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WMU in the News

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### Widespread changes in seafarers' role forecast

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Gas death on supply ship

A MEDIC on the supply ship HMAS *Stalwart* has died and 51 other crew members are in hospital from the effects of a toxic gas leak which developed in the stern quarters of the ship about 50 miles north of Darwin on midnight on Tuesday.

A total of 57 crewmen and officers were lifted off *Stalwart* by helicopter in an emergency operation before dawn on Wednesday. Four seamen in a critical condition have been flown to Sydney and another is in a Darwin hospital.

The ship's engineer, Lieutenant Commander Gordon Thomas, said the accident happened when a seaman noticed a foul smell as he began pumping out the ship's sullage tanks.

### Well test result.

ULTRAMAR Exploration, a unit of Ultramar Canada Inc, has reported the results of the appraisal well 49/5-3 in the North Sea.

The company said the well flowed gas at rates up to 27.8 million cubic feet of gas per day through a 3/4 inch choke in the interval from 11,485 ft to 11,580 ft. It said the well had been suspended as a potential gas producer.

### Sceptre plans

FOLLOWING two years of active, disappointing international drilling activity, Sceptre Resources Ltd

NEIL SINCLAIR reports from the conference in Amsterdam entitled Maritime Industries in the Nineties — A European View.

# Widespread changes in seafarers' role forecast

WIDESPREAD and fundamental changes in the number and role of seafarers were predicted yesterday by one of the world's leading experts in maritime education and training.

Professor Gunther Zade, vice-rector and academic dean of the World Maritime University in Malmo, Sweden, forecast that in the next decade dual purpose ratings may replace deck and engine-room ratings, and the overall number of ratings will about equal or even fall below the number of officers.

He also predicted the phasing out of radio officers and their replacement by advanced ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications technology, managed by a

bridge officer.

"The number of engineers may be reduced to two or even one, as a result of the availability of reliable automated engine operation and control systems," said Professor Zade.

He said the quest by shipowners for reduced manning levels coupled with the introduction of new communications and navigation technology would also mean substantial changes for maritime academies.

He said the number of maritime academies would be further reduced and those remaining would be better equipped with sophisticated training equipment. The introduction of new syllabi to reflect technological changes and lower manning targets was vital.

Professor Zade said navigation

would lose importance in the maritime training syllabus, whereas seamanship and maritime law might have a greater effect on the training of master mariners. Electronics and automation would receive increased attention.

Professor Zade called on maritime lecturers to recognise the need for changes and play a full part in their implementation.

"Academics will have to abandon their too often defensive or fatalistic attitude to change for a constructive participation in the implementation of reasonable amendments to the present system," he said.

• Western European shipowners must not sacrifice their high standards in the battle with low-

cost flag of convenience shipping, delegates were urged.

Mr R. J. de Wit, Queen's Commissioner in the province of North Holland, said: "Quality is the best weapon in competition."

Opening the conference, which was organised by Hogere Zeevarstschool (Amsterdam's senior nautical college), Mr de Wit criticised the low quality of crews on some ships sailing under convenience flags such as Panama and Honduras.

But he said it was of great importance that West European owners responded not by lowering their standards to reduce costs, but by striving to offer high-quality ships, crews and management.

### 'Research still needed' on riser systems

THE head of Norway's foremost maritime research institute yesterday admitted that technical problems still blocked the development of deepwater fields with floating production platforms.

Floating platforms have for some time been advanced as the best — and in some cases probably

## OPEC chairman in new dialogue plea

By Terry Macalister Energy Reporter

A FURTHER impassioned plea for oil-producing and consuming nations to get together round a negotiating table was made yesterday by the chairman of OPEC.

Dr Subroto told the "Oil and Money in the Eighties" conference



## Gas producers face 'severe competition'

THE uncertain future facing gas producers was outlined to the conference by a senior energy adviser at Shell International.

Mr Douglas Wade said gas

## Problem Singapore

LIKE every man in the world, Singapore has its fair share of problems. Although its reputation as a leading maritime port remains intact, awareness that it can no longer escape from the global economic crisis is finding out what has happened to Singapore's economy. He presents his major special report Monday.

## Radio links

AMATEUR radio operators played a part in maintaining communications in the devastated Maldives. Small ship terminals are being used as transport. Maconachie reports development in technical page.

