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Model Concession Agreement for Port Sector: Give a Wide Berth (Editorial - The Financial Express)

The reported move to put the model concession agreement in the ports sector under the scanner and to amend the protocols in the request for qualifications (RFQ) document to accelerate the flow of investments while preventing anti-competitive practices is a welcome development. The RFQ or expression-of-interest is the first in the two stages of the bidding process for the selection of private partners in infrastructure projects. The RFQ helps shortlist the most eligible bidders and is key to the success of the PPP projects as the cost and quality of the service provided is dependent on the most suitable partner. The model RFQ, which was first issued by the ministry of finance in early 2007, was later revised based on the recommendations made by the inter-ministerial group after incorporating the suggestions of various stakeholders. Detailed guidelines for inviting applications for pre-qualification and short-listing of bidders were issued in end-2007 and then amended in May 2009. The guidelines issued clearly stated the need for restricting the short-list of pre-qualified bidders to six or seven companies. Bidders were also not allowed to occupy two consecutive berths in a port—this it was believed would lead to monopolies and anti-competitive practices.

However, these restrictive guidelines have not really helped the development of the ports sector. The model guidelines need to allow more flexibility for sector-specific and project-specific needs. A similar problem of excessively restrictive guidelines had hobbled the roads sector until Roads minister Kamal Nath moved to liberalise the guidelines. Now, the shipping ministry is making a move to relax the earlier guidelines. A major change under consideration is the doing away of the current restriction on adjacent berths, a policy that has only proved to be counter-productive. Of course, the loosening of restrictions will not mean giving away to anti-competitive practices. In fact, minor private ports within a radius of 150 km will likely not be allowed to bid for terminals in major ports as it has been found that this leads to unproductive squatting with a view to establish a monopoly or at the very least restrict fair competition. Government estimates show that private sector investments in the ports sector should go up to Rs 26,157 crore in the seven years up to 2013-14 to supplement the internal resources of Rs 16,059 crore. The only way to achieve the target is to begin by amending the tough rules which discourage private investment in ports.

Dec 08, 2009

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/FE-Editorial---Give-a-wide-berth/551044/>

Government to Award 17 Port Projects to Private Players

The government is planning to award 17 major port development projects to private players, under its ambitious National Maritime Development Programme. "We would like to have more private participation in the maritime sector under the NMDP. As per the current plans, 17 projects will be awarded to the private sector," K Mohandas secretary, ministry of shipping, said. These 17 projects, once completed, will enhance the cargo handling capacity in the country by 183.5 million tonne per annum, he said. NMDP envisages to increase the capacity of major ports across the country by 410 million tonne per annum (MTPA), which would be needing an investment of Rs62,000 crore, he said.



"We are ready to provide support to all the private sector players to set up ports and other maritime development projects," Mohandas said. Designed as public-private-partnership project, NMDP was launched in 2005 to implement 276 projects by March 2012. Under NMDP, the government also plans to set up a mega container terminal at Chennai, with an estimated cost of Rs3,686 crore, which would increase the Chennai port's capacity by 48 MTPA. The project also calls for investing Rs1,136.63 crore in Kandla Port, to enhance berthing and allied facilities.

Source(s): PTI, Dec 13, 2009.

http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report_government-to-award-17-port-projects-to-private-players_1323184

Handing Over of Gwadar Port to PSA

Criticism are raised about the decision of handing over of Gwadar Port to Singapore Authority (PSA) on just 9 per cent Gross Revenue Sharing Formula, costing Pakistan a huge loss by the top notches of the previous regime. According to sources, handing over of the Port to PSA for 40 years through Concession Agreement was one-sided, as the ports of India in the same area have been given on 40 per cent Gross Revenue Sharing. Sources said that Pakistan would never be self-sustained with the present agreements for share of funds with PSA, as the types of the jobs accepted by GPA in the Concession Agreement are extremely cost intensive that can not be recovered from the revenue earned from PSA. The PSA is to give just 9 per cent corporate benchmark out of total profit per year, while Pakistan's neighboring country has given its west coast ports in Chennai on 35 to 40 per cent gross revenue sharing formula.

Sources disclosed the handing over of the entire operations to private operators was supported to ensure that it will become a success. The private port operator was supposed to bring in its own business and make the port operational 100 per cent by 2008, but unfortunately they failed to do so. A copy of the documents, in this regard, discloses that 'Under the Concession Agreement between Govt and PSA, entire Gwadar Deep Water Port Project worth \$288 millions has been handed over to the Concession Holder for 40 years extendable for further 10 years, which includes Port Management, Terminal operations, Future Development, Financing and Maintenance'. They said that the performance of PSA Gwadar has not been encouraging as it has not been able to bring any ship so far; has not been able to market the port; has not shown any intentions for expansion of the port as envisaged in the Concession Agreement.

Source(s): Waqar Hamza, the Nation Dec 12, 2009.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Business/12-Dec-2009/Handing-over-of-Gwadar-Port-to-PSA-onesided>

Vietnam Seeks Billions for Ports Overhaul

Despite the global economic downturn, Vietnamese trade is outpacing its outdated and overworked ports infrastructure. Filling the capacity gap will require substantial foreign investment, but questions about the country's underlying financial health, including a recent sharp devaluation of the local currency, could hamper those inflows. Vietnam has 40 active ports, ranging from the small Vung Ro with just over 160 meters of wharfage to the dual-site Saigon Port, which has 3,000 meters of wharfage with 20 different quays with container, bulk and bag facilities. The country has a combined berthage of 40,000 meters and last year moved nearly 197 million tons of cargo, including over five million 20-foot equivalent (TEU) container units, a standard industry measure.

The lack of modern port facilities threatens to dampen Vietnam's economic growth prospects and limit new trade opportunities. Vietnam's trade-driven economy is expected to grow 5% this year and slightly faster in 2010. Government officials acknowledge the dearth of deepwater and internationally standardized port facilities, including enough berths to service incoming container and trans-ocean vessels. Anecdotal evidence supplied by industry analysts indicates that ships sometimes run aground due to insufficiently dredged water channels that give sea access to ports. "The limiting factor [of Vietnamese trade] will be infrastructure," said Barry Akbar, general director of shipper APL-NOL, at a recent conference in Hanoi. "Serious terminal congestion can come as early as 2010 if full economic recovery takes hold." A senior official at the Vietnam Maritime Administration acknowledged at the same conference, which was attended by several international representatives, that there is "no consistency and compatibility between ports and road, power and logistics ... [and] also little connection between the ports and the surrounding land use." In prepared comments, he said that "handling equipment is relatively backward with low capacity so that we cannot meet the demand of the regional marine market."

The government's Ports Master Plan for improving facilities, indicates costs at between US\$46 billion and \$56 billion, including the development of the \$3.6 billion Van Phong International Transshipment Terminal for big container vessels near the southern area of Nha Trang. The Maritime Administration of Nha Trang told a recent conference that the facility will be able to handle 15,000 TEU container ships and that the bay is naturally between 20 meters and 27 meters deep and thus won't require dredging for ships to gain access. The first phase of the Van Phong project, scheduled to start next year and finish in 2015, will see construction of two large and five small berths with a quay size of up to 2,260 meters. This would allow the facility to handle 9,000 TEU vessels and have a total container throughput capacity of two million TEUs per year. The world's largest container ships, such as the Emma Maersk, have a capacity of around 15,000 TEU. A second phase of the project foresees the addition of four large and three small berths, with 2,377 meters of total berthage that would allow for the handling of 12,000 TEUs ships with an estimated container throughput of between four million to 4.5 million TEUs per year. The ambitious plan also involves developing Van Phong into

a multi-industry economic zone replete with trans-shipment and other services. Envisaged in the government's broader plan, Van Phong will be supplemented by several international "gateway" ports in the northern, central and southern areas of the country. They will be smaller in scale yet able to handle container vessels of between 4,000 and 8,000 TEUs or 80,000 -100,000 deadweight tons (DWT). An unspecified number of dedicated hub ports, designed to serve large-scale industrial areas, will be built to deal with ships of up to 400,000 DWT of liquid cargo and 300,000 DWT for coal and ore. If these plans are realized, the port improvements would represent a big boost in efficiency for the country's fast growing industrial base.

Source(s): Dec 14, 2009.

<http://www.supplychain.cn/en/art/3417/>

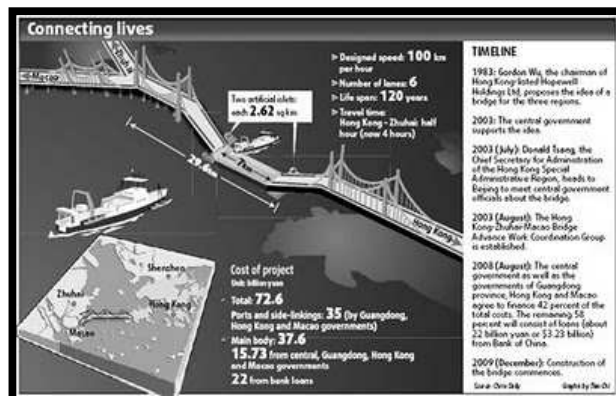
World Longest Sea Bridge Starts Construction

Construction of the 50-km Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, expected to be the world's longest sea bridge, kicked off in Zhuhai of Guangdong province on Dec 17. It is expected to be completed by 2016. The Y-shaped bridge is being built at a cost of more than 72 billion yuan (\$10.54 billion). It would take about half an hour to travel from Zhuhai or Macao on the west bank of the Pearl River to Hong Kong on the east bank, compared with the current three hours. The project is financed by the central government together with the regional governments of Hong Kong, Macao and Guangdong. The main 35 km of the bridge include a 29.6-km overseas pass and a 6-km harbor tunnel under the South China Sea. Two artificial islands will connect the tunnel and bridge on either side.

Reclamation projects to create the artificial islands in Macao and Zhuhai ports are part of the first phase of construction. Each city will have a port, which its own government will build. The six-lane bridge is expected to remain in good shape for up to 120 years. After more than a decade of study, construction began on a replacement for the cantilever portion of the bridge on January 29, 2002, with completion originally slated for 2007. The new eastern "signature" span was to feature a pair of side-by-side, five-lane concrete viaducts linking to a single-towered, self-supporting suspension span between the viaducts. The Total length to the West is 10,304 feet (3,141 m) and to the East: 10,176 feet (3,102 m) having a total of 4.46 miles (7.18 km) excluding approaches. Cost to build original bridge was approximately \$77 million in 1936 (including Transbay Transit Terminal). If

Source(s): Dec 18, 2009.

<http://nextbigfuture.com/2009/12/world-longest-sea-bridge-starts.html>



SHIPBUILDING

Global Insights: Mistral Talks Reveal Russian Shipbuilding Maladies

Among other things Russian President Vladimir Putin's sought during his sojourn to Paris recently, the focus was much on the support for Russian shipbuilding industry. Russia's reported interest in buying the Mistral naval ship reflects the sorry state of the Russian Navy and Russian shipbuilding industry. Mistral is an enormous amphibious warship capable of carrying hundreds of soldiers as well as more than a dozen tanks and helicopters to. Not only does the Russian Navy lack a large amphibious ship like the Mistral, but it is doubtful that Russian shipbuilders could construct such a complex vessel without foreign assistance. Similar weaknesses in Russia's aerospace sector have required the government to purchase unmanned aerial vehicles from Israel after the Georgian War highlighted Russia's inadequacies on this score. Russian policymakers are being forced to consider abandoning the Soviet practice of military autarky and returning to the Czarist tradition of importing advanced foreign military equipment and experts.

Russia's shipbuilding industry still depends heavily on military contracts, and has never recovered from the collapse of the integrated Soviet economy, which prioritized its military-industrial complex with lavish financial, human, and other resources. During the past decade, the Russian Navy received less than a dozen new warships. At present rates of production, Russian shipbuilders might manufacture a comparable figure in the coming years. The combined problems of obsolescent

technology, aging equipment, and poor workers are hard to overcome when, as one source estimates, about one-third of Russia's defense firms are in danger of bankruptcy. The same problems with Russian shipbuilding have prevented realization of proposals to provide Russia with a fleet of large and complex modern aircraft carriers. Russia's only remaining carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov, has repeatedly gone out of service for essential repairs since its commissioning in the early 1990s. Currently, Russia does not even have a shipyard designed to build aircraft carriers. The Admiral Kuznetsov was built in Ukraine during the 1980s, when that republic's defense industries were embedded in the integrated Soviet military-industrial complex. Even during the Soviet period, the military had difficulties building carrier ships whose equipment and accompanying aircraft matched the capabilities of NATO carriers.

Russian shipbuilders have objected to the proposed purchase of the Mistral, arguing that the money would be better spent on buying Russian-made ships, which would generate jobs and revitalize Russian domestic production. Supporters of the proposed transaction publicly state that acquiring the advanced French technologies to manufacture these vessels would renovate Russia's obsolescent shipbuilding practices. They might also privately hope that the shock of foreign competition will spur Russian defense companies to become more competitive. France's willingness to sell such a powerful vessel to Russia testifies to the pragmatic -- some would say mercenary -- dimensions of French foreign policy. French defense firms would earn large sums of money from the sale of the Mistral and the technologies needed by Russian shipbuilders to construct additional ships, as well as from the post-sale supply and service contracts that would result.

Two major impediments, however, may delay or derail the transaction. First, the sale has provoked widespread alarm among Russia's neighbors that have strained relations with Moscow, as well as in the United States and other NATO countries uneasy about strengthening Russia's ability to conduct amphibious attacks against other countries. Security experts in Georgia and the Baltic states -- all of which share adjacent territorial waters with the Russian Federation -- have expressed particular alarm about how Russia might use such a capability. Paris has thus far ignored the unease in these foreign capitals, but that might change.

Second, the Russian government may not be able to afford such ships. On many occasions in recent decades, Moscow announced ambitious naval procurement plans with great fanfare, only to quietly abandon them later when policymakers gave priority to funding other needs. Purchasing the Mistral alone could cost Russia approximately \$750 million. Acquiring the means to enable Russian shipbuilders to construct additional such ships -- which would require buying a license and French technology, and hiring French trainers and technicians -- could require Moscow to spend billions more. At a time when the Russian economy remains in a slump and low world energy prices deprive the Russian government of considerable export revenue, Russian policymakers might decide that having a fleet of such expensive, if highly capable, ships is once again beyond their means.

Richard Weitz, *World Politics Review*, Dec 01, 2009
<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=4723>

Navy Chief Questions India's Shipbuilding Pace

India's Navy chief, concerned that shipbuilding could be falling behind schedule, wants to review building processes. Addressing the annual Navy Day news conference on Dec. 2, Adm. Nirmal Verma said, "We need to revisit the building strategies of the [defense] shipyards. There is a need to do much more. Construction schedule is where our shipyards lag. The reason for delays is the basic method of construction." India's shipbuilding capacity is saturated and the Navy plans to induct more warships at a faster pace to replace the large number of vessels to be scrapped in the next five years, said an Indian Navy officer. The Navy has ordered 34 ships from three different shipyards, but the rate of delivery is only one ship per year, Adm Verma said.

The Navy plans to order weaponry and equipment worth more than \$15 billion in the next 10 to 12 years. Under a long-term plan approved last year, the Navy will procure 60 new warships, submarines, one additional aircraft carrier, maritime surveillance aircraft, C4ISR equipment, a dedicated satellite and other sea-based assets. India's first indigenous aircraft carrier will be launched next year and commissioned in 2014, and indicated that a second homemade carrier may also be approved. "We are re-looking at the design. It won't be a copy of what we have today," Verma said. The homemade aircraft carrier, the 40,000 ton Air Defense Ship, is under construction at the state-owned Kochi shipyard. India's only aircraft carrier, INS Viraat, is due to retire in 2013.

Source(s): vivek raghuvanshi, *Defence News*, Dec 2, 2009.
<http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=4401058&c=SEA&s=TOP>

Slowdown Signs - Shipbuilders Running Below Capacity

It is reported that along with the falling new ship orders, more and more shipbuilders run under the production capacity. Many shipbuilding enterprises even did not receive any orders after the worldwide economy crisis. According to statistics from China Association of the National Shipbuilding Industry, China new ship order during January to October fell by 63%YoY much smaller than the Q1 decrease of 95.6%. In October, only China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation and China State Shipbuilding Corporation received new orders reaching 2.19 million DWT totally. CSIC received 6 VLCC amounting to 1.91 million DWT. And CSSC received 288,000 DWT. Though the shipping industry faces a lot of challenges and difficulties, Chinese shipbuilding industry still keeps on the top. An experts refused to be identified stated that the transportation overcapacity and the shipbuilding industry overcapacity would be obstacles to the recovery in global shipbuilding industry.

Source(s): Dec 3, 2009.

http://steelguru.com/news/index/2009/12/03/MTIzMiUy/Slowdown_signs_-_Shipbuilders_running_below_capacity.html

US Navy Confronts \$80 Billion Cost of New Ballistic Missile Submarines

The US Navy is preparing to tell Congress that the \$80 billion cost of building new ballistic missile submarines in the coming years could force big shipbuilding cuts and trigger industry consolidation unless the service receives additional funding for the project. The 12 new SSBN(X) subs are considered critical for U.S. national security. They would replace 14 Ohio-class subs that carry nuclear ballistic missiles and are deemed by the Navy the most survivable leg of the U.S. strategic arsenal.

In the previous 30-year shipbuilding plan sent to Congress in February 2008, the Navy did not account for the cost of the SSBN(X) project -- an omission the service never fully explained. The Navy is now confronting the grim reality that it cannot afford the new subs without curtailing or giving up other shipbuilding projects, according to Pentagon and naval sources and internal documents reviewed by ITP. The decision to fund the new subs from within the Navy's anticipated budget marks the "single most significant change" since the previous plan, according to a draft of the new 30-year report due to be released to Congress in two months. The report has not been finalized and remains subject to change. The plan says it might be helpful if Congress lets the Navy split the cost of each SSBN(X) over multiple years, but argues big cuts are likely unless additional funding is provided.

A Pentagon source said the need to buy the new subs poses a "big problem" for the Navy because the project is expected to consume much of the shipbuilding account for years. Funding SSBN(X) within the Navy's shipbuilding budget will "greatly impact the Navy shipbuilding plan and will likely jeopardize that portion of the shipbuilding industrial base not directly involved in submarine production," the draft plan contends. Northrop Grumman's shipyard in Newport News, VA, and General Dynamics' Electric Boat shipyard in Connecticut build subs for the Navy. The report notes that plans to limit production of surface combatants to fewer than two ships per year for most of the 14-year period of SSBN(X) procurement will likely hurt shipbuilders. GD's Bath Iron Works shipyard in Maine and Northrop's Ingalls shipyard in Mississippi build surface combatants. Ingalls also builds amphibious ships. Bath is also part of GD's effort to win the Littoral Combat Ship competition. Lockheed Martin leads the other LCS team.

The Ohio-class subs are due to start retiring in fiscal year 2027. SSBN(X) procurement must get under way by FY-19 to ensure operational subs will be available to replace the vital Ohio-class subs as they leave operational service, the Navy maintains. Research and development costs for the new program are starting to accrue today; detailed design is slated to start in FY-15. The Navy plans to buy the first sub in FY-19, the second in FY-22 and one annually from FY-24 to FY-33. Any delay in construction will hurt the Navy's ability to meet the sea-based strategic deterrent operational requirements established by U.S. Strategic Command, the service maintains. The new subs must be mission capable starting in FY-29 before the inventory of Ohio-class subs can drop below 12, according to the draft plan. "There is no leeway in this plan to allow a later start or any delay in the procurement plan," the Navy writes.

The Navy previously called for 14 new ballistic missile subs but now says only 12 are needed. The cost estimate of approximately \$80 billion assumes the SSBN(X) unit cost to be roughly \$6 billion to \$7 billion, consistent with the cost of an Ohio-class sub escalated to FY-09, the report states. Hence, the SSBN(X) project could cost at least \$72 billion to \$84 billion, according to the draft. The previous report predicted a fleet of over 300 ships from FY-17 onward, with 322 in FY-38. But the new plan would sustain a fleet of 279 on average, rather than the new goal of 324. (The previous goal was 313.) It says the fleet will have 284 ships in FY-11, rise to 312 in FY-21 and drop to 237 by FY-40.

Source(s): Christopher J. Castelli, Inside Missile Defense, Vol. 15, No. 25, 2009 (Dec 16, 2009)

<http://www.thegnomesociety.com/2009/12/80-billion-to-re-cap-boomers.html>

Push for Single Naval Shipbuilder as Part of Radical Reform-Australia

Australia's naval shipbuilding industry must face up to further radical reform, including the option of a single naval constructor, according to a defence report commissioned by the South Australian government. It says Australia must capitalise on an estimated \$250 billion of planned investment by Defence in 48 new warships over the next 30 years to build a sustainable naval shipbuilding industry. But building such an industry will require a sweeping overhaul of project and contract management, including the possible move to a sole naval shipbuilder, if the nation is to realise the full strategic benefit from the Rudd government's defence build-up.

The report, to be launched on Dec 14 by the chairman of the SA government's defence advisory board, Peter Cosgrove, says Australia's biggest and most ambitious defence build-up since World War II, including 12 new submarines and 11 major surface warships, represents a major nation-building opportunity for Australia. "This creates the opportunity, indeed the need, to revolutionise the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of naval shipbuilding and through-life support, and to develop a sustainable national industry and skills capability which will flow through to other 'hi-tech' industries," General Cosgrove says. "Apart from cost efficiencies for Defence, the program will be a driver for jobs growth and improved social wellbeing across the nation."



Source(s): Patrick Walters, The Australian, Dec 14, 2009.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/report-suggests-single-naval-shipbuilder-for-250bn-plans/story-e6frq8yo-1225809977365>

MARITIME SECURITY

Ships Must be Prepared to Battle Against Pirates

There is an ongoing debate in maritime circles about the best way to guard against the troublesome Somali pirates off the eastern coast of Africa. Should ships carry armed guards or should they rely on the current practice of states and navies providing for security on the high seas? This debate was fueled to greater intensity recently when an American ship, the Maersk Alabama, repelled a pirate attack with "evasive maneuvers, small-arms fire and a Long Range Acoustic Device, which can beam earsplitting alarm tones."

The ship used an on-board security team to thwart the attack, according to the Associated Press. That has stirred the flames of this debate. It got added attention when Vice Adm. Bill Gortney of the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, said the Maersk Alabama had followed the maritime industry's "best practices" in having a security team on board. Gortney's praise of the American ship's use of armed security raised the bar on this debate. The use of armed security is at the core of the issue. The international shipping companies still are overwhelmingly opposed to the idea of armed guards through past tradition. It also increases the overall shipping costs of the shipping companies, and some say the practice would force shippers to hire people who don't have maritime experience.

We wish there were simple answers to these complex problems. We wish the piracy trade could be ended once and for all because it's ludicrous to think piracy on the high seas is still an option in the technological age of satellite imagery, security improvements and years of knowledge of the militaries of the world and the shipping industry. But that is another debate altogether. In this particular debate, we see no current recourse but to arm American ships well enough to ward off attack like the Maersk Alabama did. That is the most prudent and cost-effective way to protect vessels sailing off the African coast. As far as we know, there is no military option on the table to go to war against the pirates. And Navy ships cannot protect every vessel near Africa. With those facts in hand, you basically have to be prepared to protect yourself. We don't like the idea of arming our private shipping vessels any better than most in the international community, but the reality and danger of shipping in African waters leaves no other choice. We must allow any ship the power to protect its crew and its cargo.

Source(S): Dec 01, 2009.

http://www.mywesttexas.com/articles/2009/11/30/news/opinion/editorial_sunday_11-29-09_txt.txt

Somali Marine Commander Accuses International Community of Doing Little to Fight Piracy

The Commander of Somalia's newly recruited coast guards Admiral Farah Omar Ahmed said he is very concerned over the strengthening pirate activities off the Somali coast with the international community doing little to eradicate piracy off the coast. Talking to reporters in Mogadishu last night the Commander said that dozens of war ships along Somali coast were only patrolling in the sea without doing much work to combat piracy. "The cooperation between Somali government and the international community to fight piracy is too little, while pirates are stepping up their attacks so this seems that the international campaign against Somali buccaneers will produce nothing" Admiral Ahmed stated. "The buccaneers are so strong and they are using sophisticated elements for their operations" he added.

The commander stated that individuals at some seaports in Africa and Arab world work with the pirates and give them details about when ships are sailing from seaports and their ways in the sea and that is what is making easier for pirates to hijack more ships. "We have got that reliable information and investigations are under way and we will call the media when we have ended our investigation" Somali Marines Commander Admiral Farah Omar Ahmed told reporters during his press conference in Mogadishu. Over the weekend Somali pirates abducted a Greece-owned supper oil tanker sailing from Saudi Arabia to the United States, making it the largest ship taken by pirates since November last year when they captured the Saudi-owned Sirius Star which was carrying two million barrels of oil.

Source(s): Shafii Mohyaddin Aboka, [newstimeinfra.com](http://www.newstimeinfra.com), Dec 1, 2009.
<http://www.newstimesafrica.com/archives/9382>

Africa: Maritime Pirates Threaten Everyone, Especially Continent's Hungry

Oceangoing ships are responsible for moving at least 80 percent of all commerce worldwide, so maritime pirates are a threat to everyone, especially those who are starving in Somalia and East Africa and rely on ships to deliver emergency shipments of food aid. Robert W. Maggi, the U.S. Department of State's coordinator for counter-piracy, made that point in a November 23. "The United States and international community are trying to feed those facing chronic hunger and starvation in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, but the ships carrying that humanitarian food aid must contend with pirates who are seeking to hijack and ransom emergency food shipments for their own personal and selfish financial gain," he said. "The United States strongly condemns all piracy on the high seas and views piracy off the coast of Somalia as being a symptom of difficulties and problems that are ongoing ashore."

Maggi described the piracy, ransoming and hijacking off the coast of East Africa as "criminal activity," possibly driven by economic circumstances in that region. Recently, the Maersk Alabama was carrying 5,230 metric tons of humanitarian food bound for the East Africa region on behalf of USAID's Food for Peace Program when four suspected pirates attempted to board and hijack the vessel 560 nautical miles off the northeast coast of Somalia. That food would provide a daily survival ration to 330,000 people for about 30 days. The ship successfully repelled the hijackers with a combination of evasive maneuvers, long-range acoustical devices and action by an armed security team onboard the ship. No injuries to the crew or damage were reported in the incident.

That event, Maggi said, illustrates the need for vessels to take appropriate self-protection measures when transiting waters off the Horn of Africa. "The United States," he said, "urges vessels to implement internationally recognized best management practices as developed by the shipping industry, their flag registry states, and the International Maritime Organization. These practices include self-protection measures such as increasing lookouts, taking evasive action, ensuring ladders are raised on ships, increasing lighting at night, and readying fire pumps to repel boarders. They may also include armed or unarmed security teams on board." An international armada of naval vessels from some 26 nations is now working to combat the piracy problem off the coast of East Africa. It includes ships from Japan, Russia and China in a "pretty unprecedented way," Maggi said, because there is universal desire to eliminate piracy.

Source(s): Charles W. Corey, [All Africa.com](http://allafrica.com), Dec 2, 2009.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200912020948.html>

Amid Talk of Regionalism, Japan Expands Naval Power

When, upon being elected, Japan's Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama spoke of building fraternal seas and constructing a European Union-styled East Asian Community, critics denounced him as a naive peacenik. But Hatoyama's low-profile Nov. 23 decision to commission a new DDH-22 helicopter destroyer -- Japan's largest military vessel since World War II -- suggests he is actually striking a shrewd balance between promoting regionalism and protecting Japan's regional and global interests through robust naval capabilities. The DDH-22 is officially designated as a "helicopter-carrying destroyer" by Japan's Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF). But with its flush flight deck and large, starboard-side island structure, it looks a lot like a "light" aircraft carrier. While Japanese law states that carriers "exceed the war potential needed for a minimal level of self-defense" permitted by Japan's pacifistic post-war constitution, the MSDF has craved such capabilities since the 1960s, and Tokyo has long been inching closer and closer to this goal. Hatoyama's decision to commission the DDH-22 culminates a request first made when the opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was in power, suggesting that a bipartisan consensus exists for the expansion of Japan's naval power.

While defense officials are loathe to say so publicly, the move is at least partly directed at China. Though Japan is still the Pacific's second-largest naval power (after the United States), Beijing's blistering military buildup is threatening to blunt Tokyo's superiority at sea. Earlier this year, China's People's Liberation Army Navy flexed its military muscle by deploying cruise-missile-laden destroyers around energy-rich gas fields in the East China Sea, and by conducting training exercises in the disputed Senkaku Islands. The provocations so rattled Japan's Defense Ministry that it soberly concluded in its annual defense white paper that Tokyo's military posture was "inadequate" to fend off these Chinese encroachments. Hatoyama has already demonstrated his ability to offer a conciliatory posture toward Beijing -- including an apology for Japan's wartime transgressions, a pledge not to visit the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, and the inking of a joint military exercise agreement with Beijing. By approving these defense acquisitions, he has signaled that he is also willing to confront hard military realities. (For details see the full report at World Politics Review).



Source(s): Prashanth Parameswaranm, World Politics Review, 15 Dec, 2009.
<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=4814>

Pyongyang Declares Waters around Northern Limit Line a Firing Range

Issuing its latest military threat, North Korea warned on Dec 21 that it may fire weapons into the Yellow Sea near the disputed naval border on the west coast of the peninsula. The North said ships from South Korea should stay clear of the zone. Through the state-run Korean Central News Agency, the naval command in Pyongyang announced that it would designate the areas near its sea border "a peacetime naval firing zone" for artillery units on the coast and islands in response to South Korea's "reckless military provocations." The command added, "All fishing boats and warships are required to take security measures in that zone to protect themselves."

The North does not recognize the Northern Limit Line, the de facto west coast sea border drawn by the United Nations at the end of the Korean War in 1953. The North says it was created in a unilateral decision and that the border should be drawn further to the south. The area it referred to yesterday includes South Korean waters as defined by the NLL. The sea border disputes led to deadly exchanges in 1999 and 2002 near the west coast island of Yeonpyeong, and again near Daecheong island in November this year. In the most recent skirmish one North Korean was killed and several others were injured as the two sides traded fire. A North Korean ship ignored the South's warnings and crossed the NLL, prompting the South's navy to fire shots. The North called the South Korean response "a grave armed provocation." Pyongyang has crossed the NLL 22 times this year, according to the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff, but the North has frequently accused the South of violating the border and warned that it would take military action if such moves continued.

The South Korean military didn't take the North's most recent statement as a surprise. One official, requesting anonymity, said this was only the latest attempt by the North to nullify the NLL. "As far as I understand, North Korea is experiencing some chaos within after the currency revaluation,"

the official said. "Perhaps the North is deliberately trying to create tension on the peninsula to rally the public and restore order internally." Another official in the military said the NLL remains the definitive sea border between North and South, and added: "We will respond firmly to any attempt to nullify the border, including violation of the border and shooting exercises across the line. We're keeping a close eye on the North Korean military." In what has been a roller coaster of a year for inter-Korean relations, the North has mixed hostile rhetoric with conciliatory gestures to the South.

Source(s): Yoo Jee-ho , Joong Ang Daily, December 22, 2009.
<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2914327>

SL Navy Seizes a Massive LTTE Vessel with a Helipad

Recording another remarkable victory against terrorism the Sri Lankan Navy has seized a massive vessel that was due to be used to help the LTTE leader to escape from the country. Navy Commander Vice Admiral Tisara Samarasinghe says the Navy seized this vessel named as "Princes Chrisantha" in the seas thousands of kilometres far away from Sri Lanka.

The Navy complement headed by Commander D.K.P. Dasanayaka brought the vessel to Colombo harbour at around 12.30 this afternoon. It has been revealed that the vessel was planned to be brought to the Sri Lankan waters during the last stage of the humanitarian operations against terrorism. After being brought in to the sea areas of the country it was the objective of the terrorists to take the LTTE leader and other senior members of the organisation to a foreign country. Furthermore, they had also planned to take the tiger terrorist leader to a safer location by even using a helicopter. Vice Admiral Tisara Samarasinghe says this is clearly evident since a small helipad can be seen in middle of the ship. However, the Navy Commander says all those attempts of the terrorists were averted due to the maritime security programme implemented by the Navy. The "Princes Chrisantha" which is 90 meters in length and 33 meters in height had been manufactured in Japan in 1981. Therefore, this is the largest ever LTTE vessel seized by the Navy. The London Shipping Agency Corporation situated in Manila in Philippines is the owner of the ship. The ship which weights five thousand tons can transport the same amount of tonnage.

Source(s): Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Dec 21, 2009.

<http://www.sbbc.lk/index.php/component/content/article/1-latest-news/2095-navy-seizes-a-massive-ltte-vessel-with-a-helipad>

East Coast to Get Security Cover

The Coast Guard has given finishing touches to a maritime security plan for India's east coast, from where terrorists could launch attacks on the mainland. Sources said the Coast Guard, tasked with securing India's territorial waters extending to 12 miles off the coastline, has sought the Defence Ministry's nod to set up a new regional headquarters in Kolkata. "The defences along the west coast have been tightened after 26/11. The east coast is equally vulnerable. The new hub will improve surveillance off the West Bengal and Orissa coasts," said a senior official. Setting up a hub in Kolkata didn't figure in the original set of coastal security initiatives announced after the Mumbai attacks.

Until now, the Coast Guard's regional headquarters in Chennai controlled the entire east coast. The hub in Kolkata will form the fifth regional headquarters of the Coast Guard, with the other four located at Chennai, Mumbai, Port Blair and Gandhinagar. The new headquarters at Gandhinagar to monitor the Gujarat coast came up after 26/11. The Coast Guard has plans to increase its existing 22 stations to 42 in the next two years. However, it is hamstrung by shortage of manpower and equipment. The 3,000 new posts sanctioned by the government could take three to five years to fill. It could take three to four years to induct the 55 new ships and 45 aircraft.

Source(s): Rahul Singh, Hindustan Times, Dec 15, 2009.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/East-coast-to-get-security-cover/H1-Article1-486634.aspx>

Coastal Security Force to be Operational in Two Years: Indian Navy

The "Sagar Prahri Bal" (SPB), which has been sanctioned for safeguarding India's coastal territory, will be introduced in the next two years with an induction of 1,000-odd security personnel and 95 Fast Interceptor Crafts (FIC), a navy official said. "The force will comprise 61 officers and 939 men and 95 FICs in the first phase. At least 20 of these total number of interceptor crafts have already been delivered and all of these are indigenously built," said Commodore C S Azad, the Naval Officer-in-Charge at an interactive session during the first day of Navy week celebrations here. He said the primary objective of forming the SPB was to augment the coastal security network across the country. "We'll see support from the Coast Guard, Border Security Force (BSF), marine police and all other stake holders of the coastal territory of the nation. We need to develop a comprehensive and collaborative effort to protect the maritime security chain."

About security of the West Bengal coast, Azad said there would be about 150 personnel in the SPB to protect the coastal belts of the state. Two to four FICs would also be given to the state. "The induction of this SPB's radar chain will start from January 2010 and will continue till 2011," he added. Azad also said the force would take care of 12 major and 180 minor ports on the Indian coastline. After the 26/11 terror attack in Mumbai last year, the defence ministry had decided that the Navy would set up the SPB to strengthen the coastal security and surveillance system in the country. The force was targeted to carry out round the clock shallow water operations for seaward anti-terrorist patrols for security of naval assets, besides interception at high speeds and perform search and rescue operations in case of emergencies.

Source(s): IANS, Dec 1, 2009.

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/costal-security-force-to-be-operational-in-two-years-navy_100282823.html

Operating on the High Seas

The term blue-water navy is a colloquialism used to describe a maritime force capable of operating across the deep waters of open oceans. While what actually constitutes such a force remains undefined, there is a requirement for the ability to exercise sea control at wide ranges. In modern warfare blue-water navy implies self-contained force protection from sub-surface, surface and airborne threats and a sustainable logistic reach, allowing a persistent presence at range. Over the past decade, the Indian Navy has been constantly making rapid strides in this area. Since the late 1990s India's attempt to strengthen its maritime status has gathered decisive pace. This all involves India's drive, seen in its 2006 Navy Day of "transforming itself from a 'brown water' coastal defense force to a formidable 'blue water' fleet." It reflects the Indian Navy's own 2003 slogan, and play on words, of Tacking to the Blue Waters.

Technically, a 'blue water' navy is taken as one able to operate over 200 miles (320 kilometres) from shore. The INS Jalashwa, an addition to the Indian Navy was commissioned at the Norfolk, Virginia naval station on June 22, 2007. Formerly the U.S. Navy's amphibious transport dock USS Trenton (LPD-14), the Jalashwa dramatically enhanced the Indian navy's sealift and airlift capabilities. Along with carrying 968 fully-equipped combat troops and their assault vehicles, the ship can function as a command and control platform during mishaps at sea like offshore oil installation fires and maritime air accidents. It will also provide the Indian navy the ability to conduct large-scale relief operations and humanitarian missions, such as those required in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. In 2004, the Indian government concluded a lease-purchase agreement for two Russian-built Akula-II attack submarines, the first nuclear-powered submarines to serve in the Indian Navy since a 1988-1992 trial of a Russian Charlie-class boat. The Akula-II is able to launch anti-ship missiles and advanced long-range, rocket-propelled torpedoes.

In addition, BrahMos Aerospace, the corporate joint venture between India's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and NPOM, Russia's state-supported cruise missile and space technology design bureau, developed an anti-ship missile capable of being launched from surface ships, submarines and aircraft and with a tactical land-attack capability. The BrahMos missile, believed to be the first supersonic anti-ship/land attack missile, was inducted into the Indian Defense forces in November 2006 after a series of successful flight trials. The Navy version was the first to be inducted in 2006. The Indian Navy maintains a Carrier Battle Group around INS Viraat. India launched an SSBN INS Arihant in July 2008, to act as a nuclear deterrent at sea. India has two aircraft carriers under construction that are due to join the fleet in 2014.

Source(s): DNA, December 4, 2009

http://www.dnaindia.com/academy/report_operating-on-the-high-seas_1319793



MARINE ENVIRONMENT

How Offshore Oil and Gas Production Benefits the Economy and the Environment

Conventional wisdom holds that offshore oil and gas production harms the surrounding environment. This blanket "wisdom" ignores the fact that the largest source of marine hydrocarbon pollution is offshore natural oil seepage. It also ignores the fact that offshore oil production has lowered the amount of oil released into the ocean by reducing natural oil seepage, especially in areas with active offshore oil seeps, such as California's Santa Barbara coast. This Heritage Foundation analysis cites studies, developments, and biological facts that demonstrate often-overlooked benefits of offshore oil and gas production.

The oceans surrounding the United States hold tremendous oil and natural gas potential, but much of that potential is not being realized. Nearly 85 percent of these waters -- the Atlantic, the

Pacific, and the eastern Gulf of Mexico -- are off-limits to exploration and drilling. Government studies estimate that these restricted areas hold at least 19 billion barrels of oil -- nearly 30 years' worth of current imports from Saudi Arabia -- and oil estimates are known to increase as exploration occurs. The greatest untapped potential lies in the Pacific. Producing this oil would increase oil supplies, lower prices, and generate large tax revenues -- while creating thousands of jobs in the domestic energy industry. Drilling restrictions in general are imposed due to environmental concerns, despite the fact that offshore environmental damage has been greatly reduced by technologies that minimize the risk of oil spills and other hazards to the environment. In fact, offshore oil production has *lowered* the amount of oil released into the ocean by reducing natural seepage of oil, especially in areas with active offshore oil seeps, such as California's Santa Barbara coast.

Natural hydrocarbon seeps have historically been used to locate the world's usable sources of oil and tar. Papers published by British Petroleum in the early 1990s^[1] show that over 75 percent of the world's oil basins contain surface oil seeps. Most seeps emit small volumes of oil and gas that do not significantly deplete hydrocarbon reservoirs over the short term, but can add up to significant depletion of oil and gas over the longer term. The knowledge that surface seepage has a direct link to subsurface oil and gas accumulations is not new and has been the impetus for many of the world's early major oil and gas discoveries by pioneers of oil production -- as far back as ancient China, and more recently the 1860s in Pennsylvania and the 1890s in Azerbaijan. Natural seeps were the impetus for early exploration of oil in Iran and Iraq in the early 1900s. Natural hydrocarbon seeps continue to be an important indicator of economic oil and gas resources. The high cost of deep-water offshore oil and gas exploration has made the identification of hydrocarbon seeps an important consideration in oil-exploration risk-reduction methods.

Source(s): Bruce Allen Nov 30, 2009

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/EnergyandEnvironment/bg2341.cfm>

Beautiful Sea Forests – Sunderbans in the Bay of Bengal

Salt-resistant, mangrove trees – Sundari trees – lend their name to the Sunderbans, the world's largest delta. It is fed by the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers. Covering about 10,000sq.km, most of it is located in Bangladesh and the other, in West Bengal in India. Both the areas are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The most famous animal of the region – the Royal Bengal Tiger – is found in the Sunderban National Park here. The tiger, which number about a 400, is adapted to pounce, run and swim in the mangrove swamps. There is a tiger reserve that keeps a check on the tigers and their conservation. Other animals found here are Chital deer, barking deer, estuarine crocodiles, variety of birds and turtles, and snakes. The Olive Ridley and Hawk-billed Turtle are famous here. The mangroves are closely monitored by conservationists and the government alike. But it is the natives who are active as they have a symbiotic relationship with the forests. Fuel, timber and food are only some of the things that people here depend on from the mangrove forests. Port Canning, 48km away, is the nearest railhead. Kolkata, 112km away, has the nearest airport. Cruises from Port Canning will take you to several swamp islands and small ports in the Sunderbans. You can spot many animals, birds and reptiles on the way. Many resorts and eco-lodges here will arrange guides and boats for tourists. The best time is between September and May.

Source(s): Dec 2, 2009.

<http://travel.homestayscochin.com/2009/12/02/beautiful-sea-forests-sunderbans-in-bay-of-bengal/>

Panama Canal Receives World-Class Certification for Environmental Management

The Panama Canal Authority's (ACP) Environment Division received ISO 14001-2004 certification resulting from an audit performed by Lloyd's Register Central and South America Inc., during an official ceremony November 17. The recognition underscores the ACP's commitment to protect and maintain its natural resources, and validates its efforts to ensure the Canal provides safe, reliable and efficient service to its customers. The ACP sought the certification because of its firm commitment to the protection of the environment. Moreover, receiving this recognition confirms that the ACP is implementing robust management procedures. ISO standards are implemented by more than 610,000 organizations in 160 countries. These standards help to enrich quality management at organizations, including enhancing customer satisfaction and continually improving performance. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a non-governmental organization, is the "world's largest developer of standards"

ACP's Environment Division ISO certification will be valid for a period of three years through 2012. The ACP received its first Environmental Management ISO (14001-1996) certification in 2003. Other departments and divisions at the ACP have received ISO certification, including the Operations Department, the Contracting Division, the Industrial Shipyard, Electrical and Aqueduct Divisions and

the Safety Division. The ACP is the autonomous agency of the Government of Panama in charge of managing, operating and maintaining the Panama Canal. The operation of the ACP is based on its organic law and the regulations approved by its Board of Directors.

Source(s): MarEx eNewsletter, Dec 3, 2009.

<http://www.maritime-executive.com/article/2009-11-30-panama-canal-receives-world-class-certification-environmental-management/>

Rise in Sea Levels Threatens California Ports

Global warming and a resulting rise in sea levels present a direct threat to the world's seaports -- and many of California's harbors are nowhere near ready, state officials say. Sea levels in California are expected to increase 16 inches over the next 40 years, causing flooding and endangering facilities throughout the state, according to a report by the California State Lands Commission. By 2100, the ocean could rise as much as 55 inches, the report said. Most of the 40 ports and shipping hubs surveyed by the state said they were not prepared for the rise in sea levels. At the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, rising water could damage ground-level facilities and toxic-waste storage sites, said Geraldine Knatz, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, the state's largest.

In Oakland, the site of the state's third-biggest port, higher water could cause flooding and impede the movement of goods on highways and by rail, officials said in response to questions in the survey. "We need to start planning for these things now, so that we're not caught having to do a lot of remedial repair work 15 years to 20 years into the future," Knatz said in an interview on Dec 14.

To help prepare for the sea level increase locally, the Port of Los Angeles plans to take part in a Rand Corp. study of sea level rising. Because ships have become bigger over the years, the port's cargo container wharves are already about 15 feet above sea level. The port's oldest docks are 12 feet above sea level. Long Beach has used fill from major construction projects to elevate some of its port facilities 10 feet above sea level, said Al Moro, Long Beach's chief harbor engineer. Experts said some preparations would come naturally from the need to service ships of increasing size and height. "The big, modern ports should be able to handle small to moderate increases in sea levels," Asaf Ashar, head of the Washington office of the National Ports and Waterways Institute. A far more alarming assessment was released last week by the Munich, Germany, office of the World Wildlife Fund, the Munich-based insurer Allianz and the Tyndall Center for Climate Change Research at the University of East Anglia. That study suggested that too little attention had been focused on the combination of rising water levels in conjunction with other events, such as hurricane damage along the U.S. East Coast.

In the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana region, sea level rise could expose \$96.5 billion of infrastructure to damage, the WWF-Allianz report said. It said cities like New York could face damages in the hundreds of billions of dollars if rising sea level is combined with hurricane storm surges. For its survey, the California State Lands Commission used research from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego, the U.S. Geological Survey, Santa Clara University, the California Department of Boating and Waterways and the Hydrologic Research Center. Of 104 ports and shipping hubs contacted by the state for its survey, just 40 responded -- and most of those appear to be unprepared, officials said.

Source(s): By Ronald D. White. Los Angeles Times, Dec 10 2009.

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-ports-warming10-2009dec10.0.3094074.story>



MARITIME COOPERATION

U.S. to Help Boost Cambodia's Seaport Security for Avoiding Nuclear Smuggling

The United States on Monday(Dec 14) inked an agreement with Cambodia to help the latter to strengthen the seaport security to avoid the nuclear smuggling and other radioactive material in the country. Carol A. Rodley, U.S. ambassador to Cambodia, and Cambodian Senior Minister Om Yen Tieng signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments at the Secretariat of the National Counter Terrorism Committee (SNCTC) in Phnom Penh, a press release from the U.S.

Embassy said. The agreement launched a cooperative effort to help deter, detect, and interdict illicit smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive material.

"The agreement, known as the Megaports Initiative, paves the way for the Kingdom of Cambodia to install radiation detection equipment at the Autonomous Port of Sihanoukville," it said. According to the agreement, in addition to providing equipment and related infrastructure, the United States will also train Cambodian officials on the use and maintenance of the equipment. "The installation of radiation detection equipment at the port will improve Cambodia's ability to monitor cargo at this critical location and underscores the importance of the country's seaports in regional maritime security," it added. It said that the Megaports Initiative is now operational at 28 ports around the world. Work is underway at additional ports in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

Source(s): Xinhua, Dec 14, 2009.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/14/content_12646187.htm



MARITIME LEGISLATION

Antarctic Nations Consider New Controls on Ships

Countries that manage Antarctica are considering new controls on ships visiting the frozen continent to reduce the growing threat of human and environmental disasters posed by exploding numbers of tourists, an official said last week. A proposal for a code to ensure ships plying the world's southernmost seas could withstand hitting an iceberg and other measures are being discussed at a meeting this week in New Zealand of more than 80 experts from signatories to the Antarctic Treaty, the international accord to oversee the region. Antarctica's pristine environment, unpredictable and extreme weather, mostly uncharted waters and vast distances from habitation pose major dangers for vessels and major problems for rescuers in any emergency. In the past, most shipping in Antarctica has been limited to scientific vessels bringing researchers or supplies. But traffic has burgeoned in recent years as tourists flock to see the world's last great wilderness. Annual tourist numbers have grown from about 10,000 a decade ago to 45,000 last year. Tourists can pay between \$3,000 and \$24,000 for a two-week trip, in style ranging from basic to all-out luxury.



Existing rules bar tourists or tour operators from leaving anything behind – like garbage or human waste – and protect animal breeding grounds. But there are no formal codes on the kind of vessels that can use the waters or the kinds of fuel and other chemicals that they can carry. In a recent scare, the Canadian cruise ship Explorer hit an iceberg and sank in November 2007. All 154 people aboard were saved by a nearby Norwegian vessel during a window of good weather, but light fuel oil continues to leak into surrounding waters from the Explorer's sunken hull. Four other passenger ships have run aground in Antarctica in the past three years. Trevor Hughes, the head of Antarctic policy at New Zealand's foreign ministry, said the sinking of the ice-strengthened Explorer was a wake-up call to Antarctic Treaty nations, and experts from all key members of the Antarctic Treaty now want a tough new code for shipping in Antarctica.

"Without regulations, we are going to have a disaster where a lot of lives are lost and where oil spills out into the environment, and we see penguins being smothered and poisoned by fuel oil in their rookeries," Hughes told The Associated Press. The proposed code, which must be ratified by treaty states to become binding, would cover vessel design and construction for polar operations, equipment and crew training. In a similar move, the UN International Maritime Organization recently approved guidelines for ships in polar waters. New Zealand is one of the dozen founding members of the Antarctic Treaty, along with the United States, Russia, Britain and others, and is among those leading the push for shipping regulation.

Ray Lilley, The Associated Press, Dec 14, 2009.

<http://www.thestar.com/travel/article/738256--antarctic-nations-considering-new-controls-on-ships-amid-tourism-explosion>

SHIPPING

Chinese Throughput a Quarter of Global Box Port Traffic

Data released in December from the United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD) shows that Chinese box port throughput makes up a quarter of total box port traffic in the world. According to its Review of Maritime Transport 2009, world box port throughput rose by an estimated 4% to hit handling capacity for 506 million TEUs in 2008. Mainland Chinese ports accounted for about 22.6%, or close to a quarter, of total global box port throughput. The addition of Hong Kong figures would push total Chinese box throughput over a quarter of global container traffic.

This increase could add more pressure on what the UNCTAD has described as “challenging times ahead for the shipping industry”. According to its Review of Maritime Transport 2009, the global economic downturn and financial crisis has slowed growth in world seaborne trade, whilst an increase in the supply of vessels has kept freight rates depressed. “Decelerated growth” in international seaborne trade came about in 2008, according to the UNCTAD, on the back of credit tightening brought about by the global financial crisis and reduced demand for goods and shipping services. “At the same time, the supply of new vessels continued to grow. This growth was the result of vessel orders placed before the financial crisis, when the industry was still expecting continuing high growth rates in demand - which did not materialize,” said the UNCTAD.

Looking ahead, “as the world’s shipping capacity continues to increase, the industry finds itself confronted with a surge of oversupply and tumbling freight rates,” said the UNCTAD. According to the UNCTAD, these challenges are further compounded by other developments, including maritime security at sea and the need to address the climate change challenge. The Review of Maritime Transport 2009 highlighted that the global merchant fleet had expanded 6.7% this year, with carrying capacity for 1.9 billion dwt. According to data from the Review, tanker tonnage went up 2.5% compared to a 7% increase for dry bulk carriers. “For the first time, the total tonnage on dry bulk carriers has exceeded the tonnage on oil tankers,” said the Review. Bulk carriers including tankers are estimated to make up 71.2% of the global merchant fleet at the moment. Meanwhile, the global fleet of fully cellular box ships “continued to expand substantially” in 2008. By the beginning of 2009 there were 4,638 ships, with total capacity for 12.14 million TEUs. This was an increase of 8.5% in terms of ship strength and 12.9% in terms of TEU capacity, from previous year levels.

Source(s): World Port.com, Dec 11, 2009.

http://www.portworld.com/news/i90386/Chinese_throughput_a_quarter_of_global_box_port_traffic

MARINE TECHNOLOGY

Technology to Combat High Seas piracy

A sophisticated electronic early warning system aimed at combating soaring levels of piracy on the high seas has been developed by engineers at BAE Systems of UK. The company is working in partnership with major ship owners, to assess commercial requirements in order to create the most effective solution to this increasing threat to maritime security. As a result, the team at BAE Systems has used its expertise in the defence, security and aerospace sectors to develop a suite of technology that enables a crew to detect a ship and identify suspicious activity at distances of up to 25km, long before pirate vessels become a threat. The early warning system gives the crew the vital time needed to take evasive action or alert navies to the danger.

Nick Stoppard, BAE Systems Director of Solutions Development said: "Piracy is on the rise. Attacks in 2008 were double those of the previous year and there is a clear need for better methods to help commercial ships identify and evade pirates before an attack occurs. We have used our expertise in security engineering, technical analysis, systems design and integration to develop a layered defence system to improve the safety and security of ships and their crew. "This technology is just one aspect of work that we are undertaking across BAE Systems to address emerging global security issues."The system draws on a range of current capabilities developed by BAE Systems and includes:

- High Frequency Surface Wave Radar to detect small boats well beyond the horizon at up to 25km
- Panoramic Area Surveillance System 360 video camera and display system to provide visual identification. It includes movement detection and threat level alarms, with plans to incorporate infra-red
- Passive Radar Identification System (PRISM) to provide early warning of an unidentified radar carrying vessel

- Improved lighting to increase the likelihood of detecting intruders within the immediate vicinity of the ship at night and act as a deterrent

BAE Systems is currently undertaking a feasibility study into the use of this technology with ship owners and specialists from security organisations. Technology and capability sea trials in partnership with ship owners are expected to take place within the first three months of next year.

Source(s): defence web, Dec 3, 2009.

http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5695:technology-to-combat-high-seas-piracy&catid=51:Sea&Itemid=106

MARITIME HERITAGE

Remembering a Maritime Disaster 68 Years Ago

Let's have a brief respite from our political reports and talk a bit about history. Sixty eight years ago to this day, on Dec.17,1941 a little known maritime disaster happened in Manila Bay near Sisiman Cove on Corregidor Island (little known because the war had started and news reports stopped coming). The Compania Maritima ocean-going vessel S.S. Corregidor on its way to Cebu City and then to Australia struck a mine, broke in half and sunk very rapidly causing untold casualties. On board that vessel was Benjamin Avila, who was an expert swimmer and a noted athlete from De La Salle University who after graduation came home to Cebu and was asked to coach the University of Southern Philippines (USP) Varsity Team. He brought his team to Manila for an exhibition match against De La Salle and was coming home on the S.S. Corregidor when the tragedy struck. The details of the tragedy has been revealed in a book titled "Close Quarters' PT Boats in the United States Navy" by Naval Historian Robert J. Bulkey in collaboration with then Pres. John F. Kennedy.

"S.S. Corregidor. On the night of December 17 there was a large explosion in Sisiman Cove. Looking out across the entrance to Manila Bay, the men of Squadron 3 could see many flashing lights on the water. Lieutenant John Bulkeley immediately got PT's 32, 34 and 35 underway. At the edge of the minefield at the entrance of the bay they found the water thick with oil and dotted with survivors of the S.S. Corregidor, a Filipino ship carrying evacuees from Manila to Australia. Leaving the harbor on a faulty course, the Corregidor had struck a mine and gone down immediately. The PT crews rigged ladders and lines over the side, and worked until they were exhausted, hauling the wet and oily passengers aboard. Not until they put the survivors ashore at Corregidor and aboard the SS Si-Kiang at Mariveles were they able to count them. When they did, they could scarcely believe the total. The three boats had picked up 296 passengers, of whom all but 7 survived. PT 32, a 77-foot boat designed to carry 2 officers and 9 men had taken aboard, in addition to its own crew, 196 passengers from the Corregidor." Since Don Jose Avila was very close to the Americans (he was one of the first Cebuanos to speak English and was called the Little Governor) he personally went to Gen. Douglas MacArthur when he couldn't find his son on the hospitals along Manila Bay. Gen. MacArthur dispatched his PT boats for a search and rescue operation, but didn't find any more survivors.

These PT Boats became part of Philippine history when they brought Gen. Douglas MacArthur from Corregidor to Cagayan de Oro. PT 32 went missing off the Calamian Group (it must have sunk during a squall) while PT-34, PT-35 and PT-41 went to Cebu City after they dropped off Gen. MacArthur. PT-34 and PT-41 went off to Tañon Strait and torpedoed the Japanese Cruiser Kuma but only damaged it. Its float planes eventually found the PTs in Cebu City. In a mad dash to outrun the planes, PT-34 was strafed by the Jap planes and ran aground in Kawit Island and burned. Amongst the survivors of the S.S. Corregidor that I know of is Mrs. Adelaida "Laling" Pages Javier and Celestino "Tinong" Tugot, the famous golfer from the Del Monte Golf Course. The S.S. Corregidor was reportedly carrying some 1,200 passengers (who knows, it may have carried more). Only 296 people were rescued by the PT-boats. There were most probably some 900 people who perished in this maritime disaster. Before she was named the S.S. Corregidor, this vessel was once the HMS Engadine a seaplane tender (this was before the era of Aircraft Carriers) that participated in the famous Cuxhaven Raid in Northern Germany on Christmas Day in 1914 at the start of World War I when they raided Zeppelin (blimps that were used for reconnaissance missions) hangars. Later she also participated in the famous Battle of Jutland in 1914 which was considered the largest naval battle of World War I.

Source(s): Valeriano Avila, The Freeman, Dec 17, 2009

<http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=533166&publicationSubCategoryId=109>

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