



Welcome once again to another issue of Seacurus Monthly – while summer kicks off in earnest, the usual “silly season” has actually seen some serious shipping issues come to the fore.

Safety is of course uppermost in the concerns of all, but the challenges of balancing that against the balance sheet is a constant commercial conundrum. One area where that is most evident is with moves towards container weighing.

What would seem on the face of it a very simple concept is starting to become a real cause for concern – and if it is not delivered effectively, then the impact on world trade as well as safety could begin to be felt.

It has been an odd few months from the piracy and maritime security perspective – despite those who are eager to say that Somali piracy is defeated it seems that the pirates aren't listening. According to the Iranian navy, there are still groups out there and they are very much operational. It would seem that their demise has been exaggerated, and it is to be hoped that they can continue to be held at bay.

Uppermost in these efforts are of course the navies present in the region, but so too are the private maritime security companies. Without armed guards it seems that the pirates could well experience a resurgence, so it is extremely disconcerting to hear reports that the armed guarding sector could be on the brink of collapse.

According to reports, and the collapse of one major player, there are many companies on the brink of bankruptcy and many more desperately seeking mergers or buy-outs. The “gold rush” of maritime security is seemingly very much over, it is to be hoped that enough good companies remain in the game to provide vessels with the protection they need.

Maritime threats do not always come bearing AK47s, and Seacurus was on hand in London to join an interesting debate on the issue of cyber threats to shipping. There is a gloomy prognosis that owners are not doing enough to head off this threat, and it seems much more needs to be done. We explore this issue in more depth inside.

As subscribers to this monthly report and also our daily news, you were approached last month for your thoughts on the format and way in which our bulletins are delivered. We were ever so grateful to hear back with your thoughts, it was gratifying

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to hear that so many appreciate the bulletins – though of course, there is always room for improvement. As such, you will hopefully have noticed that we are now delivering the “Top Ten” maritime news stories of the day. We think this balances the short, punchy format – but makes it even easier for you to see the news that matters.

We hope you like the new format, and as ever please do contact us if you wish to share your thoughts and feedback.



Captain Thomas Brown
Managing Director –
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Boxing Clever: Weighing Matters

The issue of container weights, loss of boxes off ships, collapsing stacks and a whole raft of commercial and safety concerns have been aired lately, as the topic of weighing containers has come to the fore. Weight checks will be compulsory from mid-2016 under amendments to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) agreed last year after a lengthy industry-wide debate. But arguments still rage as to how best to stamp out cargo misdeclarations, including inaccurate weights that might result in serious accidents.



In the last month some high profile ports have broken ranks over the question of where best to weigh containers before they are loaded onto a ship. It seems that now the genie is out of the bottle, then more will turn their eyes to solutions rather than allowing themselves to be bogged down in the problem. One of the biggest problems appears to be that a compromise solution was found, and while this was designed to make mandatory container weight checks easier by providing a choice of methods, it seems that this may in fact have complicated the process.

The options which have been factored in, and which the container industry fought hard to maintain may, in retrospect, be causing more confusion than was expected. It seems that weighing each export box on arrival at the terminal might actually have been more straightforward than requiring the shipper to use one of two ways to produce the certified information.

In order to progress the SOLAS amendments the IMO alighted on a solution that recognised that not every shipper had the capability to physically weigh each container. The compromise stated that shippers can either weigh the fully loaded box, or provide a certified figure based on the weight of individual items to be shipped, plus the container itself. On the face of it, what could be simpler? All the shipper needs to do is weigh the goods, packaging, dunnage and add the tare weight of the container and verify the total gross mass weight with the shipping line.

Despite the seeming simplicity, choice and options are not great bed fellows of regulation, and as port companies assess how best to comply, there is a delay and more debate than action.

According to DP World, one of their senior executives believes that ports are probably best placed to check how heavy each container is before loading, with the caveat, that it does not impact port operations.

Of course, if terminals have to weigh each container, there would be an incremental cost attached because of the need to install weighbridges, but that could be done, whereas the alternative of certified container weights provided by shippers could pose problems for highly automated facilities. With the likes of DP World's London Gateway, Altenwerder in Hamburg or the soon-to-open World Gateway in Rotterdam all harnessing automation – then the uncertainty of certification of box weights, is not ideally suited.

However, some port interests were relieved that terminals were not expected to have to weigh each outbound container. The European Sea Ports Organisation, has voiced its support that container weights will have to be verified, it also notes that these checks should preferably be carried out by shippers at the point of origin.

While Chris Welsh, secretary-general of the Global Shippers' Forum and a keen advocate of mandatory checks, has welcomed the decision to allow two ways of assessing a container's weight. Whatever the solution which a specific port favours, research has highlighted that weighing containers will soon be a commercial advantage for ports that offer the service and will not have a major impact on operations.

Responding to new container weight-verification requirements the TT Club has claimed that technology to weigh containers quickly at ports already exists, and makes life so much easier and quicker, which impacts the bottom-line.

The TT Club believes that the ports able to verify container weights could attract shipping line customers seeking to ensure that container stacks are not top heavy, or exceed the limits of container strength. It would also allow them to improve their vessel stowage.

Cyber Threats: Fact or Fiction

Seacurus was present last month at an event bringing a range of maritime stakeholders together to explore and examine the potential cyber threats hidden within the industry.

The London event played host to leading experts and a mixed audience of maritime professionals, as this most modern of shipping threats came into the spotlight. While shipping's cyber vulnerabilities remain relatively uncertain, the industry is slowly waking to the implications of such attacks.

The gathered experts believe that hackers will soon discover shipping's soft underbelly, and when they do, and as bandwidth increases allow – then the results could be terrifying. As criminals, pirates and terrorists begin to target shipping.



It seems shipping may have been lucky up to now, but “security through obscurity” is not a sustainable solution. Professor Sadie Creese of Oxford University claims that a cyber-attack in shipping is a “when-not-if” problem – so the industry needs to get ready.

At the moment the number of known shipping cyber cases is actually low, as attacks often remain invisible, but these numbers are likely to grow in number and impact. Though already there are claims that the low instances of attacks are based on under-reporting. Critics have expressed concerns that shipping companies are avoiding reporting problems for fear of alarming investors, regulators or insurers.

Whatever the actual true picture, the divergent views suggest that facts and hard data concerning maritime cyber security are hard to find. What is certain is that as crew complements get smaller and ships get bigger, ships increasingly rely on automation and remote monitoring, meaning key components, including navigational systems, can be compromised.

The perennial technology problem onboard ship is the USB flash drive. Since the arrival of these devices in the early noughties, the potential for a seafarer to unwittingly infect shipboard systems has grown exponentially. Add to that the change to the shipboard architecture, with systems ever more connected any virus entering a vessel has had a growing host to allow the problem to spread.

This is the so-called “insider” threat posed by seafarers. While hugely concerning it was also noted that this should also be the easiest to remedy. As such problems stem not from malicious intent but ignorance or lack of understanding. This means that introducing systems, protocols and cultural changes can bring rapid improvements.

This does not, of course, address the less certain issue of external threats, that of the dreaded “hacker”. Technology and the connections this brings, has seemingly opened the door to emerging threats and vulnerabilities, as equipment has become accessible to outside entities.

Researchers have discovered significant potential issues in the three key technologies sailors use to navigate: Global Positioning Satellites, marine Automatic Identification System (AIS), and Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS). According to one report, a probing of the online defences of the world’s 20 largest container carriers found that 16 had serious security gaps.

The vulnerabilities take on a wide spread of faces – ranging from an attacker with a cheap GPS jammer exploiting weaknesses, through to tampering with AIS data such as a vessel’s identity, type, position, heading and speed to shore stations and other ships. These are real problems, but it is unclear as to who is willing or able to tackle them.

Ships need to embark on a simple “cyber-hygiene” routine to ensure that many of the more obvious vulnerabilities are dealt with. Thinking about this in plain security terms, locking a door isn’t going to stop the determined criminal but it will prevent opportunist thieves, and may also guard against stupidity of those who may compromise security by accident.

In particular, there are some absolute basics which vessels need to implement onboard as practicable actions that do not incur excessive overheads or complications:

- **Setting up strong user access control;**
- **Setting up strong network access control;**
- **Performing back-ups;**
- **Testing disaster recovery plans;**
- **Making sure any anti-virus software is kept up-to-date.**

The speakers warned against any feeling of a false sense of security, stating that as ships grow in complexity we can no longer afford to ignore the problem. Indeed there were calls for cyber management and security to be incorporated within the ISM code, requiring rules to be laid down within Safety Management Systems.

It is increasingly felt that shipping has to align the traditional notions of managing safety and security with these new and perhaps unfamiliar threats. Shipowners and operators must start by thinking defensively and building in resilience from day one, with IT security policies that are explicit and carry tough penalties for infractions.

The problem of cyber-security might be couched in technological terms, but the solutions are likely to be both technological and cultural. It was also stressed that cyber failings will result in operational and safety issues, there are also potentially significant legal, insurance and liability issues to consider.

The marine insurance market is beginning to awake to the cyber issue. While the majority of insurance policies carry some kind of cyber-security exclusion clause, cover will kick in if the consequences of an attack fall under another peril category, such as fire or explosion.

Following the emergence of standalone cyber-risk policies in other sectors there are moves to explore cover specifically for energy and maritime which may offer protection against data breach, business interruption, hacking damage and extortion among other risks.

There are also commercial concerns relating to cyber threats – not least where electronic bills of lading (“BOL”) are used. Of course, the BOL is not only a contract of carriage but is a document of title and receipt, with access to an electronic copy of the BOL and the goods in their possession, a criminal would be able to steal whatever cargo they targeted – with devastating effect on the legitimate parties. So while the use of electronic documents provides a number of advantages, cyber security is a major concern – especially as criminals are increasingly adept at perpetrating electronic BOL fraud.

Another issue which was explored during the seminar, was that of seaworthiness. This concept is one of foundations on which maritime law, marine insurance and the rules governing the carriage of goods by sea, and liability rests.

The carrier’s duty to provide a seaworthy vessel has received considerable attention, worldwide, from courts, scholars and others in the shipping industry. In essence a ship must be made fit to meet and undergo the perils of the sea before it embarks on a voyage. If it isn’t seaworthy and something goes wrong whilst underway, there can be serious legal and commercial ramifications.

What, it was asked, are the boundaries of ‘seaworthiness’ and would a cyber-issue, compromise this? Currently there is no clear answer, but cyber security vulnerabilities could, it seems, be a seaworthiness issue.

Shipping law firm Holman Fenwick Willan stressed that there is no case law as yet, so it is not possible to know. However the term “seaworthiness” is a very broad one, as it does not only include the physical state of the vessel but also extends to other aspects/factors. Consequently, it is not easy to define seaworthiness in specific limited terms.

So if an accident happens as the result of IT systems being compromised by a hacker or a virus contained within a digital chart system, does that count as negligence on the part of the ship owner? Would this mean that seaworthiness is affected? At the moment we have only questions, but if the threats grow at the levels predicted by the cyber security experts, it seems that case law may not be too far into the future.

Categorising Seafarers under the Maritime Labour Convention

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC2006) is behind many fundamental changes affecting the shipping industry. Almost every one of these is positive, but it seems there are still some problems and anomalies emerging. Even as MLC was first debated there were those who questioned whether cruise ship dancers would be deemed seafarers (yes), or whether the likes of Lady Gaga (if performing on a cruise ship) would be considered a seafarer (no).

As the convention entered into force, there were decisions taken by some flag States which were less understandable or clear cut – most noticeably, the respective decision by Panama regarding cadets, and the UK regarding maritime security operatives (MSOs).

According to the maritime security industry, the decision not to categorise Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel (PCASP) as seafarers has had a serious and detrimental effect on their businesses.

It is reported that the consequential effects of such actions, and a suspension on the issuance of British Seaman's Discharge Books and Seaman's Cards to all UK PCASP are beginning to be felt as private maritime security companies (PMSCs) – both from the UK and international companies which employ British citizens struggle to manage the challenge of getting operatives into countries and onto ships.



Many individual operatives themselves are also keen for a review of this policy, and the industry has been highlighting the associated problems to the government and appropriate authorities.

Initially the decision to de-classify MSOs was taken by a tri-partite group of the UK Maritime Coastguard Agency, the British Chamber of Shipping and Nautilus International. Collectively these parties felt that classifying MSOs as seafarers was not the appropriate route – and there are perhaps good and valid reasons for this.

Some have stated that the “transient” spot market nature of private maritime security means that having to prepare accommodation for MSOs which complies with MLC2006 is not practical. It would seem that this may be a valid operational view, but it would rather seem to fly in the face of the spirit of MLC, which aims to protect those working at sea...whatever their role.

In making the original decision on categorisation of maritime security personnel, it has also been suggested, that this was simply an issue related to income tax benefits and Seafarers Earnings Deductions (SED).

Whatever the reasons, it now appears that the ability of British operatives to work on vessels is severely hampered, and this will also affect the provision of maritime security on a global scale. Those MSOs affected now find it harder to move to vessels – as their travel is more costly, and there are concerns over visas. If the decision stands it is likely to cost PMSCs a significant amount of additional money in the purchasing of visas, passports and administration to keep the visas of their existing personnel current.

The additional cost of moving guards around the region to meet ship's schedules will be significantly more expensive (the increase has been estimated as a rise of 25-40% in costs) which could result in a steep rise in expenditure for those affected.

All which means the costs associated with deployment are increased, and in an extremely tight market, this is having a dreadful effect on many businesses, as it severely hampers their ability to deploy their people effectively both in practical and financial terms.

There are others issues too. Where maritime security operatives have sought seaman's papers from different flags, there are serious concerns that any inconsistency in paperwork could cause concern in the event of port State control inspections. A passport from one State and seafarers identification paper from another could mean potential control measures, which could impact the vessel owners and operators too.

The Demise of Private Maritime Security?



The mainstream media has been fascinated by the Somali piracy epidemic which has blighted shipping, they have also been in a thrall to the private maritime security companies (PMSCs) which subsequently began to tackle them.

This fascination shows no signs of abating, especially as it seems a number of high profile PMSCs are going through varying degrees of financial difficulty. This has seen relatively obscure companies make the pages of papers such as The Independent, as journalists pick over the bones of businesses which have gone bust.

Perhaps the most high profile (for now), failure has been that of Gulf of Aden Group Transits (GoAGT). An article in the UK's Independent newspaper last month alleged that GoAGT went under owing millions in unpaid salaries, and there are rumours that travel companies may also be in the queue of creditors.

GoAGT had been running between 35 and 50 transits a month, making it one of the world's top 10 PMSCs until its spectacular collapse. GoAGT even counted some of the Royal Navy's highest ranked and highest profile officers among its staff.

The company boasted on its website, before that vanished too, of holding a "100 per cent success record on over 1,800 transits" and that it provided "safe passage and protection across the industry to some of the world's largest and most respected shipping companies".

While the company's demise is of concern for all those working ashore, there is real concern as to the effect on the operatives who will now have been left out in operational areas – or onboard vessels.

Media reports state that around 100 armed security staff have been "left scattered at sea" and "left high and dry in treacherous waters, including off the coast of Somalia", by the collapse – and while the truth may be less poetic, there are real concerns as to how they will be repatriated and cared for, and ultimately paid.

Thankfully it seems that in the interim, the "current and planned operations" of GoAGT are now being carried out on their behalf by another company. But the issue of unpaid wages is immensely serious. According to reports, the company's Eastern European contractors are owed more than £200,000. While it is understood that some of the Filipino guards are on six-month contracts and so it is thought they could be owed even more.

One commentator has stated that their calculations have identified that GoAGT staff, both at sea and ashore are owed around £4.7m. The loss of this one company is significant, but if more follow then the implications are widespread and extremely troubling.

Following a period of almost exponential growth in the sector, especially focused on UK companies, it seems that at best we are seeing the almost inevitable market correction, and at worst a total collapse of the model.

Unfortunately that is exactly the prediction of many analysts and experts – indeed, if prices fall any further then the collapse of a few businesses in isolation could preface the demise of the whole sector – certainly from a UK perspective. It is understood that the GoAGT closure is just the first of several security companies in the UK that are likely to fold.

Views as to whether this is the entire UK armed guarding bubble bursting, or simply a slight deflation, vary. But there has been a drop in the take up of services, which has also come at a time of massive price undercutting and the use of increasingly inexperienced (read cheap) Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel (PCASP) from non-traditional manpower supply areas.

The driving down in prices has seen fees slashed by 30% or more, and this is in a business with high costs, high risks and zero room for error. There has been a sense that many PMSCs have had a “win business at all costs” mentality – and this has perhaps led to an unsustainable price war, as companies have sought to force the competition out of business. Alas it seems that some may be placing themselves a little too close to the fire in the process.

The Cassandra prophets have long spoken of the fact that shipping companies, would not allow themselves to be held “ransom” by both pirates and a new born service providing industry. So owners took on guards when necessary, but there was a considered approach to ensuring that costs were always going to be driven down.

Now it seems that there is a difficult equilibrium needed, and we need to escape a cycle of maritime security “boom and bust”. However, there is no real indication of how it will be achieved.

Despite fewer attacks it is the considered opinion that nothing has actually changed, and the pirates are still out there. So vessel vulnerabilities still need to be scrupulously assessed, and where armed guards are needed, then the highest standard ones available should be used.

However, if too many PMSCs do go to the wall, it seems that we could find a situation where there is not enough supply for the demand and the companies that have survived will be in the whole churn once more. For the short term the future is one of immense uncertainty, and more big and respected names may fall. While in the longer term, those PMSCs who do survive will need to have evolved into being far more astute and business savvy. They will have to have a far wider remit of risk management, rather than just providing hired muscle for one voyage.

Knock on Effects of Petro Piracy

As we have covered in previous editions of the Seacurus Monthly, the growth of “petro piracy” in SE Asia is a huge concern. With about a quarter of the world’s seaborne oil trade passing through the Malacca Strait there is no shortage of targets for criminals and the potential knock on effects for global trade are growing.

The press has latched on to this phenomenon, painting an image of pirates hidden on the Indonesian island of Batam, a pirate lair for centuries watching as passing ships come into their sights with Singapore’s skyscrapers crowding the distant horizon.

All very poetic, we are sure you’ll agree – but the fact is the crime doesn’t stop at petro cargoes, and there are concerns that in focusing solely on one vessel type and cargo, then shipping could be sailing blindly into trouble.

In 2013, piracy attacks rose dramatically in Indonesia, where 106 incidents took place - a seven-fold increase in five years. A third of the 106 incidents in 2013 were reported in the last quarter of the year, suggesting a potential attacks to escalate into a more organised piracy model unless they are controlled.

Indeed, the IMB has called the rise of petro-piracy “alarming”. While the targeting of tankers first came to prominence off West Africa, tankers have always been an attractive target for pirates, and this is a trend which has actually been around for years.



However, as with most things, timing is everything and it appears that the “business model” and price of fuel has prompted the Indonesian pirates into these copycat attacks. Petro-piracy is an organised crime, requiring good logistics and networks to steal and sell-on fuel, mainly in Batam or onto the black market in Singapore where fuel is more expensive.

This organised element has had some observers noting that prominent criminals have been released from prison in the area, and have drawn conclusions regarding their involvement. While that may be a case of 2+2 = piracy, it is an interesting theory.

Whoever is behind the attacks, it is clear that tankers are under real threat – especially so given their tendency to be “slow and low”. However, it has been stressed that the threat should not be assumed to begin and end with just tankers or petro cargoes.

Criminal elements with a marine capability are considered to be willing and able to hit alternative targets, seeking to gain whatever they can from any passing shipping. As such it is being stressed the threat does not necessarily end there. The message is that other vessel types could soon become targets too, and so it is imperative that steps are taken to ensure that necessary security measures are in place, as this specific type of piracy evolves into a more random “smash and grab” form.

In the meantime shipping must act to protect itself, and it is considered vital that action is taken from intelligence, management and operational perspectives. One key concern to emerge is the accusation that criminals are being granted access to sensitive information on cargoes and vessel movements. As such owners, masters and agents are being urged to do everything possible to control and restrict the flow of such intelligence and data.

Parallel to this is a need to ensure that practical measures are taken to protect seafarers, cargoes and vessels. From the management ashore, through to the team onboard there needs to be an awareness of the local piracy problems, as well as an ability and willingness to take the necessary actions to safeguard and protect their vessels.

Monthly News Roundup

MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION AND SEAFARER NEWS

Suez Canal Shapes Up for Future: A major dredging project that will deepen a 34km section of the Suez Canal's western channels by 1.2m to 15.8m is scheduled to get under way this week. "This project will allow giant container ships heading south to pass through these channels and reduce total transit time," the canal authority stated. The long-awaited project has no scheduled end date and could take many months to complete. The canal has its own dredging fleet and a further project, to widen anchorage areas in Great Bitter Lake and at the tips of the western channels, is also planned. It comes as the Suez Canal posts record traffic movements this year.

<http://goo.gl/jVOnXS>

Iran Rescues Five Vessels in Indian Ocean: Iranian warships claim to have rescued five commercial vessels in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean after tough battles with pirates, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said. "The 30th flotilla had 5 cases of severe conflicts with the pirates". In some cases this involved running gun battles between those pirates in fast boats and elite Iranian naval marine commandos on the high seas. Iran has also suffered casualties in the process. Unconfirmed reports suggest some of those ships were related to American and British oil tankers. Independent corroboration has yet to be provided. <http://goo.gl/7fKlxn>

Deadly Virus Warning for Shipping: As the fears over the spread of the Ebola Virus in West Africa continue, marine insurers say clients have to ensure their crews take every precaution. P&I Clubs have issued warnings to shipowners over the risk of Ebola and told members crews need to be made fully aware of the risks they face. Standard Club is advising all of Members who trade in West Africa to be well aware of the current guidance issued by the World Health Organization (WHO). Owners should monitor the health and wellbeing of their crews, and it is "prudent" to advise crews to remain aboard vessels whilst in ports in certain WAF countries in order to reduce the risk. <http://goo.gl/g6mrog>



Landmark US Crude Export: A tanker has loaded a cargo of crude oil, the first such export from the United States since the easing of a 40-year-old ban on U.S. crude exports. Westport Petroleum Inc, the US-based shipping arm of Japanese trader Mitsui & Co, chartered the Panamax "BW Zambesi" for the voyage. The tanker, owned by BW Group, docked at the Galveston terminal in Texas to load just over 400,000 barrels of condensate and is expected to arrive in Asia in early September, one source said. The Crude Oil Export Ban was under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act 1975 after the 1973 Arab Oil Embargo to conserve US resources. <http://goo.gl/Lnzh0H>

White List: The Paris MoU published its report on 2013's worldwide flag performance, "White, Grey and Black Lists." The report indicates further improvements towards quality shipping. Last year Thailand and the United States of America were moved up to the White List. This year Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia and Switzerland moved from the Grey List to the White List. Georgia, Lebanon, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Libya and Albania moved from the Black List to the Grey List. Bahamas and Greece have dropped from the Top 10. The worst performing RO is INCLAMAR. There is also a new view taken of the correlation between flags and ROs working on their behalf. <http://goo.gl/HtBhY9>

Putting Safety First: The Safety@Sea Singapore campaign has been launched led by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), the campaign is an industry-wide effort to increase awareness of safe practices and inculcate a safety-first culture at sea. Mr Andrew Tan, Chief Executive, MPA said, "Singapore is the world's busiest port in terms of vessel arrival tonnage, and is located along a vital shipping lane and one of the world's busiest waterways. The Safety@Sea Singapore campaign focuses on the human element in marine incidents, we want to safeguard against complacency, raise safety standards, and get everyone in the community to do their part." <http://goo.gl/AkT7La>

Report or Be Damned: There is a known problem in gathering reports on safety from shipping. But there should be no shame in reporting that something went wrong, especially where an accident was avoided. The shame should be in not reporting it. One avenue open to all seafarers, wherever there are in the world, is the Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP). The aim of CHIRP is to seek out root causes, identify the lessons learned and to consider how best this information can be used to prevent reoccurrence elsewhere in the maritime industry. CHIRP does not seek to apportion blame but to gather data to help decisions and safety. <http://goo.gl/XWnzf3>

Anger at Photocopied Charts: A bulk carrier at Abbot Point coal port in Australia has been detained for crossing the Great Barrier Reef without the required nautical charts. The second officer of Hong Kong-flagged "Bulk Ingenuity" was fined AUD85,000. The master was also fined AUD40,000,(USD116,000). The Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Vessel Traffic Service (REEFVTS) picked up the vessel outside the designated shipping area (DSA) en route to the coal port from China on 21 July, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) reported. AMSA said the vessel had relied on photocopied charts for navigation, and ignored the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

<http://goo.gl/at4qsm>

Abandoned Vessel and Crew Concern: A Greek-owned cargo ship has been anchored in the Delaware River for nearly 16 weeks, with 20 crew on board, caught in a quagmire between U.S. Coast Guard demands for operational repairs, and an owner who has not paid bills incurred since April. The "Nikol H", which is registered in the Marshall Islands, needs additional repairs before sailing, and the owners allegedly owe as much as \$1.2 million, which prompted vendors and others to sue to recover costs for providing fuel, food, and supplies while the ship has been here. The original crew members' visas expired, and they are not permitted to go ashore for recreation and shopping. <http://goo.gl/mgLT3b>

Finger Pointing by Nigeria: The Nigerian Navy has blamed foreigners for most of the piracy, illegal bunkering and other sea crimes committed in the nation's maritime domain. Flag Officer Commanding (FOC), Western Naval Command (WNC) Rear Admiral Sanmi Alade said, "Most of criminality in our waters is carried out by foreigners and not Nigerians. The era when the navy had challenges of platforms will soon be over because we will take delivery of some ships before the end of the year and command our waterways". Adding, "We will take full command once again and there will be no need for private security here and there because our water is not private." <http://goo.gl/1jpEUx>

P&I Cargo Classification Warning: The Japan P&I Club has cautioned its owners against transporting nickel ore cargoes that are deliberately classified as iron ore to evade the Indonesian government's export restrictions. In a circular to its members, the Japan P&I Club said: "The club has been advised of two cargoes of nickel ore that were allegedly being prepared for shipment under the bulk cargo shipping name of iron ore. In an attempt to circumvent the current ban on nickel ore exports in Indonesia and in contravention of the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code, these two cargoes were being offered for shipment as iron ore. <http://goo.gl/fjQevn>

Violent Pirate Attack off Malaysia: Pirates have shot a seafarer in the neck after boarding an anchored product tanker, two miles off Teluk Ramunia, Malaysia. According to sources, cash, personal belongings and possibly fuel were stolen by the seven armed Indonesians that boarded the tanker MT Ji Xiang which is registered in Ulan Bator, Mongolia. Local authorities were able to intervene, and in their haste to escape, the pirates left two pistols and a machete on the vessel which was carrying 14 crew comprising seven Myanmars, a China national and six Indonesians. A maritime patrol boat gave chase but lost them in the waters off a neighbouring country. <http://goo.gl/aq6PZe>

US Hits Pollution Spill Ship: US Federal prosecutors say the operator of a ship that discharged 34 metric tons of oily bilge water and waste sludge has been fined \$500,000. Authorities said the ship, M/V Bulk Victory, is banned from calling on ports of the United States for three years. The U.S. Attorney's Office said in a news release that Pacific and Atlantic, which has its main offices in Greece, operated the Bulk Victory, a 13,697 gross ton cargo ship. Authorities say in March, the U.S. Coast Guard boarded the vessel in the Delaware Bay Big Stone Anchorage to conduct an inspection. An investigation determined the ship had discharged the bilge water and sludge. <http://goo.gl/EdmuZf>

Vessel Hit in Ghanaian Waters: A Kiribati-flagged tanker has been hijacked by pirates off the coast of Ghana, the International Maritime Bureau has reported. According to the IMB, the 3,232 gross ton MT Hai Soon 6 was boarded and hijacked by a group of 10 heavily armed pirates at 2340 UTC on Friday about 46 nautical miles south of Ghana. The vessel was said to be sailing in southeasterly direction and the fate of the crew and vessel is unknown. IMB advises all vessels in the area to keep a sharp lookout for the missing tanker and report any sightings to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre. <http://goo.gl/6Glea0>

Cruise Ship Crime Concerns Grow: Sexual assault is “far too common” on cruise ships serving US ports, despite the cheerful image of fun on the high seas promoted by cruise lines, a Senate committee heard this week. A rape victim was among the witnesses who appeared before the Senate transportation committee, which is considering legislation to reinforce the rights of cruise ship passengers. “If you think young women are safe on cruise ships, think again. They’re not,” said Philip Gerson, a Miami trial lawyer whose clients have included an autistic teenager sexually assaulted on a Christmas cruise around the Caribbean. Cruise lines “foster a misleading information campaign” with promises of safe and happy days on the high seas far away from such dry-land hazards as muggings or traffic mishaps, he said.

<http://goo.gl/kHKIUA>

So careful on Social Interaction: Videotel, part of KVH Industries, Inc., has launched a new program, “Social Media at Sea”, addressing the unique dangers of inappropriate use of social media by shipboard personnel and providing simple solutions to ensure that seafarers understand the dangers - and benefits - of this onboard revolution. Since the use of the Internet has now become commonplace on many vessels, seafarers often have much more freedom to communicate with friends and family using social media tools. Consequently, the thoughtless snap of a picture or video capture can often make the difference between incidents that attract little or no attention and those that end up making the headlines. <http://goo.gl/cb39KL>

German Shipping Under Threat: Germany, which currently is home to the world’s biggest container vessel fleet, will in future have fewer small shipping firms as European banks avoid the industry and American and Asian financiers focus on bigger peers, according to a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). As shipowners face pressure to put more fuel-efficient vessels into service to get better rates, they will need to team up with peers in alliances or mergers to tap financing sources, according to PwC’s Claus Brandt. Smaller shipping companies will bid farewell to the market, because they don’t have access to financing sources. This could hit the German model hard. <http://goo.gl/ZxErHK>

Extension for EU Mission in Somalia: The EU Foreign Affairs Council, has extended the mandate of the EU mission on regional maritime capacity building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP Nestor) until 12 December 2016. This civilian mission forms part of the EU's comprehensive approach to fighting piracy in the Horn of Africa, alongside the EU Naval Force Somalia and the EU training mission for Somalia, said the Council in a statement. Around 50 international experts from 11 EU member states work in the mission, which is based in Niamey. It has a budget of 9.2 million euro for the period until July 2015. <http://goo.gl/a3PZ6b>

Accommodation Concerns: The Maritime Labour Convention, has been in force for some time now, but some superyachts are struggling to comply. One area of concern is that of accommodation requirements. MLC requires that "a separate berth for each seafarer." And though the provisions of the Passenger Yacht Code (PYC) and Large Yacht Code (LY3) allow the build of double or higher-occupancy cabins, this does little for yachts whose delivery is far behind them. With 'hot bunking' and sleeping on office sofas no longer allowed, superyachts now have a dilemma when it comes to the number of crew on board providing the service expected to owners. <http://goo.gl/wVfYB0>

Less Regulation: The Liberian Registry has called on shipping regulators to ensure the effective implementation of existing rules to protect human life, safety and the environment, rather than creating new rules and regulations instead. Scott Bergeron, CEO of the Liberian International Ship & Corporate Registry, said, "It is the job of ship registries and other regulators to ensure the effective, efficient and practical implementation of rules and regulations. Unfortunately, the entire industry does not operate in this way...I think the industry already has enough regulations, and creating new ones just as a political or public reaction to accidents is very short-sighted." <http://goo.gl/042YY8>