

# Conference aims to address pressing issues

It will also showcase some of the latest technology, writes **VINCENT WEE**

**A** forthcoming exhibition and conference highlights the way the business of shipping has become increasingly complex and sophisticated. With market segments becoming more clearly defined there is a greater need to identify and address the issues more precisely.

Some of these needs are being met through the various industry forums but the fast-changing geopolitical situation and how these developments affect the shipping and maritime trade need a wider field of experts to give an accurate analysis.

With demand conditions in shipping in a greater state of flux than it has ever been and the equilibrium of supply in strategic chaos some key questions are being thrown up.

These include: What are these geopolitical developments and how are they impacting on the shipping and maritime industries? How is political determinism replacing, or re-shaping the marketplace?

Recent developments and trends in logistics and ports are also very pertinent to shipping lines and logistics players in this part of the world, particularly when it relates to regulatory changes taking place in Europe and other major markets.

Among the issues of interest would be the EU's competition rules and economic regulation of the liner shipping industry and the responses by ports to some of the dominant trends in the shipping industry.

As a world leader in jack-up rig construction and the conversion of floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) vessels as well as a premier ship repair centre and niche builder of customised and specialised vessels, the impact of new rules and conventions affecting ship safety, standards and security as well as approaches to risk management affecting the changing regimes in shipping, would be of interest to industry players here.

With a reputation for quality work, execution reliability, short turnaround time and strong project management capability to protect, some of the recent innovative developments in shipbuilding technology and techniques that are having an effect

on ship prices, deliveries and production capacity would be especially relevant to them.

As a major international maritime centre, the market response to demands for greater fuel and environmental efficiency and optimisation of equipment and ship engines will also be keenly watched. New developments and creative approaches to shipping investments and financial risk management in the form of forward freight agreements to mitigate risks and freight rates fluctuations will also be of interest to shipping professionals more engaged in the land-based side of the business.

As a one-stop centre for marine and offshore equipment, products and engineering services, Singapore is a good location to hold a conference bringing all these elements together. Discussion forums for maritime issues are not that common.

These include the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and others centred on the various industry segments like the Asian Shipowners Forum, Asian Shippers Council and Asean Ports Association.

Meanwhile among the research community, the proposed Maritime Asia-Pacific Research Network aims to address the issue of lack of information and data collection in the region's maritime industry.

The Asia Pacific Maritime (APM) 2008 Conference being held in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name will bring together various industry players to talk about the relevant issues.

The conference will bring together experts from various fields. These include shipbuilding and repair, port and logistics operations and regulatory bodies and consultancies dealing with environmental and bunkering issues.

The number of suppliers and vendors bringing products into the Asian market is also rising. The APM 2008 exhibition will showcase some of the latest technology, equipment and products that are available in the industry.

The conference runs from March 26-28 at the Singapore Expo. E-mail [apm@reedexpo.com.sg](mailto:apm@reedexpo.com.sg) or call 6780-4623 for more details.



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## Industry to tackle global shipping issues

**Two-day conference will focus on outlook for Asia**

INTERNATIONAL delegates will join members of the local shipping, insurance and banking industries in a two-day conference at the end of the month to tackle the major issues impacting global shipping, with particular emphasis on the outlook for Asia. They will participate in the Asia Pacific Maritime 2008 Conference starting here on March 27. It is being organised in conjunction with the 10th presentation of the Asia Pacific Maritime exhibition – a major event in the maritime calendar in Singapore.

Eminent industry persons will engage conference delegates on some of the geopolitical developments impacting the shipping and maritime industries.

They will also look at the prospects of the rising BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China) bring to the table, and how Asian countries can tap the economic effects of rising trade volumes.

Coming at a time when financial

markets are in disarray as a result of the continuing turbulence created by the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States, delegates can look forward to a discussion on the topic as well.

Lawyer Robson Lee, a partner at Singapore legal firm Shook, Lin and Bock, will speak on "The Sub-prime Crisis: Impact on financing shipping assets and IPOs".

Shipping and financial investments is a topic the conference organisers, Reed Exhibitions and *The Business Times*, are introducing to tackle concerns shipowners and shipping companies have over raising capital at an unpredictable time like this and the impact on their investments and assets.

The head of corporate finance at Norwegian bank DnB NOR, Joachim Skorge, is another speaker tackling the finance subject in a talk titled Innovative and Creative Approaches in Shipping Investments.

But the outlook for shipping will take centre stage when a panel handles the topic, as shipping demand continues to be in a state of constant flux.

Among panelists are Maersk South-east Asia chief executive Jesper Praestensgaard, PSA Singapore Terminals' commercial manager Ong Seow Leong, shipping agency M T Maritime managing director Vijay Rangroo and Charles Taylor Mutual Management (Asia) director Robert Drummond.

The conference will cover shipping, logistics, ports, technology and equipment.

And with a huge Chinese delegation expected to attend the three-day APM Exhibition starting on March 26 at the Singapore Expo, the conference organisers are also delving into the prospects for shipbuilding and ship repair in the region.

The Chinese and Korean yards have gained a big lead in the shipbuilding and repair business and they are looking at getting new orders from shipowners attending the maritime event.

The president of the Korean Shipbuilders Association, Park Kyu-Won, will speak on innovations in shipbuilding and technology in a session on shipbuilding, ship repair and conversions.

Reed Exhibitions project director Yeow Hui Long said the conference is timely, as the shipping industry in Asia needs to update itself on trends regularly to keep up the momentum the region has gained in shipping and the port operating business.

"The conference will showcase Asia's achievements, the region's role, and its growing leadership in the global maritime industry, and will be another event that will boost the status of Singapore as an international maritime centre," said Ms Yeow.

This is the second of a four-part weekly series brought to you by Asia Pacific Maritime 2008

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