The Porthole

Volume 23 No. 08 **August 2023**

The newsletter of
the Company of Master Mariners of Australia,
South Australian Branch
PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015
Branch Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC

Branch Master's comments

Good Day to all

This month's meandering is mainly concerned with last week's Federal Meeting which was held via "Teams" with the usual mixed success. The attendees were comprised the Federal Court members and the Branch Masters of the various States, with a proxy standing in for the Melbourne BM. My own contribution to the meeting was aural only as I didn't have enough bars on my Teams' reception to activate the video link successfully.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

The last meeting's minutes were presented and accepted, and in ensuing business, the ongoing saga of my director's ID was brought up, and we decided to try once more through the public library.

All the voting on the various constitutional amendments were successfully carried out in the affirmative, passed, and are being put into place.

The call is out for volunteers for the position of vice-president(s) for IFSMA.

These positions would seem to be a 'poisoned chalice' as the appointees, apart from having a lot of work to do, would seem to be required to be self-funding as far as international travel is concerned.

The ratifications for CoMMA applicants by e-mail is proceeding well, but the branches are being asked to act more promptly. Please note that this doesn't apply to us in SA (!)

The Secretary's Report mostly doesn't apply to us but will be forwarded together with the official minutes soon. This report was accepted by vote.

The Treasurer's report was read out but had an error or two and will be re-drafted and voted on by e-mail. Despite this, the report was overall healthy.

The "Master Mariner" magazine will be published on e-mail this October.

Our next Federal Meeting by "Teams" will be on Sat 11th Nov '23.

Our own monthly meeting will be on Wednesday next August 30th at 1145 for 1200, with the Court meeting an hour beforehand.

Happy Sailing

BobW (SABM)

The next Branch meeting will be held at
the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay,
on Wednesday, 30th August, 2023, at 1145 for 1200.
Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology
before 12:00 on Monday, 28th August 2023
with Bob Westley (0427 644 947) or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)

The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Ltd. is a Company established to promote and further the efficiency of the Sea Service generally, and uphold the Status, Dignity and Prestige of Master Mariners in particular.

In this issue

An accident of our times

By Michael Grey

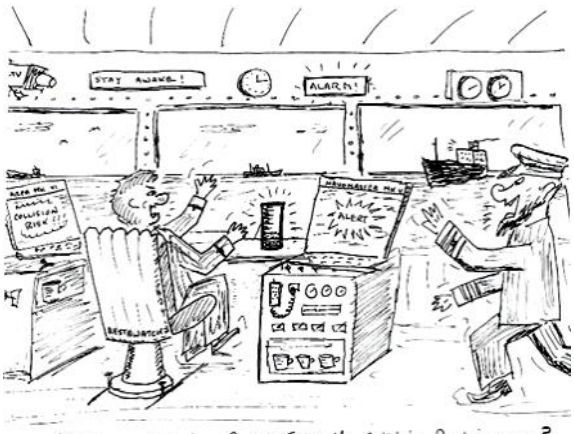
The report into the loss of the bulker *Wakashio*, which stranded and broke up on the shores of Mauritius in July 2023, has finally been made public by the Panamanian authorities. There are few surprises in this report, the main findings having been earlier made available to the IMO, which was justifiably concerned at the devastation caused to the pristine foreshore by the ship's spilled bunkers.

It is one of those accidents which might be considered inexcusable. She was a modern, well-equipped ship, operated by a famous Japanese line and managed by one of the most reputable ship managers. Her stranding caused considerable environmental harm, cost the senior officers their liberty, everyone concerned their reputation and the subsequent removal of the wreck and the clean-up, enormous expense. There was just no reasonable excuse for such an occurrence and probably not a lot to be learned from a professional point of view, from the analysis of the events.

And yet…. The loss of the *Wakashio* might be considered an accident of its time, that just would not have occurred in another era. What was the ship, which should have passed the coast of Mauritius well clear, doing so close in the first place? The answer is clear enough – they closed the land so that they could get a signal on their mobile phones, so that the crew could speak to their nearest and dearest. The date is significant, too, with Covid raging around the world, no shore leave or reliefs and society in general expecting (if they ever even thought about seafarers for a second) shipping to keep world trade and the stuff they all needed, flowing. Crews were expected to work months beyond their contracted tour lengths, with no expectation of any change in their circumstances and additional and cumulative concerns about how their families were faring in the pandemic far away.

The chance of a telephone conversation as the vessel skirted the coasts of Mauritius was something that clearly assumed a lot of importance for this small isolated group of people. There was a birthday on board and some effort to cheer up their unenviable circumstances.

The Panamanian report makes clear all the various things that went badly wrong before the ship came to grief. There was a lack of vigilance, with the watch officer apparently distracted by his phone and unsupported, forgetting the master's order regarding the closest approach to land. The chart was the wrong scale and it appeared that everybody who could have supported the navigation was otherwise occupied. It was in short, a navigational shambles.



You might say that there was a complete dereliction of duty, and you would probably be correct, in an accident which just would not have happened in another age before personal communications became so important to us all. Most people ashore would be appalled at the prospect of being parted from their mobile devices for weeks on end, and the modern seafarer, although having to put up with such isolation, clearly feels the isolation keenly. In earnest discussions about future labour shortages and how recruitment and retention can be encouraged, it is clear that communications with nearest and dearest, in distant memory confined to snail mail and the agent's boat, have become entrenched as essential human rights.

Any survey of seafarer attitudes will confirm the importance of communications with employers being effectively rated by their provision of communication access. And seafarers jolly well know, as they sit aboard ships which are wired up for instant data transmission, that the technology is eminently available to keep them in touch, at a reasonable cost.

It might be suggested that this accident was not the first contributed to by the distractions of communication and will not be the last. There is something about novelty in the maritime world that will inevitably contribute to accidents, which just would not have happened had they not been available. The "radar assisted" collision, misunderstandings caused by VHF, AIS, GPS – now mobile distraction, it's just the latest addition to the technological armoury which will briefly take our attention, until it is replaced by something else. Artificial intelligence – navigation advised by Alexa – who knows what delights are to come?

Source: Maritime Advocate 235

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Emerging emojis

Brian Perrott & Stephanie Morton of HFW have brought to our attention a Canadian Court ruling that an emoji can create a legally binding contract.*

The matter concerned a Canadian grain company called South West Terminal Ltd ("South West") and a farmer named Mr Achter. The parties had entered into four grain deals previously.

During negotiations for a fifth grain deal, South West sent a photograph of the draft contract to Mr. Achter by phone. This was accompanied by a message saying "P*lease confirm flax contract"*. Mr. Achter responded by sending a thumbs-up emoji.

When no grain was delivered, South West brought a claim against Mr. Achter for breach of contract. Mr. Achter's position was

that the thumbs-up emoji simply indicated that the flax contract had been received. His understanding was that the full contract would follow by fax or email for his review and signature.

The Canadian judge held that the thumbs-up emoji was sufficient to create a binding contract. He considered that the meaning of the thumbs-up emoji was to approve the flax contract and not simply confirm its receipt. His view was that the parties had reached *consensus ad idem*, a meeting of minds, as they had done for previous contracts.

Comment

Lawyers are used to debating the meaning of words, but it seems inevitable that this will soon extend to debating the meaning of emojis.

We expect the English Courts would follow a similar approach to the Canadian Court given the right facts. As such, the use of an emoji may be sufficient to constitute acceptance of a contractual offer.

While text exchanges are often considered to be 'less formal', it should be remembered that it is possible to enter into a binding agreement via exchanges of text messages. Clarity of communication is therefore important regardless of the channel used.

**South West Terminal Ltd. v Achter Land & Cattle Ltd., 2023 SKKB 11*

Source: Maritime Advocate 835 —oo00oo--

Diligent on human rights

By Michael Grey

There is a great deal of righteousness flowing like a river around the corporate world at present, as everyone flaunts their Environmental, Social and Governance policies to demonstrate their credibility as people with whom you should do business. ESG seems to have rather taken over from efficiency, quality and price as the most important criteria surrounding a purchase of goods or services.

It has crept up on us quite rapidly, pushed by over-promoted HR types, who have squeezed their way into corporate management, through a combination of sharp elbows and a facility with meaningless jargon. It seems to have emerged from the financial world, as it attempted to rehabilitate itself after the shame and degradation of the 2008 crash, but has now spread into all sorts of sectors, as companies seek to assure the world of their diversity, inclusion and huge enthusiasm for the works of Greta Thunberg. You sense, however, with the "de-banking" scandal and a backlash against net zero and the cancellation of women by strident minorities, that all this cultish behaviour might have gone too far.

We have certainly come a long way since people in our industry were quietly outraged by some Norwegian finance house letting it be known that only "green" ships would henceforth qualify for loans and mortgages against them. Some went so far as to suggest that these holier-than-thou Scandinavians were only bankers, and technically unqualified to judge on the green-ness of a newbuilding, and that their only job was to assess the financial validity of the business plan. Sadly, they probably would not make such views public today.

"No seafarers were harmed in the transport of these products." Even the daftest HR guru, in these mad times, would not suggest such an advertisement, but reality tells us that the safety and human rights of seafarers, running the ships that feed and fuel the world, are seldom to the fore as the ESG ratings are considered. You only have to recall the way seafarers found themselves treated during the pandemic, and at current complaints about the lack of shore leave in so many places, to realise that while there may be shipping companies which go that extra mile for their employees, plenty of others wouldn't even cross the road.

The International Transport Workers' Federation, perhaps because they have seen the many corporate public pronunciations of ESG enthusiasm, has now come up with the suggestion that the big brands ought to be rated on their HRDD – Human Rights Due Diligence. The idea that the welfare of seagoing transport workers should be part of an auditable package is an interesting one, although the measure is currently only guidance and thus can be taken – or left.

It is surely not unreasonable, although on the wilder shores of this international industry, such a notion would occasion only howls of derisive laughter. But in an industry where the best players have embraced their responsibilities to the environment, and wax lyrically about their inclusive and diverse policies, an acknowledgement of the human rights of this unseen and largely unheard workforce might well resonate. Not with the public, perhaps, which mostly believes that some sort of unseen agency transports their imports and exports, but as an example that might spread from the big brands and reputable companies to the wider world. Would it cost much? In that it is asking people to do something that is manifestly right and that public relations benefits might accrue from such a move, what would be the downside?

Sadly, the cynic in me suggests that without the thrust of public opinion, leveraged by lobbies, such guidance might well fall on stony ground. I recall that some years ago there was a brave, small-scale attempt by the officers' union and the Mission to Seafarers to interest the Fairtrade organisation to extend their remit to the "fair sea transport" of goods. I was present at the meeting and it was clear that the well-meaning representatives of the estimable body failed to understand anything about seafaring conditions and how they might be incorporated. And in any case, it is actions, not some bold slogans about diversity and inclusion, which ultimately matter most. The "mission statement" is meaningless without genuine belief and proper execution. Perhaps strengthening and properly implementing the Maritime Labour Convention would be a vehicle in which the brands could believe.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List

Source: Maritime Advocate 836 —oo00oo--

Water everywhere, not a drop to drink

Splash August 4, 2023

Steven Jones, the founder of the Seafarers Happiness Index, on the horrendous news that many at sea are struggling to get access to clean drinking water.

Harkening to the voices from webinars and conference panels, you'd be forgiven for seeing the maritime industry awash with *bon homme*, and which only ever does the right things and does them well. Industry bodies proudly proclaiming their work, blue-chip shipping companies pressing their green-ship credentials, and all manner of service providers doffing their collective caps as they jostle to lock onto the money teat.

ITF

What we hear in this gilded world is almost universally positive. All about commitments to change, best practices and signing up to charters for improvements, about data and transparency. A rousing desire to be smarter, better, cleaner, more wonderful. Such talk lifts the spirits, loosens investor purse strings, and serves as a shield to the slings and arrows of critics.

Sadly though, stepping away from the good companies who serve as bright lights of beaming optimism, you very quickly find yourself in the dark corners. In the shadows where dodgy manning agent Gmail charlatans scam enthusiastic young people out of money. The murky places beyond the corporate veil, where crews are abandoned like so much garbage. And where incredibly, to quote Band Aid this far from Christmas, the only water flowing is the bitter sting of tears.

As shocking as it may seem in the 21st century, the latest Seafarers Happiness Index responses have repeatedly mentioned the issue of drinking water on board. We have heard time and again about seafarers being denied access to drinking water, while others are being forced to pay for it. This seems utterly incredible and is clearly unacceptable.

Water is key to life, it sustains us. It allows us to perform effectively and remain healthy. Dehydration can be crippling and debilitating, and denying drinking water jeopardises everything – health, safety, performance. It seems outrageous to have to stress how important access to drinking water is, but here we are. Sadly, it seems some owners do not seem to know or care they are jeopardising seafarers' health, safety, motivation and performance.

Denying seafarers sufficient drinking water goes against every tenant of what shipping is meant to be about, it is inhumane, cruel and just plain wrong. It jeopardises well-being and the safe operation of vessels. Letting our people go thirsty is despicable.

Then there is the mental toll. The negative impact on morale and motivation is hugely significant. Being denied a basic necessity like water breeds resentment and hurts morale, it is also crushing for the spirit and mental wellbeing as well as the physical.

Those seafarers who are left thirsty, unsure when they will get to drink, or who are charged for drinking feel devalued and expendable. This erodes motivation to go above and beyond.

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) is clear on the requirement to provide water. All shipowners should provide free of charge food and drinking water of appropriate quality, nutritional value and quantity to meet the needs of those on board. So why would this be happening?

Problems of aging water tanks? Issues with plastic bottles and their disposal? Just plain old cutting back on spend? Just what is going wrong for owners to place crews in this position? Are the checks inadequate, is there an assumption by port state that water is freely and adequately available? Is it a lack of oversight, damaged storage or broken equipment? Or is it the real sign of a callous culture developing?

Drinking water is a basic human right, not a luxury. What's next, oxygen fees, perhaps bring your own bedding or food? This cheapening of basic needs is as worrying as it is depressing, as too many seafarers face grim, hazardous futures, seemingly devoid of the most fundamental human needs.

Seafarers deserve so much better than wondering where their thirst will be quenched. When problems such as this emerge, it is hard to be optimistic when the seafaring glass appears to be completely, literally empty.

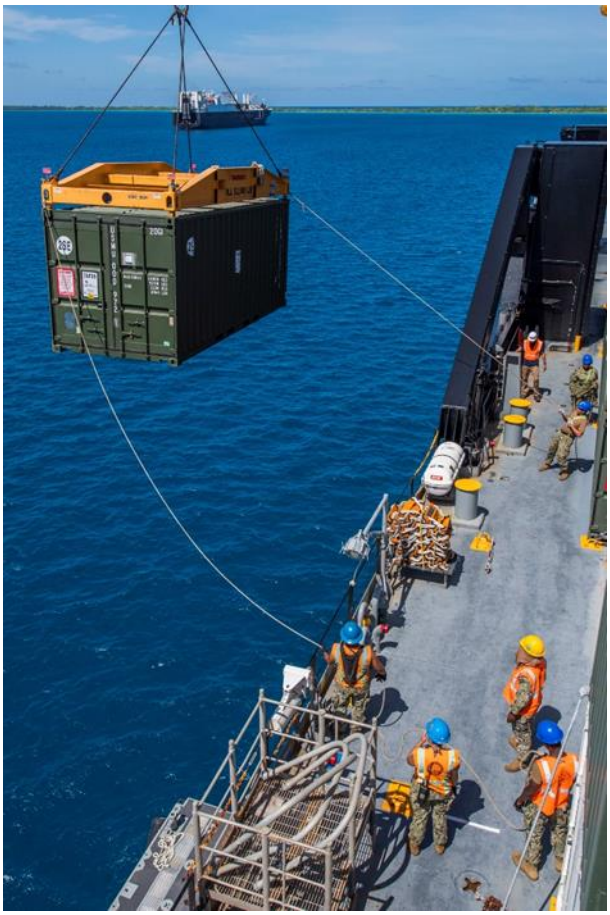
Source: Splash247 230804 —oo00oo--

Brookings Institute warns of US Military's Logistics Gap vs China

by John Konrad (gCaptain) August 1, 2023

Last week the Brookings Institute recently published a new report titled "America can't afford to ignore the logistics triad," highlighting the critical role of logistics in military operations. The report underscores the importance of logistics in high-end warfare scenarios, particularly against formidable adversaries like Russia and China. It argues that the logistics triad – transport systems, physical military infrastructure, and digital/cyberinfra-structure – should be a top priority in defence modernization efforts.

The report begins by noting that logistics do not fit prominently into the military identities of the nation's three largest services –



191114-N-CO914-1065 DIEGO GARCIA, British Indian Ocean Territory (November 14, 2019) Sailors keep tension on taglines as a crane lifts a container aboard Military Sealift Command Bob Hope -class roll-on roll-off vehicle cargo ship USNS Seay (T-AKR 302) during an Improved Navy Lighterage System (INLS) training mission. Navy Cargo Handling Battalion (NCHB) 1, NCHB 8, NCHB 11, NCHB 13, Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 1 and Amphibious Construction Battalion (ACB) 1 are participating in the INLS training mission under the direction of Commander, Task Force (CTF) 75 in preparation for upcoming joint cargo handling exercise Native Fury 2020. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Nathan Carpenter)

the Air Force, the Navy, and the Army. However, it emphasizes that logistics are crucial for the functioning of weapons and combat formations. In today's world, logistics would be contested by the adversary in any high-end war, making the penalty for under-valuing logistics potentially severe.

The report also discusses the aging and atrophying of ships, planes, and trucks bought in the 1980s, the development of precision missiles by China and Russia that can threaten fixed bases, and the proliferation of cyber systems that have created new vulnerabilities for America's global transport and supply networks.

"First, ships and planes bought in the 1980s have aged and atrophied, without being adequately maintained or replaced," says Marcos A. Melendez III and his coauthors in the report. "Second, China (and Russia) has developed precision missiles that can threaten fixed bases anywhere, especially in regions near its shores. Three, cyber systems have proliferated. That has made logistics more efficient, but it has also created new vulnerabilities for America's global transport and supply networks."

The report further delves into the challenges faced by the United States in the Western Pacific, where the logistics challenges are significantly greater than those faced by China due to geographical advantages. The report suggests that the United States needs to prioritize the logistics triad to effectively compete in this region.

The report concludes by emphasizing the importance of improving the nation's ability to move, supply, and sustain its armed forces abroad. It suggests that the triad of military logistics systems must be seen as an ongoing top priority for the Department of Defense, on par with the nuclear triad, command and control, fighters and bombers, tanks and rockets, and subs and ships.

"Every U.S. military department or service has developed a separate logistics enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, resulting in six major systems," says the report, highlighting the problem extends well beyond the aging military sealift fleet to the digital infrastructure. "China consolidated its military logistics into one logistic force in 2016 called the Joint Logistics Support Force. This move eliminated the large self-contained logistic systems for each service. That is the right approach."

In light of this report, it is clear that a comprehensive and strategic approach to military logistics is crucial for the United States to maintain its global military power in the modern era. The report serves as a wake-up call for policymakers to prioritize and invest in the logistics triad as a key component of defence modernization efforts.

Source: gCaptain 230802

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Internet-Famous FLIP Ship Sent for Scrap

Mike Schuler August 9, 2023

Copyright Scripps Institution of Oceanography / UC San Diego

One of the internet's most revered unusual ships, known simply as FLIP, has been sent for scrap.

The Floating Instrument Platform (FLIP), owned by the U.S. Office of Naval Research (ONR) was a unique oceanographic research tool that exemplified the ingenuity of scientists and engineers at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego, which operated the vessel.

Launched in 1962, the unique vessel was designed to "flip" from a horizontal to a vertical position by filling its ballast tanks with water, allowing the 355-foot vessel to remain nearly motionless in ocean swells. It was this characteristic that made it such a valuable tool for science.

The vessel was designed, built, and operated by Scripps' Marine Physical Laboratory in the late 1950s, developed as a cost-effective alternative to using submarines for accessing the water column below the sur-

face, which was highly sought after by oceanographers.

Photo courtesy Scripps Institution of Oceanography / UC San Diego

Over its 50-year service life, FLIP helped advance society's understanding of ocean currents, ocean acoustics, air-sea interactions, marine mammals and more. It was retired in 2021 but has remained remembered for its unusual design and invaluable contributions to science.

"R/P FLIP has existed for more than half the length of the institution's entire history," said Scripps Oceanography Director Margaret Leinen. "It was an engineering marvel constructed during an important phase of new technology for ocean exploration following World War II. The many discoveries from FLIP help set the stage for ongoing cutting-edge science to understand our ocean."

FLIP was actually classified as a platform due to its lack of propulsion, which meant it had to be towed to location by tugs. Outfitted with research instruments by scientists from universities around the world, FLIP's stability and lack of engine noise made it ideal for observing tidal forces, internal waves, and small-scale turbulence.

FLIP towed away on August 3, 2023. Photo courtesy Scripps Institution of Oceanography / UC San Diego

FLIP was originally designed without living quarters. However, this concept was quickly abandoned due to the hazards of scientists having to board it from small boats, which are not immune to ocean swells. To accommodate people staying on board, it had to be outfitted with amenities that could operate in orientations 90 degrees apart from each other, including toilets, sinks, bunk beds, and dining tables.

FLIP's crew also had to receive special training for the unconventional operation of the vessel. The full transition from horizontal to vertical took 30 minutes, but the final 49 seconds were said to be the most gut-wrenching as it settled into its new orientation.

FLIP operated for years without incident. However, in 1969 it had to be abandoned by its crew after losing power when it experienced ocean swells exceeding 80 feet. The incident required a rescue operation where crew members had to jump into the water to be picked up by boats.

Even after its final research voyage, FLIP has continued to attract public and media attention, not to mention the occasional viral social media post.

FLIP departed Scripps' Nimitz Marine Facility under tow on its final voyage on August 3rd. Officials at Scripps Oceanography have arranged for one of FLIP's booms to be removed and attached to the Scripps Pier in La Jolla, where it will continue to deploy research instruments as a tribute to FLIP and an inspiration for innovation at Scripps Oceanography.

Source: gCaptain 230810

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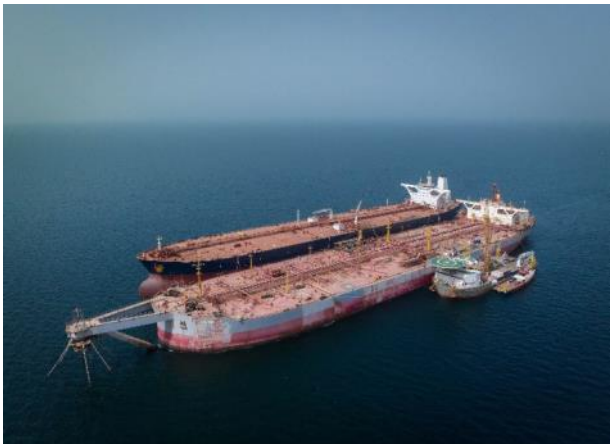
FSO Safer: Red Sea's 'Ticking Time Bomb' Diffused

Mike Schuler August 11, 2023

The United Nations on Friday announced the successful removal of more than 1 million barrels of oil from the decaying *FSO Safer* tanker off Yemen, averting a worst case scenario oil spill that would have devastated coastal communities and created a crisis in vital Red Sea shipping lanes.



The *FSO Safer* with *Yemen* and *Endeavor* moored alongside. Photo courtesy Boskalis

The ship-to-ship transfer of oil to a replacement vessel was concluded at 1800 local time on Friday by a team from SMIT, a subsidiary of Boskalis. As much of the 1.14 million barrels of oil on board has been extracted as possible, but less than 2 percent of the original cargo remains mixed in with sediment that will be removed during the final cleaning of the vessel.

The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, David Gressly, who has led UN system-wide efforts on the *Safer* since September 2021, said today marks a great milestone.

"A remarkable global coalition came together under the UN umbrella to prevent the worst-case scenario of a catastrophic oil spill in the Red Sea," said Gressly. "We need to finish the work the UN started. The

installation of a CALM buoy to which the replacement vessel will be safely tethered is the next crucial step."

The *FSO Safer*, containing 1.14 million barrels of oil, had been at risk since it was abandoned off Yemen's Red Sea coast since 2015 amid the ongoing civil war in the country. Due to a lack of maintenance, its condition had deteriorated significantly.

The UN has warned that a major spill would devastate fishing communities on Yemen's Red Sea coast and cost estimated at $20 billion to cleanup. Disruptions to shipping through the Bab al-Mandab strait to the Suez Canal could cost billions more in global trade losses every day.

The SMIT has been on-site since late May preparing the *Safer* for the oil transfer operation, which officially kicked off July 25. Preparations included inspections, safety measures, and the installation of oil screens and transfer pipes. The transfer was supported by two Smit Lamnalco tugs and hydraulic pumps were installed to facilitate the transfer. Oil was transferred to the replacement vessel *Yemen*, formerly the *Nautica*, which the UN secured from Euronav earlier this year.

"I welcome the news that the transfer of oil from the *FSO Safer* has been safely concluded today," commented UN Secretary-General António Guterres. "The United Nations-led operation has prevented what could have been an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe on a colossal scale."

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has been implementing the operation. UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner thanked everyone involved in the operation and donors for making the operation possible.

"Today is a proud moment for the many people across the UN System, as well as our donors and partners who have worked tirelessly over the past months and years to avert a disaster in a country already vulnerable, following protracted conflict. There is still work to be done, but today we can say with confidence that the immediate threat of a spill has been averted," Steiner said.

SMIT Salvage will now clean the tanks of the *Safer*, which is expected to take about a week The *FSO Safer* will eventually be transported to a green scrapping yard under the responsibility of the UN.

"I am very pleased that we have succeeded in removing the oil from the *FSO Safer* and transferring it to a modern double hulled tanker," said Peter Berdowski, CEO of Boskalis. "With our salvage activities, we have once again averted a potential environmental disaster of unprecedented proportions. Thanks in part to the efforts of the Dutch Ministry of Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and over two years of preparations by Boskalis, we were able to successfully execute this complex operation on behalf of the United Nations. I would like to compliment our salvage experts in particular for successfully carrying out the work under very challenging conditions in the Red Sea."

"We are grateful for the efforts of all those who ensured that this operation could take place in a safe and timely manner, including the Boskalis/SMIT salvage team, UN personnel, the international community and all other stakeholders that have contributed," added Nabil Hayel Saeed Anam, Managing Director of HSA Group's Yemen region, Yemen's largest company and the first private sector donor to the operation.

Source: gCaptain 230810

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ABS Invests In Atom Splitting Nuclear Research

by John Konrad (gCaptain) July 24, 2023

Nuclear propulsion aboard commercial maritime vessels may sound like a science fiction scenario, but this is precisely the subject of a new study conducted by the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) and Herbert Engineering (HEC).

Photo: Shutterstock/metamorworks

ABS and HEC began this exploration as a simple question: 'what if advanced modern reactor technology could be adapted for commercial marine propulsion?' It's the kind of ambitious hypothesis that inspires innovation and ignites change.

"A net-zero world is more easily realized through nuclear propulsion, and we are putting in place the foundations for that future today," says Christopher J. Wiernicki, ABS Chairman. "We are putting in place the foundations for that future today."

The study, an intricate interplay of theory and simulation, sought wisdom from leading nuclear reactor developers. For a 14k TEU container carrier, a pair of lead-cooled, 30MW fast reactors were envisioned. What might that change? The prediction was intriguing. The cargo capacity and operational speed would likely go up, while the need for refuelling would simply evaporate across the vessel's entire 25-year lifespan.

When a similar thought experiment was conducted with a 157k DWT Suezmax tanker, the results were equally unexpected. The addition of four 5MW heat-pipe microreactors might nudge down the cargo capacity but would give a shot in the arm to operational speeds. And refuelling? Just once in 25 years. Remarkably, both vessels would report a net carbon emission of zero.

The potential is grand but ABS has no intention of cutting corners on safety. "It is critical that industry evaluate these technologies with a laser focus on safety," says Wiernicki.

Echoing his sentiments, Robert Tagg, Senior Principal Naval Architect at HEC, highlights how this study aids in understanding the promise and the particulars of modern reactor technology.

ABS is now at the helm of this potential revolution, steering the future alongside the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) which is assigning it two crucial research tasks: probing the roadblocks to the adoption of advanced nuclear propulsion and aiding the University of Texas in the thermal-electric integration of a nuclear propulsion system on a commercial vessel.

Not The First Step

This might sound like ABS's first steps to a nuclear future but it's not. ABS worked on the design of the first nuclear cargo ship, *N.S. Savannah*, in the 1950's and has worked on countless nuclear projects for the US Navy since. More recently Wiernicki has been slowly ramping up ABS's commitment to new nuclear technology and partnerships for years. In 2020 ABS completed a new technology qualification of a Compact Molten Salt Reactor (CMSR) developed by Danish company Seaborg Technologies. The concept was found to satisfy the Feasibility Stage, the first milestone in the ABS New Technology Qualification (NTQ) process.

The Compact Molten Salt Reactor (CMSR) is a transformative technology capable of functioning with both fossil fuels and renewable energy sources, generating substantial low-carbon energy. Its uniqueness lies in its use of a novel liquid salt as a neutron moderator, acting as a catalyst to enhance fission chain reaction efficiency, thereby reducing energy generation costs and size. Importantly, this moderator withstands neutron irradiation, a hurdle that had previously impeded commercialization. The liquid salt can be reprocessed to separate uranium and plutonium for fuel reuse, yielding waste that only requires 300 years of storage, in contrast to the 300,000 years required for long-lived nuclear waste.

Seaborg's CMSR design is intended to be installed on power barges to provide electric power for the production of low-carbon ship fuels like ammonia and hydrogen. The first power barges envisioned by ABS, which are expected to enter service in the early 2030's, will have two reactors installed delivering 2x100MW for the 24-year lifetime of the reactor

Conclusion

The HEC study and CMSR development work is not a finale but an overture; it presents a view of a future where the maritime industry reduces its carbon footprint with both shipboard reactors that provide direct propulsion and near-shore reactors that can energize hydrogen fuel production. However, this utopian vision will not materialize without funding and support from all corners of the maritime industry.

This is the tipping point where imagination meets science, where the audacious question 'What if?' begins to morph into 'Why not?' and then finally into 'How?'. We hope ABS not only continues this research but doubles down on investment in a safe nuclear future.

Source: gCaptain 230725

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Sunken tugboat recovered from Suez Canal

Bojan Lepic August 10, 2023

The Suez Canal Authority has successfully recovered the sunken tugboat *Fahd* which sank following a collision with an LPG carrier.

The tugboat sank in the Suez Canal on Saturday after colliding with the LPG carrier *Chinagas Legend,* resulting in one fatality.

The Hong Kong-flagged gas carrier was unscathed in the incident which took place around the 51 km point in the Al-Balah bypass.

Ossama Rabiee, chairman and managing director of the Suez Canal Authority, said that the sunken tugboat was recovered by the Authority's Inkaz salvage crane and that the waterway was clear.

The salvage operation was completed without affecting the traffic through the Canal despite strong water currents, zero visibility underwater, and deep diving to depths of 27 meters.

Before retrieving the *Fahd*, a survey was carried out to locate the tugboat, followed by securing the location using warning and guiding buoys to enable vessels to transit safely. The recovery site was also secured environmentally against potential oil spills.

At the time of the collision, traffic along the waterway was briefly halted while salvors removed the tug's wreck.

Rabiee noted that traffic through the Canal was now running normally in both directions and it wasn't affected by the salvage works. On Monday and Tuesday, the Canal registered 146 transits in both directions at a total net tonnage of 8.4m tons.

The canal has had an eventful year in terms of the number of accidents with groundings far more numerous than in previous years.

Source: Splash247 230810

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After Attacking Ukraine Wheat Exports, Russia Faces Own Shipping Challenge

By Jonathan Saul and Nigel Hunt

LONDON, Aug 8 2023 (Reuters)

Russia's lack of ships and Western grain traders' shrinking appetite for business with Moscow are adding to rising costs of moving Russian wheat, at a time when the war in Ukraine has spilled perilously close to vital Black Sea supply routes.

President Vladimir Putin promised to replace Ukrainian grain with Russian shipments to Africa after Moscow in July ended an arrangement that gave Ukraine's food cargo safe passage in the Black Sea, imposing a de-facto blockade on its neighbour and attacking storage facilities, in an escalation of the war.

Ukraine's response, sea-drone attacks on a Russian oil tanker and a warship at its Novorossiysk naval base, next door to a major grain and oil port, has added to these new dangers for transport in the Black Sea.

Eduard Zernin, head of Russia's Union of Grain Exporters, cited a potential aggravation of what he called "hidden sanctions" that "may lead to an increase in freight and insurance costs" for Russia.

This "will be reflected in the price level of wheat and other grains on the world market," Zernin told Reuters.

Even though agriculture exports are not subject to direct European and U.S. sanctions imposed after Russia invaded Ukraine last year, Moscow says restrictions placed on banking and Russian individuals are "hidden sanctions" on the food trade.

The financial and security risks associated with trading with Russia – compounded by the Black Sea corridor collapse – are driving up costs of freight for Moscow and pushing it toward older and smaller vessels run by less established shipping operators, Reuters reporting based on conversations with 10 marine insurers, traders and shipping companies showed.

The situation is raising doubts about whether Russia can keep up a record pace of exports and if not resolved could push global wheat prices higher, the sources said.

Already, prior to the expiry of the deal, grain carriers and commodity houses had reduced exposure to Russia.

Global commodity houses are no longer helping Russia with the mechanics of trading its grain. Cargill, Louis Dreyfus and Viterra stopped such work on July 1, adding more pressure on Moscow to handle all aspects of grain deals including transport.

Cargill has said it would continue to ship grain from Russia's ports. It declined further comment.

Dreyfus, Viterra and ADM declined to comment, while another major international group, Bunge, did not respond to a request for comment.

"It is not going to be easy for them (Russia)," said one industry executive with knowledge of grains exports.

Last year, Russia exported a record volume of wheat on ships chartered from international companies and traders. While exports remain strong, in the past few months it has had to source more of its own freight, increasingly relying on a "shadow fleet" of older vessels typically operated by companies based in Turkey and China, three shipping industry sources said.

"There is very little coming out now for international companies," said the executive, who, like other industry sources consulted for this story, asked not to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue. "Most of what is coming out is dealt with by Russian traders using (shadow) fleet ships, which international traders would not touch."

In a sign of Russia's growing hunt for vessels, its requests for charters doubled to 257 in July compared with the same month last year, according to data from maritime platform Shipfix that collates from hundreds of market participants.

The data does not show how many of the requests were fulfilled, or which ship operators were involved.

The requests for ships were up 40% from June and are likely to climb further as the export season gathers pace.

Denmark's NORDEN and two other Western shipping groups that declined to be named told Reuters they stopped working with Russia after the invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022.

INSURANCE

Without the Black Sea corridor in place, both Russia and Ukraine warned in July that ships destined for each others ports could be treated as legitimate military targets, which three marine insurance sources said was a further blow to Western companies' risk appetite.

Insurance for ships heading to Russia's Black Sea ports currently costs tens of thousands of dollars in additional premiums daily, the three sources said, with rates ticking higher following Russia's attacks on Ukraine's other waterways through the Danube in recent days and Kyiv's response.

The Black Sea remains a critical area for Russian exports, with other locations more complicated and costly.

One shipping source familiar with the matter said even before insurance, ship operators were charging up to $10,000 more daily for Russian cargoes than for cargoes leaving nearby ports in Bulgaria and Romania, as the collapse of the deal and Black Sea escalation weighed.

Mike Salthouse, head of external affairs with leading ship insurer NorthStandard, said that ever since the United States and Europe imposed sanctions, some traders and insurers fear the ultimate beneficial owners of Russia's ports and terminals could be connected to designated individuals.

"The ownership structure is not readily apparent from routine or even enhanced due diligence," he said, leading to "a level of

reluctance with engaging in Russian trades."

The industry executive said another risk was if a vessel needed to buy fuel from Russia, a situation the source said could create problems with Western sanctions enforcers, then making it harder to conduct non-Russian business.

"It's not easy to flip into the normal trade after that," the executive said.

Russia's Black Sea terminals handle about 70% of the country's grain exports. They include the Novorossiisk and Taman ports.

"TRADE BARRIERS"

Despite the tensions, global wheat prices remain well below the peak after Russia's invasion last year triggered fears of a global hunger crisis. The removal of more Ukrainian grain from the world market could add to supply pressure unless Russian exports or large crops from other producers make up the difference.

Two sources said the escalation of tensions in the Black Sea was likely to impact Russia's export numbers, and was discouraging shipping companies from bringing vessels to Russian ports, especially newer ships that carry more.

In a statement to Reuters, Russia's agriculture ministry forecast grain exports will fall about 8% during the 2023/24 season from Russian last year's high of 60 million tonnes. It did not give a reason for the drop.

Wheat exports will be down a little less, to 44-45 million tons, Zernin said, in line with estimates from the International Grains Council.

SHIPBUILDING

The ministry in December announced a plan to build a fleet of 61 new grain ships, citing "sanctions pressure and the refusal of many international carriers to cooperate with Russia."

Russian exporters need 34 grains ships with a carrying capacity of 60,000 tonnes and 27 with capacity of 40,000 tonnes, the ministry said in December. It did not say when they could be built by Russian shipyards.

Russia's state-owned agricultural leasing company Rosagroleasing said in March of this year it had placed orders for a fleet of grains ships that it planned to launch within three years.

No orders have currently been reported for Russian companies either domestically or internationally, according to data from valuation company VesselsValue. New ships typically take up to three years to build.

Many of the Russian operated current fleet of 31 mainly smaller dry bulk carriers are over 30 years old, VesselsValue data showed, making it harder to access some ports with stringent requirements for ships over a certain age.

"We don't see Russia building its own fleet from scratch in the short term in order to meet its immediate needs. The primary focus is going be on chartering from the commercial market," said Victoria Mitchell, analyst with Control Risks consultancy.

(Reporting by Jonathan Saul and Nigel Hunt in London, Reuters reporters, additional reporting by Polina Devitt in London and Gus Trompiz in Paris; editing by Frank Jack Daniel)

Source: gCaptain 230809

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Bollinger Shipyards Cuts Steel on Polar Security Cutter Prototype

Mike Schuler August 9, 2023

Bollinger Shipyards has begun cutting steel on the first of eight prototype modules that will become the foundation of the first U.S. Coast Guard Polar Security Cutter (PSC).

Artist rendering of the Polar Security Cutter. Credit: Halter Marine

USCGC Polar Sentinel (PSC-1) will be the first heavy icebreaker to be built in the United States in 50 years. The steel cutting took place at Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding in Pascagoula.

"Today marks a significant step for both Bollinger Shipyards and the United States," said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. "After over 50 years, we're back to building heavy icebreakers. We're honoured that responsibility lies with Bollinger. Beginning work on the first Prototype Fabrication Assembly Unit is an important step closer to commencing construction on the first Polar Security Cutter. This isn't just an important milestone for our company, it's also an important step for our national defence. Simply put, the United States is back in the icebreaker business."

Before constructing a heavy polar icebreaker, a prototype module is built to test new systems, processes, people, and tools needed to work with specialized steel. Lessons learned will improve design completeness and manufacturing quality and efficiency.

"We're relearning how to build this type of ship," said PSC program manager Capt. Eric Drey. "It's the first heavy icebreaker

built by our nation in 50 years. It's not just a big day for the Coast Guard, but a big day for the nation."

Bollinger will need four months of labour for each module and will recruit and train more workers during this time to manage the transition to production of the lead hull as the prototype modules are completed.

Lockport, Louisiana-based Bollinger Shipyards, acquired the PSC program last year through its acquisition of VT Halter Marine, which was awarded the PSC program contract in 2019, beating out Bollinger Shipyards and Fincantieri Marinette Marine to win the bid.

The Coast Guard's polar icebreaking fleet currently consists of one heavy icebreaker, the 399-foot *USCGC Polar Star*, commissioned in 1976, and one medium icebreaker, the 420-foot *USCGC Healy*, commissioned in 1999.

The Polar Security Cutters (PSCs) is one of the Coast Guard's highest priority programs, with polar icebreaking capability to support economic, commercial, maritime, and national security needs in the polar regions. The program is planned with three vessels capable of executing key Coast Guard missions, including defence readiness, marine environmental protection, ports, waterways and coastal security, and search and rescue.

However, due to the PSC design not yet being mature, the program is over budget and three years behind schedule, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Construction on the first ship is now scheduled to start in March 2024 with completion not expected until at least 2027.

To help fill the capability gap until the delayed Polar Security Cutters are operational, the Coast Guard plans to invest $75 million to extend the service life of the 50-year-old *Polar Star.*

Source: gCaptain 230810 —oo00oo--

Japanese Team Develops "Game Changer" Floating Vertical Axis Wind Turbines

PUBLISHED JUL 28, 2023 6:02 PM BY **THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE**

A consortium of Japanese companies is working to develop a new concept in floating offshore wind turbines that they report will be easier to manufacture while also costing less to build and maintain. Known as a vertical axis wind turbine, they believe it will be the next generation technology that will also be well suited to the challenges of floating turbines and resilient to harsh weather conditions.

Floating vertical access wind turbines

Conventional horizontal axis floating wind turbines have a high center of gravity which requires a large and expensive to build floating structure to maintain the stability of the turbines, especially in harsh conditions such as a typhoon. The towers stand as high as nearly 500 feet, which the Japanese group highlights increases the maintenance costs. They also point to installation challenges including specialized vessels, and costly port infrastructure for the construction. In addition, the nature of the wind farm makes it difficult to enlarge.

With the vertical axis wind turbine, they report it is possible to increase the power generation to achieve a cost reduction for the overall installation and ongoing operation and maintenance expenses. The concept uses a series of smaller paddles, a maximum height of approximately 360 feet that are closer to the surface and critically have the ability to tilt up to 20 degrees while maintaining output. It uses a rotating cylindrical floating foundation.

The blades would be produced through a continuous pultrusion method using a moulding process to form composite materials with carbon-reinforced plastics. They are produced in lengthwise sections with the same cross-sectional shape, eliminating the need for large manufacturing facilities, and they would also be easier to transport than the traditional large wind turbine blades.

Japan's J-Power, Osaka University's Graduate School of Engineering, and Albatross Technology, a company developing ocean renewable energy technologies including floating offshore wind turbines, marine current turbines, and wave energy converters, conducted the initial studies on this floating wind technology. In the next phase, shipping company Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha ("K" Line) will join the research along with Tokyo Electric Power and Chubu Electric Power.

The five partners plan to jointly develop a small-scale (20kW) experimental floating axis wind turbine that will be installed in Japanese waters. After confirming the validity of the analysis and design method, they plan to proceed to a larger scale (megawatt class) offshore demonstration project.

They believe this design concept will represent a "game changer" for the industry and can help to address the challenges that offshore wind faces in Japan and elsewhere. They highlight that while the Sea of Japan is similar in size to the North Sea, which has become the center of Europe's offshore wind industry, the Seto Inland Sea has a deeper water depth. They point out that moving even a few kilometres from land in Japan, it is difficult to install wind turbines with fixed foundations.

They also highlight Japan's exposure to harsh weather and sea conditions including typhoons. This technology they report is designed to maintain its maximum output even with a tilt which they believe means it can significantly contribute to Japan's future energy needs.

Source: Maritime Executive 230728 —oo00oo--

Speaking the same language

A recent report by CHIRP has highlighted the ongoing problem of communications. A pilot encountered major communication problems when speaking to the master, who had a poor knowledge of maritime English. Other than simple orders such as 'starboard 10' or 'dead slow ahead', the pilot struggled to communicate with the master. The pilot found it difficult to integrate with the bridge team, who all spoke in their language and not maritime English.

Proficiency in maritime English is an essential safety enabler CHIRP says. It is the official language within the shipping industry and is the foundation of effective communication.

Recruitment Placement and Service Licences (RPSL) play a critical role in ensuring that officers and crew members have adequate language skills in maritime English, which is essential to meet the requirements of the International Safety Management (ISM) code. This includes emergency preparedness and response, which requires quick and efficient communication to prevent dangerous situations.

Once certificated, all seafarers should be provided with ongoing training and development in maritime English to ensure their communication skills remain current and effective. This can be achieved through various means, including language courses, on-board training programs, and continuous language proficiency assessments.

Communication: Like any skill, competency in maritime English will quickly fade if it is not constantly practised, significantly increasing the likelihood of miscommunication or misunderstanding. Companies should invest in ongoing language training throughout a seafarer's career. Port State Control could remove the master if they consider that their inadequate proficiency in maritime English does not meet the requirements for safely operating the vessel with 3rd parties/contractors and emergency responders.

Source: Maritime Advocate 837

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Philippines To Resupply South China Sea Troops After Beijing's Block

Reuters August 19, 2023

MANILA, Aug 19 (Reuters)

The Philippine armed forces said on Saturday it would again seek to resupply troops stationed in a rusty World War 2-era ship on a reef in the South China Sea, after China blocked a previous attempt with water cannons.

The BRP Sierra Madre, a marooned transport ship which Philippine Marines live on as a military outpost, is pictured in the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, part of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea March 30, 2014. REUTERS/Erik De Castro/File Photo

"This exercise of our sovereign rights and jurisdiction is a testament to our firm belief in the rules-based international order that underpins regional peace and stability," armed forces spokesperson Medel Aguilar said in a statement.

Manila filed a diplomatic protest against Beijing this month after China's coast guard used water cannons and "dangerous" moves to prevent the Philippines from sending supplies to a handful of troops in the Second Thomas Shoal.

China claims almost all the South China Sea, an assertion rejected internationally, while Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan and the Philippines have various claims to certain areas.

Manila calls on all relevant parties to respect its sovereignty and jurisdiction over its maritime zones, Aguilar said, adding that Manila supports the peaceful settlement of disputes.

China's embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Chinese coast guard said on Aug. 7 it had told the Philippines not to send ships to the shoal and not to send "construction materials used for large-scale repair and reinforcement" to the warship.

The Philippines intentionally grounded the warship in 1999 as part of its sovereignty claim to the shoal, which lies within its 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

The planned resupply mission "is a clear demonstration of our resolve to stand up against threats and coercion, and our commitment in upholding the rule of law," the armed forces said.

In 2016, an international arbitration award invalidated China's sweeping claim to almost the entire South China Sea.

China, which does not recognize the ruling, has built man-made islands with airstrips and surface-to-air missiles in the South China Sea.

(Reporting by Neil Jerome Morales; Editing by William Mallard)

Source: gCaptain 230822

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Third Of Ukraine Crop Exports Wiped Out After Black Sea Block

August 19, 2023 (Bloomberg)

By Áine Quinn and Olesia Safronova

The Kremlin's efforts to paralyse Ukrainian food shipments are succeeding, with a third of the country's crop exports wiped out since its Black Sea ports were effectively blocked last month.

A worker loads a truck with grain at a terminal during barley harvesting in Odesa region, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, Ukraine June 23, 2022. REUTERS/Igor Tkachenko

The drop marks a significant setback for Ukraine's economy and global food security, even with a €1-billion push by the European Union to build out alternative routes since the start of Russia's invasion. The US this week said it's working with European partners to keep grain exports flowing, relying on rivers like the Danube and other avenues after sea passage has become unsafe.

"The key question is the river ports," said Evghenia Sleptsova, senior economist at Oxford Economics. But ramping up volumes through those could prove difficult "now Russia started bombing Izmail and Reni," two ports along the Danube which were attacked earlier this week.

Ukraine was only able to export 3.2 million tons of grains, vegetable oils and meals in the four weeks through August 15, down from 4.4 and 4.8 million tons in May and June when the Black Sea deal was still in place, according to estimates from analyst UkrAgroConsult. Crop stockpiles are now expected to swell through next year as better-than-expected harvests face fewer routes to market.

Even in wartime, Ukraine is still an important grain exporter globally, and the Black Sea deal that Russia quit on July 17 helped calm global prices and maintain flows to consumers. Russia's own grain trade is benefitting from Ukraine's weakness. Its crop exports are booming and are expected to make up nearly a quarter of global wheat trade in the 2023-24 season.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that within a month after the grain deal broke down there have already been seven attacks on ports with drones and missiles, signalling how challenging it has been to find reliable workarounds.

There are also logistical hurdles: It takes four times as long for some cargoes to get to the Danube now compared to a month ago because of traffic jams, according to Alex Lissitsa, member of the board of Ukrainian Agribusiness Club.

The delays and smaller shipment volumes are also leading to higher transport costs. Olena Vorona, operational director at the supplier Agrotrade Group, said her company completely reoriented flows to Danube ports and railways even before the grain deal collapsed, but transport costs are up to 50% higher.

"In many regions, farmers will most likely think about reducing the sowing of winter cereals, because the prices offered by the market do not cover the costs," said Lissitsa.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's railroad operator said that waiting times at border crossings toward European countries are currently about 5-6 days. Its chief, Yevhen Lyashchenko, told Bloomberg it's preparing for rail exports to increase.

That might not be enough to stave off a broader slowdown, though. Ukraine's grain and oilseed exports could fall by a quarter in the second half of the year compared to the first half, according to Oxford Economics' Sleptsova.

"That would be a drag of 3% on Ukraine's gross domestic product in the second half of the year," she said.

–With assistance from Megan Durisin and Irina Vilcu.

Source: gCaptain 230823

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Ship built to wrong dimensions causes consternation Down Under

Bojan Lepic August 25, 2023

Australia's icebreaking research vessel *RSV Nuyina* is much wider than its intended design and is not able to safely turn and pass underneath Hobart's Tasman Bridge and take on fuel on the other side.

Australia's Antarctic Program

Reports from *Guardian Australia* claim that the vessel was denied permission to pass under the bridge due to safety concerns.

The A$528m ($339m) ship will now have to refuel at an alternate location, hundreds of kilometres away vastly increasing costs and creating more emissions along the way.

The Guardian said that the *RSV Nuyina*, in charge of resupplying Australia's three Antarctic stations and carrying out climate research in the Southern Ocean, is currently berthed at Hobart's Macquarie Wharf, south of the Tasman Bridge with its intended refuelling station

at Selfs Point just upstream on the other side of the bridge.

The design width of the vessel was 25.6m when it was delivered. It currently stands at 35.1m, a considerable increase. The 160-meter icebreaker was built by Damen in its Galati shipyard in Romania in 2018.

According to *The Guardian*, the ship could pass under the Tasman Bridge from the southern side but could not safely travel back due to the ship needing to complete a turn on the approach to the bridge, before passing through the concrete beams. Given the size of the ship, there is almost no room for error as it could drift and side slip while conducting a turn.

The media outlet also quoted Tasmania's harbour master, Mick Wall, who said that the vessel's "windage area" was too large which meant that strong winds could push it off course.

The Guardian highlighted an incident from 1975 where 12 people died when a cargo ship crashed into the same bridge causing part of it to collapse.

Source: *Splash247 230825* —oo00oo--

AD Ports eyes further Kazakhstan investments

Sam Chambers August 16, 2023

AD Ports Group from Abu Dhabi has signed a heads of terms (HoT) agreement with Semurg Invest, the owner and developer of Sarzha Multifunctional Marine Terminal at Kazakhstan's Kuryk Port, to potentially invest in a grain terminal.

Under the terms of the agreement, the two companies would form a joint venture to invest, operate and develop Sarzha terminal on the Caspian Sea into a multipurpose terminal.

AD Ports' global footprint has latterly focused significantly on Central Asia.

Abdulaziz Zayed Al-Shamsi, regional CEO, AD Ports Group, said "This project would be of significant strategic importance, particularly in the context of the Transcaspian International Transport Route (TITR). Forming a joint venture with Semurg would be a key milestone in our Middle Corridor strategy."

Nurzhan Marabayev, general director at Semurg, said: "Caspian Sea ports have emerged as pivotal hubs within the fast-growing global logistics supply chain. The co-operation between our two companies would bring new impulse to the ports development in Kazakhstan considering AD Ports Group's experience and expertise."

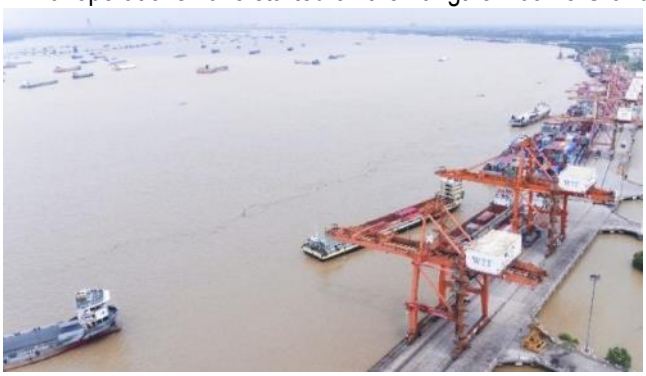
This agreement follows the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kazakhstan's Ministry of Industry & Infrastructural Development in January 2023 for strategic cooperation in the development of a marine fleet and coastal infrastructure in the Caspian and Black Seas.

Source: Splash247 230816 —oo00oo--

China trials giant new canal

Sam Chambers August 22, 2023

Trial operations have started on the Yangtze-Huaihe Grand Canal, China's second longest canal linking two major rivers.



The canal connects China's longest river, the Yangtze, which flows through southern Anhui province for 400 km, and the Huaihe River, which runs through the north of the province.

The canal is 723 km long with the whole project costing $12.5bn. Ground was broken for the start of the project in December 2016.

Earlier this summer, China started building another canal mega project.

Linking Nanning, capital of South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, with the Beibu Gulf, the Pinglu Canal will be 134.2 km long and is scheduled to open by the end of 2026. It will allow ships to travel from far inland and reach the Beibu Gulf near the border with Vietnam via the Qinjiang River.

Source: Splash247 220822 —oo00oo--