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The 1980 built research vessel HUMBOLDT seen anchored off Callao (Peru), The 1,731 grt/600 dwt modified stern-haul factory trawler is well-equipped for oceanographic and fisheries research, the 2 Burmeister & Wain Alpha diesels with a total output of 3000 hp giving this 76 mtr long vessel a maximum speed of 14 knots

#### **Photo : Piet Sinke** ©

**PSi-Daily Shipping News** 

# **SMITWIJS TOWAGE B.V.**



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### **EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS**



The HOS BRIMSTONE seen discharging alongside Heerema's SSCV BALDER in the Gulf of Mexico, note in the background the UNION MANTA
Photo: Willem Poot – Balder ©

# Somalia: A Somali MP is Involved in the Hijacked Cargo Vessel--Says an Islamist

In a press conference held in south Mogadishu by Islamic Courts judiciary council leader Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys and national security secretary Sheik Yusuf Mohammed Siad Indho-adde have described the pirate hunting operation in Somalia's Indian Ocean coasts as a successful salvage operation.

Sheik Aweys, the Courts supreme leader, expressed happiness over the rescue operation, indicating that people against the success of the Islamists had been behind the hijacking of **MV Veesham 1**, a cargo ship registered in Emirates.

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Yusuf Indho-adde stated that during the salvage operation by Islamist fighters, two ships he described belonged to Engineer Munye Sa'id Omar, a Somali parliamentarian who after the fall of former government took over 3 huge government vessels, as he was one of former Somali high-ranking marine officials, shot them several times.

Indho-adde said, "The ship was rescued by the "marines" of the Islamic Courts"

Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed, Somalia's Union of Islamic Courts executive council leader, has also praised Islamist fighters in a news conference in Mogadishu Wednesday following the retrieval of the hijacked Dubai registered cargo vessel carrying charcoal from Mogadishu port of El-maan.

Sheik Ahmed, detailing how **MV Viishaam1** was freed, stressed that it was a political conspiracy by some people he did not specify, pledging that the pirates would be brought to an Islamic court.

"After fierce exchange of gunshots between the pirates and the Courts fighters, our forces have stormed in the ship and rescued crew members and the captain, capturing eight Somali pirates", Sheik Ahmed said.

Somalia's Union of Islamic Courts has seized most of Somalia's central and southern Somalia, including the capital Mogadishu early June this year after deadly skirmishes that engulfed the lives of nearly thousand people and more than 1,500 were wounded. Most of the victims were civilians.

Indho-adde has also condemned the federal government for being involved in the hijacking, mentioning Somali parliamentarian engineer Munye's two ships that shot four fast Islamist boats onboard about 40 heavily armed Islamic fighters who finally caught the pirates.

This has been the first victorious pirate hunting operation in Somalia's Indian Ocean by the Union of Islamic Courts since they took control of the capital city Mogadishu nearly five months ago, making their positions at the heart of Somalia's pirate stronghold in Mudug province, central Somalia.

Eight Somali pirates armed with automatic weapons took over control the vessel while it set out from Mogadishu port carrying charcoal to UAE, demanding \$150,000.

**MV Veesham 1**, registered in Emirates was the first to be hijacked in Somalia's coasts since Union of Islamic Courts took control of the capital.

### **Coast Guard Responds to Barge Fire**

According to reports, A cargo van whose contents caught fire on a barge was still billowing smoke as the vessel was being towed to Juneau from Frederick Sound. Officials said the fire broke out in the van, which was full of solid waste being shipped on an Alaska Marine Lines barge from Sitka to the disposal site in Washington state. A firefighting tug from Petersburg and a Coast Guard cutter hosed the blaze through the night. The firefighting tug continued to spray water on the fire Tuesday morning alongside the loaded barge, the Daily Sitka Sentinel. Coast Guard Lt. Mara Booth-Miller said the AML tug and barge were diverted to Juneau.

Nine containers of the 94 aboard the barge Baranof Provider caught fire while under tow by the AML tug Western Mariner, she said. Tug crew members were never in danger, and no one was on board the 200-foot barge, the report said.

### Zelfrichtend vermogen redde levens Amelander reddingbootbemanning Belangrijke kantelproef nieuwe reddingboot in Hindeloopen

Ruim een week na het omslaan van de Amelander reddingboot **Anna Margaretha** staat een geplande 'kantelproef' op het programma van de Koninklijke Nederlandse Redding Maatschappij (KNRM). Op zaterdag 11 november om 11.00 uur is de haven van Hindeloopen het decor voor een belangrijke zeewaardigheidstest van een nieuwe reddingboot voor reddingstation Den Helder. Wanneer de reddingboot zich na de eerste kanteling zonder problemen opricht, is het de beurt aan de toekomstige bemanning van het schip om actief aan de kantelproef deel te nemen.

In de ochtend van 1 november kapseisde de Amelander reddingboot tot drie maal toe. De enorme klappen die de reddingboot en haar bemanning opliepen kregen schip en bemanning echter niet klein. Met lichte verwondingen konden schipper en bemanning de gehavende reddingboot op eigen kracht in veilige haven brengen. Eenmaal aan wal reageerde schipper Kees de Boer opgelucht: "**Mijn bemanning zweefde ergens in het stuurhuis rond, ikzelf** hing in mijn gordel op mijn kop. Na een kort moment van aarzeling draaide de boot door en lag weer op z'n buik in het water. We hebben ons leven aan deze reddingboot te danken".



Het is voor de bemanningsleden van de KNRM dus niet ondenkbaar in een situatie terecht te komen waarbij een reddingboot door metershoge golven omver wordt geslagen. De schepen

van de KNRM worden gebouwd om alle denkbare weersomstandigheden te kunnen doorstaan. De bemanning wordt getraind om bekend te raken met een dergelijke situatie door tijdens de kantelproef aan boord van de reddingboot plaats te nemen. De test moet de bemanning ook vertrouwen geven in de zeewaardigheid van 'hun' schip.

De kantelproef is één van de laatste tests alvorens de reddingboot in Den Helder zal worden gestationeerd. Enige weken na de kantelproef volgt een serie proefvaarten en de belangrijke duurproef. Tijdens deze duurproef zal de reddingboot een tocht maken van minimaal 10 uur om het schip inclusief alle apparatuur voor langere tijd te beproeven. Naar verwachting zal de reddingboot **Joke Dijksta** in januari in Den Helder worden gestationeerd.

### **Five More to Leave MarAd Reserve Fleet**

Five ships moored in Virginia, California, and Texas will be headed to recycling yards under contracts announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration. Two of the ships are from the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet in Benicia, Calif.; two are from the Beaumont Reserve Fleet in Texas; and one is from the James River Reserve Fleet in Newport News, Va.

Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton siad that plans worked out with Congress called for the removal of at least 13 ships from the fleet sites in 2006, and that the agency has almost doubled that number, removing 25. The ships scheduled for recycling include the **Vulcan**, a former Navy repair ship built in 1941, which will leave the James River site to be dismantled at Bay Bridge Enterprises, LLC, of Chesapeake, Va., under the terms of a contract worth \$494,000. In 1978, the **Vulcan** was the first Navy ship on which women were deployed, except for hospital ships. The two ships from Suisun Bay are **Queens Victory**, a 1945-vintage Victory Ship, which will go to Esco Marine, Inc., of Brownsville, Texas, under terms of a contract work \$1,180,000, and **Jason**, a Navy repair ship built in 1943, which will go to Esco Marine? **Maumee**, a tanker built in 1956, will be dismantled at a cost of \$405,726, and **Maryland**, a container ship built in 1963, will be dismantled for \$400,000. The companies have up to 45 days to remove the ships from the fleet sites.

### **Pirated ship recovered off Somalia**

Islamist fighters who control a large area of southern Somalia stormed a ship hijacked by pirates and recovered it overnight, a maritime official said on Wednesday.

The seizure is the first delivery by the Islamists on a promise to stamp out rampant piracy in the shipping lanes along its coast, the longest in Africa.

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The Islamists seized the capital in June from US-backed warlords and went on to take over much of south-central Somalia, imposing sharia law.

Andrew Mwangura, co-ordinator of the Seafarers Assistance Programme, said all 14 crew were safe and two pirates were wounded during the Islamist boarding.



The PRINSENDAM seen moored behind the DB 101 in Cape Town - Photo : Ian Shiffman ©

The **Prinsendam** was scheduled to shift from the V & A Waterfront passenger berth, Cape Town, to a bunker berth in the Duncan Dock at 0200 this Thursday morning, November 9. Gale force winds delayed the shifting of berths until; 0600 Thursday morning. The **Prinsendam** berthed at the Eastern Mole behind the crane barge **DB101**, which was to shift from her Berth to Table Bay anchorage at 0900 this Thursday morning. The amended departure time for **Prinsendam** was now scheduled for Thursday evening 1900 hrs, when she sails for Fort Lauderdale via Walvis Bay.

### **Sea Pollution Near Vladivostok Growing**

The sea pollution with petroproducts near Vladivostok is growing with every passing month. The entire area of Zolotoy Rog Bay is already covered with an oil film, Itar-Tass learnt at the territorial hydrometeorological center. Concentration of petroproducts in water has nearly doubled in the autumn as against summer months.

The high level of pollution was registered over the entire area of the Bay of Amur and Ussuri Bay, which were regarded as pure in the past. These findings were made by specialists of the Primorye hydrometeorological center and

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the Sea Protection Institute who completed explorations at the network of observation stations, located along the entire coast of Peter the Great Bay.

Explorations showed that sea pollution is rising at a rapid rate near Vladivostok. Concentration of petroproducts in water tops ceiling figures 10-20 times. Experts registered a considerable rise in the content of phenol and mercury.

Scholars called as reasons for this situation the continued discharge into the sea of petroproducts, unpurified sewage and industrial waters as well as a great number of unauthorized junks along the bay.

Late last year, the administration of the Primorye Territory took some measures to improve the ecological situation in Zolotoy Rog Bay. The authorities imposed personal responsibility of leaseholders of piers for water pollution and worked out a system of fines. However, these measures have not yielded any results so far.

### **Cargo Ships Run Aground in Yangtze River**

Dozens of cargo ships loaded with coal, sand and ore have run aground on the Hanjiang River, the longest branch of the Yangtze River, due to the lowest water level for 77 years, reports Xinhua.

About 70 cargo ships ran aground at Xiangfan, a city in the middle reaches of the river, according to the local maritime office. The average water level is less than 0.8 meters which is only navigable for ships under one hundred tons.

A lack of substantial rainfall in the upper reaches since the beginning of August is the major cause of the low water level.

The 1,532-km tributary originates in Shaanxi Province, traverses Henan Province before joining the Yangtze River in Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province. The river's middle reaches in Hubei are busy with ships carrying raw materials from north to south.

### CASUALTY REPORTING Crewman dies off Australia

A crewman on the 100–gt tug **Arjuna 11** (built 1985) has been killed in a towing operation off Darnley Island, Australia. the accident took place off Queensland on 21 October, according to the Torres News. The dead man was named as Ernesto Urbano, 52, who came from the city of Cagayan De Oro in the Philippines.

Engineer Urbano was working on the rear deck at the time. A spokesperson for owner Sea Swift, of Cairns, described Urbano as "a particularly nice man who got on well with everyone". Police said the investigation into the death was ongoing.

### NAVY NEWS

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## S.C. workers to help refurbish WWII ship

About two dozen employees of Hampton Hotels in South Carolina volunteered Wednesday to work on refurbishing the **DD 724 USS Laffey.** A World War II destroyer commissioned in 1943, the **Laffey** is retired at Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum in Charleston.

The **Laffey** saw action at Utah Beach on D-Day and fought in the battle of Iwo Jima. In just one hour, the Laffey was hit by five Japanese Kamikaze planes and three bombs, but stayed afloat. It was nicknamed "the ship that wouldn't die." The **Laffey** earned five battle stars and a Presidential Unit Citation for its WWII service. It received two battle stars in the Korean War, and was decommissioned in 1975

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## Nederlandse scheepsbouw succesvol, orderportefeuille 6,5 miljard euro

De orderportefeuille van de Nederlandse scheepsbouw is momenteel 6,5 miljard euro groot, aanzienlijk meer dan in 2005. De werven hebben op praktisch alle deelmarkten uitstekend gepresteerd, meldde VNSI-voorzitter ir M.J. van der Wal donderdagmiddag tijdens de ledenvergadering voorafgaand aan het Maritime Awards Gala te Groenekan.

De zeescheepsbouw (inclusief marinebouw) kent in 2006 opnieuw een hoge orderintake van € 2 miljard (2005: € 1,7 miljard). De zeescheepsreparatie realiseert in 2006 een verwachte omzet van € 300 miljoen (2005: € 250 miljoen). In de kleine scheepsbouw is de orderintake gestabiliseerd op naar verwachting € 450 miljoen, daarbij de piek van 2005 (€ 600 miljoen) achter zich latende. De stijgende lijn van 2003 (€ 231 miljoen) en 2004 (€ 317miljoen) blijft hiermee gehandhaafd. In de grote jachtbouw bedraagt de orderintake in 2006 naar schatting € 800 miljoen (2005: € 700 miljoen). De nieuwbouwwerven hebben daarmee tot ver in 2009 werk.

#### Innovatie

De heer Van der Wal sprak zijn waardering uit voor de nieuwe RDI-regeling die het ministerie van Economische Zaken heeft afgekondigd (3 x  $\in$  20 miljoen). De Nederlandse werven zijn hiermee in een gelijke positie gebracht met de overige werven in Europa. Van der Wal beschouwt het tevens als een erkenning van de innovatieve kracht van de Nederlandse scheepsbouw.

#### Honderden vacatures

De economische situatie, de vooruitzichten voor de komende jaren alsmede de vergrijzingsproblematiek hebben inmiddels honderden vacatures doen ontstaan. VNSI werkt momenteel in samenwerking met verschillende onderwijsinstituten aan een actieplan. Dit plan zal begin 2007 in werking treden.

### Aker Yards to build giant ferries for Stena

Aker Yards has inked a contract with Stena Rederi AB in Gothenburg (Sweden) for two 62,000 gt Super Ferries. Deliveries are scheduled for the first and third quarter of 2010. The value of the contract is approximately EUR 400



million (about \$511 million). The contract includes options for two further vessels of the same type.

Aker Yards says the basic design of these special ferries will take place in Finland and the building in

Germany. Aker's yards in Finland and France, which traditionally serve the ferry business, were fully booked for the delivery dates requested by Stena. Aker Yards with its17 yards cooperating across borders had the possibility to offer building of the ferries in Germany.

Aker Yards, Germany has experience in building passenger ships and roro ferries, and the designer, Aker Yards, Rauma has experience in designing and building of passenger and car ferries for more than 20 years.

The 62,000 GT ships will each be 240 m long and 32 m wide with a passenger capacity of 1,200. Each will provide 5,500 m of trailer lanes and 700 m of car lanes. With a main engine output of 4 x 8,000 kW (4-stroke diesel engines) they will reach a service speed of 22 knots.

### **New Japanese shipyard**

Japan's Minaminippon Shipbuilding Co. is to build Japan's first new shipyard since 2000. It will open by April 2008 and will be able to build 100,000 dwt tankers. The yard will be built on land to be purchased in Oita Prefecture and will include a repair dock. Minanippon, which specializes in tankers and car carriers, will also expand its existing shipyard in Oita,

Minaminippon plans to increase its output from the current five ships a year to eight per year by FY 2011.

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The **CLIPPER ENTERPRISE** seen departing from Callao port **Photo : Piet Sinke** ©

### Vietnam launches most powerful rescue tug boat

The Song Thu Co. handed over to the Navy on Monday the most powerful marine rescue ship ever built in Viet Nam.

The 3,500hp tug boat was handed over at a ceremony in the central Da Nang City. It is equipped with a screwpropeller system, fire extinguishers, a decompression chamber, and other life-saving equipment. It can also tow large vessels to safety. The ship, to be based at the Naval Command in Da Nang, took 17 months to build, uses Dutch technology, and can be deployed for 30 days at sea, operating within a 3,000-nautical-mile range under all conditions.

In related news, the defence ministry-owned Song Thu Co. is working with the Dutch Damen group to build a multipurpose vessel to respond to oil spill incidents in the central region and four towing vessels for export to Europe.

It also commissioned on Monday the country's most modern computer-controlled dry dock. The 60m-long dock is designed by the US-based Rolls Royce group.

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# **CMB MAKES US\$50M ON BULKER SALE**

BELGIAN-based CMB's bulk carrier owning subsidiary Bocimar International has sold the capesize shi **Mineral Poterne** for US\$70m. CMB says the capital gain on the sale is about US\$50m which will be recorded when the ship is delivered to its new owners, scheduled for March 2007.

CMB has also set up two joint venture agreements with Norwegian owner JB Ugland. The first involves three 33,000 dwt and two19,800 dwt chemical carrier newbuildings owned 50/50 by the two companies with delivery of the vessels scheduled for 2010 and 2011. The second involves four 29,100 dwt bulk carrier newbuildings, two to be fully owned and two long-term time chartered with purchase options, with deliveries scheduled for 2008 and 2009. CMB has a 33% stake in the JV.



## **GOOD MARKET BOOSTS FARSTAD**

NORWEGIAN-based offshore support specialist Farstad Shipping made a Q3 operating profit of NKr536.8m (US\$83.5m), up by NKR99.2m on Q1 due, says Farstad, "to a combination of a very good market, increased number of vessels in the fleet and favourable exchange rate development".

Farstad says: "The market for the supply vessel fleet is now very good. The rate level has improved in all markets both for the AHTS and PSV. In the North Sea there has been close to full utilization during the quarter resulting in a record high rate level. The increased activity level in the North Sea this year has particularly been important to maintain the market balance and a high rate level for the PSV fleet. There are presently approx. 20 more PSV vessels operating in the North Sea compared with the same period last year. We are expecting a correction in the market for PSV vessels as a consequence of the large number of vessels still under construction (approx. 110 vessels with DWT greater than 2000 DWT). The rate level for the AHTS fleet is expected to be good also in the near future. However, if the number of newbuilds continues to rise this might result in a temporary unbalance in the market." The company's adds: "High oil prices, the oil companies increased focus on exploration and the contracting of new rigs are positive for the demand of supply vessels. The contract coverage for the Farstad-fleet in 2007 is approx. 66%."



The SMIT DENEMARKEN and the SMIT ARUBA seen in the Caland Canal – Photo : Jan Oosterboer ©

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# **APM runt havens in Bahrein**

APM Terminals wordt de exploitant van de havens Mina Salman en Khalifa Bin Salman in Bahrein.

Behalve voor de containerterminals in beide havens heeft de concessie betrekking op de overslag van general cargo en andere operationele activiteiten, zoals het aanbieden van loodsdiensten. Khalifa Bin Salman is de nieuwe haven van het emiraat die in 2008 gereed is. APM Terminals Bahrain is een joint venture met de Arabische transportgroep Kanoo.

## **More Losses for TUI**

TUI, the German tourism company which owns box lines Hapag-Lloyd and CP Ships, has suffered another loss, reports Tradewinds.



The **NEW YORK EXPRESS** at Flushing pilot station **Photo : Peter Andriessen** ©

It said the shipping division's pre-tax deficit was EUR 91m (\$116.28m) in the nine months to 30 September, compared to a profit of EUR 218m in the same period of 2005.

Shipping revenues jumped to EUR 4.75bn from EUR 2.3bn as CP Ships was added to the accounts.

The market was characterised by a reduction in freight rates and high costs, TUI said.

The integration of CP Ships also hit the bottom line, with a total cost of EUR 100m to be booked in 2006. But savings from the merger will amount to EUR 220m.

Average freight rates per box were \$1,431, down 4.2% year-on-year. Overall, freight rates dropped in almost all trade lanes due to intense competition.

# **Presentation of Evergreen's Boxship**

"Ever Superb", the fifth in the Evergreen Group's series of 7024 TEU S-class container vessels, has been named Ship of the Year 2006 by leading Asian maritime publication Lloyd's List Maritime Asia.

The presentation was made to Dato Dr Kenny Ong, Chairman of Evergreen Marine Corp (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd at the 8th Lloyd's List Maritime Asia Awards held at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 2 November 2006. With an overall length of 300 metres and a beam of 42.8 metres, the S-class vessels are able to carry containers 17 rows across on deck and 15 rows across below deck. They have a deadweight of 78,200 tons on a service draft of 14.2 metres. Each vessel has a single 10-cylinder Mitsubishi Sulzer 10RTA96C main engine developing 74,700bhp 54,900KW) to provide for a service speed of 25.3 knots.

"Hatsu Shine" was the first vessel in the S-class series to enter service when she was delivered to the Evergreen Group's UK shipping company Hatsu Marine Limited in September 2005. Following three further S-class deliveries to Hatsu Marine, **Ever Superb** became the first S-class vessel to enter operation with affiliate company Evergreen Marine Corp. The vessel is currently serving on the HTW service linking Hong Kong and Taiwan with the US West Coast.

The last vessel in the S-type series is due for delivery to Evergreen Marine Corp before 2008.



#### Due to a strike in the Spanish port of Valencia MSC decided to skip this port with the MSC SUSANNA and to proceed to Northern Europe, normally the port of Antwerp is in the schedule of the MSC SUSANNA, but due to her draft of 15.1 mtr it was decided to enter the Port of Zeebrugge, at the CHZ (Container Handling Zeebrugge) about 1500 containers were discharged which were original bound for Valancia, the containers were transshipped to the MSC GINA which was moored behind the MSC SUSANNA, the MSC SUSANNA broke a record in view of her draft for a Flemish port. The MSC SUSANNA with a DWT of 110623, measures a length of 336,67 mtr and a beam of 45.6 mtr Photo : Henk Claeys ©

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The **COSCO ROTTERDAM** seen at the Westerscheldt river **Photo : Alain Dooms** ©



The CARNIVAL SPIRIT seen moored in Ensenada (Mexico) Photo : Roland van Velzen ©

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The **SEABULK ARIZONA** working for Amerada Hess in Okume Oilfield offshore Equatorial Guinea. **Photo : Jan Plug** ©

## AIRCRAFT / AIRPORT NEWS Dagelijks ruim honderd VLM-vluchten op Londen City Airport

Dertien jaar na de start van VLM-vluchten van en naar Londen City Airport, heeft de Belgische regionale luchtvaartmaatschappij een opvallende mijlpaal bereikt. Sinds donderdag (9 november) vertrekken en arriveren meer dan honderd vluchten van VLM Airlines op deze Londense luchthaven. VLM Airlines is de afgelopen dertien jaar uitgegroeid tot de belangrijkste maatschappij op Londen City.



VLM's Fokker 50 OO-VLY City of Liverpool tijdens de landing op Zestienhoven-Rotterdam Airport Foto : Joop & Vera Looije ©

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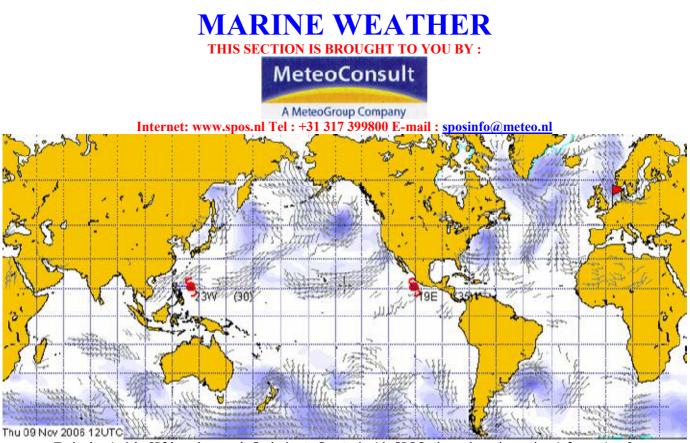
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Wat in 1993 begon met een dagelijkse vlucht van Antwerpen naar de Londense Docklands is vandaag gegroeid tot 104 vluchten van en naar Londen City Airport per werkdag. VLM vliegt vanaf deze luchthaven naar elf verschillende bestemmingen waaronder Antwerpen, Amsterdam, Brussel, Groningen, Isle of Man, Jersey, Liverpool, Luxemburg, Manchester en Rotterdam.

VLM Airlines vervoerde de afgelopen dertien jaar bijna vier miljoen reizigers van en naar Londen City.

# Luchtmacht verkoopt bakermat Soesterberg aan provincie Utrecht

De Koninklijke Luchtmacht en de provincie Utrecht hebben donderdagochtend (9 november) een intentieverklaring getekend voor de verkoop van luchtmachtbasis Soesterberg aan de provincie. In 2008 verlaten de laatste militairen de basis, die daarna moet worden omgetoverd in een stuk landschap waar natuur, recreatie en wonen in harmonie samen moeten gaan.



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

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### .... PHOTO OF THE DAY .....



Whilst enroute to Norway the **mv TERTNES** was used as a exercise object, The UK based **Eurocopter AS-332L2 Super Puma MkII** Rescue helicopter of **BOND offshore** homed in on the vessel for some unexpected exercises. **Photo : Marc van der Stok** ©

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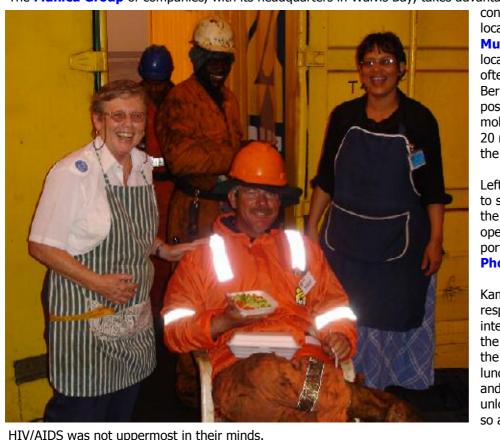
# **NAMIBIA: Walvis Bay harbour gives HIV** an international passport

When fishermen arrive in the port city of Walvis Bay in Namibia, flush with money after months at sea, they don't have to go far to spend it. The small town's harbour area is littered with discos and nightclubs catering to the foreign trawler men who sustain the entertainment and commercial sex industries.

Strategically located halfway down the coast of Namibia, with direct access to principal shipping routes, the deep-sea port of Walvis Bay is dominated by the fishing industry. Commercial fishing and fish processing is one of the fastestgrowing sectors in the Namibian economy.

The Trans-Caprivi and Trans-Kalahari highways also link Botswana, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe - countries with HIV infection rates that are among the world's highest - to Walvis Bay, which has an estimated HIV prevalence rate of between 25 percent and 30 percent, making fishermen and truck drivers particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

October is a quiet month in Walvis Bay: the government has declared it a 'no fishing' month - or 'downtime' as the locals call it - so that fish stocks can recover. Fewer vessels arrive in the harbour, and trucks do not pull up to the gates as frequently.



The Manica Group of companies, with its headquarters in Walvis Bay, takes advantage of the lull in business to

conduct AIDS education among its local workers. The Walvis Bay Multi-Purpose Centre (MPC), a local community-based NGO, is often invited to discuss HIV testing. Bernhard Kamatoto, who is HIVpositive and the MPC's community mobiliser, spoke to a group of over 20 men about living positively with the virus.

Left : Gail on the left of the mission to seaman in Walvis Bay seen during the food supplies during the salvage operation of the UMFOLOZI in the port of Walvis Bav Photo : Piet Sinke ©

Kamatoto received a lukewarm response, with most of the men only interested in the free condoms and the attractive female counsellor from the Multi-Purpose Centre. It was lunchtime in the deserted harbour, and the workers had just finished unloading cargo from a large vessel, so an hour-long discussion on

Manica employee Erastus (last name withheld) told IRIN/PlusNews that although this was his first AIDS awareness meeting, he didn't need the information - it was the "sea-farers with all the money" who should be receiving these messages.

**PSi-Daily Shipping News** 

Just outside the harbour gates, the **Mission to Seafarers** building offers recreational facilities to up to 200 foreign fishermen a day. According to a staff member who asked not to be named, the mission hands out condoms "like sweeties", but because they usually came from countries with low prevalence, foreign fishermen were not properly informed about HIV/AIDS and not always receptive to practicing safer sex.

According to a report by Namibia's Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) on the dynamics of HIV risk behavior in Walvis Bay, trawler men were the bridge linking high- and low-risk regions of the world, potentially connecting Chinese housewives with commercial sex workers and her clients in Walvis Bay.

Having received no HIV/AIDS education prior to their arrival or during their stay in Namibia, most of these fishermen have low levels of HIV/AIDS knowledge, and local AIDS educators are unlikely to use their limited funds on foreign nationals or obtain permission to board international ships, the report said.

When the mission closes its doors in the evenings, the next stop for seafarers, who have spent months prohibited from drinking alcohol and with little to do, is the 'red-light district', a strip of clubs and 'back rooms' lining a street just a short walk from the harbour.

Club Lokolos, one of the more popular hangouts, is busy despite the fishing 'downtime'. As the dance floor slowly fills and the music gets louder, a group of Chinese men at a table in a quiet room in the club watch a young sex worker dancing suggestively with a Ukrainian trawler man. None of the men speak English, but according to a group of commercial sex-workers who are regulars at the club, language is not really a barrier and hand gestures provide enough communication. Negotiating condom use, however, was difficult, and they admitted it was easier to agree to not use condoms.

"The foreign fishermen simply tell them that HIV/AIDS is not a problem for them because they don't have HIV in their country," said Lisias Kashati, coordinator of the Social Marketing Association's Corridor of Hope project in the Erongo Region, one of Namibia's 13 administrative districts and where Walvis Bay is located.

Kashati told IRIN/PlusNews that as part of the Corridors of Hope project, which targets sex workers and truck drivers, he conducts regular workshops and has struck up a good relationship with many of the women. Sex workers were generally better informed about the pandemic, he said, as they were not as mobile and could be reached by prevention efforts, but they were still vulnerable to violence, and alcohol and drug abuse.

#### LOCAL FISHERMEN ALSO AT RISK

Although local fishermen have had much greater exposure to HIV education and awareness campaigns, they were still at risk, as the interventions were irregular and often inadequate, Kashati pointed out.

Distrust of vessel owners and management also caused Namibian trawler men to be wary of such initiatives, the IPPR report said. Local fishermen often have negative attitudes toward safe sex, despite being well informed about HIV/AIDS. Some are of the opinion that paid sex is unprotected sex, the report commented.

High levels of alcohol abuse in local communities, and their risky lifestyles, have contributed to high HIV prevalence rates among local fishermen, who are usually permanent residents of Walvis Bay. They tend to spend more time onshore than foreign fishermen, and prefer to visit some of the 400 shebeens (unlicensed bars) estimated to be operating in the local township of Kuisebmund.

MPC conducts regular shebeen outreach campaigns in the township. Doris, the Zimbabwean owner of the 'Why Not Pa-Centre Bar', had invited the NGO's Bernhard Kamatoto and another colleague to give a short talk on HIV/AIDS prevention but a banner advertising VCT services outside the pub was deterring many regulars.

Her clientele is mixed: locals, Angolans seeking work, truck drivers and the "big spenders" - local fishermen. "I like these guys [fishermen] because they don't have to wait for end of the month to spend money. As soon as the ship comes in, they are here at my place," she told IRIN/PlusNews.

Besides a few young girls and a group of boys playing pool, very few customers were coming in. "They don't want to hear about condoms when they are drinking," Doris said, shrugging her shoulders.



The Russian crewed NAMSOV fishing trawler VENUS 1 anchored at the Walvis Bay anchorage Photo : Piet Sinke ©

"I always advise everybody who comes in here to use condoms but, in a poor place like this, if a girl can find someone who will take care of her and he doesn't want to use a condom, what can you do?"

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