

MAKING WAVES

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Saudi Arabia mulls new port for food Imports

Saudi Arabia is considering building a new port in the Red Sea city of Jeddah to handle rising imports such as wheat and barley under a food security plan. Food security has topped the policy agenda in the Gulf region following rampant inflation in 2008 that underscored the peninsula's dependence on imports and forced countries to invest abroad to ensure supplies of staples like rice and wheat.

Top OPEC oil exporter, Saudi Arabia, has emerged as a global buyer of wheat and is also trying with the help of private Saudi investors to secure farmland in Africa and elsewhere abroad to import more food. "The new port is still under study and we are looking at various locations for a port to support Jeddah's Islamic port in food security imports," Khalid Bubshait, head of the Saudi Ports Authority, told Reuters in an interview. Jeddah Islamic Port (JIC) is the largest in the kingdom with a capacity of 3.2 million TEUs (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units), representing 73 per cent of the country's container traffic. The port is expected to nearly double its capacity to 6 million TEUs by 2011 as it is undergoing expansion of its three terminals.



JIC has faced some congestion in 2008 and 2009, resulting in hefty charges for many delayed ships as well as the diversion of some shipping lines to other ports. "This new port will deal with non-container imports like wheat and barley imports," Bubshait said, declining to give a cost estimate for the port. "The idea of this port is still under study and no decision has been taken yet. We haven't decided on the size or number of docks yet," he added. Since Saudi Arabia abandoned its wheat cultivation programme two years ago, due to dwindling water resources in the desert kingdom, it became a major buyer of wheat from global markets.

Source(s): **Reuters**, 3 Mar 2010

<http://www.tradearabia.com/news/newsdetails.asp?Sn=FOOD&artid=175820>

China gets Sea of Japan foothold in North Korea

North Korea has agreed to lease a port on its north eastern coast to China for 10 years, giving Beijing a directly controlled foothold on the Sea of Japan for the first time in more than a century. Li Longxi, a National People's Congress deputy and head of the Yanbian Korean Minority Autonomous Prefecture, told China News Service that the deal, for exclusive use of a port in Rajin in the "special city" of Rason, would boost the regional economy and give landlocked Jilin valuable access to trade routes. China has worked to acquire a foothold in Rajin for several years, after North Korea designated Rason a free-trade zone. A Chinese company secured the right to use Rajin's No 1 port two years ago and it has since been used to transport coal to southeastern China and Japan.

However, the new deal will give China much more freedom, because it will be able to choose what facilities to build at Rajin's No 1 port and how to use them. "With the lease, China can develop the port and build infrastructure there as it desires," said Liu Ming, director of Korean Peninsula studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Science. He said Chinese authorities planned to use the port not only for shipping goods and resources but also for tourism. "This port could be used to dock cruise boats. Chinese tourists with a special permit can board cruises to countries like Russia, Japan and South Korea from the Rajin port," Liu said. China lost port access to the Sea of Japan, which Koreans call the East Sea, in the 19th century, and the resource-rich and strategically important northeastern provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang became landlocked.

The lease of the port in Rajin is further indication of Beijing's desire to develop the region into an important



trade gateway connecting the northeast Asian economies of Russia, Japan, North Korea and South Korea.

In August 2009, the State Council approved a proposal to turn Jilin's Tumen River area into an economic development zone. It includes the provincial capital Changchun, the city of Jilin and Yanbian. It said the new economic zone was significant for China's long-term strategy, and accelerating its development was a big step in reviving the country's backward northeast. Li said leasing the port was part of the overall strategy to develop the Tumen River area and tighten China's connections with Mongolia, Russia, North Korea and South Korea. At present, most of the goods exported to South Korea and Japan from the northeast have to be shipped through the port city of Dalian in Liaoning. Liu Ming said using the Rajin port would result in significant cost and time savings.

Source(s): Mandy Zuo and Kristine Kwok, Guanyu.com, Mar 09, 2010.
<http://guanyu9.blogspot.com/2010/03/china-gets-sea-of-japan-foothold-in.html>

UN to help expand Bossasso Port (Somalia)

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) has signed an agreement with Somali's Puntland state to help expand the capacity of the port of Bossasso in Puntland on the Horn of Africa. Bossasso serves the Somali peninsular but lacks the ability to handle large ships, thus hindering the ability of the WFP when sending in food and other aid to the region. "One of the items in the agreement we signed with WFP include the expansion of Bossasso port so that big vessels can dock without any problem," said Puntland Information Minister Abdihakin Ahmed Guled after the signing. He announced that WFP has also been given the right to establish warehouses in Bossasso to further assist with the distribution of aid parcels.

Source(s): Mar 15, 2010
<http://www.dredgingtoday.com/2010/03/15/united-nations-to-help-expand-bossasso-port-somalia/>

Shipping Minister predicts sharp rise In ports' capacity by 2012

While addressing the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) Logistics Outsourcing Summit recently, India's Union shipping minister G K Vasani said that the annual aggregate capacity of ports in India will see a sharp rise by 2012. According to the minister, the annual capacity of the major ports will increase by 74% to touch 1 billion tonnes (bt) in the next 2 years. It is to be noted that in 2008-09, the total capacity of major ports stood at 575 million tonnes (mt). In this context, S Nageshwar Rao, managing director of Raghavendra Shipping Services, a mid-sized shipping firm in Vishakhapatnam, says, "After being hit by the global economic recession, port activities in the country are now picking up. Considering the surge in volume of cargo traffic at the country's major ports, there have been several port development projects undertaken by the Government of India (GoI). Construction of several new terminals at the major ports of the country will enhance their cargo handling capacity, which will consequently boost the overall capacity of ports."

Mr Vasani also said that the cargo handling capacity of the country's 200 non-major ports would touch 580 mt by the end of 2012, which would consequently increase the combined annual capacity of major and non-major ports by the completion of the Eleventh Five Year Plan in 2012 to 1.5 bt.

Source(s): Mar 21, 2010
<http://www.shippingbiz360.com/article/5/201003212010032113541466146cfd9e4/Shipping-minister-predicts-sharp-rise-in-ports%E2%80%99-capacity-by-2012.html>

India surprises with big new coal ports

The speed with which large, private, fully-mechanised ports are springing up in India is making coal producers and traders think again. Suppliers had until recently doubted India could import the coal it will need because most of its ports were small and shallow, and government port expansions were running late.

The internal perception of India's coal ports has been of a collection of mostly small, old, terminals which cannot take standard coal 150,000 tonne capsized vessels but are mostly limited to

50,000-75,000 tonne panamax or handysize. But the slew of private ports under construction or expansion and their sheer size has taken the international coal market by surprise. "We're going to have to revise our projections for Indian coal imports and look at the impact of the ports being built," said John Kearsy, head of research at ship brokers Simon Spence & Young. India will need more imported coal to make up for its domestic shortfall for the next 20 years. In 2010-2011 India will import 81 million tonnes. India is fully geared up to handle its coal import requirements by 2012, said a spokesman for the Adani Group, India's largest coal importers.

Krishnapatnam Port in Andhra Pradesh is one of the new state-of-the-art cape ports and will be able to take in more coal than South Africa's total 2009 exports by end-2011. Gangavaram, also on the east coast, is already taking capes and will soon be able to import 35 million tonnes coal. "The long-held dream of capsize discharging at India has now become a reality and volumes will continue to increase," said Stuart Frost of ship brokers Lorentzen & Stemoco.

Source(s): Mar 25, 2010

<http://www.maritime-connector.com/NewsDetails/7336/lang/English/India-surprises-with-big-new-coal-ports.wshtml>

India's Kakinada seaports to Invest Rs 800 Cr

Kakinada Seaports Limited (KSPL) has lined up Rs 800 crore to increase its handling capacity to 20 million tonnes. The port, which currently has four berths, has taken up various expansion works to augment the handling capacity. "While three berths will be ready in two years, we are planning to construct six more over the next 3-4 years. This apart, to accommodate larger vessels we are deepening and widening the entrance channel. For all these, we will need Rs 800 crore," KV Rao, chairman and managing director, KSPL. Of the total investment, promoters would pump in Rs 200 crore and the remaining would come from financial institutions. The port has already spent Rs 425 crore for creating the four berths and additional infrastructure facilities. KSPL saw a growth of 33.5 per cent in cargo handling in 2009-10, compared with the preceding year. "In 2008-09, we handled 7.8 million tonnes, which increased to 10.42 million tonnes this fiscal. During 2010-2011, we expect to handle 13 million tonnes of cargo," he said. The port mainly handles iron ore, coal, phosphoric acid, cement clinker, fertilizer and granite stones. In 2010-2011, it expects to handle sugar in large quantities, said Rao. KSPL registered revenues of Rs 180 crore in 2009-2010 and is targeting to achieve Rs 230 crore in the next financial year. Rao said Singapore-based Sembawang Shipyard and KSPL were jointly developing a shipyard in Kakinada in which the latter had acquired 26 per cent stake.

Source(s): April 1, 2010

<http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/kakinada-seaports-to-invest-rs-800-cr/390319/>

Another link in Chinese chain

A new Chinese canal project should strengthen Wuhan's role as a shipping hub in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, according to David Lammie of Yangtze Business Services. The new project is a 67km-long canal from the mid section of the Yangtze River to a tributary that connects with the central route of the country's major south-north water diversion project: at present there are three of these diversion projects planned for the country. Connecting the Yangtze's Jingjiang section to the Hanjiang River, the canal's primary function is to divert water from the south to dry northern cities such as Beijing and Tianjin. However, its secondary function will be to improve shipping, and ports such as Wuhan will benefit from the new route. Mr Lammie explained that China's major waterways tend to run east to west, but this project, like the Grand Canal itself, will provide a north to south connection. Once completed, the canal should have a depth of between 5m and 6m, allowing 1,000-ton ships to pass through and facilitating the transportation of coal from the north to the south, said Xu Shaojun, head of the Hubei Provincial Investigation and Design Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower. Costing more than \$870m (Rmb6bn) to construct, the diversion project is expected to be completed in 2014.

Source(s): Port Strategy, April 21, 2010

<http://www.portstrategy.com/news101/asia/water-project-will-be-another-link-in-the-chinese-chain>

Surat poised to revive shipbuilding

ABG shipyard's hi-tech Maritime Institute at Ichhapore is set to be ready by the end of 2010. Students who aspire to build a career in shipbuilding will now have state-of-the-art technological facilities to do the same. Gujarat, and particularly Surat, has always excelled in shipbuilding, according to ancient texts. However, post colonialism, the shipbuilding industry began to die a slow death and ultimately many ships came in to rest in peace at Alang, which is one of the world's biggest graveyards for ships. Providing 30,000 and more jobs, in the lucrative business of ship breaking, Alang is a rare location where ships are beached right at the shore due to its gentle seaward slope. Most other shores around the world need to lighten ships on the sea bed and then transport them. With the abolition of industrial licensing in 1990, shipbuilding saw a boom. An inefficient public sector monopoly has now turned into a booming licensed private sector industry. New life has been breathed into various ports across Gujarat, from Kutch to Hazira. With support from the government and SEZ proposals, shipbuilding seems to be going full speed ahead, once more. With cheap and best steel available, skilled cost effective labor, world class naval engineers, architects and management leaders, Gujarat seems to be wading towards just that and Surat, just as it did in the past, seems poised to produce the best naval architects in the country.

Source(s): Ashleshaa Khurana, TNN, Apr 11, 2010

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/surat/Surat-poised-to-revive-shipbuilding-/articleshow/5785437.cms>

China, Singapore joins hands in shipbuilding Industry

The China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC) and Singapore's Pacific International Lines (PIL) opened a joint venture - CSIC Pacific. Speaking at the opening of the company, Lim Hwee Hua, Singapore's Minister in Prime Minister Office and Second Minister for Finance and Transport, said that this CSIC-PIL's partnership is reflective of the close links between China and Singapore. She said that the partnership is forged against a backdrop of an extremely difficult period for the shipping industry, adding that setting up of the company to provide alternative ship financing options for distressed shipping assets during this period "would surely be most welcomed by industry players." CSIC Pacific will also designate Singapore as the place of arbitration for its contracts. Lim said that this is the strongest endorsement of the transparency and efficiency of Singapore's legal regime.

Source(s): *Xinhua*, April 13, 2010

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90778/90861/6949619.html>

India's first anti-submarine warfare corvette launched

Launching the country's first Anti Submarine Warfare Corvette (ASWC) for the Indian Navy at the Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) Limited, M.M. Pallam Raju, Union Minister of State for Defense, said three more such P-28 Corvettes will be launched by the GRSE by 2015. Pointing to the completion of the Rs. 560 crore modernization program of the GRSE scheduled for 2011, Mr. Raju said the dock's building capacity will be boosted manifold as it could then manufacture frigates. "The current value of the book of orders for the GRSE is Rs. 8,000 crore, but once the orders for the P-17 frigates starts coming in within two years, the book of orders will increase to Rs. 24,000 crore once there is greater infrastructure, bigger ships will be built here," he said. Named Kamorta, after an island in the Andaman Sea, the ASWC is indigenously built and is designated as a frontline warship with anti-submarine warfare capabilities and a very low signature of radiated underwater noise.

The ASWC Kamorta will be docked at the Eastern Naval Command. Hoping that large private houses will come forward to invest in the shipbuilding sector along with the Ministry of Defense on a

public-private partnership mode, Mr. Raju said around 6,000 small and medium private companies have already participated in giving “vertical expertise” to the defense public sector.

Source(s): Raktima Bose, April, 20 2010

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/20/stories/2010042062662000.htm>

Korea regains no.1 ranking in global shipbuilding

In 2009 the world's number one shipbuilder, Hyundai Heavy Industries, failed to receive any new orders and this applies to most of Korea's large shipbuilding companies as well. Back in 2007, new orders for domestic shipbuilders added up to 32 million tons. But, the amount was nearly cut in half in 2008 and plunged to one-tenth of the 2007 volume last year after the global financial crisis hit the industry hard. As a result, Korea lost the top place in the global shipbuilding industry to China. However, things began to change starting earlier in 2010. Hyundai Heavy Industries' outstanding performance in the offshore plant market has increased new orders by almost 200 percent to 1.5 million tons in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period in 2009. And the nation beat its biggest rivals, China and Japan, to regain the top spot. However, the amount of ship orders is still low compared to the industry's boom years between 2003 and 2008. Industry experts and the government expect new ship orders to gradually grow as the shipping industry recovers. Especially, the upward trend of the freight index for different types of ships and increase in orders for domestic shipbuilders in offshore plant markets are expected to improve performances starting from the second quarter.

Source(s): April 26, 2010

http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News_View.asp?code=Ne2&nseq=102446



A new shake-up for shipping from Asia: the warming Arctic ocean

The challenges facing the ports of Seattle and Tacoma have been listed as 1) The trade collapse from the Great Recession; 2) The looming opening of wider Panama and Suez canals, allowing much Asian cargo to bypass the West Coast; 3) Prince Rupert, a day's sailing distance closer to Asia, and 4) Washington's slowness to improve transportation infrastructure. Now a fourth one is also looming large, at least for the middle distance: a melting Arctic Ocean thanks to climate change. A report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute discusses how China is quietly preparing for the strategic and trade implications of the ocean being navigable during the summer months. It would speed transit times, especially between Asia and Europe. Port of Seattle spokeswoman Charla Skaggs said, "we recognize that the world and trade routes are changing, and that cargo to the U.S. West Coast is not always going to be a given in the future. We take this potential for cargo shift very seriously and are working to keep Seattle a competitive and attractive port in which to do business." She said the Arctic route is probably more of a concern for East Coast cargo now travelling through Suez or Panama.

Source(s): Jon Talton, The Seattle Times, Mar 5, 2010.

http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/soundeconomywithjontalton/2011296329_a_new_shake-up_for_shipping_fr.html



China to help establish deep-sea port in Bangladesh

China has agreed to implement Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's request to build much-awaited deep-sea port at Sonadia of southeastern Cox's Bazar district in November-December this year, a senior official said on April 1.

The Shipping Ministry has taken the initiative to present the proposal on complete design and work area of the deep-sea port project in the next meeting of the cabinet. Shipping Secretary Abdul Mannan Hawlader told newsmen in Dhaka, the deep-sea port project will include construction of infrastructures for the port and jetty, beck water, additional channels, export-import zones, system for communications with other ports, road, railway, power supply, gas connection, transit area, township and helipad. This will require requisition of land and rehabilitation of the affected people.

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said the Sonadia deep-sea port would be a regional port. It will expand Bangladesh's trade with China, Myanmar, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. During her recent visit to Beijing, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina discussed with her Chinese counterpart on the construction of deep-sea port and got assurance of assistance. The Minister said about 130 billion taka would be required to complete the first phase of the deep-sea port project. The government will give 30 percent of the fund while the rest would come from public-private partnership. Shipping Ministry Joint Secretary Abdul Quddus said work on the first phase of construction would begin in 2010 and end in 2017. He said expenditures for the second phase (2026-2035) have been estimated at 260 billion taka. He said the deep-sea port would be constructed on 22,000 hectares of land at Sonadia of Kutubjom and Hoyanak union of Moheshkhali. Five international and four general cargo jetties would be constructed in the first phase.

Source(s): April 1, 2010

http://www.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=99701&Itemid=2

Medvedev reaches maritime border agreement with Norway's leadership

Moscow and Oslo have reached an agreement on the demarcation of maritime borders after almost 40 years of talks. The demarcation concerns maritime borders in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean, Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg said after the meeting with President Dmitry Medvedev. The Russian president, who is on a state visit to Norway, said that the two countries' officials will conduct technical work to prepare the agreement for the final signing. "A joint statement will be issued at the end of the visit where chief principal approaches are fixed," Medvedev said. Analysts believe the dispute over the demarcation was the key issue in the bilateral relations. Russia and Norway had many issues to discuss, Rossiyskaya Gazeta daily wrote, adding that demarcating maritime borders in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean was the most important one. The talks on the issue have been ongoing since 1970.

Source(s): April 27, 2010

<http://rt.com/Politics/2010-04-27/roar-black-sea-fleet.html>

MARITIME SECURITY

Balancing Powers in the Malacca Strait

Singapore's warning of a terrorist threat in the Malacca Straits has again highlighted the issue of who is in charge of security in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia have stepped up sea patrols in the strait after Singapore's navy said on Thursday (Mar 4) it had received indications that a terrorist group was planning attacks on oil tankers.



The 900-km long (550 miles) Malacca Strait, linking Europe and the Middle East with the Asia-Pacific, carries about 40 percent of the world's trade. More than 50,000 merchant ships ply the waterway every year. About 3.3 million barrels per day (bpd) of Middle East crude oil passed through the strait to Japan in 2009. Middle East crude accounts for 90 per cent of Japan's total imports. Up to 80 per cent of China's crude imports are delivered via the narrow and congested waterway. So China and Japan have a stake in keeping the Malacca Strait secure, as does India which is patrolling in the Andaman Sea at the western end of the strait. The strait is a vital sea lane for the U.S. Navy, which sent warships to Taiwan via the Malacca Strait at a time of heightened tensions between China and Taiwan in 1996.

Although the three littoral states — Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore — have asserted their sole right to maintain security in the Malacca Strait, Australia, India, Japan, the United States and China have all offered military assistance at various times. The Malacca Strait has been infested with pirates for centuries, but since the 9/11 suicide airliner attacks, the security focus has switched to terrorism. The ability of Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia to ensure security in a waterway of such geopolitical importance has been complicated by their own competing territorial claims and rivalries. All three countries, for instance, have had territorial disputes over islands and waters that have wound up in court or in naval confrontations. Worries about territorial sovereignty have made hot pursuit in the strait problematic. The three countries conduct joint patrols under the Malacca Straits Coordinated Patrol established in July 2004. But joint patrols are not the same as combined patrols and have proven difficult to coordinate.

A 2005 initiative, “The Eyes in the Sky Program” involving joint aerial surveillance with Thailand also restricts air patrols from going within three miles of each other’s borders. The same lack of trust has hampered intelligence sharing. The United States, after pronouncing Southeast Asia a “second front in the war on terrorism” in 2002, tried to increase its naval presence in the region. Malaysia and Indonesia swiftly shot down that idea. Two years later, Washington proposed the Regional Maritime Security Initiative, which would have involved joint patrols — including putting U.S. special forces on high-speed boats. Again Indonesia and Malaysia vetoed the presence of foreign forces in the strait and a diluted version of the idea was adopted instead. Southeast Asian countries are, if anything, even more suspicious of a Chinese military presence in the region. One of the rationales for keeping security confined to the littoral states is to keep the strait from becoming a big power flashpoint. Indeed, the response to piracy and terrorism in the Malacca Strait can illuminate how the big power dynamics are playing out in the region. The Regional Maritime Security Initiative, for instance, also had in mind interdicting WMD cargo (think North Korea nuclear and missile materiel).

Singapore did not say what terrorist group was behind the threat to oil tankers in the strait. Security experts say the al Qaeda network has long had video footage of Malaysian police patrols. The Indonesian militant group, Jemaah Islamiah, once had strong connections to the group. The head of an Indonesian anti-terrorism task force has suggested Indonesian militants have re-established an al Qaeda connection. The United States, China, Japan and India will continue to seek influence over Malacca Strait security — for anti-terrorism, geopolitical and commercial interests — even as China, for one, looks for alternative routes for its burgeoning energy needs.

Source(S): Reuters, Mar 7, 2010.

<http://blogs.reuters.com/global/2010/03/07/balancing-powers-in-the-malacca-strait/>

US Navy's global mission

On March 21, the US Navy showcased its capabilities during Tampa Bay Navy Week. Built around the MacDill Air Force Base Air Fest, the Week featured the Navy's precision flight demonstration team, the Blue Angels. Tampa Bay Navy Week is designed to show Americans the investment they have made in their Navy. In addition to the Blue Angels, Tampa Bay Navy Week has also featured sailors from the guided missile submarine USS Florida, the Leap Frogs Navy Parachute Team, Navy Band Southeast and a team of Navy divers. During the Tampa Bay Navy Week, Navy showcased more than 140 ships and submarines and more than 40,000 sailors were deployed, executing the entire spectrum of naval operations, from war fighting to deterrence, from maritime security to disaster relief. This worldwide engagement is what makes the Navy relevant to American security. “Our engagement communicates our nation's will and commitment”, said Vice Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III. “Our engagement forges and sustains relationships and supports shared goals,” said the Vice Admiral. Elaborating on the U.S. navy's global visions, he made the following points:

America's Navy is projecting power. During the month of February, operating in the North Arabian Sea, the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower launched more than 640 combat sorties and flew more than 5,100 flight hours in support of troops on the ground in Afghanistan. Ashore, more than 7,000 Navy personnel are on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, performing critical jobs that continue to enhance both countries' security, stability and infrastructure.

America's Navy is providing a visible and powerful forward presence: Amphibious ships are on patrol in the Western Pacific, with U.S. Marines aboard, as well as surface combatants and submarines, deterring aggression and participating in exercises with US allies in the region.

America's Navy is protecting the global maritime environment, enhancing security and securing freedom of navigation for all nations: Operating with the U.S. Coast Guard, Navy ships and sailors are monitoring and deterring illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Central and Western Pacific and intercepting narcotics shipments in the Caribbean. Together with the international community, they are engaged in counter-piracy operations.

America's Navy is providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief: Sailors and marines have provided critical support to the United Nations and the government of Haiti as part of Operation Unified Response. During Tampa Bay Navy Week, area residents have had the opportunity to swim with Navy divers, listen to one of the fine Navy bands, and watch the Blue Angels perform their precision aerobatics. But the real show is happening over the horizon, in the Western Pacific, off the coast of Somalia, in Middle East waters and on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq. And it's happening around the clock, every day.

Source(s): Vice Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III, The Tampa Tribune, Mar 12, 2010.
<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/mar/12/na-the-navys-global-mission/>

West African pirates want cargo, not ransom

While the world's militaries are busy waging battle against pirates off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, there are more violent seafaring criminals off the western coast of Africa, military experts say. Unlike the eastern Africa pirates, who are mainly interested in taking hostages for lucrative ransom payments, the pirates plaguing western Africa waters are more interested in the ships' cargo. In November, for example, pirates attacked an oil tanker off Benin, killing a civilian mariner as they stole from the ship's safe. "They're going for the goods, not necessarily going for the ransom, and that's because of the large amount of natural resources out there," said U.S. Navy Lt. J.G. Peter Flynt, a Naval Forces Africa West and Central Africa desk officer.

The primary natural resource being shipped is petroleum — oil theft from Nigeria alone totals roughly \$1 billion a year, said Phillip J. Heyl, chief of the Air and Maritime Security Branch of the Strategy, Plans and Programs Directorate of U.S. Africa Command. And more countries are producing petroleum for export, such as Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana and Cameroon, making them targets of thieves who steal from fuel storage sites, pipelines and anchored barges, Heyl said. But with international navies already committed to disrupting piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Somali basin, there are few international forces left to sail the western waters, said British Cmdr. John Harbour, spokesman for the European Union Naval Force Somalia. No military warships persistently patrol the west coasts, and international military and diplomatic officials must now add piracy to the list of other problems that threaten regional stability, such as drug smuggling, illegal fishing, human trafficking and illegal migration.

However, countries such as Cameroon, Gabon, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe and Equatorial Guinea are now patrolling and protecting their own shores as part of the U.S. Navy's Africa Partnership Station — which focuses on training and equipping West African navies.

Source(s): [Sandra Jontz](http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=68802), Stars and Stripes(Naples), Mar 21, 2010.
<http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=68802>

India using navy to spread power, influence: Australian think tank

India was making "great use" of its navy to spread power and influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), said an Australian think-tank which observed that a new maritime "great game" was emerging there "as strategic competition between India and China becomes evident". The report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) said that India was "obsessed" with China's entry into IOR and was making "great use" of its navy to spread its power and influence.

"A new maritime 'great game' is emerging in the IOR, as strategic competition between India and China becomes evident. Each has fears of being contained by the other. In China's case, because India is supported by Japan and the US. India promotes itself as the dominant power of the region. It's obsessed by China's entry into the IOR and is making great use of its navy to spread power and influence," the ASPI report added. It went on to say that India was seeking the role of dominant power in the IOR. However, it also displays "considerable insecurity about the presence of other major powers" in the region. "India sees itself as a 'threat attractor', at risk from terrorism, domestic insurgencies, arms trafficking and border disputes with its neighbours." "The ocean was an increasingly important global trading thoroughfare, especially for energy supplies, and the risk of disputes over maritime sovereignty was magnified by the potential wealth beneath its waters." Though India "seeks to be the dominant power" in the Indian Ocean, bilateral defence and security cooperation agreements should be pursued with the country. But that should not "jeopardise" Australia's relations with other stakeholder countries in the IOR, the report said.

Source(s): IANS, April 6, 2010

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics/nation/India-using-navy-to-spread-power-influence-Australian-think-tank/articleshow/5766473.cms>

Indian Govt. designates Indian Navy responsible for maritime security

The Government has designated the Indian Navy as the agency responsible for overall maritime security, including coastal security of the country; the Lok Sabha was informed on April, 15 2010. The Indian Navy, the Coast Guards, State Marine Police and other Central and State agencies work in coordination for the coastal security and to deal with threats of vulnerable targets, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Murli Deora said in a written reply. He said the measures instituted in this regard include enhanced surface and air surveillance along with coastal exercises by Indian Navy ships and aircraft along the coast and in all offshore development areas, including those on the east coast of India.

Source(s): April, 15 2010

http://www.mynews.in/News/Govt_designates_Indian_Navy_responsible_for_maritime_security_N46877.html

United Nations approves funding to help Somalia, neighbouring countries prosecute maritime piracy suspects

A package of projects to help Somalia and its neighbors prosecute maritime piracy suspects was approved by a 10-nation board overseeing a new United Nations trust fund for the fight against piracy. The announcement was made at United Nations Headquarters by B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who chairs the Board of the Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. "Piracy off Somalia is a menace to the region and the world. Prosecuting suspected pirates is an important piece of the international strategy to combat the problem," he said. The five projects approved by consensus today cost \$2.1 million and focus primarily on support for the prosecution of piracy suspects.

Four of the projects will help strengthen institutions in the Seychelles, which is serving alongside Kenya as a regional centre for the prosecution of suspected pirates, as well as in the regions of Puntland and Somaliland, in such areas as mentoring of prosecutors and police; constructing and rehabilitating prisons; reviewing domestic legislation on piracy; and enhancing the capacity of the courts. An additional media project seeks to help local partners design and disseminate anti-piracy messages within Somalia. The Board also recently established an emergency funding facility to offset the costs involved in prosecuting piracy suspects arrested at sea, including travel for witnesses, court equipment and the transportation of suspects. The Trust Fund was established in January 2010 by the Contact Group on Piracy Off the Coast of Somalia. The Board comprises 10 voting members -- Djibouti, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Norway, Somalia and the United States -- as well as three non-voting entities -- the International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations country team for Somalia.

Source(s): April 23, 2010

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MYAI-84T4CE?OpenDocument>

Piracy rattles Japan to open first foreign military base

Japan is opening its first overseas army base in Djibouti, a small African state strategically located at the southern end of the Red Sea on the Gulf of Aden, to counter rising piracy in the region. The 40-million-dollar base expected to be completed by early next year will strengthen international efforts to curb hijackings and vessel attacks by hordes of gunmen from the lawless Somalia. The Djibouti base breaks new ground for Japan, which has had no standing army since World War II and cannot wage war. It however has armed forces — the Japan Self-Defense Forces — which were formed at the end of US occupation in 1952. “This will be the only Japanese base outside our country and the first in Africa,” Keizo Kitagawa, Japan’s navy force captain and coordinator of the deployment, told AFP recently. “We are deploying here to fight piracy and for our self-defense. Japan is a maritime nation and the increase in piracy in the Gulf of Aden through which 20,000 vessels sail every year is worrying,” Kitagawa said.

He explained that 10 percent of the Gulf of Aden’s traffic comes from Japan and 90 percent of Japanese exports depend on the crucial sea lane that was almost overrun by the marauding pirates two years ago. “A camp will be built to house our personnel and material. Currently we are stationed at the American base,” Kitagawa said. Since 2008, an international flotilla of warships has been patrolling the Gulf of Aden in a bid to stop the hijackings. Last April, Japan’s defense ministry announced it was sending two destroyers and surveillance planes to boost the anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden. The presence of the international navies has forced the Somali pirates to venture southwards in the less-patrolled Indian Ocean. In mid-April, they seized three Thai fishing boats with 77 crew some 1,200 miles (2,220 kilometers) from the coast of Somalia, the first time the pirates have struck so far east into the Indian Ocean.

Source(s): April 24, 2010

<http://harowo.com/2010/04/24/piracy-rattles-japan-to-open-first-foreign-military-base/>

Protests mark Ukraine vote on Russian Navy base stay

There have been chaotic scenes in Ukraine’s parliament over its decision to allow the Russian navy to extend its stay in a Ukrainian port. Scuffles broke out in the chamber as opposition lawmakers voiced their anger and tried to unfurl Ukrainian flags. Opponents say that by hosting the Black Sea fleet Ukraine could be dragged into future conflicts Moscow has with other powers. But government supporters argue the deal will help strengthen ties with Moscow and boost Kiev’s struggling economy. Ukraine agreed to extend its lease until 2042 in exchange for a 30 percent cut in the price of Russian gas. The Russian fleet has been based in Sevastopol since the 18th century and the region retains a strongly Russian-leaning population.

Source(s): April 27, 2010

<http://www.euronews.net/2010/04/27/protests-as-ukraine-extends-russian-navy-base-stay/>

Pak can bank on US plane to spy on India

The United States would be providing two upgraded P-3C Orion surveillance aircrafts to Pakistan to boost its maritime security capabilities. Pakistan is due to get seven of these reconnaissance aircrafts, out of which the first three would be handed over to it during a ceremony in Jacksonville, Florida, a spokesperson for the Pakistan Embassy in Washington said. The spokesperson underlined that the acquisition of the latest aircraft reflects the growing cooperation between the US and Pakistani navies. Pakistan currently commands the Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, and the US aims to strengthen its maritime capability so that it can effectively protect the vast sea-lanes, which come under the Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan. The Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan stretches from Strait of Hormuz to the Red Sea, covering 2.4 million sq miles and bordering 14 nations along the Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, Horn of Africa and Red Sea, The Daily Times reports.

Source(s): ANI, April 30, 2010

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/pak-can-bank-on-us-plane-to-spy-on-india/613444/>



MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Indian Ocean countries in new deal to stop pollution

Ten East and Southern African countries have signed a new pact against pollution that will boost environmental management in the Western Indian Ocean. The Protocol for the Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-based Sources and Activities will be implemented on the countries' coastline that stretches from Somalia to South Africa. The agreement binds the governments to a common objective of preventing, reducing, mitigating and controlling pollution from land-based sources and activities to protect and sustain the marine and coastal environment in the Western Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean is globally recognised for its unique biological richness and natural beauty and high ecological and socio-economic value. United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) estimates the economic value of the goods and services provided by the Western Indian Ocean marine ecosystem alone, through fisheries and tourism, to be over \$25 billion. With a combined coastline that stretches over 15,000 kilometres and a continental shelf area of about 450,000 square kilometres, the Western Indian Ocean region is home to a diverse range of marine and coastal ecosystems that include lowland forests, mangrove forests, sea grass beds and coral reefs. This serves as a source of livelihood and income for over 60 million people residing within 100km of the coastal zone.

Source(s): April 19 2010

<http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/IndianOceancountriesinnewdealtostoppollution/-/2558/901732/-/12lasm2z/-/>

US Guard to fight oil spill with fire

The U.S Coast Guard could have let an ever-growing blob of oil in the Gulf of Mexico - 100 miles long and 45 miles wide at its widest point - keep creeping toward shore. That would leave birds and other wildlife at risk, in addition to devastating tourism and businesses that make their living off the beaches and the water. Or they could set it ablaze, which is what they began doing Wednesday (Apr 28). The giant inferno is designed to burn off much of the oil, sparing the shore the brunt of the damage. But air quality will suffer. Tens of thousands of gallons of oil a day are leaking into the Gulf from the blown-out well where the Deepwater Horizon drilling platform exploded and sank mid- April. Eleven workers are missing and presumed dead. The cause of the explosion has not been determined. Greg Pollock, head of the oil spill division of the Texas General Land Office, which is providing equipment for crews in the Gulf, said he is not aware of a similar burn being done off the U.S. coast. The last time crews with his agency used fire booms to burn oil was a 1995 spill on the San Jacinto River.

"When you can get oil ignited, it is an absolutely effective way of getting rid of a huge percentage of the oil," he said. "I can't overstate how important it is to get the oil off the surface of the water." He said the oil likely will be ignited using gelled gasoline and rags soaked in oil. What's left afterward is something he described as a kind of hardened tar ball that can be removed from the water with nets or skimmers. "I would say there is little threat to the environment because it won't coat an animal and because all the volatiles have been consumed. If it gets on a shore, it can be simply picked up," he said. The Coast Guard says a new leak has been found at the site where an oil platform exploded and sank in the Gulf of Mexico. Rear Adm. Mary Landry says the new estimate is that 5,000 barrels a day are leaking. Officials had been saying it was 1,000 barrels a day. Also, the military has offered to help contain the oil.

Source(s): Rob Shaw, The Associated Press, April29, 2010

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/apr/29/na-guard-to-fight-oil-spill-with-fire/>



MARITIME LEGISLATION

WWII ships leaking lead into San Francisco bay to be removed

The federal government has agreed to remove World War II-era vessels that have been moored in Suisun Bay for decades. Dubbed the ghost fleet, the ships have been leaking fuel and lead into the estuary, which connects to the San Francisco Bay. The Maritime Administration will remove and recycle 52 vessels over the course of seven years to settle a lawsuit filed by environmental groups and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. The rusting vessels, part of a fleet reserved after WWII for national emergencies, have leached an estimated 20 tons of heavy metals including zinc, copper and cadmium, according to a study commissioned by the Maritime Administration. An additional 50 tons of metals is expected to fall into the bay over time if the ships are not removed. Twenty ships that are in the poorest condition will be removed first, by a deadline set for Sept. 30, 2012. The vessels will be cleaned of marine growth and exterior paint at a local dry-docks before they are moved. The remaining ships will be cleaned on site within two years and taken from the bay by 2017. Under the settlement, the Maritime Administration will also clean horizontal surfaces of the vessels every 90 days to prevent peeling paint from falling into the water. The agency is also required to conduct monthly and quarterly inspections of the ships, and to test water runoff samples. No new ships with excess flaking will be allowed to dock at the site. Environmental groups sued the government in 2007 to end the discharge of toxic metals from the decaying fleet. The Regional Water Board joined the lawsuit a year later. In January, a federal court ruled that the Maritime Administration was illegally polluting the bay and unlawfully storing hazardous waste.

Source(s): April 2, 2010

<http://gantdaily.com/2010/04/02/wwii-ships-leaking-lead-into-san-francisco-bay-to-be-removed/>



MARINE TECHNOLOGY

BAE systems to provide mission computer systems for Indian Navy patrol aircraft

BAE Systems is developing the mission computer system suite for Boeing's P-8I aircraft destined for the Indian Navy. The aircraft is a variant of the U.S. Navy's P-8A Poseidon. Developed by a Boeing-led team, the P-8I is a multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft with a broader range of capabilities to operate over land or water while performing anti-submarine warfare; search and rescue; and long-range intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance.

"Maritime surveillance and patrol is becoming more and more important to effective defense," said Donna Linke-Klein, director of mission computers and antenna solutions for BAE Systems. "The P-8I mission computer system provides superior interoperability for the future battle space." BAE Systems' mission computer system suite for the P-8I is a flexible and ruggedized processing platform that can be configured to meet the general purpose, input and output, video, voice, and graphics processing needs for modern military battle management requirements. The P-8A Poseidon is a long-range; anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface warfare; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft. The Indian government selected Boeing to provide eight P-8I aircraft to fill its maritime patrol needs, replacing Tupolev Tu-142M aircraft. BAE Systems will begin deliveries to Boeing in 2011.

Source(s): Business Wire , March 1, 2010.

http://www.marketwatch.com/story/bae-systems-to-provide-mission-computer-systems-for-indian-navy-patrol-aircraft-2010-03-01?reflink=MW_news_stmp

Foreign technology fuelling China's shipbuilding dream

Rapid growth in China's shipbuilding industry is attracting numerous equipment suppliers and manufacturers to the country. European marine-engine maker Wartsila is to transfer most of its propeller- and auxiliary-engine production to China from the Netherlands, resulting in the loss of a third of its 1,500 workforce in that country. The company cited a significantly lower order intake during the past year, and "fundamental changes" in the marine market.

One of the fundamental shifts it refers to is the emergence of China. Last year, China overtook South Korea as the world's biggest shipbuilder in terms of new orders – though not in overall tonnage terms. South Korea and Japan have been the world's top shipbuilders for many years. Although the total number of orders in 2009 was a fraction on previous years, it illustrates a trend, with China now able to match its competitors in technology as well as cost. In the latest milestone, China's largest super tanker, Xin Pu Yang, left for its maiden voyage in January destined for Saudi Arabia. The 333 metre-long, 60 metre-wide very large crude carrier (VLCC), built at the Longxue Shipyard, can carry up to 308,000 tonnes (over 2m barrels) of crude oil. Owned by China Shipping, it is the first locally built oil tanker to surpass the 300,000 tonnes mark. But it is not just Chinese shippers that are buying. Listed international tanker group OSG expects to take delivery of its first China-built VLCC, Overseas Everest, early this year, after construction at Jiangnan Shipyard.

Such prestigious orders highlight China's increased technical competency, from ship design capability, through to shipbuilding efficiency. The arrival of foreign expertise is helping, pushing China's shipbuilders forward. Lubricants specialist Castrol Marine has also identified the changes taking place in the global marine sector. It is to open its first technology centre outside Europe at Shanghai's Jinqiao Science Park this year. Tankers, containers, bulk carriers and drilling platforms are routinely produced, with Chinese shipyards also eyeing higher-value products, such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers. Domestic demand is strong. The total fleet of LNG tankers required by China is expected to hit 39 this year and rise to 65 by 2015, according to a recent report by China Daily. The Hudong-Zhonghua yard has already produced its first LNG tankers for local shippers – the first to be built, Dapeng Seng, was delivered in 2008 – but it is keen to extend its footprint into the international market.

Source(s): petroleum-economist.com, Mar 03, 2010.
<http://www.petroleum-economist.com/default.asp?Page=14&PubID=46&ISS=25577&SID=724689&Country=&SM=ALL&SearchStr=Foreign%20technology%20fuelling%20China%27s%20shipbuilding%20dream&itemCount=1>



MARITIME TOURISM

Cruise industry going green

World's biggest cruising company Southampton based Cunard Cruises using some of the latest environment friendly systems to lessen the impact of vessels on their surroundings which makes sure that the deep blue of the oceans stays green. However, Micky Arison, the boss of the company has warned there is, as yet, no "silver bullet" when it comes to concerns over pollution and reducing a vessel's carbon footprint. Mr Arison outlined the group's environmental responsibilities as part of the 2010 cruise report, which annually examines trends within the industry.

Cruise ship operators, which take passengers to some of the planet's most ecologically sensitive areas including, Alaska, Norwegian fjords, both the Arctic and Antarctica, Australia's Great Barrier Reef, and the South Pacific, are now only too aware their customers expect the highest standards when it comes to safeguarding the environment. Mr Arison said: "We are dedicated to preserving the marine environment in which we operate, and therefore believe it is our duty to introduce environmental practices which set a high standard of excellence and responsibility.

"Technology is one answer to the challenges we face but, in terms of finding another radically different way of powering our ships in an even-more environmental fashion". While "various,

alternative energy sources have been put forward but they all have their problems, even liquid natural gas would need massive on-board storage space. "In the meantime we are lowering our energy consumption every year by three to four per cent through a variety of solutions from new paints and hull coatings, to simply slowing the ships down. "Longer, seven day, transatlantic crossings to and from Southampton and New York are one major change which will mean a greener, as well as a lower cost operation." Southampton cruise ships are reducing air emissions through the implementation of fuel efficiency measures, low energy lamps, increased recirculation of waste heat and improved efficiency in air conditioning.

Source(s): Mar 3, 2010

http://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/5039780.Cruise_industry_going_green/

Heritage: past to present: Lewes' maritime tradition thrives

The society is working to restore four historic wooden boats, including a 95-year-old Delaware ducker, to create a fleet of ships in honor of the town's maritime past. Mike DiPaolo, director of the Lewes Historical Society, said the program has been in the works for several years, and the timing was right to bring it to fruition this June. "It's a fun, experiential program," DiPaolo said. "One of our focuses is maritime heritage in Lewes, so it's also a great educational opportunity and a way to connect hands-on with Lewes' past." Attendees will be given a kit with all the parts and hardware necessary to build a 12-foot boat called a Bevin's skiff to take home at the end of the weekend. The fee to participate is \$750 and is open to the public, DiPaolo said. The build will be held at the society's Lifesaving Station Boathouse along the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal. "It's a teambuilding exercise and a chance to interact with those you care about," he said. "Plus, you get a boat that you can hopefully use all summer long, and for years to come." A group of 16 volunteers is currently working on the society's project to restore the four boats, and is hoping to have the first boat, the ducker, complete by fall. The other boats are a lifesaving service boat, a Delaware pilot skiff and a canoe, DiPaolo said. The society also was recently given a Moth sailboat, which was used in the Lewes Yacht Club races during the 1930s, he said.

Source (s): April 15, 2010

<http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20100415/LIFE/4150306/Past-to-present-Lewes-maritime-tradition-thrives>



MARITIME EDITORIAL

Are Pirate ransoms legal? confusion over US order

Shipping companies with U.S. interests don't know if they are allowed to pay ransoms to Somali pirates anymore after President Obama declared them an "extraordinary threat," even as pirates extended their reach farther than ever toward Asia, hijacking three Thai vessels. A total of 77 crew members were taken on 18th April in the hijackings 1,200 miles (1,900 kilometers) east of Somalia in the Indian Ocean — the farthest from the Somali coast pirates have ever attacked, the EU Naval Force said. According to the International Maritime Bureau, Pirates now hold 14 vessels and 305 hostages. Pirate attacks have risen since 2009 despite increased patrols by U.S. and European warships, in part because the multimillion dollar ransoms keep rising. The shipping industry has long seen ransom payments to retrieve hijacked vessels, cargos and crews as a cost of doing business. But after Obama issued an executive order on Somalia in the mid- April 2010, shipping officials say it's no longer clear whether companies with U.S. interests can legally pay ransoms. The industry is worried because ransoms have been the only way to quickly and safely free hostages. "Its confusion is the way you could sum it up," said David Osler, a writer at the shipping news journal Lloyd's List. "Industry sources believe the executive order is worded poorly ... it's not immediately clear to everybody what is being said here."

Obama's order outlaws anyone from supplying financing to any Somalis involved in military activities. Roger Middleton, a piracy expert at the British think tank Chatham House, said: "I think the shipping industry would like to be told whether or not they would potentially face prosecution." For some, the order's ramifications are clear. ~~Because it's not~~ clear where the million-dollar ransoms wind

up, paying them now would be illegal, insisted Doug Burnett, a maritime expert in the law firm Squire, Sanders and Dempsey. "You would be very hard-pressed, if you were just looking at the document, to say that paying ransom to pirates would not be a violation of the executive order," Burnett said, adding that ransom payments go to clans in Somalia and add to the country's lawlessness. The U.S. Treasury Department, though, indicated it is not interested in prosecuting anyone trying to free hostages. "We are targeting only those individuals and entities that freely choose to support acts of piracy or armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, including through the supply of weapons, financing, communication devices, or small boats and other equipment," Adam Szubin, director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control at the Department of Treasury, told The Associated Press. Still, a Treasury Department spokesperson, who was not authorized to speak publicly in line with department policy, said it is possible that if a ransom payment ends up in the hands of one of 11 individuals listed by the U.S. government along with Obama's order, the Department of Justice could become involved.

The shipping giant A.P. Moller-Maersk Group said it is examining the impact of the order. A company spokeswoman, Marie-Louise Moller, said its primary concern has long been the safety of its crews. "Taking away our ability to secure the safe release of our crew members and vessels could put us as an employer and ship owner in a very difficult position," Moller said. "Thankfully we have not had to test such a scenario under these restrictions and it's difficult for us to comment further on the consequences of the order without speculating." A federal law enforcement official said separately that five or more pirate suspects are being brought to the United States for prosecution. The suspects will arrive in the United States by the end of April, the official told The Associated Press. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the transfer is still under way. Meanwhile, U.S. officials had said that as many as 20 suspected pirates held on U.S. ships off the coast of Somalia might soon be headed to the U.S. for prosecution.

Source(s): Jason Straziuso, The Associated Press, Apr 20, 2010

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gB7YMEDuCwwY9ncDOtPAKEI4-H2wD9F6VNO80>

Combating Piracy

A dangerous new development has occurred in the campaign against Somali pirates hijacking vessels for ransom in the Indian Ocean. When seven of them sought to seize a UAE-owned cargo ship, end of March, they were driven off by gunfire from private security guards aboard. When a

Spanish warship in the area caught up with pirates, it was found that one was dead of gunshot wounds. Six survivors were arrested and their vessel was sunk. It would, however, be entirely wrong to celebrate this particular victory over the thieves.

This is the first time that private security guards have slain an attacker. The International Maritime Bureau is not alone in being deeply concerned at this development because it threatens an escalation in the violence that the criminals are prepared to use to capture a vessel. Any escalation in this conflict is to be deplored and this latest broadening is heavy with risk. Nevertheless, those merchant vessel operators that have chosen to hire guards cannot be blamed entirely. The reality is that despite dozens of warships from around the world patrolling the region, it is simply too vast, even with their advanced surveillance equipment, for them to guard every commercial vessel, let alone fishing boats, pleasure yachts and coastal trading dhows. The convoy system that has been introduced only works effectively for vessels travelling to and from East African ports. Elsewhere owners are reluctant to incur the considerable expense of having their vessels wait for days until a sufficiently large group of vessels has formed up to be convoyed by international escorts. The tactics, therefore, need to change in two key ways. First, rather than scattering naval assets around the Indian Ocean, they should be brought together to blockade the Somali coast. This would interdict the pirates' mother ships from moving to and from their homeports. Any suspicious vessels leaving Somalia could be shadowed to ensure their bona fides as fishermen. It could also provide a cordon that could stop any seized vessels from being taken into harbours to be ransomed.

The second step is to establish a tribunal to try arrested suspects at the UN's International Criminal Court in The Hague. Piracy on the high seas is a serious crime. Those who carry it out should be prosecuted and punished. Convicted pirates could be imprisoned in the state whose vessel they tried to attack or if they are caught before as assault, in agreed third countries. At all times,

however, it is essential that this is a formal and organized international process. Bringing in hired guns, as the Blackwater massacre in Baghdad's Nisoor Square demonstrated, is not the answer.

Source(s): Middle East North Africa Financial Network- Arab News, Mar 25, 2010.
http://www.menafn.com/qn_news_story_s.asp?StoryId=1093316684

The future of tourism in Philippines

Tourism, in Philippines has seemingly run into rough weather. The Tourism Act of 2009, or Republic Act 9593, was supposed to make the tourism industry more competitive in the region. Instead, RA 9593 has become a source of rancor within the industry, threatening to defeat the purpose of the new law. Officials of the Federation of Tourism Industries in the Philippines are up in arms over the implementing rules and regulations drawn up by the Department of Tourism for RA 9593, which shut out the federation from a recent Tourism Congress. Federation officials also said many accredited agencies did not participate in the selection of nominees to head DOT agencies that have been created by virtue of the new law: the Tourism Promotions Board, Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority, and the Duty Free Philippines Corp.

The DOT likes to brag about the number of tourist arrivals in the country, but those figures pale in comparison to those in neighboring countries such as Thailand and Vietnam. Even Cambodia, with Siem Reap as its principal tourist draw, is surpassing the Philippines in the number of visitors. The figures are disheartening particularly when one considers all the attractions that the Philippines have to offer. Travellers in the region cite the insufficiency of flights to the Philippines, the lack of accommodations, and prices that are less attractive than those that neighboring countries offer. The Philippines also has one of the weakest tourism marketing programs in the region, and limited funding is not the only problem.

Tourism could be one of the biggest revenue earners for the Philippines. It could create jobs with decent pay that could lure back many Filipinos who have been forced to find employment overseas. But this can only happen if there is a healthy working relationship between the government and private players in the travel industry. If the government wants the Tourism Act to live up to its promise of making tourism a key engine of economic growth, it cannot afford to ignore those private players.

Source: The Philippine Star, March 17, 2010.
<http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=558697&publicationSubCategoryId=64>

Suggestions and contributions are welcome at maritimeindia@gmail.com