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IFSMA

NEWSLETTER

The Shipmasters' International Voice

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Readers are reminded that the opinions expressed in the IFSMA Newsletter are those of the various authors and providers of news and are not necessarily in accord with IFSMA policy.

Secretary General's Message

On behalf of everyone at IFSMA, we hope that you are keeping well and above all, staying safe.

As we reach six months since the conflict in the Strait of Hormuz region began, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has reported a total of 68 separate incidents and attacks involving ships. This represents an average of one incident every 2.6 days.

At the time of writing, these incidents have resulted in the deaths of 20 seafarers or port workers, with a further 35 injured and one person still reported missing.

Attacks have affected a range of ship types, with approximately 50% involving tankers, 20% container ships and 15% bulk carriers.

These figures are deeply concerning in themselves. However, of equal concern is the apparent spread of attacks targeting seafarers as part of wider geopolitical conflicts, with similar incidents being reported in the Black Sea. The number of seafarers killed in those waters has increased significantly since the beginning of the conflict in the Middle East. It has been reported that, in July alone, 35 merchant ships were attacked, resulting in the deaths of 23 seafarers.

Behind every casualty and every fatality is a family whose life has been profoundly affected. In the wider coverage of conflict and geopolitical events, the human stories of those working at sea can too easily be overlooked. As an organisation representing shipmasters, IFSMA remains firmly committed to ensuring that the safety and welfare of seafarers remain at the forefront of the international maritime agenda.

During August, there were no meetings scheduled at the IMO. The programme resumes this month with the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers, known as CCC12.

In the meantime, IFSMA continues to be actively engaged in two important areas of work.

The first concerns the frequency of bridge alerts and alarms on ships fitted with integrated bridge systems. It has been reported that, particularly in pilotage and high-density traffic areas, the frequency of alerts can place additional demands on the bridge team and potentially interfere with the safe conduct of navigation.

IFSMA has therefore developed an online survey to gather the views and experiences of serving shipmasters and deck officers. We are grateful to our

many member associations that are actively supporting and participating in this initiative.

The second project concerns the development of guidelines for onboard training, exercises and drills aimed at addressing the continuing and serious challenge of seafarer fatalities in enclosed spaces.

At IFSMA we are closely involved in this work and is also consulting our member associations to gather the practical experiences of serving shipmasters and other officers, particularly regarding effective training, exercises and drills for managing enclosed-space risks onboard.

Furthermore, we encourage you to stay informed about these and other developments affecting the maritime sector by visiting the IFSMA website and following our LinkedIn and Facebook channels, where we share our latest news, initiatives and updates.

In these challenging times, we extend our very best wishes to all our members, colleagues and seafarers around the world.

Stay safe and enjoy safe sailing.

The IMO Digest

Appearing below is a summary of some of the news received with grateful thanks from the excellent IMO Media service in recent weeks.

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From the News Editor

MtS Seafarers' Happiness Index



Q2 2026

The Mission to Seafarers Q2 2026 Seafarers Happiness Index falls to 6.87/10 as everyday pressures wear down a resilient but stretched global workforce.

It was announced from London on 3 August that overall seafarer happiness fell to 6.87 out of 10 in the

second quarter of 2026, down from 7.18 in Q1. This was according to the latest Seafarers Happiness Index (SHI) published on that day by the London-based Mission to Seafarers.

'from acute shock to chronic strain.'

This decline confirms that the hoped-for recovery after a challenging start to the year has failed to take hold, marking what the report calls a transition *'from acute shock to chronic strain.'*

While the first quarter of 2026 was defined by the sudden shock of conflict in the Persian Gulf, the second quarter shows those pressures settling into the everyday baseline of life at sea. It is the daily norms – i.e. limited shore leave, excessive workloads and stagnant real-wage buying power – that are steadily eroding crew morale.

Short port stays, and restrictions on port and terminal access

Sadly, shore leave scores fell to 5.72, the lowest by a significant margin, with time ashore increasingly sacrificed to intense schedules, short port stays, and restrictions on port and terminal access. Workload management scored 6.20, amid a relentless cycle of six-on, six-off watchkeeping, rapid turnarounds, heavy paperwork and inspections, with rest hours, most alarmingly, recorded *'just for authorities and filing.'*

Seafarers continue to draw strength from crew relationships

Nevertheless, the report firmly rejects a narrative of pure negativity. The strongest categories were crew interactions at 7.49 and connectivity at 7.46, showing that seafarers continue to draw strength from crew relationships and from staying connected with family. Where companies get it right, the best operators respect sign-off dates, ensure timely reliefs, offer merit-based promotions and maintain modern tonnage. As one seafarer noted: *'I am heard, my company looks after the crew.'*

A deepening recruitment and retention challenge

This report also frames a deepening recruitment and retention challenge, with pay increasingly judged against the total life package available ashore rather than historical maritime wages. One respondent warned that young crew see *'no advantages remaining compared with a shore job.'*

Demographic data shows where pressure is greatest. The average score from female respondents was 6.06, against 7.13 for men; by region and vessel type, the Middle East (4.94) and container ships (5.85) fell well below the average; and mid-career professionals aged 35 to 55 reported the lowest morale of any age group.

Comment

Ben Bailey, Director of Programme, The Mission to Seafarers, commented: *'This quarter's data should trouble the entire industry. Seafarers are extraordinarily resilient, but we must not mistake resilience for unlimited capacity; endurance is not the same as wellbeing.'*

'The fundamentals that crews are asking for are strikingly basic: enough rest to recover, connectivity to sustain family life, quality food, and pay that justifies the sacrifice. The brightest results prove happiness at sea is achievable.'

Gert-Jan Panken, GM and Vice President of Inmarsat Maritime added: *'This report is an important reminder that seafarer wellbeing is shaped by the choices we make as an industry every day.'*

'While the overall findings show there is still much work to do, they also demonstrate that when companies invest in their people, through reliable connectivity, supportive leadership and an onboard environment where crews feel safe and valued, the impact is real.'

'Technology alone is never the answer, but when combined with a genuine commitment to crew welfare and safety, it can help create a more connected, resilient and rewarding experience at sea. As our industry continues to evolve, we must ensure that progress is measured not only by operational performance, but by the safety and wellbeing of the people who keep global trade moving.'

Thom Herbert, Idwal's Head of Global Strategic Accounts and part of the seafarer advocacy team, reflected: *'Idwal is proud to support the Seafarers' Happiness Index because it brings the realities of life at sea into clear view. Many of our technical team are recent former seafarers, while our surveyors spend every day working alongside crews on board, so we recognise both the resilience described in this report and the pressures behind it. Strong leadership, respectful relationships and meaningful support from shore make a tangible difference. The industry must ensure that seafarers' professionalism and commitment are valued, not simply relied upon.'*

The SHI continues its collaboration with Idwal, the global provider of independent vessel inspections, whose surveyors attend fifteen vessels a day.

Reading seafarers' feedback alongside objective vessel-condition data aims to eliminate welfare blind spots and target social-impact investment more precisely.

Link to full findings

To read the full findings from the Seafarers Happiness Index Q2 2026 report readers are invited to use the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/37zxpyba>

IMO S-G statement on Red Sea ship attack

Condemnation of attack on international shipping

On 12 August the Secretary-General of the IMO, Mr Arsenio Dominguez, issued the following statement, following an incident involving a cargo ship mv Tihamah* which was hit by a projectile off the coast of Al Mokha, Yemen. Several seafarer fatalities have been confirmed.

'It is with sadness and regret to know that, once again, innocent seafarers have lost their lives in an indefensible attack on international shipping. I offer my deepest condolences to the families of those involved.'



In the words of IMO Secretary-General Dominguez: *'These continued attacks on shipping only serve to escalate tensions and threaten global supply chains on which everyone depends.'*

'It is particularly troublesome that the most recent attack has taken place in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden area. I reiterate my call for shipowners and ship operators to thoroughly assess risks before transiting this and other regions and follow appropriate best management practices. Seafarers deserve to be protected and allowed to do their jobs in safety and security.'

'These continued attacks on shipping only serve to escalate tensions and threaten global supply chains on which everyone depends.'

'I also urge the immediate and unconditional release of all seafarers who continue to be held captive following piracy attacks in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region.'

'Ensuring seafarer safety is a fundamental obligation under international law and a shared responsibility of the global community.'

Video footage

A news report on You Tube by WION (World Is One News) is to be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ydma3eky>

***Believed to be Tanzania-flagged.**

Mozambique advances

Information sharing strengthening maritime security

Mozambique reinforced its maritime security architecture with the completion of a roadmap to strengthen its National Maritime Information Sharing Centre (NMISC) at a workshop held in Maputo from 27 to 30 July.

EU-financial support

Organized by IMO, with financial support from the European Union through the Crisis Response Project for the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean (CRP-RedWIO)¹ the workshop brought together representatives (*see below*) from key government ministries, maritime agencies and security institutions. The nationally owned roadmap for establishing and managing a multi-agency NMISC was developed, providing a practical framework for enhancing national maritime domain awareness, improving inter-agency coordination and integrating Mozambique into the regional information-sharing architecture under the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC)².

Commitment to strengthening maritime governance

Opening the workshop on behalf of the Government, Mr Lourenço Afonso José Machado, Member of the Board of Directors of Maritime Transport Institute (ITRANSMAR, IP) reaffirmed the country's commitment to strengthening maritime governance and enhancing cooperation to address evolving maritime security challenges. He commented: *'Effective responses to threats such as piracy, illicit trafficking, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and fraudulent vessel registration require robust information-sharing mechanisms and coordinated action across national institutions and with regional partners.'*

Participants reviewed Mozambique's legal, institutional, technical and operational framework and identified priority actions to establish a fully operational NMISC aligned with the regional information-sharing architecture established under the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC).

To achieve full capability

They examined existing coordination mechanisms, identified legal and procedural gaps, and developed governance arrangements and standard operating procedures to support the NMISC. The roadmap outlines practical milestones towards achieving full operational capability while strengthening inter-agency cooperation, maritime domain awareness, and timely information exchange among national authorities.

Mozambique's growing integration into regional maritime security

This workshop also reinforced Mozambique's growing integration into the regional maritime security architecture. Experts from the EU CRIMARIO project³, the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC)⁴ in Madagascar and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC)⁵ in Seychelles shared practical experiences on regional information sharing, operational coordination and collaborative responses to maritime incidents. Their participation enabled participants to better understand how national centres contribute to collective maritime domain awareness across the Western Indian Ocean.

Building upon progress

This initiative builds upon progress made earlier this year under the EU-funded Port Security Project, where groundwork for the establishment of a National Maritime Security Committee (NMSC) was laid.

Additionally, Mozambique has expressed interest in joining the Safe Seas for Africa Project⁶ and the wider Regional Maritime Security Architecture, which would further strengthen cooperation with regional information-sharing centres and improve coordinated responses to maritime threats. The workshop also recognized complementary national initiatives, including maritime legislative reforms and the establishment of maritime coordination mechanisms that will support the future operation of the NMISC.

Strengthening national maritime information sharing

Participants agreed that the roadmap provides a solid foundation for strengthening national maritime information sharing while enhancing Mozambique's contribution to regional maritime security. The roadmap will now be refined and submitted to the Government for review and endorsement, providing the basis for future technical assistance and capacity-building activities under the CRP-RedWIO project.

IMO's continued support to DCoC States

The workshop formed part of IMO's continued support to DCoC Member States in strengthening national

maritime information-sharing capabilities, enhancing inter-agency coordination and improving regional cooperation to address piracy, armed robbery against ships and other transnational maritime threats across the Western Indian Ocean.

Broad representation

Representatives were drawn from National Institute of Maritime Transport (ITRANSMAR, IP), Ministry of Interior, National Maritime Institute (INAMAR), National Migration Service (SENAMI), National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC), Coastal, Lake and River Police (PCLF), Mozambique Revenue Authority / Customs (AT), National Communications Institute of Mozambique (INCM), Mozambique Navy (MGM), Ministry of National Defence (MDN), Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries – Directorate of Legal Affairs and Litigation (MAAP-DAJC), Institute of Sea and Boundaries (IMAF) and the Directorate of Civil Aviation (DACM).

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/yfdj6kzm>

² <https://dcoc.org/>

³ <https://crimario.eu/>

⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/3mt3rh6z>

⁵ <https://rmsassa.org/en/rcoc>

⁶ <https://tinyurl.com/3rys7nmf>

South Africa

Strengthening regional maritime security

South Africa developed a roadmap to establish, strengthen and operationalize its National Maritime Information Sharing Centre (NMISC), during a workshop in Cape Town held from 3 to 6 August. This has the aim to strengthen inter-agency cooperation and enhance South Africa's contribution to national and regional maritime domain awareness.

EU-funded event

The roadmap formulation workshop was organized by IMO under the Crisis Response Project for the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean (CRP-RedWIO)¹, funded by the European Union. The nationally owned roadmap will strengthen South Africa's maritime information-sharing capability while reinforcing the regional Information Sharing Network established under the DCoC/JA.

Exchange of regional experience

A key feature of the workshop was the exchange of regional experience. Experts from the EU CRIMARIO project, the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) in

Seychelles shared practical lessons on regional information sharing, operational coordination and collaborative responses to maritime incidents. Efforts here highlighted how national maritime information-sharing centres contribute to collective maritime domain awareness and strengthen coordinated responses to maritime security threats across the Western Indian Ocean.

Comment

Opening the workshop, Ms Mashudu Nepfumbada, Deputy Director (Ship & Port) in the Department of Transport, South Africa, emphasized the importance of coordinated national action, timely information sharing and strong regional partnerships for effective maritime security.

She commented: *'South Africa as a participating State and the current Chair of the DCoC/JA, reaffirms its commitment to advancing practical cooperation among participating States and strengthening the regional maritime security architecture across the Western Indian Ocean.'*

Mr Kiruja Micheni, IMO Project Manager, highlighted South Africa's strategic maritime significance as the gateway between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.



He recalled how the 2023–2024 attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea², resulted in the diversion of commercial vessels around the Cape of Good Hope, reaffirming South Africa's pivotal role in safeguarding global maritime trade. He emphasized that: *'effective maritime security begins with effective information sharing. Strong national coordination is the foundation of enhanced maritime domain awareness and regional maritime security.'*

During the four-day workshop, 25 participants (**representative bodies listed below**) from government departments, maritime law enforcement agencies, defence and security institutions, emergency response authorities, and regional

maritime organizations reviewed South Africa's existing maritime information-sharing arrangements.

Delegates also assessed the legal, institutional, operational and technical measures required to strengthen the National Maritime Information Sharing Centre (NMISC).

Discussions focused on enhancing inter-agency coordination, improving governance arrangements, developing standard operating procedures, strengthening information management processes, and identifying sustainable institutional arrangements to support the Centre.

Identifying priority actions

It was reported that the resulting roadmap outlines a phased approach to strengthening the NMISC. The roadmap identifies priority actions to enhance governance and coordination mechanisms, clarify institutional roles and responsibilities, improve information-sharing procedures, strengthen staffing and training arrangements, develop the necessary infrastructure and technology, and establish implementation milestones to progressively enhance the Centre's operational capability.

The Djibouti Code of Conduct <https://dcoc.org>

In addition the roadmap ensures that South Africa's national arrangements remain interoperable with the wider Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) Information Sharing Network.

Participants agreed on several immediate priority actions, including the development of a National Maritime Security Strategy and Maritime Security Risk Register, the preparation of a dedicated implementation plan with clear timelines, the appointment of an NMISC leadership team, and the identification of a suitable facility to host the Centre.

This roadmap also calls for the review of existing inter-agency information-sharing agreements to enhance interoperability, as well as the development of a framework for the gradual relocation of relevant personnel and systems to the NMISC.

Establishment of a dedicated working group

Additional measures to support the Centre's management and operation will include the establishment of a dedicated working group to oversee infrastructure and equipment requirements; the development of staff roles and responsibilities and standard operating procedures; the integration of technical systems; the designation of training and technical leads; and the creation of policies governing data management, cybersecurity, business continuity and resilient communications infrastructure.

IMO's ongoing efforts

The workshop forms part of IMO's ongoing efforts to support DCoC/JA participating States in establishing and strengthening National Maritime Information Sharing Centres that are nationally effective, regionally connected and capable of responding to evolving maritime security challenges through enhanced cooperation, information sharing and coordinated action.

Broad representation

At the workshop representatives attended from: the Department of Transport (DoT), South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA), South African National Defence Force – Defence Intelligence (DI), South African Maritime Safety Authority – Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC Cape Town), Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) and South African Police Service (SAPS).

1 <https://tinyurl.com/yfdj6kzm>

2 <https://tinyurl.com/3yu2nm6>

Ethiopia

Enhancing maritime security and domain awareness

Ethiopia's national maritime stakeholders convened in Addis Ababa from 3 to 6 August for a roadmap formulation workshop to strengthen inter-agency coordination through the establishment of a National Maritime Information Sharing Centre (NMISC).

Although Ethiopia is landlocked, it remains deeply connected to the maritime domain through its dependence on international shipping, its national merchant fleet and maritime administration.



Representatives (*see below*) from key national institutions focused on strengthening institutional coordination, improving maritime information-sharing arrangements and developing a roadmap that

supports both national interests and regional maritime security objectives under the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment (DCoCJA).

EU-support

The workshop was organized by IMO, with the support of the European Union through the Crisis Response Project for the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean (CRP-RedWIO)*.

Throughout the workshop, participants considered Ethiopia's existing information-sharing arrangements, reviewed institutional and legal frameworks, identified operational gaps and developed practical recommendations for the establishment and operation of the NMISC.

Comment

IMO's Mr Mustafa A Abdulqader reflected: *'The National Maritime Information Sharing Centre will provide Ethiopia with the operational mechanism to transform information into awareness, and awareness into action.'*

Cooperation with Madagascar and Seychelles

Particular attention was given to governance arrangements, standard operating procedures, inter-agency coordination and integration with the wider Djibouti Code of Conduct Information Sharing Network, including cooperation with the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) in Seychelles.

Priorities identified

The workshop concluded with the development of a nationally-owned roadmap that defines a clear pathway towards establishing the Centre and identifies priorities for future technical assistance, institutional development, training and capacity-building.

Broad representation

Representatives attended the workshop from: the Ethiopian Maritime Authority, Ethiopian Navy, Federal Police, Customs Commission, Ministry of Justice, Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics, and other agencies responsible for maritime governance, security and law enforcement.

*For an introductory EU / DcoC You Tube video readers are invited to use the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/2xhwubrr>

The Caribbean

Alternative fuels and new technologies

Preparing seafarers for the transition

Policymakers, maritime educators, trainers and industry stakeholders from across the Caribbean and beyond gathered in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago from 3 to 7 August to strengthen regional capacity to prepare seafarers for the safe operation of ships using alternative fuels and new technologies.

Bringing together policy, training and practice

This regional seminar on alternative fuels and new technologies for the safe operation of ships brought together policy, training and practice. It formed part of the coordinated efforts of the IMO Secretariat to support Member States in strengthening maritime training capacity for the transition to alternative fuels and new technologies, in line with the latest regulatory developments on training provisions.

Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre Caribbean

Hosted by MTCC Caribbean at the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), the five-day seminar included technical sessions, interactive workshops, scenario-based exercises, and practical demonstrations.



Participants explored the safety, technical and operational characteristics of ammonia, methanol and hydrogen, with particular attention to their properties, hazards, handling, bunkering and emergency response.

To strengthen capacity

A key objective was to strengthen the capacity of maritime educators and trainers to translate these developments into effective, competency-based training programmes.

Participants took part in practical exercises and micro-teaching sessions designed to enhance their ability to develop and deliver training for seafarers and shore-based personnel.

The seminar also highlighted the importance of connecting regulatory developments with practical experience. In May 2026, IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 111) approved Interim Guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel (STCW.7/Circ.26) and Interim Guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using ammonia as Fuel (STCW.7/Circ.27).

Introduction to industry

Participants gained practical insights through visits and engagement with industry. At the Yara TRINGEN Complex in Savonetta, Point Lisas, which includes ammonia production plants, storage facilities and port facilities, Yara's ammonia experts provided safety demonstrations and practical training, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and ammonia-related emergency procedures.

The seminar also benefited from experts from petrochemical company Proman, who shared practical industry perspectives on the production and use of methanol as a marine fuel, including experiences from their ongoing collaboration with UTT cadets, who have had the opportunity to gain practical experience on board Proman's methanol-fuelled ships.

Collaboration with the WMU

The seminar was funded by IMO under its project on the training of seafarers for ships using alternative fuels and new technologies, which is being implemented with the World Maritime University (WMU).

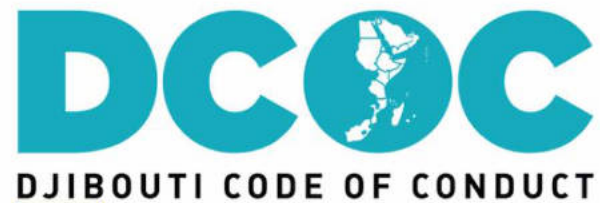
The IMO Secretariat continues to work closely with Member States and international partners to support training of seafarers serving on ships using alternative fuels and new technologies, contributing to a competent workforce capable of supporting the maritime energy transition safely and effectively.

More information

To learn more on preparing seafarers for the energy transition readers are invited to use the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/3v9vk68u>

Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden

Combined Task Force to protect shipping from piracy



DCOC Chair's Statement

We publish here with grateful thanks highlights of a statement by Mr Metse Ralephenya of the Republic of South Africa, Chair of the Djibouti Code of Conduct/ Jeddah Amendment. The text was issued on 13 August 2026.

'Signatory States of the Djibouti Code of Conduct/ Jeddah Amendment have agreed to set up a Combined DCoC Task Force, to protect shipping from the resurgence of piracy in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden.'

'This task force will provide a practical regional mechanism through which willing Signatory States can conduct coordinated maritime operations in support of existing international maritime security efforts'

'Included in the proposal is the possible embarkation of officers (known as sea-riders) from relevant coastal States aboard participating naval vessels.'

'The recommendation to establish the task force was agreed on at the 29 July 2026 DCOC Steering Committee Extraordinary Meeting.'

'Recommendations were subsequently considered by the National Focal Points of the Djibouti Code of Conduct meeting of 5 August 2026, which endorsed the Steering Committee's recommendations and agreed that Working Group 3 should lead the development of the operational framework required to establish the proposed Combined DCoC Task Force.'

'The next stage will include reviewing the existing WG3 Concept of Operations (CONOPS) in light of the proposed Task Force and develop recommendations for consideration by the NFPs, at the DCoC Regional Workshop on Operational Cooperation and Coordination at Sea, to be hosted by Kenya in Mombasa from 7 to 9 September 2026.'

'The WG3 workshop will consider the proposed Task Force's geographical scope, operational requirements, composition, responsibilities and resource implications, as well as its relationship with existing regional and international maritime security mechanisms.



Mr Metse Ralephenya, of the Republic of South Africa, Chair of the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment. The DCoC promotes maritime security cooperation across the Western Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea area.

*Photo: DCoC Media service with thanks ©.
With thanks, too, to the IMO Media Service for making this issue possible.*

'The precise composition of the Task Force – including the types and number of maritime assets that could be contributed by participating States – has not yet been determined. These matters will form part of further assessment and recommendations to be undertaken through the WG3 process.

'Regional States have emphasized that an effective regional response should extend beyond the deployment of assets at sea to include cooperation and legal processes, including arrangements for the timely transfer of suspected offenders to jurisdictions able to prosecute them.

The full statement

Readers who may wish to read the full Statement are invited to use the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/3etjk4nt>

IMO calls for urgent action as piracy resumes in the Gulf of Aden

IMO Secretary-General demands immediate and unconditional release of more than 90 seafarers held captive.

On 24 August IMO Secretary-General Mr Arsenio Dominguez issued the following statement following reports of the vessel *Seamull* being hijacked on 20 August 2026:

'Shipping challenges are on the rise with the recent increase of piracy incidents in the Gulf of Aden. With the most recent highjack, a sixth vessel is being held by pirates and armed robbers in waters that are becoming too dangerous for seafarers.

'More than 90 innocent seafarers are now being held captive, their lives subject to constant uncertainty and threat, often with limited access to adequate food, fresh water, medical support and other essential services. Behind each of them is a family enduring an unimaginable ordeal, with limited reliable information about their loved ones' well-being.

'I demand the immediate and unconditional release of all those being held captive. No seafarer should face violence, intimidation or exploitation simply for doing their jobs and keeping global trade moving.

'The deteriorating maritime security situation in the region demands urgent attention. While international focus has been drawn to other areas of heightened tension, we cannot allow the resurgence of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and surrounding waters to go unaddressed. The safety and security of seafarers must remain a global priority.



'I call on flag and coastal States to ensure ships flying their flag are adequately prepared to manage security risks and that crews are not exposed to avoidable dangers. This includes the implementation of industry best management practices (BMP Maritime Security) and relevant IMO guidance, including MSC.1/ Circ.1601/Rev.2.

'IMO will continue to support regional efforts led by coastal States to address this resurgence of piracy,

through initiatives such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct and its Jeddah Amendment.

'At the same time, sustained international naval cooperation remains essential to protecting merchant shipping and the seafarers who serve it. The international community has successfully confronted this threat before, and it must do so again.'

'I will keep raising this important matter across the UN-family, and engage with governments and all stakeholders to assess how IMO can best support collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing maritime security and protecting seafarers.'

For more information on IMO work on piracy and armed robbery readers are invited to visit: *Piracy and armed robbery against ships* using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6x5nf8p>

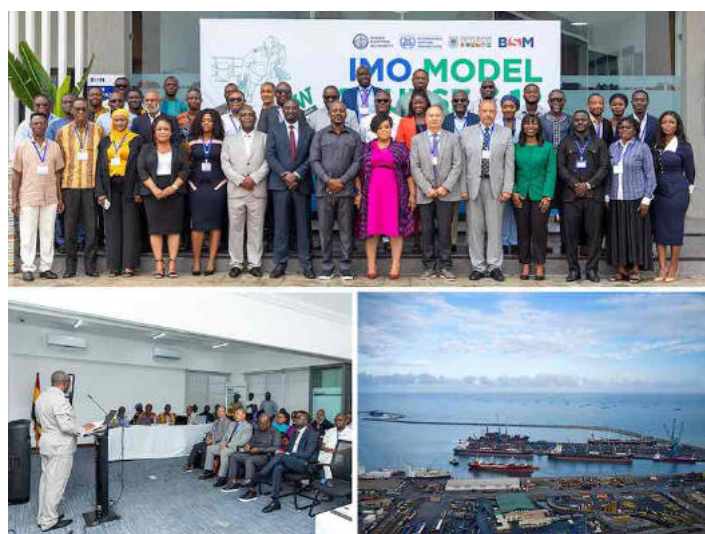
West and Central Africa

Improving seafarer assessment and certification

Maritime officials from six West and Central African countries took part in a regional training course in Accra, Ghana from 24 to 28 August to strengthen the assessment, examination and certification of seafarers.

To implement effective assessment systems

This training, based on IMO Model Course 3.12, is helping maritime administrations, training institutions and examination authorities implement effective assessment systems, in line with the STCW Convention and Code (regulations I/6, I/8 and VIII/2). For more see here: <https://tinyurl.com/3kjxpu6v>



Participants aim to enhance their knowledge of modern assessment methods, quality assurance techniques and the use of simulators to evaluate seafarers' competence, to ensure certification is valid and transparent.

The course also covers gender-sensitive teaching and learning practices to support more inclusive maritime education and training.

Broad participation

The workshop brought together 25 participants, including five women, from Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Bringing together officials responsible for maritime administration, training and examinations allows the issue to be addressed from different perspectives.

Such training as this will help participating countries address findings identified through the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS)**, including:

- Lack of documented procedures for training, assessment and record-keeping.
- Insufficient monitoring and review of training performance.
- Inadequate reporting of mandatory information to IMO.

A comprehensive mission report will capture the key lessons and recommendations for participating Member States.

IMO's ITCP

The activity was delivered through IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP)*, in close collaboration with the Ghana Maritime Authority.

* <https://tinyurl.com/bdz3xpsn>

** <https://tinyurl.com/yc4wdwwf>

Vanuatu

Progress in digital ship clearance

A national seminar held in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 18 to 20 August has identified practical next steps for establishing a Maritime Single Window (MSW)¹ to ease the flow of maritime traffic.

A Maritime Single Window is a centralized digital platform for exchanging information between ships and public authorities when ships call at ports. Using a single entry point can make clearance procedures faster and more transparent, improving the efficiency of international maritime transport. IMO Member States have been required to use MSWs in ports since 2024.

Priorities for implementation

The seminar identified several priorities to support Vanuatu in establishing an MSW. Recommendations included:

- Designating a lead agency.
- Establishing an effective coordination mechanism.
- Involving the private sector.
- Clearly defining the scope of the MSW.
- Aligning implementation with other national and development-partner initiatives.

Participants emphasized that successful implementation will depend on more than technology. It requires clear leadership, effective coordination between agencies, supportive legal and regulatory arrangements, streamlined procedures, adequate capacity and continued engagement between government and the maritime industry.

Improving processes

The seminar brought together government agencies and private-sector stakeholders to examine the IMO Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention)², related international standards and the practical steps for implementing an MSW.

Discussions

Participants mapped existing cargo and ship-clearance processes and explored how to improve them through greater coordination, digitalization and reducing duplicate information. Discussions focused on ensuring any future system responds to Vanuatu's operational and institutional needs.



UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)³ contributed to the seminar with an overview of its related work in Vanuatu.

IMO's ITCP

Activity at the seminar was delivered through IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme in close

collaboration with the Government of Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/3yknt3zz>

² <https://tinyurl.com/4s7ddd69>

³ <https://unctad.org/>

World Maritime University

Three women awarded SMART-C fellowships

Three maritime professionals from Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Vanuatu have been awarded fully funded fellowships under the IMO–Republic of Korea SMART-C Women Project to begin Master of Science programmes at the World Maritime University (WMU) in Malmö, Sweden, in September 2026.

The fellowship recipients are:

- Ms Esther Ken, Marine Pollution Officer, Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority.
- Ms Mary Lenorah Kalebo, Ship Registration Officer, National Maritime Safety Authority, Papua New Guinea.
- Ms Lurence Villacorta Carace, Officer-in-Charge, Financial Services Division, STCW Office, Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), Philippines.

All three women previously completed the SMART-C Women Training Programme, which combined online learning with in-person training in Busan, Republic of Korea. The programme covered maritime digitalization, decarbonisation and gender equality.

World Maritime University

For Ms Ken, the training highlighted the potential of digital technologies to support Small Island Developing States.

She commented: *'The programme strengthened my awareness of how digital technologies can improve maritime safety, pollution monitoring, regulatory compliance and operational efficiency, particularly for Small Island Developing States such as Vanuatu.'*

'My long-term goal is to strengthen Vanuatu's maritime policies and promote sustainable operations, while encouraging more women and young professionals to enter the field.'

Ms Kalebo has already applied the training at the National Maritime Safety Authority, strengthening governance of data in the Papua New Guinea Ships Register, standardizing ship registration procedures

and supporting the Maritime Single Window Gap Analysis.

She reflected: *'My ambition is to help position Papua New Guinea as a respected and digitally enabled maritime administration that delivers safe, secure, environmentally sustainable and customer-focused maritime services.'*

At WMU, Ms Kalebo intends to deepen her expertise in maritime law, digital governance, and environmental sustainability. She aims to advance a paperless Ship Registry and establish a structured mentorship programme for future maritime leaders.

Ms Carace will pursue the MSc in Maritime Affairs, specializing in Maritime Education and Training. She said the programme had reshaped her understanding of digital transformation: *'As a strategic enabler of transparency, regulatory compliance, safety and evidence-based decision-making.'*

Following graduation, she hopes to contribute to the modernization of the Philippine maritime education and training system and, through Women in Maritime Philippines (WIMAPHIL), to mentor future professionals and promote inclusive leadership.

Ms Carace added: *'I see the WMU Fellowship not simply as an academic achievement, but as a responsibility – an opportunity to return with renewed knowledge and a stronger commitment to a more innovative, sustainable and inclusive maritime sector.'*



About the SMART-C Women Project

Funded by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, and implemented by the International Maritime Organization, the SMART-C Women Project promotes gender equality in the maritime sector across five Asian and five Pacific beneficiary countries. It supports women's career development through four pillars:

- Comprehensive online and in-person training to strengthen professional competencies.
- Fully funded fellowships for postgraduate study at WMU or the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI).
- Global networking initiatives to support international collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
- Pilot consultancy projects supporting national master plans on women's empowerment in the maritime sector.

For further information

In order to find out more about the programme: SMART-C Women : SMART-C Projects readers are invited to use the link here:

<https://smart-c.imo.org/smart-c-women/>

A news item regarding the first SMART-C Women Fellow to begin the master's studies at World Maritime University is to be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/4h4e3d57>

Strait of Hormuz

Six months of uncertainty for seafarers

IMO Secretary-General urges practical solutions and renewed cooperation to restore freedom of navigation

Thousands of seafarers have been stuck in the Persian Gulf since the current conflict in the Middle East began on 28 February this year. To date, at least 70 attacks on international shipping have been verified by IMO, with 19 seafarers killed.

With maritime security threats on the rise globally, IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez issued the following statement:

'Six months since the conflict in the Middle East began, the situation in the Strait of Hormuz is unresolved.'

'Thousands of seafarers in the region continue to live and work under conditions of heightened risk and uncertainty.'

'While some ships and their crews have been able to leave the Persian Gulf, up to 400 ships carrying around 6,000 seafarers have been unable to depart safely since the conflict began.'

'The impacts of this crisis are grave – both in the short and long term. The disruption of vital supply chains for fuels, fertilizers and other commodities has'

consequences for communities and economies around the world.

'In July, the IMO Council¹ adopted a resolution on the protection of vital shipping lanes, reaffirming that the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation must not be threatened, impeded, denied, hampered, impaired or suspended. It called for a coordinated and sustainable return to unhindered navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.'

'Renewed political will and cooperation is needed to deliver on this commitment.'



IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez. The IMO Council, meeting in July, reaffirmed that the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation must not be threatened, impeded, denied, hampered, impaired or suspended.

'I call on all Member States and the shipping industry to work together with IMO and the wider United Nations system, to advance practical solutions to restore the freedom of navigation through the Strait.'

'The deterioration of maritime security around the globe – from the Black Sea to the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden – is detrimental to us all. But it is particularly distressing for the thousands of innocent seafarers affected.'

For more information on the impact of the Middle East conflict on shipping readers are invited to use the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/29crfdx6>

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/4u7ur4fs>

IMO joins ATLAS launch

Safe nuclear technologies at sea

IMO participated in the International Atomic Energy Agency's High-Level Forum* launching the ATLAS initiative, held in Washington, DC on 26 and 27 August.

ATLAS (Atomic Technologies Licensed for Applications at Sea) is designed to strengthen international cooperation on the safe, secure and safeguarded use of nuclear technologies at sea, reflecting growing global interest in advanced maritime nuclear applications.

IMO contributed to discussions on the legal, regulatory, safety, security, safeguards and liability frameworks needed to support the potential future deployment of nuclear-powered ships and other maritime nuclear applications.



IMO's Deputy Director at the Maritime Safety Division (Marine Technology and Cargoes), Mr Masud Karim, highlighted the organization's mandate for global ship safety, maritime security and marine environmental protection, while underlining the complementary role of the IAEA in nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

Launch of ATLAS is expected to provide a structured platform for dialogue among governments, regulators, international organizations, industry and other stakeholders.

IMO's participation reinforces its commitment to continued cooperation with the IAEA and Member States to ensure that any future maritime nuclear innovation is supported by robust international standards and upholds high levels of safety, security and environmental protection.

*for more see here:

<https://www.iaea.org/events/atlas2026>

AIS-assisted collisions: The risks of over-reliance

By Bruce Liu, Loss Prevention Executive GARD

First published 14 July 2026

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AIS has evolved into an important safety aid for situational awareness and even collision avoidance. However, this evolution also brings new risks, and over-reliance on AIS may, in some cases, contribute to incidents rather than prevent them.

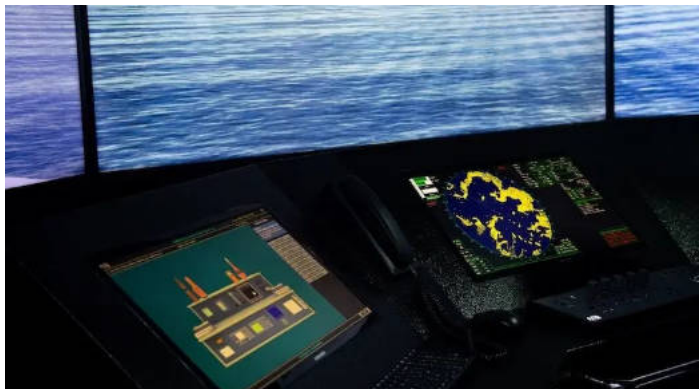
It has been nearly 25 years since the tragic event of 9/11 – a turning point that underscored the vulnerability of ships and other maritime infrastructure to potential misuse. In its aftermath, the ISPS Code was introduced to strengthen maritime security, and the Automatic Identification System (AIS) emerged as an essential tool for vessel tracking and identification.

AIS has since become an indispensable aid to maritime security and navigational safety. However, its widespread adoption – both on ships and in broader maritime applications such as aids to navigation (AtoN) and the marking of fishing gear and aquaculture areas – has increasingly shaped bridge watchkeeping practices and collision-avoidance behaviour. For bridge teams, pilots, and VTS operators, where navigational safety is critical, the integration and display of AIS information on navigational displays, particularly radar, have made traffic information more readily accessible – supported by requirements such as MSC.192(79) and MSC.191(79).

While these developments have delivered significant safety benefits, they have also increased the potential for over-reliance on AIS-derived information. In some cases, such over-reliance may contribute to incidents, particularly when it influences the assessment of navigational risks or the decisions taken on the bridge or in VTS services.

When AIS becomes too trusted

Reflecting on my own seafaring career, I recall when AIS was a novelty. It greatly simplified the identification of nearby vessels and enabled more direct communication. AIS also compensated for radar limitations in adverse weather or in waterways with bends, or other intermediate obstructions. Later, in my roles as a VTS supervisor and casualty investigator, AIS proved invaluable for streamlining ship reporting and reconstructing incidents.



However, I also observed that many accidents occurred when bridge teams relied primarily on AIS for collision avoidance, neglecting systematic visual and/or radar observations. This is concerning because, as outlined in the IMO Resolution A.1106(29), AIS calculate collision risk using dynamic

data from both own vessel and AIS target. Radar plotting, by contrast, evaluates how a target moves relative to own ship.

In my current role as a Loss Prevention Executive, I continue to see incidents related to the improper use of AIS. Over-reliance on AIS – what I refer to as AIS-assisted collisions – remains a recurring factor in marine casualties. It is crucial for mariners to recognize the limitations of AIS and to use it as a supplement, not a substitute, for fundamental navigational practices such as visual lookout and systematic radar observation or radar plotting.

Case studies: Common patterns in AIS-related collisions

Case 1: Collision between tanker S and bulker C

At 1950LT on 6 January 2018, the laden Suezmax tanker S collided with the laden Panamax bulk carrier C at the East China Sea, resulting in the loss of life for 32 persons on the tanker and significant pollution.

The investigation revealed:

- There were significant discrepancies between the tanker's AIS data and its actual navigation, with course over ground (COG) differing by 20 to 25 degrees and speed over ground (SOG) by 2 to 3 knots.
- The tanker's bridge team failed to acquire the bulker on her X-band radar and did not activate the AIS target for the opposing vessel. The bulker's bridge team did not perform radar plotting for the tanker relied solely on the tanker's AIS displayed on the radar to check CPA.

According to the investigation, the COG and SOG transmitted by the tanker's AIS were derived from her speed log, which did not conform to the data from her GPS.

The radar image from a witness vessel showed both tanker S's "activated" AIS target and the bulker's "acquired" radar target clearly. At this specific time, tanker S's AIS transmitted course was 021 degrees and speed 8.8 kn. Such dynamic AIS information would be used for the calculation of CPA and TCPA with tanker S for other vessels in the vicinity including bulker C. However, tanker S's actual course was about 358 degrees and speed 10.5 kn.

Lessons learned: AIS data reliability depends on the accuracy of its connected sensors. If AIS is transmitting inaccurate information, it can create situational confusion rather than improve awareness.

Case 2: Collision between bulk carrier V and fishing vessel L

At 0419 on 18 September 2020, bulk carrier V collided with fishing vessel L in the Laotieshan TSS, resulting in the loss of life for all 10 crew members onboard the fishing vessel.

The investigation revealed:

- The bridge team on vessel V primarily relied on AIS and ECDIS for lookout, while neglecting fundamental methods such as visual lookout and radar plotting. No radar plotting was conducted for the fishing vessel involved in the collision, nor for its accompanying fishing vessels prior to the incident.
- The fishing vessel L failed to maintain effective operation of its AIS equipment. Its AIS signal was detected right before the collision, making early detection and tracking via the AIS system by other vessels and the VTS center impossible.

Lesson Learned: Not every vessel has a working AIS, so it is important not to rely only on AIS for lookout. Always use visual lookout and systematic radar observation in addition to AIS to ensure safe navigation.

Case 3: Collision between bulk carrier J and fishing vessel L

At about 0150LT on 22 December 2022, bulk carrier J collided with fishing vessel L in the Yellow Sea, causing the loss of 11 crew members onboard the fishing vessel.

According to the investigation, the bridge team on the bulk carrier did not plot the target of fishing vessel L, nor did they activate her AIS target on the radar even at 0143LT when it became a Dangerous AIS target (in this case, an AIS target (activated or not) calculated to pass preset CPA of 0.3 nm and TCPA of 12 min limits). Until 0146LT, the AIS target of L was activated on the X-band radar, and the AIS information was used for collision avoidance.

Lesson Learned: Don't wait until the last minute to assess the risk of collision. Always monitor and evaluate approaching vessels early, using all available means, so you have enough time to take action and avoid collision.

Case 4: Collision between bulk carrier T and STS tanker S1 and S2

At 2330LT in July 2024, bulk carrier T, while enroute to Subic Bay, Philippines, came in collision with tanker S1 at anchor carrying out STS operations with another tanker S2. Damage was sustained by all three vessels.

It was found that:

- No AIS feed was available from both tankers until about 1 min before the incident when S2's AIS signal first appeared on T's radar and ECDIS displays.
- The radar echoes of both tankers had been visible on T's radar since 2250 LT. But the OOW did not plot the targets on the radar and was primarily using the AIS data reflected on the ECDIS for determining risk of collision.

The ECDIS had a Radar Image Overlay (RIO) feature, but this was not used before the incident.

Lesson Learned: Don't rely only on AIS data displayed on the ECDIS to determine the risk of collision. Always use radar and other available aids to get a complete picture to make safer decisions.

Why mariners over-rely on AIS

One contributing factor may be the way trust gradually shifts toward tools that provide fast, clear, and seemingly authoritative information. AIS offers immediate identification and CPA/TCPA outputs, which can create a perception of reduced risk and reliability, particularly in busy or restricted waters. Over time, this may unintentionally lead to a reduced emphasis on traditional cross-checks, such as visual lookout and systematic radar observation.

A lack of cross-verification is often associated with well-recognised human-factor mechanisms, where information from a single, convenient source is accepted without adequate validation against alternative inputs. In such situations, inaccuracies or interruptions in AIS data may go unnoticed, not because operators are unaware of AIS limitations, but because confidence in the system has gradually displaced routine redundancy checks – both on the bridge and, in some cases, ashore. This is illustrated by the Turkish Marine Safety Investigation Board's investigation into a collision in a VTS area where reliance on AIS affected situational awareness.

Recommendations

- Mariners should be aware of the limitations of AIS, which include refresh delays in data transmission, dependence on properly functioning sensors, and incomplete traffic coverage – not all vessels carry AIS, sensors may malfunction, and some vessels such as navy ships (as highlighted in this investigation) may operate in passive mode. Over-reliance on AIS without accounting for these limitations has been a recurring factor in the incidents described above.
- Safety Management Systems (SMS), masters' standing orders, and night orders should reinforce

the importance of maintaining a proper lookout using all available means.

- The increasing risk of GPS interference and disruption in geopolitical conflict zones is also impacting the reliability of AIS data. Mariners are encouraged to use terrestrial navigation skills such as manual fixes and radar overlay on ECDIS to cross-check vessel's position and to validate surrounding traffic information. Safe navigation requires the integration of multiple sources, not reliance on any single system.
- Finally, pilots often connect their portable pilot units (PPUs) to the vessel's AIS, which may be subject to GPS "smoothing", leading to incidents such as the reported allision with berth when the predicted vessel positions displayed on the PPU do not accurately represent the vessel's future track.

Relevant links:

- USCG: Automatic Identification System (AIS) – *Accurate Broadcasts Don't Happen Automatically*. Readers are invited to see the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/3tr6adrt>
- Maritime & Coastguard Agency: *MGN 324 (M+F) Amendment 2 - Use of Automatic Identification System (AIS)* Readers are invited to see the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/bddw29c4>
- INTERTANKO: *Jamming and Spoofing of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)*, Readers are invited to see the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/bducseyei>
- Nautical Institute: *All about AIS*, Readers are invited to see the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/nhd28x9y>
- Gard article: *GPS interference in geopolitical conflict zones*, Readers are invited to see the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc5ayfy5>

For further reading

Related articles are to be found in the GARD archives as here below:

- 'Going dark' is a red flag – AIS tracking and sanctions compliance. Published 28.05.2019 see here: <https://tinyurl.com/24jp4x6b>
- Do not switch off the AIS in Nigerian waters. Published 16.10.2020 see here: <https://tinyurl.com/2f99a85t>
- Increased collision risk in Chinese water. Published 27.08.2024 see here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdeyh8zz>

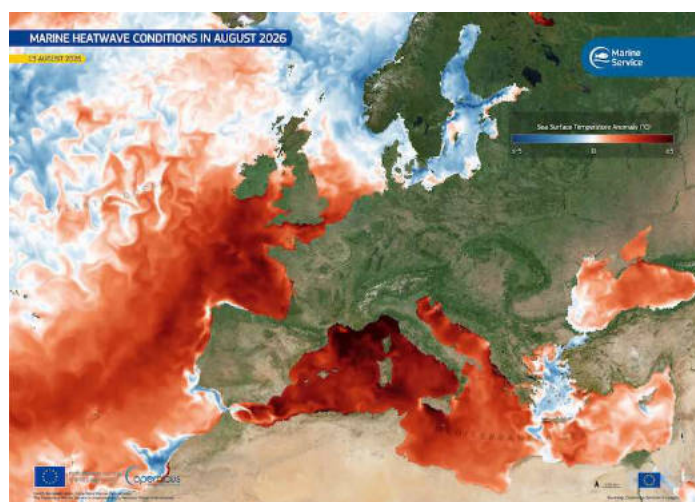
W Med + NE Atlantic

Marine heatwave

Marine heatwave conditions have been affecting the western Mediterranean Sea and parts of the north-eastern Atlantic through the summer of 2026, and unusually warm sea surface temperatures remained widespread on 13 August 2026.

Sea surface temperature anomalies

This data visualisation, based on Copernicus Marine Service data for 13 August, shows sea surface temperature anomalies across the Mediterranean Sea and the adjacent Atlantic.



Picture credit: European Union, Copernicus Marine Service Data EU ©

Red and dark red tones indicate areas where sea surface temperatures were above the long-term average. The largest anomalies, reaching approximately 6°C above average, were recorded in the western Mediterranean Sea, particularly in the Gulf of Lion off the coast of southern France.

Values above 5°C were also recorded in the Atlantic off the Iberian Peninsula. Cooler-than-average waters are visible in parts of the Aegean Sea.

The Copernicus Marine Service data help monitor marine heatwaves, assess ocean conditions, and identify thermal anomalies which may affect marine ecosystems.

Dangers of distraction

By Michael Grey, IFSMA Honorary Member

Without delving too deep into any debates about gender, some of us are better than others at "multi-tasking". But the arrival of hand-held, portable communication devices has led to us all, at some time, communicating, when our attention should have been upon something more urgent. It is why many

governments now ban the use of mobile phones while driving a road vehicle; a thoroughly sensible idea until you wake up to the fact the daft digitisers in automotive design have inflicted touchscreens to further distract drivers from their main task of staying on the road.

In a maritime context, the potential distraction of mobile devices aboard ship has been a matter of debate, practically from the day they first went to sea. The list of casualties where such distraction has been a contributor, if not the sole cause, has lengthened over the years and still features in reports. Just last week there came a US National Transportation Safety Board report into a fatal collision in a US river, where a bulk carrier ran down a towboat causing the death of a crew member.

In this particular case, the pilot of the large ship had been engaged in an extensive nonwork-related conversation with a colleague over his phone, while simultaneously uttering helm orders. The bridge team were heavily criticised for tolerating this behaviour, although they seemed to lack the necessary confidence to ask the pilot to be more attentive to his duties. You do not need much of a memory to recall the vastly expensive grounding of a containership in another US port with precisely the same root cause, just a couple of years ago, so this message did not universally register.

Distraction is surely well recognised by now as a regular but mostly preventable cause of marine accidents, some of them bordering on the comical, such as the recordings of a master giving his agent ashore a piece of his mind, as his second officer sought unsuccessfully to alert him to the fact that he was conning his chemical tanker onto a sandbank. It is not always communication that is the problem; well informed officers will treasure the report of the OOW carefully scrolling down the arrival checklist as the vessel prematurely arrived at the berth. The saga of the garbage reporting form that was indirectly responsible for the cruise ship clouting a box-boat will live for ever in the archives. But lives have been lost, vast environmental harm has been caused and careers blighted by distraction, so we maybe should not joke about these things.

Distraction comes in many forms, but one fundamental is that too few people are trying to do too many things at the same time. It is welcome that at long last, the classification societies are trying to get some order into the proliferation of alarms from equipment, that drives people crazy at their particular coal face. If they succeed, it will be a blessed relief.

Is it sensible to institute bans on the use of mobile phones, as some operators have done, as a means of reducing the risk of distraction? The current Nautical Institute Seaways magazine has an excellent

discourse on the subject where the author, Captain James Foong FNI suggests that the issue "is not the device, but the discipline". It is a wide-ranging article, noting that distraction comes in manifold forms, from the more familiar problem on a busy bridge or engine control room, to somebody pre-occupied with their device walking into hazards on deck from falling objects or swinging loads. "In a high-risk situation," Captain Foong points out, "divided attention can kill".

But he also emphasises how many are the "business cases" for the use of the mobile phone, which convert the device from a convenience into an essential tool for all manner of functions. Sharing photographs of equipment, recording incidents, and in so many other ways, the phone has become invaluable. The phone, he notes "is an essential modern tool; a camera, notebook, calculator, torch, translator, communication device, evidence recorder and personal safety aid". Discipline in its use needs to be enforced, and who could disagree with this commonsense approach.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

This article was first published in The Maritime Advocate Online No 914 of 14 August 2026 and appears here by kind permission of the author and of the editor.

Experience of a Captain of an IFSMA Shipmasters' Association

Regarding the Blockade of the Strait of Hormuz



1) The vessel on which I served was a chemical tanker (DWT 19,995 Tons / GT 12,035 Tons), and the vessel arrived at Al Jubail (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or KSA) on February 28, 2026. After loading methanol, the vessel became stranded within the Strait of Hormuz and eventually exited the Strait of Hormuz on June 26, 2026. (The vessel was stranded within the Strait of Hormuz for approximately four months.)

2) As the Master of this vessel, I joined the vessel at AL JUBAIL (KSA) on June 20, 2026, and exited the Strait of Hormuz on June 26. Therefore, I experienced approximately seven days of the blockade measures imposed by Iran's Persian Gulf Strait Authority or PGSA*.

3) The following is a summary of the seven days I personally experienced and interviews with the crew members who had been on board this vessel during the approximately four-month blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

(3.1) From mid-March to early May, when the war between the United States and Iran was intense, missiles and drones could be seen flying through the sky from the vessel, particularly at night, and there was considerable anxiety that they might fall near the vessel. In particular, because the vessel was fully loaded with methanol (flash point: 15–16°C), there was severe fear arising from the thought that, if even missile or drone fragments fell onto the vessel, the methanol loaded on board could cause the vessel to explode. Moreover, in an emergency, unlike on land where I can move my body as I wish, I could not move the vessel as I wished, and the sense of helplessness arising from this was particularly great.

(3.2) During this period, countless pieces of unreliable information were also circulating (rumors that Iran would attack vessels inside the Strait of Hormuz, rumors that a certain vessel had been blown up by an Iranian missile, etc.), and there were times when the crew members' unnecessary worry and fear became greatly intensified. At that time, maintaining harmony on board and stabilizing the crew members emotionally were extremely important.

- At that time, due to the Chief Engineer's strong request to sign off and the spread of rumors on board, there were difficulties in stabilizing the crew members emotionally. The Chief Engineer and other crew members who wished to sign off were relieved when the vessel berthed at AL JUBAIL (KSA).
- Thereafter, crew members whose contracts had expired, or who wished to sign off even before the expiration of their contracts, would also be relieved at AL JUBAIL (KSA).

(3.3) Because provisions and fresh water were received at AL JUBAIL (KSA), there were no major problems in maintaining basic living conditions even while stranded within the Strait of Hormuz. However, because the prices of provisions at AL JUBAIL (KSA) were approximately 20–30% higher than in other countries such as Singapore, it was difficult for the Master to manage with the previously allocated provision budget. This was resolved through consultation with the company by providing a special provision allowance for the period during which the vessel was stranded within the Strait of Hormuz.

(3.4) From mid-March to early May, when the war between the United States and Iran was at its height, Jamming and Spoofing occurred several times a day, and vessels anchored directly ahead and visible to the naked eye frequently disappeared suddenly from GPS

and ECDIS. Accordingly, Radar watch and visual lookout were strengthened.

(3.5) After mid-May, as the crew members became accustomed to the war and began to recognize that there would not be any major danger if the situation remained as it was, they gradually regained stability. In addition, as the war allowance agreed upon by the company and the seafarers' union began to be included in the crew members' salaries from April, the atmosphere on board improved considerably.

(3.6) On June 17, 2026, the United States and Iran prepared a memorandum of understanding for a 60-day peace agreement, and on June 26, the vessel exited the Strait of Hormuz through the northern passage of the Strait of Hormuz designated by Iran's PGSA. At the time of departure, it was my first time using the northern route designated by Iran's PGSA, and because the situation was urgent, I experienced the passage with the highest level of tension at that time.

(The right of transit passage had applied to the existing Strait of Hormuz; however, Iran is currently attempting to apply the right of innocent passage by moving the existing TSS northward and drawing it into Iranian territorial waters.)

(3.7) I hope that the vessels that are still unable to exit the Strait of Hormuz due to the renewed war between the United States and Iran will be able to exit safely and without incident.

*For more on the PGSA readers are invited to use the link here: <https://pgsa.agency/>

Compulsory tolls or charges in the Strait of Hormuz

An open letter to the S-Gs of the UN and the IMO

On 3 August eight heads of international maritime organizations signed and sent an open letter for the attention of HE António Guterres Secretary-General of the UN Secretary General and HE Arsenio Dominguez Secretary-General of IMO urging that no compulsory tolls or charges are introduced in the Strait of Hormuz.

The document stated:

We are writing to you to reiterate our concerns regarding the potential imposition of tolls or service fees in the Strait of Hormuz.

As the International Maritime Organization has highlighted repeatedly, since the beginning of the conflict seafarers have been operating in an environment of heightened uncertainty, with some sustaining injuries and tragically losing their lives while carrying out their work at sea. The safety of seafarers

who make global trade possible should be non-negotiable.

So too must be freedom of navigation. The ability of merchant ships to navigate international waterways safely, predictably and without unnecessary impediment is fundamental to resilient supply chains, economic stability and energy security.

Introducing compulsory charges for transit, or service fees that are a toll in all but name, through the Strait of Hormuz would represent a significant departure from established international practice. Beyond the immediate financial implications for global trade, it would establish a precedent that could undermine the internationally recognised legal framework governing straits used for international navigation and transit passage. Once such a precedent is established, it becomes increasingly difficult to resist similar measures elsewhere, creating uncertainty for international shipping and global commerce.

Any additional costs imposed on maritime transport inevitably flow through international supply chains. These consequences extend beyond shipping costs, contributing to higher energy prices, higher inflation, and higher economic uncertainty. Ultimately, these impacts will carry a human cost, affecting livelihoods around the world. It is vital that we continue supporting the preservation of freedom of navigation as the foundation of international maritime governance.

As discussions regarding regional security and conflict resolution take place, we must ensure that internationally recognised rights of navigation are not compromised or used as part of broader political negotiations.

We stand ready to work with the International Maritime Organization and the wider United Nations to ensure that long-established legal principles governing international straits, that are protected under international law, most notably through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), are not weakened or altered.

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Keukura Roi, Interim Secretary General, Asian Shipowners' Association.

David Loosley, Secretary General and CEO, BIMCO.

Bud Darr, President and CEO, Cruise Lines International Association.

Sotiris Raptis, Secretary General, European Community Shipowners' Association.

Thomas A Kazakos, Secretary General, International Chamber of Shipping.

Kostas Gkionis, Director / Secretary General, INTERCARGO.

Tim Wilkins, Managing Director, INTERTANKO.

Joe Kramek, President and CEO, World Shipping Council.

Editorial note:

We at IFSMA acknowledge the kind assistance of ICS and other signatories in enabling publication of this document.

Operation North Pacific Guard 2026

US Coast Guard, Canadian forces, and international partners

It was reported from Juneau, Alaska, in mid-August that the US Coast Guard, Canadian forces, and international partners concluded a joint patrol countering Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing as part of Operation North Pacific Guard (NPG) 2026.

Operation NPG is a multinational counter-IUU fishing operation which represents the very best of interoperability between the US and international partners to detect, deter, and combat IUU fishing.

Broad representation in NPG

The joint mission included US Coast Guard Cutter *Midgett*, US Coast Guard Pacific Area Maritime Information Fusion Center, US Coast Guard Pacific Area Tactical Law Enforcement Team, US Coast Guard Arctic District, and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Law Enforcement.



Illustration per USCG Arctic District Public Affairs, reproduced with grateful thanks©.

This operation was conducted in coordination with international partners; including the Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Canadian Coast Guard, Japan Coast Guard, Fisheries Agency of Japan, Korea Coast

A 25-day patrol

During the twenty-five day patrol in the North Pacific, the crew of *Midgett* conducted eight high-seas boardings and inspections, detecting three potential violations of conservation and management measures established by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations. Additionally, joint crews identified several potential violations, including illegal shark fin harvesting, through coordinated high-seas patrols, aerial surveillance, and electronic monitoring. Potential violations were submitted to the fishing vessel's flag state for adjudication.

In the words of Captain Brian Whisler, CO of USCGC *Midgett*: *'For over thirty years, NPG has combated IUU fishing on the high seas, which has a direct positive impact on US fish stocks and our US seafood economy.'*

'I am proud of our work to uphold good governance on the high seas through tactical-level coordination with trusted international partners, and this Operation continues to provide a huge return on investment each year. The US Coast Guard collaborates with our allies and partners to secure the seas against illegal fishing, trafficking, and external destabilizing influences.'

Protecting fisheries

Countering IUU fishing is by statute a homeland security mission. Salmon species depart the US Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and depending on the species, can spend over five years on the high seas of the North Pacific before returning to US waters. During this time, they are vulnerable to illegal foreign harvesting, which directly undermines lawful US fishermen and national protein security, and the cultural significance of these species. In addition, highly migratory species such as tuna, marlin, and shark swim between the US EEZ and the high seas and are likewise susceptible to IUU fishing outside of the US EEZ.

Operation North Pacific Guard's mission

NPG began in the early 1990s to enforce the United Nations General Assembly's moratorium on high-seas drift nets, and the intel-driven operation has now evolved to counter all IUU fishing threats in the North Pacific Ocean. IUU fishing remains a global threat. Every year between 11 and 26 million metric tons of fish are caught through IUU fishing around the world, threatening national security, international relations, and global economies.

Engine room fire following maintenance

A relieving master joined a vessel and requested a safety induction, only to discover that no formal induction had previously been carried out. During a full vessel familiarisation covering safety equipment, escape routes, alarms, and emergency procedures, several deficiencies were identified. Firefighting and lifesaving equipment was found to be out of date, incomplete, or unserviceable. Once these issues were rectified, the crew completed fire and abandon-ship drills for the first time in several years.

While under engine power approximately 100nm offshore in calm conditions, the master detected the smell of smoke. Other crew members assumed it was related to cooking, but the master investigated immediately. On opening the engine room access, a cloud of atomised diesel fuel was discovered. The engines were shut down, the crew alerted, and ventilation increased.

The investigation found that, following previous engine maintenance, an injector vibration mounting had not been refitted. The resulting vibration caused an injector fuel line to fail, spraying diesel fuel onto hot exhaust components and the turbocharger.

The incident had the potential to develop into a serious engine-room fire with limited options for intervention at sea. It reinforces the need to investigate any unusual smell, sound, or observation rather than dismissing it, as early reporting and prompt action are fundamental to an effective safety culture.

The event also highlights the importance of verifying maintenance on safety-critical machinery and carrying out regular drills, equipment inspections, and familiarisation exercises to identify weaknesses before an emergency occurs.

CHIRP Comment

This case shows how several small weaknesses can combine to create a serious fire risk. While each issue may appear minor in isolation, together they weakened the vessel's safety barriers. Effective maintenance control, crew preparedness, and a willingness to act on warning signs must work together as part of one safety system.

The absence of a proper induction and familiarisation process meant that existing deficiencies in firefighting and lifesaving equipment had gone unnoticed. Some equipment was outdated, incomplete, or unavailable, and the lack of regular emergency drills reduced the crew's readiness to respond effectively.

The technical failure resulted from incomplete maintenance. A missing vibration mount on the injector fuel line allowed excessive movement, eventually causing the line to fail. Diesel fuel was then sprayed onto hot exhaust components and the turbocharger, creating the potential for a major engine-room fire. This highlights the importance of effective maintenance completion checks and verification, particularly for safety-critical machinery.

The response to the unusual smell was also significant. Engine rooms develop a familiar background smell from normal operations, and experienced seafarers quickly recognise what is normal. Any smell that is different, stronger, or out of place should be treated as a warning sign. Fuel, oil, electrical faults, overheating, or fire can all present through changes in smell before other indications become obvious. An unusual smell should never be dismissed without investigation.

The master's actions were critical in preventing escalation. By identifying weaknesses during the initial familiarisation, ensuring equipment deficiencies were corrected, and restarting regular drills, the vessel's emergency preparedness was improved. During the incident, the prompt decision to stop the machinery, alert the crew, and increase ventilation reduced the likelihood of ignition and further escalation.

The key lesson is that safety depends on maintaining effective barriers at all times. Good maintenance practices, regular training, and a culture where everyone feels confident reporting concerns are essential. Small omissions can develop into major emergencies, but professional curiosity, strong leadership, and timely intervention can prevent a serious outcome.

Key Issues relating to this incident

Complacency

Demonstrated by the acceptance of degraded safety standards over an extended period. The absence of formal induction, the lack of emergency drills for several years, and the presence of expired or incomplete safety equipment indicate that safety barriers had gradually weakened without effective challenge or correction.

Capability

The technical cause of the incident was traced to incomplete reinstatement following maintenance, where the injector vibration mounting was not refitted. This highlights a weakness in maintenance control, particularly the absence of effective post-maintenance inspection, verification, and signoff processes for safety-critical machinery.

Situational awareness

The crew interpreted the indication as likely related to cooking rather than treating it as a potential engine room hazard. In a high-risk environment, unusual smells, sounds, or operating conditions should be recognised as early warning signals that require investigation until they are positively explained.

Communication

There was a lack of communication, as the concern raised by the Master was not initially shared or escalated by other crew members. A strong safety culture requires all personnel to communicate concerns clearly and challenge assumptions, regardless of rank or previous experience.

Distraction

This may be considered as a secondary factor, as the crew were engaged in routine activities when the smoke indication occurred. However, the greater issue was not the activity itself but the failure to prioritise and interpret the warning sign immediately and appropriately.

Key Takeaways

Regulators

'Safety barriers are only effective when they are actively verified; an emergency system that has not been tested cannot be assumed to provide protection when needed.'

This incident highlights the importance of regulatory oversight focusing not only on the existence of safety management systems but on their effectiveness in practice. The prolonged absence of drills, incomplete safety equipment, and lack of formal familiarisation demonstrate how safety controls can degrade when assurance processes are ineffective.

Managers (Operators / Companies)

'A maintenance task is not complete when the work is finished; it is complete only when the system has been verified safe to return to service.'

Managers should ensure that maintenance activities include effective planning, supervision, independent checks where appropriate, and confirmation that equipment has been correctly restored before operation. The missing injector vibration mounting illustrates how a small omission can remove a critical barrier, allowing a technical failure to develop.

Seafarers

'An unusual smell, sound, or condition is not a nuisance or inconvenience; it is a safety signal that requires attention until the cause is understood.'

Seafarers should recognise that early warning signs are valuable information that can prevent serious incidents. The initial dismissal of the smoke smell demonstrates how assumptions and familiarity can delay effective response. In high-risk areas such as engine rooms, abnormal indications should always be treated seriously and investigated promptly.

*CHIRP = Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme.

CHIRP supports individuals and organisations to create a safer and more positive work environment with free reports, newsletters, policy submissions, best practice learnings, videos, articles and more. Readers are encouraged to use CHIRP's safety resources to improve their safety and that of others.

To learn more of the work of CHIRP readers are invited to use the link here: <https://chirp.co.uk>

Editorial note:

Text based on material kindly provided by CHIRP General Maritime Feedback (MFB) of July 2026.

CHIRP* Maritime Report No M 2801 of 29 July 2026

Heads Down vs Heads Up: A breakdown in polar BRM

The reporter describes a breakdown in bridge resource management (BRM) during navigation in polar waters, highlighting the challenges of maintaining situational awareness in a dynamic ice environment.

An expedition vessel had completed daily operations and was proceeding towards open water through an area with 6–7/10 ice concentration, including glacial ice, bergy bits, and icebergs (see definitions below).

The bridge team consisted of the Master, who was conning the vessel, and the Chief Officer, who was assisting with a navigational system combining vessel sensor inputs (including GPS and echo sounder data) to provide a real-time 3D representation of the seabed. The Officer of the Watch (OOW) also provided support. The OOW was on their first voyage in polar waters, while the Master and Chief Officer had prior ice experience.

There was no dedicated lookout on the bridge, as the assigned lookout was on deck securing expedition workboats. As ice concentration increased, available leads and open water became more limited. The vessel was not following a pre-established passage plan, and no clear route or contingency plan had been agreed upon for the changing conditions. The Master

manoeuvred the vessel while seeking input from the bridge team on the safest route.

The Chief Officer primarily referred to an electronic track based on a previous vessel's route and advocated following it. However, several icebergs along this track were not identified during the assessment.

The OOW relied more on visual observation to identify alternative routes through the ice, but their input was not fully incorporated into decision-making. The Master sought guidance from the team as conditions became more constrained.

The reporter considers that the situation reflects reduced situational awareness, reliance on electronic information, and ineffective use of bridge team inputs during increasing workload in ice conditions.

Ice definitions

Iceberg – large floating piece of glacier ice

Bergy bit – smaller fragment of an iceberg or glacier

Growler – very small, low-lying ice fragment that is difficult to detect

Glacial – ice land-originating ice from glaciers

CHIRP Comment

This report highlights the unique challenges of polar operations, where rapidly changing ice conditions demand a combination of traditional seamanship, sound judgement, and effective use of modern navigation tools.

Electronic navigation systems and previously recorded vessel tracks can provide valuable situational awareness, but they do not confirm that a route remains safe. Ice conditions, weather, visibility, and glacial activity can change rapidly, making reliance on historical tracks a significant risk. Following another vessel's track without independently assessing current conditions is not an acceptable navigational strategy and can create a false sense of security.

The bridge team's attention should never become overly focused on electronic displays or recorded data at the expense of maintaining an effective visual lookout. In polar waters, direct observation remains one of the most important safety defences. Not all hazards are detectable by radar; for example, small ice fragments such as growlers may present a serious collision risk while remaining undetected by electronic sensors. Equally, a vessel should never intentionally make contact with glacial ice, regardless of its size or apparent condition.

The report also reinforces the importance of effective Bridge Resource Management (BRM). The bridge team must operate as an integrated safety barrier, ensuring that observations, concerns and alternative views are actively shared and considered, regardless of rank or experience. In this case, opportunities to strengthen that safety barrier appear to have been missed. The designated lookout was not continuously available on the bridge, reducing the vessel's ability to detect hazards visually, while the Officer of the Watch, despite being best placed to observe the developing situation, was not actively consulted for their assessment. Experience levels may differ, but every member of the bridge team contributes to situational awareness, and encouraging challenge and discussion is fundamental to safe decision-making.

Effective passage planning is equally critical. Passage plans should identify alternative routes where intended tracks may become blocked or unsafe, and bridge teams should be prepared to reduce speed, reassess the situation and revise their plan whenever uncertainty increases. Commercial pressures, particularly in the expedition sector, where operational resources and scheduling flexibility may be more limited than on larger passenger vessels, must never influence decisions affecting navigational safety.

The CHIRP Maritime Advisory Board also noted that while the master and chief officer often hold advanced ice navigation qualifications, other bridge team members may possess only the minimum level of polar training. Furthermore, there is little formal training or guidance specifically addressing the role of lookouts in polar operations. Given the critical contribution that vigilant visual observation makes to safe ice navigation, this is an area where the industry should consider developing more structured guidance and training.

Safe polar navigation depends on combining technology, professional experience, continuous observation and open communication. None of these elements is

sufficient in isolation; together they provide the resilience needed to ensure that decisions are based on a complete and current understanding of the operating environment rather than on a single source of information.

Key Issues relating to this incident

Communication

The bridge team did not effectively exchange concerns, particularly the OOW's visual observations of the ice conditions. Information was available but not fully shared or acted upon.

Over-confidence

Reliance on a previous vessel's track as a "proven" route may have reduced the level of challenge and independent assessment required in a changing ice environment.

Lack of Teamwork

The bridge team did not fully combine their different sources of information, experience, and perspectives to build a shared mental model.

Pressure

Increasing ice concentration, restricted manoeuvring space, and the desire to make progress increased pressure on the decision-making process. The increasing workload and uncertainty created a more pressured bridge environment, affecting communication and decision-making.

Distraction

Attention became focused on electronic information and tracking, reducing attention to the developing external environment.

Key Takeaways

Regulators

'Polar operations require bridge resource management standards that recognise the unique challenges of dynamic ice environments.'

Regulators should consider whether polar training adequately addresses BRM in high-uncertainty environments. Guidance should ensure that operators have robust procedures for ice navigation, including contingency planning, defined decision points, and clear escalation processes. Consideration should also be given to how bridge teams are trained to manage authority gradients where differences in rank, experience, or confidence may affect the sharing of safety-critical information.

Managers / Operators

'Technology can enhance situational awareness, but it cannot replace teamwork, independent assessment, and effective challenge within the bridge team.'

Managers should ensure that polar passage planning includes clearly identified routes, alternatives, and agreed decision points before entering areas where conditions may rapidly deteriorate. Operators should promote a culture where all bridge team members are encouraged and supported to challenge decisions, regardless of rank or experience. Electronic systems should be recognised as valuable decision-support tools, but bridge teams must remain aware of their

limitations and continue to verify information through observation and professional judgement. Polar-specific BRM training should include realistic scenarios that reflect the pressures and uncertainties of ice navigation.

Seafarers

'In polar waters, the safest route is built from many sources of information, not from one screen, one person, or one previous track.'

Seafarers should maintain a shared mental model by ensuring that everyone on the bridge understands the intended plan, the risks involved, and the changing conditions. Concerns and observations should be communicated early, particularly when what is seen outside does not match what is expected from electronic information. Technology should support decision-making, not replace professional judgement. In challenging environments, maintaining a balance between heads-up visual awareness and heads-down system monitoring is essential.

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Allseas' offshore wind industry heavy transport vessel *Grand Tour*

ABB to power

In early August ABB reported from Helsinki that it had secured a contract with Guangzhou Shipyard International (GSI) to deliver an integrated power and propulsion package to semi-submersible heavy transport vessel (HTV) *Grand Tour*. This 230-metre loa vessel has been ordered by global offshore contractor Allseas and will provide a key link in the logistics chain supporting Europe's offshore wind energy industry.

On its delivery in 2028, *Grand Tour* will carry very large converter stations from fabricators in Asia and

Europe and transfer them directly to Allseas' construction vessel *Pioneering Spirit* for installation.

Converter stations are at the heart of long-distance offshore power transmission as they turn AC electricity from turbines into DC for site-to-shore transfer by power cable.

Capability to convey 40,000 metric tons of cargo

Power, control and manoeuvrability are key vessel attributes for *Grand Tour*, which will carry, it is reported, loads of up to 40,000 metric tons on its stern deck and position itself alongside *Pioneering Spirit* while lowering its main deck below the waterline to float converter stations directly onboard.

ABB's supply includes four 3.5MW nozzled Azipod® units, providing sufficient thrust to serve *Grand Tour's* bollard pull and dynamic positioning (DP) needs.



Semi-submersible heavy transport vessel Grand Tour.
Image credit: Allseas ©.

Rotating 360 degrees, Azipod® propulsion will support precise manoeuvring into position at *Pioneering Spirit's* bow. The units will be equipped with optimized nozzles to ensure high efficiency also during transit. Gearless Azipod® units reduce mechanical losses and fuel consumption – thereby helping to reduce emissions – as well as noise and vibration compared to conventional mechanical thrusters.

In addition, the gearless design helps to minimize the need for lubrication oil, reducing the need for maintenance and thereby lowering operating costs. The technology's compact footprint provides flexibility in design and facilitates efficient installation.

The full ABB package includes a medium-voltage AC power plant in a closed ring topology, controlled by PEMS™ power and energy management system and enhanced power plant protection system (EPPS). The full-scope powertrain solution is complete with remote condition monitoring and maintenance capabilities.

BC Ferries' New major vessels programme

Corvus Energy secures 40MWh battery contract

It was reported from Canada and Norway in early August that Corvus Energy, a leading supplier of zero emission solutions for the ocean industry, has been awarded a contract to supply its Battery Energy Storage Systems (ESS) for four new hybrid-electric, double-ended passenger and car ferries for Canada-based ferry operator, British Columbia Ferry Services Inc. (BC Ferries).

The four new vessels are part of BC Ferries' new Summit Class and are respectively named: *Summit Arbutus*, *Summit Cedar*, *Summit Maple*, and *Summit Spruce*¹.

Prepared for zero emission operation

It is understood that Corvus will deliver 40 MWh of installed battery capacity—10 MWh per vessel—a scale that places these ships among the highest capacity battery-powered ferries in the world.



BC Ferries design rendering.

Image credit: BC Ferries©.

In addition, Corvus will supply battery interface bases and pack control systems sized for an additional 60 MWh (for a total of 70MWh) for each vessel, enabling the vessels to sail nearly emission free for up to two hours as charging infrastructure becomes available. This future-ready design eliminates the need for major structural modifications and positions BC Ferries at the forefront of large vessel electrification.

The Corvus Dolphin NxtGen™ Power system—featuring advanced liquid-cooled power cells, improved energy density, and enhanced safety architecture—represents a significant technological leap in marine battery performance. The ESS will be

integrated into the power and propulsion package for the new vessels.

A strategic choice backed by proven performance

BC Ferries selected Corvus based on its experience delivering largescale marine battery installations, its strong operational presence in British Columbia, and its proven track record powering the company's Island Class fleet. This ensures long-term lifecycle support for the new vessels, from commissioning through decades of service.

About BC Ferries' fleet renewal

Operating one of the world's largest ferry systems, BC Ferries provides service on 25 routes to 47 terminals and transports approximately 9.7 million vehicles and 22.7 million passengers annually.

BC Ferries' New Major Vessels (NMV) programme, the Company's largest capital investment to date, aims to renew the BC Ferries fleet, increase service capacity, and enable more environmentally sustainable operations.

Each of the four new double-ended ferries will be capable of carrying up to 360 vehicles and 2,100 passengers and crew.

Designed in collaboration with LMG Marin, the vessels will feature diesel-battery hybrid propulsion, including compatibility with biofuel or renewable diesel. Their unique architecture supports a seamless future transition to near zero-emission, all-electric ferry operation when shore charging infrastructure is in place.

Comment

BC Ferries' Head of Fleet Renewal, Ed Hooper, commented: *'BC Ferries is looking towards the future of what passenger ferry transport can be for the people, businesses and communities that rely on our ferries every day.'*

'Our challenge today is an aging fleet, most notably impacting our major routes. When the new Summit Class vessels begin to arrive in 2029, we will be adding more capacity and building better reliability into the way we do business. These vessels will have a long lifespan.'

Timeline

The first vessel is scheduled for delivery by 2029 from China Merchants Shipbuilding Industry Group Weihai Shipyard Co., Ltd., with all four entering service by 2031.

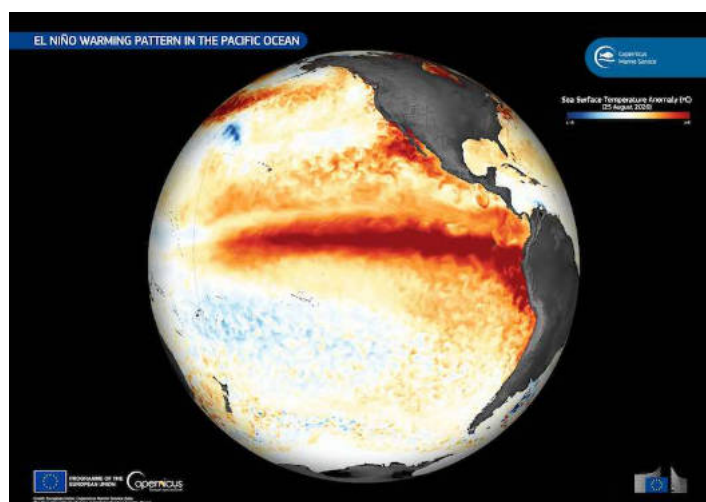
BC Ferries corporate video on the new tonnage is available using the link here:

El Niño warming pattern in the Pacific Ocean

El Niño is a recurring climate phenomenon associated with unusually warm surface waters in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. As the warm phase of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO), it is linked to changes in atmospheric circulation which can influence weather patterns worldwide. These changes can result in increased rainfall in some regions and reduced precipitation in others, with potential effects on agriculture, water resources, and marine ecosystems.

This data visualisation, based on data from the Copernicus Marine Service, shows sea surface temperature anomalies on 25 August 2026.

A distinct band of warmer water, identified by red tones, stretches along the central and eastern equatorial Pacific, illustrating the ongoing El Niño warming pattern.



Credit: European Union, Copernicus Marine Service Data

As climate change continues to affect the ocean, monitoring changes in ocean temperatures is increasingly important. Copernicus Marine Service data support the monitoring of temperature anomalies, contributing to climate forecasting, marine resource management, and preparedness for extreme weather events.

About Copernicus Marine Service

The Copernicus Marine Service (or Copernicus Marine Environment Monitoring Service) is the marine component of the Copernicus Programme of the European Union. The Copernicus Marine Service provides free, open, regular and systematic reference information on the blue (physical), white (sea ice), and green (biogeochemical) ocean state, variability and

dynamics across the global ocean and European regional seas. It is funded by the European Commission (EC) and implemented by Mercator Ocean International.

Ocean currents

An introduction to ocean currents by the Copernicus Marine Service is available using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/y92744he>

Darwin's *Beagle*

Pocket chronometer acquired by National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

Towards the end of August the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich reported that it had acquired a rare pocket chronometer, known as the 'K'.



The chronometer 'K' on the open ledger.

Image National Maritime Museum ©.

A rare survivor

This instrument is understood to be one of only two surviving pocket chronometers from the Second Beagle Voyage (1831-1836), the expedition during which Charles Darwin carried out research leading to his theory of evolution.

The instrument was saved for the nation following an export ban in 2025 and will go on public display at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich in October 2026.

HMS *Beagle* set sail to survey the coasts of South America, but the voyage is now most famous for the research carried out by Darwin. During the expedition, he collected specimens, recorded observations and sketched the flora and fauna he encountered.

This work later became evidence for his groundbreaking theory of evolution.

Robert FitzRoy, captain of the *Beagle*, took 22 chronometers on the voyage. He

selected 'K' as the observation chronometer and referred to it affectionately as the 'journeyman watch.' Whilst most of the chronometers remained secure in the captain's cabin, FitzRoy took this pocket watch on shore to measure the celestial observations essential to his timekeeping measurements. He describes it as: 'a very good pocket chronometer, carried by hand, in a box, [and] was always used for taking time' on shore.

Charles Darwin wrote of the chronometers that: 'There is a most important error in the longitude of S America, to settle which this second trip has been undertaken. Our Chronometers at least 16 of them, are going superbly: none on record ever have gone at all like them.'

Beagle returned after the five-year expedition and Captain FitzRoy reported an error of only 33 seconds in the chronometric calculations, despite only 11 of the chronometers functioning fully on their return.



HMS Beagle off Fort Macquarie, Sydney Harbour, by Owen Stanley.

Image National Maritime Museum ©.

Funded by the Admiralty since 1818, the Royal Observatory, Greenwich played an important role in the management and testing of Royal Navy chronometers in this period.

The Astronomer Royal, John Pond, reported on the best instruments and these

were reserved for the Beagle voyage. Francis Beaufort, the Hydrographer of the Navy – the officer responsible for the production of charts – specifically requested pocket chronometer 'K' for use on the voyage.

The Royal Observatory still holds the ledger books in which staff recorded the sea lives of these chronometers. As Admiralty hydrographers surveyed the globe, they relied on these timekeepers for measuring locations relative to Greenwich.

Decades later, the widespread use of these British charts based on the Greenwich meridian contributed to its designation as Prime Meridian of the World (0° longitude) in 1884.

The chronometer was acquired following a successful fundraising campaign with

support from Art Fund, Society for Nautical Research, The Tanlaw Foundation, National Heritage Memorial Fund and private individuals.

Paddy Rodgers, Director, CEO, Royal Museums Greenwich commented: 'This is a lovely object, with beauty and functionality, which sits at a lovely intersection between navigation, Darwin's emerging science of evolution, and FitzRoy's emerging status as a pioneer of meteorology.'

'The charting of the globe with the Greenwich meridian at its centre, the understanding of evolution, and the mapping of weather systems are all cross-referenced by one very special timepiece. What a treasure!'

Professor Claire Jowitt FEA FRHistS FHEA, Chair, Society for Nautical Research, said: 'The Society for Nautical Research is pleased to have played a part in securing the future public display of this chronometer from HMS Beagle's second survey voyage.'

'Some artefacts have the ability to sum up key moments from history: this circumnavigation was not only significant for the development of Darwin's ideas about evolutionary biology, but its chronometers established for the first time a linked chain of reference points around the globe of known longitude.'

'We are delighted that the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich can now share this important heritage with the nation.'

Straits of Malacca and Singapore accord

Free, open and safe for international shipping

Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore reaffirmed their shared commitment to keep the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) free, open and safe for international shipping at the 17th Co-operation Forum held in Singapore.¹

The Littoral States affirmed the status of the SOMS as a Strait Used for International Navigation, where the right of transit passage applies, as enshrined in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and reflected in customary international law. They underscored the importance of respecting navigational rights and freedoms both in principle and practice.

The Littoral States also reaffirmed the important roles played by User States, international organisations, the maritime industry and other stakeholders in sharing responsibility for and contributing to the safety of navigation and environmental protection in the SOMS.

At the 17th Co-operation Forum, the Littoral States and stakeholders discussed proposals to further these efforts, including the safe introduction of new technologies and alternative fuels in the SOMS, and review ongoing technical projects to enhance navigational safety.

The Co-operative Mechanism established by Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore in 2007 provides the framework for this co-operation. It enables Littoral States to work together with User States and other stakeholders on navigational safety and environmental protection in the SOMS. Its establishment gave practical effect, for the first time, to Article 43 of UNCLOS.² The Littoral States also renewed their commitment to uphold the objective and founding principles of the Co-operative Mechanism.

The Littoral States further expressed their appreciation to stakeholders for their longstanding contributions to the Co-operative Mechanism and encouraged their continued support and participation.

¹As one of three important components of the Co-operative Mechanism on Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (Co-operative Mechanism), the Co-operation Forum serves as a key platform for the Littoral States, User States, the industry, and other stakeholders to engage in dialogue on issues relating to navigational safety and marine environment protection in the SOMS. The other two components are the Aids to Navigation Fund and Project Co-ordination Committee.

²Article 43 states that: 'User States and States bordering a strait should by agreement co-operate: (i) in the establishment and maintenance in a strait of necessary navigational and safety aids or other improvements in aid of international navigation; and (ii) for the prevention, reduction and control of pollution from ships.'

17th Co-operation Forum

Keynote Address by IMO Secretary-General, Arsenio Dominguez

25 August 2026

'This year's 17th Co-operation Forum and Co-operative Mechanism meetings take place as global attention is focused on developments in and around the Strait of Hormuz and other critical maritime chokepoints.

'The conflict in the Middle East and developments in and around the Strait of Hormuz have placed seafarers in harm's way, threatened the safety and security of international shipping, and severely disrupted global trade.

'These developments are a stark reminder that the principles underpinning international shipping must never be taken for granted.

'Navigational rights and freedoms, including the Right of Transit Passage, must be respected and upheld by all States. With no exception.

'Equally, innocent seafarers must not be caught in the crosshairs of geopolitical tensions. They deserve to work in a safe and secure environment, free from risks beyond their control.

'Last month, the IMO Council adopted a resolution on Protection of vital shipping lanes, reaffirming a fundamental principle which underpins international shipping and global trade: Straits used for international navigation must always remain open, safe and secure.

'I thank Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and the many Member States represented here today for your leadership and support in this regard.

'The Straits of Malacca and Singapore are among the world's most important maritime arteries, supporting international trade, global supply chains and economic prosperity far beyond the region.

'Ensuring the safe, secure and efficient movement of ships through these waters is not only a regional responsibility but also a matter of global significance.

The Co-operative Mechanism was established in 2007 to foster cooperation and communication between the Littoral States, User States and stakeholders of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore under IMO's "Protection of Vital Shipping Lanes" initiative.

'For close to twenty years, it has proven to be a remarkable example of practical and constructive international cooperation and a durable and effective platform, with the three Littoral States, together with User States, industry partners and other stakeholders, including IMO, working collaboratively to enhance navigational safety and strengthen marine environmental protection in the Straits.

'The success of the Co-operative Mechanism lies in its balanced and inclusive approach and the trust it has fostered. It promotes dialogue, builds trust and facilitates cooperation among all those with an interest in the safe and sustainable use of these vital waterways.

'I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of IMO's ongoing support to the Co-operative Mechanism and to contributing to its continued success through our technical support, capacity building programmes and the IMO–Malacca and

'I also encourage User States, industry partners and all relevant stakeholders to continue supporting the Co-operative Mechanism, including by making voluntary contributions to the Aids to Navigation Fund.'

'By investing in the Co-operative Mechanism, we also invest in the continued safety, security and sustainability of one of the world's most important waterways.'

'Grounded in international law, and principles of mutual respect and shared responsibility, the Cooperative Mechanism has shown us how States bordering vital waterways can engage with Users. It presents us with a proven model of cooperation that I believe the wider maritime community can learn from and replicate.'

'I wish you productive deliberations and every success in your meetings.'

'Thank you.'

Grim reminder of past tragedies

By Michael Grey, IFSMA Honorary Member

A ship which can charitably be thought of in the autumn of her days. A cargo known to be problematical and with which there will be no second chances should things turn nasty. Two life rafts and two survivors out of a crew of 24, although the search was continuing. The loss last weekend of the bulker Ocean Winner in the Bay of Bengal brought back memories of those 1980-90s years, when bulker losses of mainly elderly ships which vanished with their crews - were almost so routine that the mainstream media failed to even notice them.

We were supposed to have learned a lot since then, and to do the industry credit, much has indeed improved, such that these losses are now very rare. We learned about the sin of postponed maintenance and the need for continual inspection of hard worked and corroding structures. The industry faced up to the dangers of the port equipment bashing ships around like so much scrap iron. We had hoped that the loaders might have learned of the strains which could be put upon ship structures by an injudicious departure from the loading plan, just to get the ship away faster. And most important of all, bulk carriers have, over the intervening years, been exposed to far tighter inspection regimes and stronger regulations.

We were also supposed to have learned a lot more about the dangers of liquefaction, with cargoes liable to this problem being identified and proper precautions taken to ensure that the cargo was within transportable limits. But sadly, these particular problems have persisted, and new, well-found ships

have been lost, occasioning regular warnings from class, the bulk carrier owners' organisation Intercargo and the P&I clubs, of the continuing need for vigilance, independent testing, and a firm refusal to carry doubtful cargo.

But some problems have never entirely gone away, mostly revolving around human nature. Cargoes are still stored for shipment in some places where there is heavy rainfall, and pressure is still put on shipmasters to accept cargo that is inadequately tested for moisture content, with dodgy sampling and little confidence that the tests have been undertaken by somebody who does not have a vested interest in getting the ship away.

Masters in these places probably have nobody on their side, with all interests anxious to get the cargo aboard and the vessel to sea. The owner doesn't want the ship blacked by the charterer or the terminal, the charterer is being screamed at by the consignee who needs the cargo desperately. There might be a supercargo involved, whose focus is expediting the operation. The agent, who in another age, might have been working for the ship, is simultaneously representing the charterer. The master could make waves, but knows his job is on the line. The P&I club could help, but somebody has to alert them. The alleged can tests might have been very selective, but who knew? Maybe all will be well.

There is no evidence whatever that this sort of scenario had played out as the 73,000dwt Panama flag panamax Ocean Winner loaded her China-bound cargo in the Indian port of Paradip, earlier this month. But it is a fact that liquefaction has been a factor in a notable number of incidents in recent years, where large ships carrying these types of cargo have got into difficulties. Doubtless the flag state's investigators will be considering this in due course.

That, and the possibility of a catastrophic structural failure, because there is no getting away from the circumstances that a 28 year old geared bulker might not be the optimum carriage for 71,000 tonnes of iron ore fines for an Indian ocean crossing in the monsoon period. The ship could have been in tip-top condition, maintained to an exemplary level by her several owners, but it would have been surprising, if three decades of hard wear had not registered on her structure. You do not, I was once told by a class surveyor of great experience, see fatigue, no matter how hard you scrutinise a piece of steel.

One can only hope for the best that the efforts of the rescuers might be successful, but when this was being written mid-week, hopes were already fading. One also hopes that we can learn something from this tragedy, although it might just result in underlining lessons that were learned in all those earlier, awful, losses. That would be a small positive, if nothing else.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

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The Indian Subcontinent

Sailors' Society Wellness at Sea Conference

4,000 cadets, ratings and trainees join

Now in its fifth year, Sailors' Society's 2026 Wellness at Sea Conference for the Indian Subcontinent brought together more than 4,000 cadets, ratings and trainees for a unique event focused on the human skills needed for a healthy and resilient career at sea.

This conference, one of four regional events designed especially for the next generation of maritime, explored the key elements that promote wellbeing at sea. From mental health and physical wellbeing to communication, relationships and conflict when working in a multi-cultural environment.

Expert speakers

Cadets, ratings and trainees from across the Indian Subcontinent heard from leading voices from the world of maritime, including Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General of the IMO, Captain M.P. Bhasin, Managing Director for MSC Crewing Services in Mumbai and Captain Savio Ramos, General Secretary of the Maritime Union of India.



The event also gave cadets and trainees a direct voice, with their participation and feedback helping Sailors' Society understand the issues and priorities facing the next generation of seafarers. Data and insights gathered during the conference will contribute to the charity's 2026–2027 Cadet Report, providing an important snapshot of the experiences, concerns and aspirations of tomorrow's seafarers.

Comment

Sara Baade, CEO of Sailors' Society, commented: *It is fantastic to see so many of the next generation of seafarers from across the Indian Subcontinent benefiting from this event that focuses on something just as important as their technical training – looking after themselves and each other.*

'These young people are the future of our industry, and we need to make sure they have the knowledge, confidence and support to thrive at sea. Their voices and experiences will also help shape our 2026–27 Cadet Report.'

Sailors' Society is particularly grateful to TK Foundation, whose funding made the conference possible, and to the maritime schools, colleges, training institutions and companies that made time for their cadets, ratings and trainees to attend this free event.'

Events ahead

The Indian Subcontinent event forms part of the 2026 Wellness at Sea conference programme with events for South East Asia (held on 5 September); Africa and the Middle East (17 September), and the UK and Europe (18 November).

More information on the events, the agenda and other speakers can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/ydfmcx6x>

Ends

About Sailors' Society

For more than 200 years, international maritime charity Sailors' Society has been transforming the lives of seafarers and their families.

The charity, with HQ in Southampton, works to provide practical, emotional and spiritual welfare support around the clock, day in, day out to today's 1.9 million seafarers, supporting wellbeing across every area of their lives and giving them the best opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling – and productive – career at sea.

For more information on the charity's work readers are invited to use the link here: www.sailors-society.org