**World Waits for Iran Sanctions Deal:**

For nearly a week, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China have been trying to break an impasse in



talks with Iran over its nuclear research program. A deadline has been set for dawn on Wednesday.

Switzerland, and they are trying to reach an agreement that could see sanctions eased. The six powers want more than a 10-year suspension of Iran's most sensitive nuclear work. Their goal is to find a way to ensure that for at least the next 10 years Iran is at least one year away from being able to produce enough fissile material for an atomic weapon.

Sanctions have halved Iran's oil exports to just over one million barrels per day since 2012, and this has hammered its economy.

**Shipping rates could improve**

Shipping rates for crude would double if Iran is freed from sanctions and manages to increase exports by as much as the nation's oil ministry predicts, reports Morgan Stanley. And, according to Bloomberg, the industry's biggest tankers could earn as much as \$100,000 a day should Iran boost exports by one million barrels a day.

Iran is storing at least 30 million barrels of oil on a fleet of supertankers, most belonging to its national carrier NITC. An estimated 15 NITC's VLCCs, each capable of carrying two million barrels of oil, have been deployed off the Iranian coast as floating storage.

**Oil prices dropping**

Higher Iranian oil exports are likely to put more pressure on weak global oil prices.

Brent crude prices dropped on Tuesday as negotiations continued, reports Petro Global News. Brent crude fell to

\$55.60 per barrel on Monday, a 1.4 percent drop from Friday, while U.S. crude slid almost one percent to \$48.43 per barrel. Investors are concerned that a nuclear deal could flood already swollen crude inventories with even more oil, said the news agency.

The Swiss talks come just as Saudi Arabia has announced that it will not curb production to stabilize global prices, instead calling on non-OPEC producers to implement cuts before OPEC members will consider it.

OPEC production accounts for around 30 percent of the global market. In the past, Saudi Arabia often played the role of the swing producer, temporarily cutting its production to offset supply growth elsewhere or weaker global demand, or increasing its output level to make up for a supply shortfall.

### **OPEC earnings could bounce back**

For 2014, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates that, excluding Iran, OPEC members earned about \$730 billion in net oil export revenues (unadjusted for inflation). This represents an 11 percent decline from the \$824 billion earned in 2013, largely because of the decline in average annual crude oil prices, and to a lesser extent from decreases in the amount of OPEC net oil exports. This was the lowest earnings for the group since 2010.

These net export earnings do not include Iran's revenues because of the difficulties associated with estimating Iran's earnings, including the country's inability to receive payments and possible price discounts Iran offers its existing customers.

Saudi Arabia earned the largest share of these earnings, \$246 billion in 2014, representing approximately one-third of total OPEC oil revenues.

For 2015, EIA projects that OPEC net oil export revenues (excluding Iran) could fall further to about \$380 billion in 2015 (unadjusted for inflation) as a result of the much lower annual crude oil prices expected in 2015. EIA expects that OPEC's crude oil production and exports in 2015 will be unchanged from 2014 levels, following OPEC's decision on November 27 to not change its production targets from previous levels.

On a per capita basis, OPEC (excluding Iran) net oil export earnings are expected to decline by half from about \$2,186 in 2014 to \$1,114 in 2015. For 2016, OPEC revenues are projected to rebound to \$515 billion with the expected rebound in crude oil prices.

**Costa Concordia Linked to Drug Smuggling:** Italian police investigating the Costa Concordia tragedy have reported phone calls and tape recordings that indicate an organized crime syndicate hid cocaine on board during the vessel's last voyage.

According to The Independent, the recordings link a Calabrian organized crime group to alleged drug trafficking. "The same ship that made us a laughing stock around the world, took the piss out of us, too," says someone from the organized crime group on the recordings.



According to The Times, 20 people have been arrested following the drug investigation.

The drugs have not been found, but it is believed that a crew member would have been involved.

Captain Francesco Schettino was found guilty of manslaughter for the accident and sentenced to 16 years in prison, but there is no indication that he had anything to do with the drug smuggling operation.

Some reports indicate that over 43kg of cocaine has been seized from cruise ship crew members this year.

More than 4,000 people were on board the Costa Concordia when it capsized in January 2012, and 32 people lost their lives.

### **The United States Merchant Marine Academy Hosts 7th Annual Women on the Water Conference:**

Last week, The United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) in conjunction with the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) hosted the 7th Annual Women on the Water (WOW) Conference. The annual conference, which is hosted by a different U.S. maritime



academy each year, brought together over 125 maritime professional mariners and maritime academy cadets. The three day conference began with opening remarks from Maritime Administrator Paul N. Jaenichen, Sr. He welcomed the audience of mostly women by thanking the attendees. He said, "Thank you for your interest in a strong and diverse maritime community, and thank you for taking the right steps to promote your personal growth and career development."

Mr. Jaenichen went on to explain; "Today, our nation relies on maritime transportation more than ever before - oceangoing vessels carry nearly 70 percent of U.S. Foreign Trade, barge tows provide crucial links in our domestic energy supply chain, and U.S.-Flag commercial vessels crews

by American Merchant Mariners provide a logistic supply line to allow for global protection of our Armed Forces. Our industry is a robust national asset- and it is critical that we remain so in the future. That means attracting the very best people to pursue maritime careers. Yes, when you look around the industry men are clearly in the majority - but talent is talent - regardless of gender. Our industry needs to fully leverage the diversity of thought, character, courage and commitment that women have to offer. MARAD understands that a more diverse and inclusive workforce will give rise to a stronger and more prosperous maritime industry."

The conference, which was held in Ackerman Auditorium, gave attendees and cadets the opportunity to learn about some of the many exciting careers that are available to them at graduation and beyond. They learned valuable skills such as, "Decoding the Gender Gaps" from Ms. Raleigh Mayer and "Media Relations" from Dr. Joseph V. Trahan, III. They also heard about current issues affecting the maritime industry, from professional mariners and military officers. Panelists discussed topics ranging from "Afloat Employment" and "Mentoring", to "Cyber Security" and "Work-Life Balance".

The Keynote speaker was Rear Admiral Mary Landry, United States Coast Guard (USCG) Retired. Ms. Landry, who is the current the Director of Incident Management and Preparedness at Coast Guard Headquarters, spoke about her experiences serving active duty with the USCG before joining the Coast Guard's Senior Executive Service. She discussed how her experience as Federal on Scene Coordinator in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and during the response to the historic 2011 Mississippi River Valley floods led her to her current role, in which she is responsible for establishing, developing, and implementing all hazards incident management goals, strategies, policies, and doctrine to meet Coast Guard responsibilities in incident preparedness and response.

During her speech she encouraged the cadets to "respect your individuality and the choices you make." Looking at the assembly of students and professionals, she went on to say, "I have the greatest respect for the career you have chosen. You have great role models." She reminded the cadets, "When you are 5 or 10 years out, don't forget to mentor others".

After Ms. Landry's inspirational speech, Rear Admiral Sue L. Dunlap, Deputy Superintendent presented her with a framed replica of the USMMA Battle Standard.

USMMA is a federal service academy that educates and graduates licensed merchant mariners and leaders of exemplary character who serve America's marine transportation and defense needs in peace and war. With 95 percent of the world's products transported over water, these leaders are vital to the effective operation of our merchant fleet for both commercial and military transport. Academy graduates abide by the motto "Acta Non Verba" - deeds not words. USMMA is administered by the U. S. Maritime Administration under the auspices of the U. S. Department of Transportation.

**Crowley: at home and abroad:** Privately held Crowley Maritime's global ship management team has been on a roll of late, with several notable awards in the ship management arena. A significant award from the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command brought a fleet of seven T-AGOS/T-AGM vessels into the Crowley fold in December. Todd Busch, Crowley senior vice president said of the award, "The very nature of the T-AGOS/T-AGM missions demand sophisticated top management solutions and talented crews that Crowley offers." The award creates jobopportunities for existing crew members with experience on these types of vessels, as well as shore side positions, such as engineers and contracting professionals.

Closely following that award was the February 2015 news that Crowley Accord Management Pvt. Ltd., the international ship management venture managed globally by Crowley Maritime Corp.'s ship management group, was awarded full technical management contracts for five new tankers. These tankers will be joined by three more, bringing Crowley's international ship management fleet to more than 70. Best



known locally as one of the nation's largest Jones Act operators and employers, Crowley's reach extends well beyond the Americas.

"Crowley Accord draws on its pool of experienced resources, which are at its disposal both ashore and afloat," said Sanjay Shesh, managing director, Crowley Accord. "We utilize proven systems based on internationally recognized quality management principles and have the flexibility to meet all owners' needs for periodic technical and accounting reports - all things our new customers indicated were of importance to them."

The Crowley Accord acquisition, which took place in April 2014, immediately increased the size and scope of Crowley's technical ship management group and supported the company's expansion into the international ship management market with a foreign crewing presence. The acquisition also made Crowley a rare U.S. company - one that provides third-party international crewing and technical ship management. Today, Crowley owns 86 vessels and manages 75 vessels.

According to Mike Golonka, vice president, ship management for Crowley, at the top of the list for qualities that a ship owner should look for when shopping for a ship management company is the search for another ship owner. He adds, "The best ship management companies are usually

those who also own and manage their own fleets." Also on that list are transparent and open communications with principals and, of course, a safety-oriented manager who will not only help to keep employees and property safe, but will also help to reduce claims and costs.

According to Golonka, the decision to outsource is typically financially driven. In most cases, outsourcing ship management services means that the owner can conduct business at a fraction of the cost, primarily due to the reduction in in-house staff and resources. He explains, "Another factor that helps to drive down the cost is the ship manager's economies of scale, gained from the sheer volume of ships managed. As such, services and equipment are often acquired at cheaper bulk rates - savings that a transparent ship management company will pass on to the customer."

Touting Crowley's 120 years of varied experience, Golonka offers that Crowley is able to bring expertise to many different areas of operations and sectors - a benefit few others can offer. To ensure efficiency with all of this in-house expertise, Crowley dedicates commercial managers and a specialized staff to each customer, therefore offering tailored ship management services across nearly any sector.

In the case of Crowley, however, it is the attention given to the quality of its seafarers that may be their strongest suit. Although most of the hires in the Crowley managed fleet are direct referrals from unions, when they do recruit externally, they look for people who are a good fit culturally and want to find a place they can grow their career. Golonka adds, "One of the advantages of our diverse ship management operations is that we can hire individuals who want to work in a variety of fleets and gain a breadth of knowledge that will help them in their advancement. Alternatively, for the individuals who do prefer to 'homestead' with a specific fleet, and we can also offer this opportunity and promote from within."

At Crowley, however, the offer of a job doesn't constitute the final hurdle to walking up the gangway. "Our most critical and innovative vetting element is our Navigation Assessment Program, which requires all deck officers to complete a simulator assessment before they stand a navigation watch," says Golonka, adding "Other post-offer vettings include physicals, drug and alcohol testing, and DOT-required previous employer checks."

The final piece of the process, says Golonka, involves establishing clearly understood, high-quality operating procedures leave little room for interpretation and higher levels of consistency from ship to ship. As a bonus, high-quality ship management attracts and can help keep the most talented mariners, which often translates into even lower claim costs and proper maintenance on the vessel.

**Thome Group:** Both Thome and Crowley manage ships and are considered quality operators in their chosen sectors. Where they diverge in terms of business models is that Thome prefers to concentrate strictly on providing third party service. Thome's Ashish Malik, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Tanker Division, explained, "Ship management is a core competence that we have focused on and would like to continuously improve on, further strengthening our systems and procedures in order that these are also

adaptable to accommodate the ever changing requirements of the industry." He adds, "Owning vessels would involve a lot of focus on the commercial aspects of running the owned vessels and may lead to dilution of the focus on the continuous improvement of ship management capabilities."

Like Crowley, Thome values integrity and transparency with its principals, but also insists that profitability varies inversely with the cost of operations. Malik told MarPro in February, "In a competitive market, the normal OPEX, as budgeted, may not vary much between one established ship manager and the other. However, the quality of ship management and crew competence influences the safety of operations, and consequently plays the essential role in prevention of incidents. That eventually makes a difference in the costs of operating the vessel."

There are many reasons to outsource ship management. The Thome model calls for a good partnership between shipowners and the ship manager, which in turn can allow for costs to be reduced and operations improved, capitalizing on the expertise, experience and economies of scale (offering lower fixed cost / ship) that a big ship management company is able to offer. Thome's Malik adds, "This allows the shipowner to focus more on the commercial aspects."

Beyond all that, the shipowner gets to share the experience and learning from other vessels being managed by the ship manager, and it here that the quality of the crewing process is important. In fact, Thome manages more than one type of vessel. Malik says that different types of vessels involve various common requirements, while there are also various aspects for which the requirements are typical to the particular kind of vessel. And, he adds, "A ship management company that realizes this and is able to differentiate between the common and typical different requirements and able to address these accordingly, can be successful in different sectors at the same time; while also improving on efficiency by capitalizing on resource and knowledge sharing between different sectors, wherever this is applicable."

And, because Thome Ship Management operates out of offices all around the globe, it gives them global reach but also cultural diversity. To that point, Malik insists, "Cultural diversity, is, in fact, our strength. We do not focus on a passport / nationality but rather our focus is on competence and attitude. With the world getting more and more connected with each passing day, it is essential for a business, particularly like ship management which involves operations all around the world, to have a 360 degrees approach in all respects. The cultural diversity enables us to understand the requirements and solutions from all angles and in general also prepares the employees better for dealing with different cultural groups outside the company."

To that end, Thome's Human Element drive is well recognized in industry and focuses on Quality and Safety; which Malik says go hand in hand. For example, Thome Group recently announced that it had become self-sufficient in recruiting junior officers, thanks to its in-house cadet training program.

Launched in 2005 under Thome's "Human Element" initiative, the Thome Global Cadet Program has already trained in excess of 1,350 cadets from at least 12 countries in Asia, Europe and the Far East. Currently there are 650

cadets at various stages of training on the program with another 200 due to join soon as deck, engine, electrical or catering cadets. The success of this scheme has enabled Thome Group to fill all of its 2014 junior officer vacancies from within its own pool of trained seafarers.

Michael Elwert, Director of Group HR, HSSEQ & Crewing, said "We place a great deal of importance on our cadet program and are delighted that it is proving so successful, adding, "He added: "We at Thome Group recognize the importance of providing quality training to our seafarers and the difference it makes towards them and ultimately the performance of the vessels they operate. We believe that training is the key to operating safe and efficient ships on greener seas. The level of training we provide is specialized and is over and above the standard recommended by STCW."



As Thome Group continues with the expansion of its fleet, the requirement for suitably trained officers to serve onboard its tankers, bulkers, gas carriers and offshore has increased exponentially. The cadet program has a robust selection process to ensure that Thome recruits well rounded candidates who benefit from quality coaching. The multi-national and multi-cultural cadets match up well the diversity with Thome Group.

Notable in the long line Thome Global Cadet Program graduates is Chief Engineer Jonathan Duenas who graduated from the very first program in 2005 and has since become Thome Group's youngest Chief Engineer. Duenas reported, "Being able to be part of the Thome Cadet Program has not only given me an amazing opportunity, it has also given me a career that I'm passionate about. It shaped me to be a better decision maker and critical thinker."

**Industry Calls, Bibby Responds:** UK-based Bibby Ship Management is seeing a near 20% increase in inquiries for its services from the offshore sector as ship owners and support vessel operators look to reduce costs and recruit the best crews for their vessels. But, those two seemingly dissimilar goals can be hard to achieve in the same fleet. Not so, says Bibby. Predictably, the trend towards lower costs is being fueled by oil majors as the slump in oil prices weighs on their bottom line.

Can managers improve service and crew quality while reducing costs? Andrew Rodden, Bibby Ship Management's UK Managing Director says that they can, explaining, "There

is a calculable commercial advantage to be made and there is a partnership between owner and manager which can benefit and improve the overall quality of the service delivered to the oil company," he said.

In the midst of the price downturn, support vessel owners are still operating in high cost areas. Many are now looking to see if they can introduce cost savings without jeopardizing the level of service. Rodden adds, "They are looking at the OpEx of their vessels to see if they can save money from the crew employment perspective. We had one enquiry from an owner who traditionally employed high cost officers and who is now open to alternatives to man his ships while retaining their focus on quality."

The drive to improve cost efficiencies is not just limited to the North Sea offshore sector, other high cost operators are being pressured to cut costs while maintaining operating efficiency. That's easier said than done. But Rodden says that Bibby has the answer.

According to Bibby, the key benefit is the operational economies of scale that managers can offer, especially where there are owners with small numbers of vessels within a geographical region. They will have a shortage of options in terms of what economies of scale they can draw on to help them drive costs down, they cannot really cut their crewing costs nor can they drastically trim their travel expenditure or vessel procurement.

"Bibby Ship Management's strength lies in its door to door, end-to-end service which will add value to the supply chain. Any ship owner can go to any company in the Philippines to get a Filipino crew, but the reality is being able to offer the security of doing all of that in-house. We manage and control that process, and we can add value at each step of the way," Rodden said.

Rodden also says that ship managers have the ability to leverage whatever cost-efficiencies and performance improvements they are building into their shipping and marine operations onto the offshore business. Rodden adds, "An obvious area here, for Bibby Ship Management, is Mumbai in India where it has set up a strong crew recruitment, training and management operation."

**Different Ship Managers: Same Human Resources Philosophy:** The decision to outsource ship management to a third party is typically a financially driven solution. And yet, a sub-standard manager can depreciate the assets, adding to the costs of outsourcing, and negating any advantage there. Often, the owner's reputation relies on the manager's performance, which eventually boils down to who is manning those vessels, where they came from, how they were recruited and trained. But, crew quality and financial savings need not be mutually exclusive concepts. This much, the world's best ship managers can agree upon.

Crowley, Thome and Bibby might operate in different sectors, global regions and employ different strategies when it comes to best practices when it comes to managing their far flung fleets. The one thing that they can agree on is the need for quality mariners, a structured recruiting process and continual vetting of these personnel. Without addressing the human element first, the rest is certain to fail.

## **“MARINE WAVES”**

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“Maritime Group” knows as to what we are, not forgetting that we are here to share our valued flow of thoughts, inter-changed with quality of expression exchanged, is to arrive at a QUALITY consensus, since “MARINE NEEDS A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH - Do something instead of killing time or else, time will be killing you.”

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