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Attacks on vessels being stoked by economic impact of coronavirus

CONCERNS HAVE BEEN raised about an increase in attacks on vessels in the Singapore Strait, leading to warnings for crews to remain vigilant while transiting the busy waterway.

They come as Singapore's piracy watchdog issued its fifth incident warning for the year following a spate of incidents logged by the Regional Co-operation Agreement on Combating Piracy's information sharing centre.

Three vessels were boarded in one night last week and ship equipment stolen. Two weeks earlier, thieves targeted two bulk carriers and a tanker within a two-hour period.

ReCAAP said the incidents on the night of November 8 bring the tally to 31 so far in 2020. It recorded 39 incidents in 2019.

Most incidents — 27 of this year's 31 — were in the eastbound shipping lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme, suggesting they originated from Indonesia.

"The increase in incidents is probably driven as much by economic factors as anything else," said Harry Hirst, a consultant and master mariner at law firm Incisive Law.

"We think the coronavirus pandemic has caused increased economic hardships in the region.

"The eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait where most of the attacks have occurred, is closer to Indonesia where the economic hardships may be more acute."

ReCAAP has advised ships "to exercise utmost vigilance, adopt extra precautionary measures and report all incidents immediately to the nearest coastal state".

The regional piracy monitoring centre was concerned enough that its executive director Masafumi Hiroki issued a statement saying that although the incidents so far have been moderate, they should not be ignored "because the lack of arrests can embolden criminals to escalate their crimes".

"In addition to asking the shipping community to exercise utmost vigilance, we also urge the littoral states concerned to take enforcement actions to apprehend the perpetrators, without which the spate of incidents is likely to continue."

In its most recent piracy report, the International Maritime Bureau said two crew had been threatened, one injured and another taken hostage this year, indicating a continued risk to the crew.

It said knives were reported to be present in at least 10 of the 15 incidents it recorded although incident tallies differ between agencies.

Sharp reduction in incidents

However, security sources said the risk to shipping remained moderate and vessels that followed procedures such as lighting, alarms and mustering were unlikely to fall victim.

Most crimes were opportunistic petty thefts, though perpetrators are sometimes armed.

"They're not interested in a confrontation, they're not interested in anything other than grabbing what they can in the shortest amount of time and getting back to safety," said Guy Wilson-Roberts, head of intelligence analysis at Risk Intelligence.

He said incidents have reduced sharply in the past five years — with 125 in 2015 compared with 14 in 2018 — possibly because of better policing.

"We are not seeing big, active and capable gangs who are undertaking these kinds of operations on a regular basis. It is much more ad hoc," he added.

This year Risk Intelligence counted three incidents in July, two in August and none in September before they returned in October with six incidents, and three in November so far.

Of the 61 incidents in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore in the past 12 months, 25 involved bulk carriers and 23 involved tankers, while eight were on barges and other craft in tow. One involved a containership and four involved other vessels including offshore service vessels and a reefer.

Risk Intelligence said 47 incidents — 77% of the total — targeted vessels underway in the Singapore Strait, while 12 took place at anchorages and two involved berthed vessels.

The intersecting jurisdictions of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia makes enforcement hard.

By the time a response vessel is dispatched, thieves can quickly slip back into Malaysian or Indonesian waters, knowing they are unlikely to be followed.

Mr Hirst said while the littoral states have been active in trying to eradicate the problem, the recent spate of incidents is another reminder to always remain vigilant.

As in West Africa, part of the solution may lie in improving the lot of poor coastal communities, and in better regional security co-ordination.

Toby Stephen, a partner at HFW and Asia Pacific head of crisis management, said sensitivity regarding borders between the three countries complicates security co-ordination.

He said ideally Singapore would like the ability to pursue suspects into Malaysian or Indonesian waters, "but I don't see that happening without any reciprocity".

Mr Stephens added that the process of agencies seeking permission to cross borders slowed down piracy responses.

Dryad Global analyst James Welsh said the risk to shipping in the area had not changed.

"If anything, we've seen a decline in incidents so far this year," he said. "It is very congested and there will always be a risk to some extent.

"But the majority of these incidents can be avoided through basic security precautions."

WHAT TO WATCH

Chinese heavy lift vessel crew kidnapped in Gulf of Guinea

THE crew of a vessel boarded by pirates in the Gulf of Guinea have been kidnapped, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence.

The semi-submersible heavy lift vessel *Zhen Hua 7* was boarded 78 nautical miles northwest of Sao Tome, it said. Fourteen seafarers were taken and one crew member was also injured in the attack at the weekend.

The Liberia-flagged vessel is owned by port equipment maker Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industry Company and appears to have been working in the offshore fields in the area, from Lloyd's List Intelligence movement data.

The 1998-built, 48,127 dwt vessel is being escorted to its next port of call by an Italian Navy vessel, which is also taking care of the injured crew member. Portuguese Navy patrol vessel *NRP Zaire* and a Spanish Navy patrol vessel are also close by in support.

According to Dryad Global, this is the eighth offshore piracy-related incident within the Gulf of Guinea in nine days after a spate of failed boardings south of Cotonou and Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Security consultancy Ambrey had previously assessed that vessels with more vulnerable vessel parameters such as slow speeds and freeboards less than 10 m were particularly exposed and would likely be sought out by the perpetrators.

"With the confirmation of the latest kidnapping, there is a potential that the rate of incidents will decline in the short term," Dryad Global noted.

The consultancy warned, however, that even though it has not been confirmed that the activity over the past nine days was perpetuated by a single pirate action group the risk profile for all vessels operating within the region remains at critical, with attacks assessed as highly likely and expected daily.

All vessels operating within the area are encouraged to operate at the highest levels of vigilance and deploy full hardening and mitigation measures where possible.

This incident is the 21st kidnapping within the Gulf of Guinea within 2020. The total number of crews kidnapped from vessels throughout the area in 2020 is 110.

Dry bulk SP activity playing catch up this year

BULKER secondhand transactions are likely to end the year lower than in 2019 as coronavirus restrictions made it harder to conclude the deals. The final figure is set to be the lowest since 2015.

So far this year, 450 deals have been recorded, according to data from VesselsValue. That compares with 563 in the whole of last year, 679 in 2017, and 436 in 2015.

"The bulker market is still playing catch up with previous years as the Covid-19 pandemic stalled the number of vessels being sold, due to uncertainty in the market, difficulty of finalising deals, and due to a prolonged period of low rates through the spring and summer months," said the data provider's head cargo analyst Olivia Watkins.

Japanese owners, such as Nissen Kaiun and NS United, were seen selling older vessels amid firming asset prices and rates, and as a number of major domestic steel mills reduced their tonnage demand, she said, adding that contracts are either being terminated early or no new contracts were being offered for newbuildings.

Ordering of new tonnage has also remained low this year as owners tread cautiously due to uncertainty in the dry bulk market and shipyards are lowering prices to try and attract interest.

"We will likely see the lower number of orders placed carry through until the beginning of 2021 but with the new incentive of lower newbuild prices, we could potentially see an uptick" thereafter, said Ms Watkins.

A sales and purchase broker in Asia said that in addition to the strong rates in recent months, buying appetite was fuelled by quantitative easing by banks and the low interest environment.

He called it a "retaliatory rebound" because buyers had been withholding their investments due to concerns that the pandemic would badly hurt the freight market. When it turned out that rates were much better than expected, while ship prices were still about 15% to 20% below the same period last year, depending on different vessel types and ages, deals resumed.

In many cases, while deals have now been finalised, negotiations can be traced back to last year, and should have been concluded earlier, had the pandemic not hit, the broker said, adding that about 40% of the ships he has sold this year have been this sort of "delayed transaction".

Overall, he expects confirmed transactions to be lower in 2020 than in previous years, partly because of the crew change crisis, which has increased the difficulty and cost of vessel deliveries.

Delivery of secondhand vessels at Chinese ports has been almost impossible thus far this year, and as a result, some Chinese buyers chose to move the handover to Japan, where restrictions were looser. But the cost could double or even triple, depending on the actual arrangement in each case.

Buying momentum has however again slowed in recent weeks, given the reintroduction of lockdown measures in Europe after the second wave of coronavirus outbreaks, said the broker.

Marshall Islands demands carbon pricing measure from the IMO

THE Marshall Islands has urged global regulators to impose a carbon pricing measure on shipping to cut down greenhouse gas emissions and has slammed ongoing efforts for a short-term greenhouse gas cutting measure.

The Pacific country's delegation to the International Maritime Organization said during a virtual meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee, the IMO's supreme environmental authority, that the market-based measure is necessary for the organisation's decarbonisation efforts.

"We recognise that if we are serious about decarbonisation, carbon pricing must be part of the solution," the delegate told the MEPC.

The Marshall Islands, the world's third-largest flag state, sees the discussion of market-based measures as a priority, the delegate added.

"We feel that putting a price on carbon across the international shipping industry is the most effective way to rein in our contribution to unabated climate change."

The IMO has committed to considering market-based measures for ships but only beginning in 2023 and with the potential for discussion and consideration all the way until 2030.

Market-based measures were proposed and dismissed at the IMO less than a decade ago, but pressure has been mounting for a carbon levy to be imposed, with major corporations openly calling for it and others, such as Trafigura, putting forward their own proposals as to how it could work.

The Marshall Islands hold a unique position in shipping's decarbonisation debate. It is a country that is significantly endangered by rising sea levels and climate change is an existential problem.

It is also the world's third-largest flag state, with 171m tonnes and 3,966 vessels above 500 tonnes under its registry, according to data from Lloyd's List Intelligence. Additionally, as a small island developing state, it is highly dependent on trade and so an increase in transportation costs could have a considerable impact on its population.

In decarbonisation negotiations at the IMO, the Marshall Islands delegations has taken a firm stance on the side of more stringent decarbonisation measures and higher emissions targets.

The IMO MEPC is meeting this week and its priority is to approve a hybrid short-term measure on emissions. This would impose operational and technical efficiency requirements on ships.

The compromise measure has been criticised by some for lack of ambition and weak enforcement and the Marshall Islands has been an outspoken critic warning that it does not help fulfil the IMO's 2018 initial decarbonisation strategy.

Its delegation reiterated the criticism on Monday and said that the proposal must be rejected.

"It fails to reduce emissions before 2023, it will not peak emissions as soon as possible and it will not set shipping on a pathway consistent with the Paris Agreement goals," they said.

An unambitious measure is unacceptable at this point, they added, warning that the less work the IMO does now the more it will have to do in the future.

"Advancing to the discussion on market-based measures and other mid and long-term measures is now our only hope to restore confidence in the international community that the IMO is taking climate change seriously."

The Solomon Islands also echoed the Marshall Islands criticism of the proposed short-term measure and said it must be revised and strengthened before it is adopted.

The measure is expected to be approved.

ANALYSIS

Biden likely to make US LNG more acceptable to EU

US exports of liquefied natural gas are likely to receive a boost when the new administration of president-elect Joe Biden comes into office on January 20, according to Glenn Schwartz, an analyst with the Rapidan Energy Group, a Washington DC-based consultancy firm.

Mr Schwartz said his firm believes that Mr Biden will undo the looser emission standards imposed by the Trump administration, especially when it comes to the regulation of methane emissions in the production of LNG.

"That is something that he'll do almost instantly," he said in an interview, noting Mr Biden's commitments to reducing carbon emissions in line with the Paris Accord. "Methane is the top priority as far as global warming and methane emissions from the oil and gas sector is obviously the top of that top priority. So, it is absolutely something we expect they would pursue."

Indeed, the likelihood is that a roll back of Mr Trump's emission regulations would take place sooner rather than later as the Biden administration comes into power — even from day one on January 20, 2021.

As Mr Trump's regulations have not yet been entered on the Federal Register, they are still subject to judicial review. But on day one, Mr Biden can "voluntarily remand" their roll-back from the review process and "put the Obama era" standards back "in play".

That roll back would bring back the tighter methane emissions standards from the Obama era, allowing Mr Biden to continue with them or, if he chooses, to begin contemplating even tighter ones of its own making.

Mr Schwartz acknowledged that Mr Biden could come under pressure from more progressive elements in his party to impose tighter restrictions than those of the Obama era. If so, the costs of producing LNG may rise higher.

Meanwhile, Mr Schwartz said, a roll back to the Obama era regulations could "technically" make US LNG slightly more expensive to produce than at present, but that those additional costs would not be "appreciably" higher.

Nor would the additional costs adversely affect sales of US LNG. Indeed, according to Mr Schwartz, meeting the tighter methane emissions standards would make US LNG exports even more marketable – especially to Europe.

"Theoretically, even though methane regulations would increase costs for producers and those along the supply chain at the margins, it might serve to make [US natural gas] a more palatable product, especially for markets in Europe, which are very concerned about the carbon footprint," he said.

"I would argue it makes it more competitive because as we saw in France, they're not just looking at the price of LNG. They're not just looking at who can get me my cheapest LNG. They want to know about your carbon footprint."

As Mr Schwartz noted, the French government earlier this month applied pressure to Engie, the state-owned power company, to cancel a $7bn LNG agreement with the US company NextDecade over environmental concerns.

The French government told Engie's board of directors to delay, or even cancel, any deal because of concerns that NextDecade would be supplied by producers that emit too much methane at the source fields in West Texas.

But there remain concerns that the French ban might also broaden to the European Union as a whole — concerns that Mr Schwartz thinks may be unfounded.

Indeed, he thinks greater control of methane emissions will actually make US exports of LNG more attractive to the EU market.

"If you go to Europe and say, look, our gas is cleaner, we have these methane controls, our emissions are down and we're being more careful, more cautious, then arguably that would make it actually much more competitive in Europe."

Even if the US did not tighten its own regulations regarding methane emissions, it could eventually find its LNG subjected to what Mr Schwartz called a "carbon border adjusted tax" now being considered in Europe.

Such a tax would be aimed at preventing what he called "leakage" — a process whereby LNG not compliant with EU regulations might be imported into the 27-member bloc. The tax would aim to lower emissions instead of "just importing them" via leakage.

As emissions standards vary around the world, there is no telling at the moment how much Mr Biden's likely roll back to Obama era emissions standards could affect US exports of LNG on a global basis or what might happen to prices if progressives win even tighter restrictions.

But Mr Schwartz is convinced those Obama-era standards will be well met in Europe which is "leading the way" when it comes to "environmental concerns and turning those concerns into policy".

Shipowner confidence in LNG as a marine fuel 'improving'

CONFIDENCE in using liquefied natural gas as a marine fuel has improved with newbuildings ordered with dual-fuelled propulsion in 2020 comprising 10% of all vessels, shipbroker SSY said.

Ships ordered with dual-fuel engines that use LNG alongside conventional fuel oil almost outnumber vessels that are LNG-ready and have the capacity for converting to LNG in the future, according to the broker's latest monthly report.

"There are about 43 LNG-ready and 30 LNG dual-fuelled tankers in the existing tanker fleet," it said.

"With 55 LNG dual-fuel tankers on order and none contracted as LNG-ready status, the number of LNG dual-fuelled tankers will soon overtake LNG-ready vessels."

The tankers include three very large crude carriers, nine suezmax vessels, 22 aframax tankers, four long range two tankers and three medium-range ships.

LNG is seen as a bridging fuel to decarbonising shipping, but its use is unlikely to help shipping meet objectives to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2030 and halve all greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Using LNG as a bunker fuel will cut emissions by 20% according to accepted studies, though environmentalists have questioned these statistics which they say are dependent on the size and type of LNG engine installed.

Uncertainty about future regulatory measures for fossil fuels has stalled investments in new ships as no clear alternative fuel is set to be available commercially for more than a decade.

SSY said that 11% of tankers over 10,000 dwt contracted in 2019 incorporated dual-fuel engines, compared with 2% in 2018 and 8% in 2017.

In that year orders were greater than normal as tanker newbuilding prices fell to 15-year lows.

South Korean shipyards have received orders for two very large crude carriers and two suezmax tankers in 2020, comprising 845,000 dwt and 53% of all dual-fuelled tanker orders this year.

Chinese shipyards have won contracts for 628,000 dwt comprising four LR2 tankers, and eight handysize tankers, according to SSY.

Some 27 of the ships will be owned by Asian shipowners, and the remaining have European interests.

Included in existing 73 LNG-capable ships there are 15 suezmax tankers, 26 medium-range tankers and 19 handysize ships, the report said.

MARKETS

China-backed trade pact positive for shipping

SHIPPING and ports will benefit from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, a free trade pact signed by 15 major Asia-Pacific economies, analysts said.

They expected the trading bloc — consisting of China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand as well as 10 Southeast Asian countries — to spur regional trade in the long run and reduce anti-globalisation risks.

Chinese investment bank CICC said in a research report that RCEP will “effectively” increase trading activities between the member countries and reduce the region’s reliance on the US.

Tariff removal is one of the key agendas of the trade agreement, according to Li Chao, chief economist at Zheshang Securities.

The signatories have agreed to gradually cut the duties for most of the goods listed in the pact to zero between now and 2055.

“This is a relatively lengthy process,” he noted, adding the resulting economic and trade benefits will be bigger in the middle to long term rather than in the short term.

Shanghai-based SWS Securities said the implementation of the tariff agreement will be crucial.

Still, it expected container shipping lines, especially those that specialise in intra-Asia trade, to benefit from RCEP.

Dry bulk shipping companies may also enjoy an uplift if the multilateral trade deal can help ease the current tensions between China and Australia.

The other potential beneficiary is major ports that have a developed network in the area, the brokerage added.

Guosheng Securities chief analyst Xiong Yuan said in a report that one big challenge facing RCEP is the absence of the US.

“Given that Biden is likely to occupy the White House, the [Trans-Pacific Partnership] which Trump quit may revive,” Mr Xiong said. “This will constrain the effectiveness of RCEP, which means US-China relations remain as the key variable.”

The withdrawal of the US led to the formation of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership signed by 11 countries, including Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

Mr Li from Zheshang Securities said RCEP and CPTPP are not contradictory to each other. “There are possibilities that China could join CPTPP if the reversal of globalisation slows.”

At the same time, benefits may be able to be transmitted between the two groups through the “most-favoured-nation treatment” enjoyed by their shared member states, a mechanism that might well mitigate the risks posed by any anti-globalisation trends, he added.

Shipping stocks listed in China and Hong Kong seem to have reacted positively to news of the signing of the agreement over the weekend.

In Hong Kong, Pacific Basin, a supramax and handysize bulker specialist, saw its share price jump 5.9% on Monday when this story was published. That compared with a 5.4% increase by SITC, an intra-Asia container shipping and logistics company.

The share price of Shanghai-listed Cosco Shipping Holdings, which controls the world’s third largest boxship fleet, and Shenzhen-listed Beibuwan Port Co, operator of a key port and logistics hub linking South China and Southeast Asia, were both up by more than 3%.

UK Club announces 10% rate hike

THE UK Club has set a 10% general increase for the next renewal round, with the aim of correcting an underwriting deficit that pushed its combined ratio out to 120% last year.

The move comes despite the decline in attritional claims, thanks to an increase in large claims that the club believes make loss records an insufficient basis on which to assess future risk.

"Even those members operating without claims in recent years remain exposed to the unexpected large losses," a circular said. "It is the large and often random claims that are not covered by existing premium rates and therefore an increase in rates of 10% is necessary across the membership."

Members with adverse records can expect to pay more. But the standard deductible will remain unchanged at $15,000 per event, including fees and expenses.

The decision places the marine mutual at the upper end of the range of price increases so far announced by International Group clubs, which include 5% at Steamship, 7.5% at West and 10% at Standard.

In addition, two clubs have said they will seek additional premiums via ship-by-ship pricing, with Gard aiming at up to 5%.

Britannia has not specified a target but confirmed will that the hike likely to hit high single digits in terms of percentage points.

The clubs see tougher pricing as necessary in light of the real-terms erosion of rate levels for several years, combined with falling investment returns and a spate of major casualties that has seen pool claims for the first six months of the current year hit an all-time high for the halfway stage.

The UK Club said that the coronavirus pandemic had generated an increased but manageable level of additional claims. In addition, the IG is exposed to pool claims, in what is shaping up to be the most expensive claims year ever.

The investment picture remains unclear, with a fall in markets earlier this year offset by a subsequent strong rally.

IN OTHER NEWS

UK Freeports plan presents 'real challenge' to shipping

THE bidding process for freeport status in the UK is too bureaucratic with ports needing more time to prepare, sector representatives say.

The bidder prospectus for interested parties in England has been published this week.

But there was also some disappointment that the devolved administrations in the other three nations of the UK have yet to set out their intentions.

Australia to end crew work extension waivers

AUSTRALIA said it will resume enforcing the Maritime Labour Convention rule that crews must not work beyond 11 months at sea without leave.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority had waived the rule early in the pandemic citing the need to be pragmatic amid travel curbs and border closures.

But the exemptions will be removed from February 28.

DSME wins order for six boxships linked to Zodiac

DAEWOO Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering has won orders for six ultra-large containerships linked to Zodiac Maritime.

The sextet, worth about $650m in total, are scheduled for delivery from the first half of 2023, the South Korean yard said in an exchange filing, without identifying the buyer.

Broker reports pointed to UK-based Zodiac as the owner for the 15,000 teu newbuildings to be powered by conventional fuels.

MSC closes in on Maersk as the world's largest carrier

MAERSK's position as the leading container carrier in terms of deployed capacity is being challenged by its 2M alliance partner and second-placed rival Mediterranean Shipping Co, according to figures from Sea-Intelligence.

Maersk's deployed fleet stood at 4,076,587 teu at the start of September, with a further 31,446 on order, Alphaliner data shows. MSC had 3,816,321 teu in use, plus an orderbook of 115,000 teu.

"It is clear that what we are seeing is a steady trend over the past 25 years, with Maersk's major acquisitions simply registering as temporary spikes, which are quickly reverted back to the declining trend line," Sea-Intelligence said.

Adnoc adds bulkers to fleet

ADNOC Logistics & Services, the shipping arm of Abu Dhabi's national energy company, has added a Japan-built ultramax to its fleet of bulkers purchased this year.

The 2019-built 64,000 dwt Al Karama joins two other ultramaxes, and a 23,000 dwt vessel, and will immediately be deployed on key trading routes, including for the transport of sulphur from its Ruwais facilities in Abu Dhabi, the company said in a recent statement.

The other Japan-built 63,500 dwt ultramaxes are *Al Dhafra* and *Al Wathba*, which were bought earlier in the year.

RCL keeps up profit momentum in third quarter

INTRA-Asia feeder RCL continued to reap good gains from the bonanza in the container market in the third quarter of the year, posting a Baht257m ($8.5m) profit compared with a Baht307m loss in the previous corresponding period despite lower liftings and revenue, suggesting costs and margins have improved significantly.

Third quarter of the year revenue actually slid 1% to Baht4.08bn from Baht4.12bn in the same period in 2019, while volume handled fell 1% to 559,000 teu from 562,000 teu in the previous corresponding period, RCL said in a press release.

RCL said the results for the year to date kept improving through all three quarters and were due to be a combination of good cost management amid a "not-so-favourable freight rates environment", but savings were gained from lower fuel and chartering costs.

Singapore to pilot common data infrastructure for supply chain

SINGAPORE is once again leading the way in preparing for changes in the global economic environment in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, bringing together public and private sector players to pilot a common data infrastructure for the supply chain ecosystem.

The Alliance for Action on Supply Chain Digitalisation, co-led by the heads of PSA International and Trafigura Group, groups together more than 50 supply chain players to jointly identify pain points, opportunities and solutions across the end-to-end supply chain customer journey.

The supply chain digitalisation AfA, one of seven such groups set up by Singapore in June to seize opportunities amid the global crisis, aims to set up a digital utility to facilitate data sharing and enable businesses to connect to the infrastructure easily.

More seafarers kidnapped off Nigeria

FIVE Ghanaian crew have been kidnapped south of Nigeria from a locally trading cargoship, according to reports.

A group of about seven armed pirates attacked the Ghanaian-flagged, 1992-built, 1,739 dwt AM Delta at about 0420 hrs and about 45 nautical miles south-southwest of Brass, Lloyd's List Intelligence reported.

LLI said the ship was attacked in transit from Douala, Cameroon to Takoradi, Ghana. The attackers damaged communications and bridge equipment, but the remaining crew were safe.

Sempra Energy receives LNG export offer from Mexico

MEXICAN President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has made an offer to Sempra Energy concerning a long-awaited building permit that the San Diego, California-based firm may find hard to refuse.

Sempra has been waiting nearly a year for one last permit from the Obrador government to proceed with a final investment decision to expand a liquefied natural gas export terminal on Mexico's northwest coast.

Sempra's Mexican unit IEnova operates the Energía Costa Azul LNG facility near Ensenada, which opened in 2008 as an import facility. But IEnova and Sempra want to add an export component to the plant enabling them to ship LNG to markets in Asia.

CMA CGM in drive to develop bio-methane market

CMA CGM is seeking to build up a bio-methane supply chain that could eventually lead to the greater adoption of bio-gas as a blend for its liquefied natural gas-fuelled ships.

The French carrier successfully completed the largest-ever LNG bunkering operation, when the 23,000 teu *CMA CGM Jacques Saadé* was refuelled last week at Rotterdam World Gateway by Total's *Gas Agility* bunker ship.

Of the 17,300 cu m LNG loaded, 13% was bio-methane from municipal waste facilities in the Netherlands.

HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

Official Notice

Applications are invited for appointment as Maritime Administrator with the Gibraltar Maritime Administration. Applicants must by virtue of their citizenship, be entitled to take up employment in Gibraltar. The successful applicant will lead and manage all aspects and functions of the Gibraltar Maritime Administration. The post holder will require sound analytical skills, mature judgement, the ability to effectively lead and direct staff as well as the capacity to carry a significant work load, achieve targets and promote the services offered by the Gibraltar Maritime Administration.

Applicants would need to be:

a) A valid Master Mariner Unlimited STCW II/2 with at least 5 years' sea service or
b) A Chief Engineer STCW III/2 certificate of competency (Unlimited), with at least 5 years' sea service, or
c) A Naval Architect accredited by a recognised society, or
a) A holder of a relevant maritime-related university degree and have properly trained and qualified as a ship safety inspector.

<u>In addition to the above prerequisites, applicants must have completed at least 5 years' service in a senior position with an internationally recognised maritime safety organisation.</u>

The post holder will be familiar with the workings of the EU, International Maritime Organisation and the International Labour Organisation, the Classifications Societies and all the responsibilities of a modern shipping register and must be familiar with the legislation aspects of merchant shipping.

The post holder will also be required to supervise all matters relating to EU legislation (including Conventions and Treaties), Port State Control, Flag State Control and Common Areas.

The appointment is on contract terms, initially for three years. Salary will be competitive and commensurate with proven experience and relevant training. Further particulars may be obtained from the Ministry of Business, Tourism ,Transport and the Port via email on mbtt@gibraltar.gov.gi.

Application forms may be obtained from the Human Resources Department, 82-86 Harbour's Walk, New Harbours, Rosia Road, Gibraltar, (Tel No. +350 200 71911, email: humanresources.recruitment@gibraltar.gov.gi and from the Gibraltar Maritime Administration web site at www.gibraltarship.com.

These should be returned to the Human Resources Department via email together with a brief career resume to arrive not later than **Thursday 19th November 2020**.

Notice Publicising Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Application for a Development Consent Order for the Sizewell C Project (Application Reference: EN010012)

Planning Act 2008, Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

On 24 June 2020, the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy accepted an application by NNB Generation Company (SZC) Limited of 90 Whitfield Street, London W1T 4EZ (the **Applicant**) for a Development Consent Order under the Planning Act 2008 for the Sizewell C Project (the **Application**) (Application Reference: EN010012). The Application is currently in the pre-examination period prior to being examined by a panel of Examining Inspectors appointed by the Planning Inspectorate.

The Application is for development consent to construct, operate and maintain the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power station, which comprises two UK EPR™ reactor units, giving a total site capacity of approximately 3,340MW, along with associated development required for the construction or operation of the Sizewell C nuclear power station or to mitigate its impacts. The Sizewell C nuclear power station would be located in Sizewell in East Suffolk, approximately halfway between Felixstowe and Lowestoft; to the north-east of the town of Leiston.

The main on-site aspects of the Sizewell C Project comprise the nuclear power station; associated buildings, plant and infrastructure; offshore works including cooling water system and combined drainage outfall in the North Sea; a temporary accommodation campus; a new National Grid 400kV substation; relocation of certain Sizewell B infrastructure; a crossing over the Sizewell Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (**SSSI**); access works; construction compounds and spoil management areas; temporary rail infrastructure; and landscaping. Proposed off-site associated development includes temporary park and ride sites; a two village bypass; a Sizewell link road; highway improvements; a temporary freight management facility; temporary rail infrastructure; and permanent rail upgrade works. The Sizewell C Project is an Environmental Impact Assessment development (**EIA development**), as defined by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Further details of the Sizewell C Project are provided in the Application. The Application form and its accompanying documents, drawings, plans and maps, including an environmental statement, comprising the Application are available for inspection free of charge by downloading them from the Planning Inspectorate's website: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/the-sizewell-c-project/?ipcsection=docs.

The Applicant has identified potential opportunities to deliver improvements to the Sizewell C Project and in many cases reduce impacts as a result of continued engagement with stakeholders, the public and its contractors. In advance of seeking approval from the Planning Inspectorate to amend the Application, the Applicant is carrying out a consultation on the proposed changes summarised below. A consultation document, which includes preliminary environmental information, has been prepared, which explains the changes that are being proposed.

Proposed changes

- Increase in the frequency of freight train movements to facilitate bulk material imports by rail.
- Enhancement of the permanent beach landing facility and options for a new temporary beach landing facility to facilitate material imports by sea.
- Change to the SSSI crossing design to a single span bridge with embankments.
- Surface water removed early in the construction process to be discharged to the foreshore via a temporary outfall.
- Change to the sea defence to make the scheme more efficient and resilient to climate change.
- Greater flexibility as to where certain Sizewell B facilities are relocated to potentially avoid the need for car parking on Pillbox Field.
- Change to certain parameter heights and activities on the main development site to facilitate the construction process.
- Change to the location of the Water Resource Storage Area and the addition of flood mitigation measures to lower flood risk.
- Revisions to tree retention on the main development site.
- A new bridleway link between Aldhurst Farm and Kenton Hills.
- Extension of the Order Limits to provide for fen meadow habitat at Pakenham as further mitigation for fen meadow loss.
- Extension and reduction of the Order Limits for works on the main development site and related sites (fen meadow mitigation sites and marsh harrier improvement sites).
- Extension of landscaped bund and other minor changes at the southern park and ride, including a minor reduction of the Order Limits.
- Minor reductions to the Order Limits at the northern park and ride.
- Extension of the Order Limits for works on the two village bypass, change to the public right of way around Walk Barn Farm and additional habitat mitigation proposals.
- Extension to and reduction of the Order Limits for works on the Sizewell link road.
- Minor reductions to the Order Limits for Yoxford roundabout, the A12/B1119 junction at Saxmundham and the A1094/B1069 south of Knodishall.

How to view the consultation document
You can view the consultation document and response form between 18 November and 18 December 2020 free of charge by downloading them from the homepage of www.sizewellc.co.uk or by contacting the Applicant using the contact details below to request a hard copy or USB stick.

Applicant's contact details
If you have any enquiries about the consultation, please contact the Applicant on:

- Freephone: 0800 197 6102 (09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday)
- Email: info@sizewellc.co.uk

Any details you provide to us via the telephone or email will be subject to our privacy policy, which is available to view at: https://www.edfenergy.com/privacy/NNB.

Responding to the consultation
Any responses to this consultation must be submitted to the Applicant by the latest of **18 December 2020** via one of the methods below:

- Complete a response form online at www.sizewellc.co.uk
- Email comments to info@sizewellc.co.uk
- Post comments to FREEPOST SZC CONSULTATION (no stamp or further address required)
- If you are shielding and unable to use the above methods, call Freephone 0800 197 6102 (09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday) to arrange for your response to be collected