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P 2

GPO Moves PV Drilling IX to Vietnam

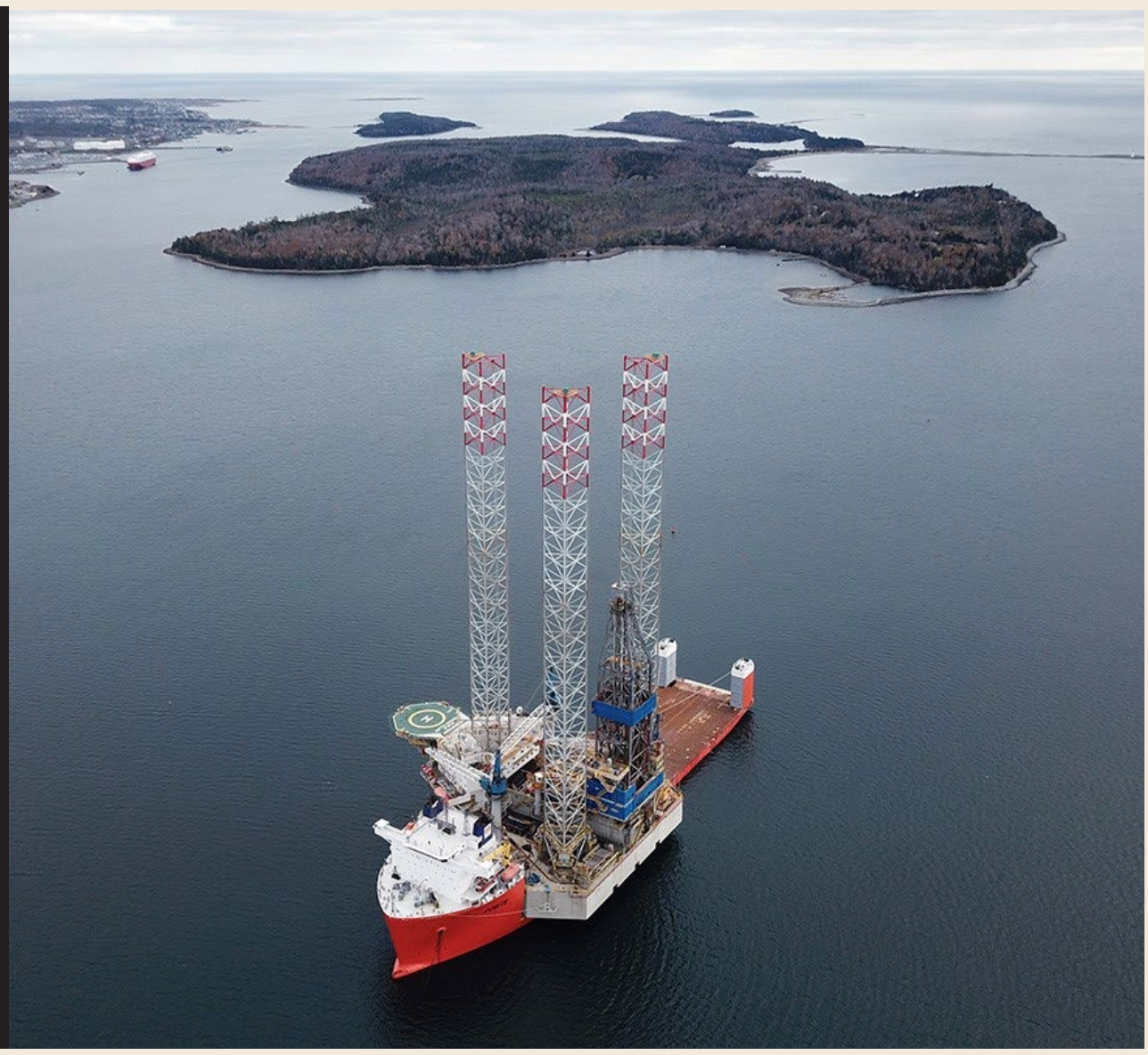
Semi-submersible heavy-lift vessel GPO Sapphire is transporting jack-up rig PV Drilling IX from Rotterdam to Vietnam, ahead of the rig's reactivation and deployment in the Asia-Pacific market from 2026.

P16

COSCO books 87-ship fleet renewal in China

COSCO Shipping has agreed a $7 billion framework with China State Shipbuilding to build 87 new vessels across its fleet, adding to an already large orderbook of containerships, bulkers and tankers.

Noble to sell six jackups to Borr and Ocean Oilfield



Noble Regina Allen arrives in Halifax, Nova Scotia in November 2017 (Photo source: Noble)

9, December 2025

Noble Corporation plc has agreed to transfer six jackup rigs to Borr Drilling Limited and Ocean Oilfield Drilling in transactions totalling about $424 million, as the company moves to concentrate on deepwater and ultra-harsh-environment jackup operations. The deals were announced on 8 December 2025 from Houston.

Under one agreement, Borr Drilling Limited will acquire five units from Noble for $360 million. The consideration is split between $210 million in cash and $150 million to be issued as seller notes. The rigs covered by this transaction are the Noble Regina Allen, Noble Resilient, Noble Tom Prosser, Noble Resolute and Noble Mick O'Brien. Closing is planned for early 2026 and will depend on Borr putting in place the necessary financing.

The proposed $150 million in seller notes to Borr are expected to carry a six-year term and be secured by a first-priority lien over three of the jackups: Noble Tom Prosser, Noble Regina Allen and Noble Resilient. Noble said the notes may be repaid ahead of maturity without any additional charge, and that certain conditions would require early repayment. In addition, Noble intends to continue running the Noble Mick O'Brien and Noble Resolute for a period of one year from signing through bareboat charter arrangements with Borr.

In a separate cash transaction, Ocean Oilfield Drilling is expected to purchase the jackup Noble Resolve for $64 million. This sale is scheduled to complete in the second quarter of 2026 after the rig finishes its current contract.

Following completion of both sales, and assuming all closing conditions are met, Noble expects its offshore drilling fleet to consist solely of deepwater units and jackups designed for ultra-harsh environments.

Commenting on the divestments, Robert W. Eifler, President and Chief Executive Officer of Noble, said the rig sales should enhance returns for shareholders when measured against both 2025 performance and projected 2026 EBITDA and free cash flow. He added that the transactions are intended to reinforce the company's balance sheet and tighten its focus on markets where it already has established positions in deepwater and ultra-harsh-environment jackup operations. Eifler also thanked the crews and shore-based teams associated with the six rigs for their work supporting customers and expressed his best wishes for their future projects.

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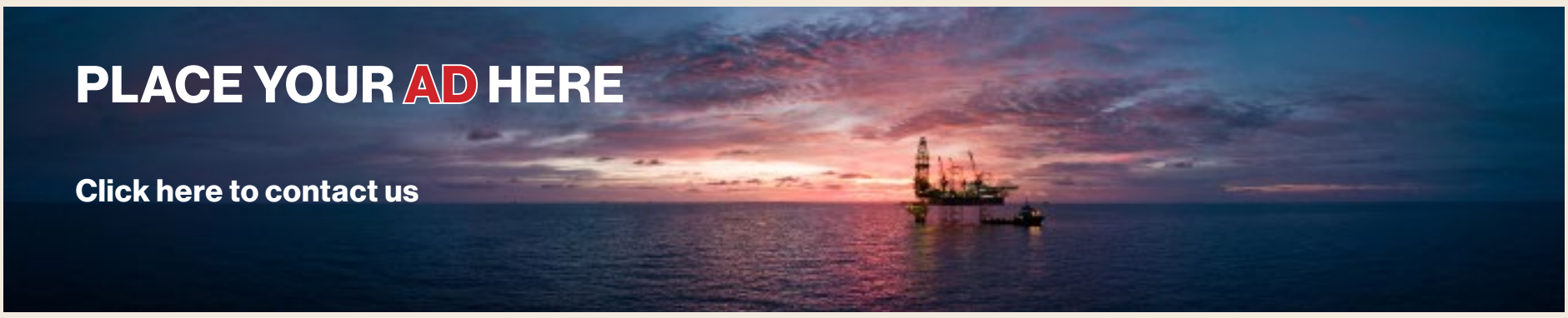
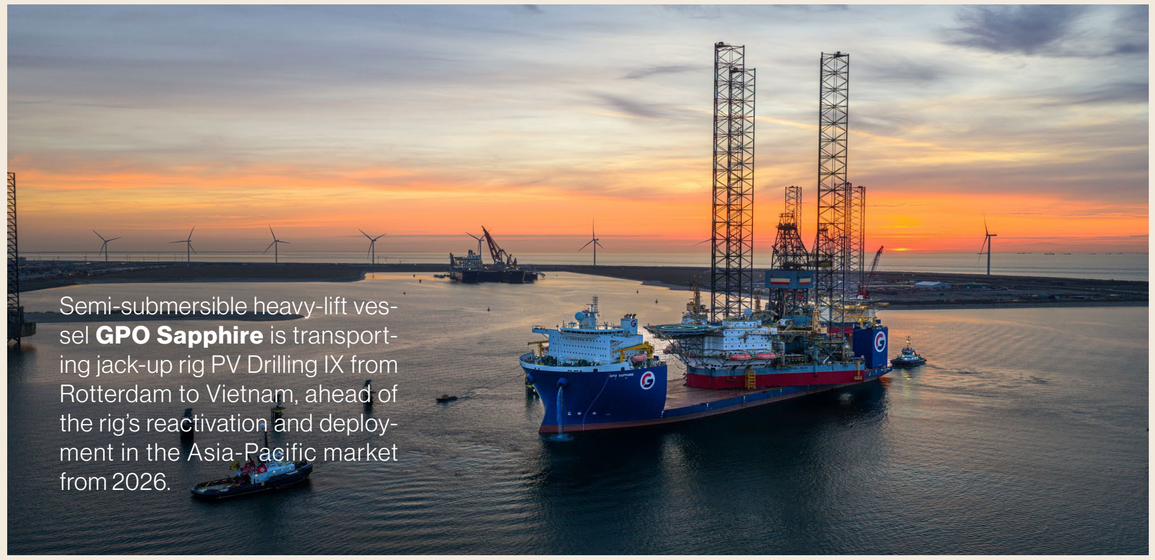


GPO Sapphire Moves PV Drilling IX Towards Vietnam



Semi-submersible heavy-lift vessel **GPO Sapphire** is transporting jack-up rig PV Drilling IX from Rotterdam to Vietnam, ahead of the rig's reactivation and deployment in the Asia-Pacific market from 2026.

Photo by ShipShot

8, December 2025

The semi-submersible heavy-lift vessel GPO Sapphire, operated by GPO Heavy Lift, is currently carrying the jack-up drilling rig PV Drilling IX on a voyage from Europe to Southeast Asia after loading the unit at the Port of Rotterdam.

Ship-tracking data shows that the vessel departed Rotterdam on 6 November and is now sailing in East African waters. The transport is scheduled to arrive at Vung Tau, Vietnam, on 23 December 2025.

Within the GPO Heavy Lift fleet, GPO Sapphire is one of four semi-submersible heavy-lift vessels in operation. All four units are built to the same specification: 65,000 dwt, an overall length of 225 m, a beam of 48 m and a deck length of 183 m, enabling them to carry large offshore units such as jack-up rigs.

PV Drilling IX is the new name for the harsh-environment jack-up rig Noble Highlander, built in 2015/2016. The rig was previously owned by Noble Corporation and was acquired by PV Drilling (Petrovietnam Drilling) in September 2025 for $65 million. Before the transaction, the unit had been cold-stacked in Denmark and is now being brought back into service for work in the Asia-Pacific offshore drilling market from early 2026, adding capacity to PV Drilling's fleet.

The rig is based on the Friede Goldman 2000E jack-up design, which is widely used in offshore basins with demanding safety and technical standards, including the North Sea, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. PV Drilling IX is fitted with a highly automated integrated NOV BLM jacking system. It is capable of drilling to 30,000 feet (9,144 m) and operating in water depths of up to 425 feet (129.5 m), and is regarded as a high-technology unit suitable for long-term drilling campaigns in fields with complex geology and stringent technical requirements.

Following the transport, PV Drilling IX is scheduled to commence operations for its first client at the end of March 2026 or early April 2026.

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Photo credit: ROVESA

Seaway Falcon Loaded GRID Jack-up Rig

12, December 2025

Semi-submersible heavy lift vessel Seaway Falcon, operated by Seaway7, has loaded the jack-up rig GRID at Dos Bocas in Mexico and sailed from the loading site last week, bound for West Africa.

According to a November 2025 fleet report issued by Borr Drilling, GRID has been working for Pemex in Mexico and is scheduled to move into Congo for a campaign with New Age in January–February 2026, followed by further work in Angola from February to August 2026.

SEAWAY FALCON is a heavy lift vessel flying the Norwegian flag, with an overall length of 199.3 m and a beam of 42 m.

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SAL's Luisa Arrives in Rotterdam

Photo credit: Vereniging van Werken Buitengaats / Facebook

10, December 2025,

The Semi-submersible heavy lift vessel Luisa has been captured arriving at Rotterdam. The vessel, formerly known as Sun Shine, was acquired by SAL Heavy Lift from Pan Ocean. In the photos, the original name is clearly removed and replaced with the new name, Luisa.

See also: SAL Heavy Lift Expands Semi-Submersible Fleet with Acquisition of MV Sun Shine and MV Sun Rise

Along with Luisa, SAL also acquired another semi-submersible vessel, Alma, previously named Sun Rise, from Pan Ocean. Both vessels are now part of SAL's fleet, further expanding their heavy-lift capabilities.

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MIGHTY SERVANT 1 Departs IJmuiden for German Ports

Photo: Rob Adriaanse ©

10, December 2025 - On 7 December, the BOSKALIS heavy load carrier MIGHTY SERVANT 1 departed the Port of IJmuiden bound for Bremerhaven/Nordenham in Germany. The vessel set course for the German ports with an estimated time of arrival of 8 December at around 08:00 hrs. MIGHTY SERVANT 1 is a Semi-submersible Heavy Lift Vessel and is sailing under the flag of Curacao. Her length overall (LOA) is 190.03 meters and her width is 50 meters. Source: SMIT KOMODO / Facebook

Petrobras issues tender for Marlim FPSO phase-out

Brazil's Petrobras has issued a tender dated 8 December 2025 for decommissioning and reuse work on ageing FPSOs P-35 and P-37 from the Marlim field in the Campos basin.

11, December 2025

Brazilian state-controlled producer Petrobras has launched a tender to select contractors for work on two long-serving FPSO units that operated at the Campos basin's Marlim field.

Issued on 8 December 2025, the call for bids covers decommissioning services together with the upgrade and reuse of the production topsides from the P-35 and P-37 units. Both platforms have been taken offline after extended service on Marlim.

Under the tender, successful contractors will refurbish the processing modules and reassemble them on the existing hulls in Brazil, enabling the units to be deployed on other projects instead of being fully dismantled.

Petrobras states that this route is aimed at optimising costs, extending the useful life of installed equipment, and strengthening domestic capability for modernising offshore production assets.

The programme will begin with P-37 under the first work package, with P-35 to follow in a later lot that combines decommissioning and reconstruction scopes. The latest tender confirms a shift away from earlier plans centred on dismantling the Marlim units and towards a reuse-focused model executed in-country.

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Chevron to Invest $2bn in Gorgon Backfill Development

8, December 2025

Chevron has revealed plans to invest AUD 3 billion ($2 billion) in a backfill project that will connect the offshore Geryon and Eurytion gas fields to Gorgon's existing subsea infrastructure and processing facilities on Barrow Island.

This development, known as the Gorgon Stage 3 project, is part of the original Gorgon plan and marks the first phase of a series of subsea tiebacks. It will complement the Jansz-lo compression project and the earlier Gorgon Stage 2 infill development.

The project includes the installation of three manifolds and a 35 km production flowline, along with other necessary infrastructure. Additionally, six wells will be drilled in the Geryon and Eurytion fields, located approximately 100 km northwest of Barrow Island in around 1,300 meters of water.

Chevron Australia president Balaji Krishnamurthy said this development would help sustain production at Gorgon, ensuring a reliable supply of domestic gas for Western Australian households and industries, as well as liquefied natural gas (LNG) for international markets in Asia.

"By adding the Geryon and Eurytion fields to the existing Gorgon and Jansz-lo fields, we can ensure a steady energy supply, support thousands of skilled jobs in Australia, contribute to regional WA communities, and generate revenue for the government," Krishnamurthy said.

Gorgon has the capacity to produce 300 terajoules per day of gas and 15.6 million tonnes of LNG annually.

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Eni's Significant Gas Discovery in Indonesia's Kutei Basin

Photo source: Shutterstock / ID: 2548129535

8, December 2025

Eni has made a notable gas find offshore East Kalimantan, Indonesia, with its Konta-1 wildcat well. The exploration well, located in the Muara Bakau working area, was drilled using the semi-submersible rig SSV Catarina from Ventura Offshore.

According to Indonesia's upstream regulator SKK Migas, the well reached a depth of 4,575 meters and was perforated on December 1. Early results showed an initial flow rate of 14 million cubic feet per day (MMcfd) of gas, which increased to 19.8 MMcfd following adjustments to the choke size. By December 6, production had surged to 30.5 MMcfd, alongside a flow of approximately 700 barrels per day of condensate. SKK Migas added that, with the choke fully open, the well has the potential to produce up to 60 MMcfd of gas.

This discovery is expected to contribute to future developments in the region, potentially being integrated into Eni's Kutei North Hub (Geng North) project, which is currently under development.

The find is expected to boost exploration activity in the Kutei basin, a region that has been an ongoing source of significant gas discoveries. SKK Migas highlighted Eni's proactive exploration efforts, which help enhance Indonesia's hydrocarbon reserves and support the country's energy security.

Looking ahead, Eni has several additional drilling prospects planned for 2025 and beyond, including potential wells at Konta, Meriam, and South Meriam within the Muara Bakau working area, as well as at Tambak and North Konta in the East and West Ganal production sharing contracts.

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Equinor Extends 28-Year-Old FPSO Life with Verdande Field Development

The Norne FPSO in the Norwegian Sea Photo: Gudmund Nymoen / ©Equinor

Equinor commenced production from the Verdande subsea oil field in the Norwegian Sea. This field, linked to the Norne FPSO, holds reserves of 36 million barrels of oil, effectively extending Norne's operational life beyond 2030.

The Verdande project was delivered on schedule, just under three years after the initial investment decision. Trond Bokn, Senior Vice President for Project Development at Equinor, emphasized the swift and cost-efficient development, citing its reliance on existing infrastructure to maximize the recovery from smaller fields.

The Verdande development cost around NOK 6 billion and has provided substantial benefits to the Norwegian supplier industry. The project is part of a broader trend of developing smaller subsea fields that connect to established infrastructure, reducing costs and minimizing environmental impact. To date, Norne FPSO is connected to six subsea fields, including Andvare and now Verdande.

Grete B. Haaland, Senior Vice President for Exploration and Production North at Equinor, highlighted the value of extending the operational lifespan of Norne, creating significant socio-economic effects, and maximizing resource recovery.

Verdande is an oil field with some gas and includes the Cape Vulture and Alve Nord East discoveries, made in 2017 and 2020, respectively. The field is developed with three wells, connected to Norne via a pipeline.

Equinor's partners in the Verdande field include Petoro, DNO Norge, Aker BP, Japex Norge, and Orlen Upstream Norway, with DNO expected to acquire Aker BP's and Orlen's shares, pending government approval. The field is located 7 km north of Norne and approximately 200 km from Sandnessjøen.

Key suppliers involved in Verdande's development include TechnipFMC, Aibel, Subsea7, and Transocean, contributing significantly to Norway's local economy and supply chain. This development showcases Equinor's commitment to maximizing the potential of the Norwegian Continental Shelf through innovative solutions and collaboration with local suppliers.

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Equinor adds twin gas finds in Sleipner hub

8, December 2025

Norway's state-controlled oil and gas company Equinor has reported two new gas and condensate discoveries in the Sleipner hub of Norway's North Sea sector, calling them its biggest discoveries of the year to date. The company says the volumes can be routed to the European market by tying them back to current infrastructure.

The discoveries were made at the Lofn and Langemann wells in production licence 1140, located between the Gudrun field and the Eirin field. Early estimates indicate recoverable resources of 5–18 million standard cubic metres of oil equivalent, equal to about 30–110 million barrels. Drilling was carried out by the rig Deepsea Atlantic, operated by Odfjell Drilling, which will now move to the next exploration well in the same area.

The licence was awarded to Equinor in 2022. The company identified the prospects using ocean bottom node seismic, with sensors placed on the seabed to provide more detailed geological data than conventional surface seismic surveys.

Kjetil Hove, Executive Vice President for Exploration & Production Norway at Equinor, links the new finds to the company's broader exploration strategy on the Norwegian Continental Shelf. He notes that the results confirm the remaining resource potential on the shelf at a time when Europe still depends on stable deliveries of oil and gas. Hove also points out that discoveries near established fields can be brought on stream quickly via subsea tiebacks, with a limited environmental footprint, low production-related CO_2 emissions and solid project economics. According to him, Equinor intends to accelerate such near-field developments on the Norwegian Continental Shelf and, together with its partners, is committed to drilling five more exploration wells in the Sleipner area to support export capacity and value creation.

Partner Aker BP reports that wells 15/5-8 S (Lofn) and 15/5-8 A (Langemann) are located around 40 km northwest of Sleipner A, between the Gudrun field and the Eirin field. Both wells proved gas and condensate within the Hugin formation, which offers a sandstone reservoir of good quality. The wells fall into the high-pressure, high-temperature (HPHT) category and, after extensive data acquisition, have now been permanently plugged and abandoned.

For Aker BP, Lofn and Langemann conclude what CEO Karl Johnny Hersvik describes as a strong exploration year. Across three major discoveries – including Omega Alfa and Kjøttkake earlier in the year – the company has added more than 100 million barrels of net resources. Hersvik says 2025 is Aker BP's most successful exploration year since Johan Sverdrup was discovered in 2010 and sees these volumes as important to maintain output of more than 500,000 barrels per day well into the 2030s.

The Sleipner asset portfolio comprises the gas and condensate fields Sleipner Øst and Sleipner Vest, as well as Gungne, and processes hydrocarbons from the Sigyn, Utgard, Gudrun and Gina Krog fields that are tied in. The area is a key hub for Norwegian gas exports, supplying dry gas to European markets, while unstable oil is shipped to Kårstø for processing and export. Sleipner also handles gas routed from Kollsnes and Nyhamna, with onward flow to Draupner, Zeebrugge and Easington.

The partners now plan to assess development solutions for Lofn and Langemann that build on existing Sleipner infrastructure to enable efficient, low-emission production. These latest gas and condensate finds follow the Omega Alfa exploration programme in Norway's North Sea sector, completed in August 2025, which resulted in a major oil discovery with recoverable volumes estimated at 96–134 mmboe.

Omega Alfa ranks among Norway's biggest commercial finds of the past decade. After the East Frigg discovery in 2023, Aker BP sees Omega Alfa as further evidence that new exploration methods can deliver sizeable results. Together, these discoveries support the company's ambition to produce over a billion barrels from the Yggdrasil area.

Earlier in the year, the partnership also discovered oil and gas at Kjøttkake in licence PL1182S, located in the Northern North Sea. The reservoir shows good quality, with recoverable volumes estimated at 39–75 mmboe, close to existing infrastructure around the Troll–Gjøa area. Following a transaction with Japex announced in July, Aker BP increased its stake in Kjøttkake to 45%. Last month, the company agreed with DNO to take over operatorship in the development phase, enabling it to apply its fast-track development approach as the partners evaluate project concepts, with first oil targeted for 2028.

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Seaway7 takes BC-Wind offshore contract in Poland

Photo source: Seaway 7

9, December 2025

Seaway7 has secured a contract with Ocean Winds covering the BC-Wind offshore wind development in Poland. The project site is in the Baltic Sea, approximately 23,000 m off Poland's coast, and will feature 26 wind turbines.

Under the award, Seaway7 will be responsible for transporting and installing twenty-six transition pieces, together with an offshore substation. Offshore operations for this scope are expected to begin in 2027.

Stuart Fitzgerald, CEO of Seaway7, said the company looks forward to working with Ocean Winds on BC-Wind and to further contributing to Poland's offshore wind goals through its third contract in this market. Seaway7, a company within the Subsea7 Group, focuses on projects in the fixed offshore wind segment and states that it aims to support future energy systems that balance efficiency and sustainability.

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Wood awarded $27m Equinor contract for Snorre link

Photo credit: Equinor

9, December 2025

Wood has been awarded a $27 million EPCI contract by Equinor for infrastructure upgrades tied to the continued development of the Snorre field in Norway's North Sea sector.

The new scope covers modifications to topsides and control systems on the Gullfaks A platform. Once complete, the facilities will allow gas to be moved in both directions between the Snorre and Gullfaks fields through a new interconnecting pipeline being delivered under Equinor's SNEIG project.

According to Wood, the work includes enabling gas imports from Snorre into Gullfaks A, upgrading fiscal metering so that gas imported and exported can be measured and accounted for accurately, and integrating the new systems with the existing production infrastructure. The changes are intended to provide greater flexibility in hydrocarbon production, improve the use of available resources, and help sustain field operations over the longer term.

The EPCI award follows Wood's completion of front-end engineering design (FEED) for the project earlier this year, extending the company's involvement in the development.

Henrik Melsom, Senior Vice President of Operations, Norway at Wood, said the Snorre field remains an important element of Norway's oil and gas industry, and that securing the contract builds on the company's long-running collaboration with Equinor in the Norwegian North Sea. He added that improving the integration and fiscal measurement of gas transferred between Snorre and Gullfaks will support Equinor's operational objectives and contribute to the reliable, sustainable use of the two fields.

Wood has delivered maintenance, repair, and modification services on Equinor's Snorre A and Snorre B platforms since 2016. The latest contract will be executed by more than 70 Wood employees, most of whom are based in Sandefjord, Norway.

hmt-news.com

DOJ Moves to Reopen New England Wind Approval

AI-generated image of offshore wind turbines used for illustration

8, December 2025

The US Department of Justice (DOJ) has asked a federal court to send the federal approval for the New England Wind offshore wind project back to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) for renewed review. The request was filed on 2 December in the US District Court for the District of Columbia in a case brought by the organisation Ack for Whales.

In its motion, the DOJ, acting for the Federal Defendants, says BOEM is now reconsidering its July 2024 decision approving the project's Construction and Operations Plan (COP). The agency says the earlier approval may not have captured all of the impacts that must be evaluated under subsection 8(p)(4) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and that the administrative record may have understated some of the impacts that were weighed in the decision. BOEM plans to issue a new COP decision after completing this re-evaluation.

The filing links the reassessment to several recent federal actions: a Presidential Memorandum issued in January 2025 directing a review of offshore wind leasing and permitting; the May 2025 withdrawal of the Anderson legal opinion and reinstatement of the Jorjani opinion on OCSLA section 8(p)(4); and a July 2025 order from the Secretary of the Interior instructing the department to reconsider approvals associated with offshore wind projects.

Federal Defendants argue that a voluntary remand would avoid unnecessary litigation over an approval that is already under agency review. The DOJ also asks the court to pause the case while BOEM carries out its reconsideration. According to the motion, Ack for Whales, which filed the lawsuit earlier this year, does not oppose the request, while the project developers intend to oppose it.

The motion notes that construction on New England Wind is neither active nor imminent. The timeline in the COP shows that offshore construction is not scheduled to begin before the second quarter of 2026.

The US government had already signalled earlier this year that it planned to seek a remand and vacatur in relation to the New England Wind approval, and the new filing is described as the formal step to implement that plan for the Avangrid project.

The motion comes shortly after the Trump administration filed, in a separate lawsuit, a request to remand and vacate approvals for the SouthCoast Wind offshore wind project, which the court granted. The new filing in the New England Wind case cites the SouthCoast decision as a relevant precedent.

New England Wind is planned in two phases with a combined capacity of more than 2 GW. BOEM approved the project's COP in July 2024, following a Record of Decision dated April 2024.

In May 2025, Ack for Whales, together with several organisations opposed to the development, brought suit challenging BOEM's COP approval and associated authorisations issued under NEPA, the ESA, the MMPA, the NHPA and OCSLA.

According to the new motion, BOEM expects that its renewed analysis may address some or all of the issues raised in the lawsuit and that the new agency action could potentially render the current claims moot once the reconsideration is completed.

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Jasmine Energy raises $25m bond for Oman drilling

9, December 2025

Singapore's Rex International has announced that its subsidiary Jasmine Energy (JEL) has completed a $25 million senior secured bond issue to support new offshore drilling work in Oman.

The bonds have a three-year term and carry a coupon of 14%. Settlement is scheduled for 12 December 2025, with closing and draw-down remaining subject to specified conditions and approvals, the company said.

Proceeds from the issue will be used to fund a three-well drilling campaign at the Yumna field in Oman's Block 50, targeted to start in 1Q 2026, and for general corporate purposes at Masirah Oil, which is indirectly 87.5% owned by Jasmine Energy (JEL).

Per Lind, Interim Chief Executive Officer of Rex International, said the completion of the bond issue comes at an appropriate time for the group, as it prepares to drill additional producer wells aimed at increasing oil flow from the Yumna field in Block 50. He noted that demand from bond investors was supported by the company's history of growing reserves in the mature Yumna field.

Lind added that income from the new producer wells will support efforts to extend the life of the field, in line with the group's stated objective of delivering long-term value for its stakeholders.

Block 50 covers about 17,000 km² in Oman's Gulf of Masirah, off the country's eastern coast. Oil production from the Yumna field began in February 2020, and the field development plan and declaration of commerciality for Yumna were approved in July 2020.

hmt-news.com

Valaris semisubs move from Australia to Malaysia for stacking

9, December 2025

The rig Valaris DPS-1, a 10,000 ft semi-submersible unit, has reached Labuan, Malaysia after completing its latest assignment in Australia. The semisubmersible will be kept in a warm-stacked condition at the Malaysian port. It last operated for Woodside in Australia under a contract that ended in November 2025, then mobilised to Malaysia and arrived on Monday, 8 December.

Valaris' other Australian-based semisub, Valaris MS-1, is also sailing to Malaysia, with arrival expected later this month.

Both rigs will be stacked in Malaysia while Valaris reviews future opportunities for the units. Company executives have recently said they do not expect to find work for these semisubs in 2026, but see potential campaigns in 2027 and beyond.

These two rigs are the only semisubmersible units in the Valaris fleet.

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Solstad Maritime ASA Secures New Work

10, December 2025

Skudeneshavn, 09 December 2025 – Solstad Maritime ASA (SOMA) is announcing a series of new project contracts covering three of its construction support vessels: Normand Navigator, Normand Cutter and Normand Jarstein.

The agreements provide a combined firm charter period of around 175 days, with options for a further 150 days. The new work is scheduled to start between December 2025 and January 2026.

For Normand Navigator and Normand Cutter, the contracts include additional project services in Brazil, such as ROV operations and survey work linked to the assigned scopes.

In contrast, Normand Jarstein is to support projects in the North Sea, where only limited additional services are included in the scope of work.

Across all three vessels, the firm periods of the contracts represent a total gross value of

TotalEnergies and Neo Next set up Neo Next+ in UK North Sea

Dunbar platform in the UK North Sea.

9, December 2025

TotalEnergies has agreed to merge its UK offshore oil and gas assets with Neo Next Energy, creating a new Aberdeen-based company, Neo Next+, where TotalEnergies will be the largest shareholder with a 47.5% interest.

The remaining equity in Neo Next+ will be held by HitecVision with 28.9% and Repsol UK with 23.6%, bringing their portfolios into the same structure as part of the transaction.

According to TotalEnergies, the new company is expected to become the largest independent producer of oil and gas in the UK, with output of more than 250,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day in 2026.

As part of the merger, TotalEnergies is contributing its UK upstream positions, including interests in the Elgin/Franklin complex, the Alwyn North double platform and the Dunbar and Culzean fields.

Neo Next+, headquartered in Aberdeen, will also hold the interests of Neo Energy and Repsol UK in the Elgin/Franklin platforms, together with their stakes in the Penguins, Mariner, Shearwater and Culzean fields. The enlarged portfolio will also include decommissioning work on subsea infrastructure and platforms in the central North Sea.

TotalEnergies chairman and chief executive Patrick Pouyanne said the deal reflects the company's long-term commitment to the UK oil and gas sector and to the country's energy security. He added that, as the new leading shareholder in Neo Next+, TotalEnergies will draw on more than 60 years of operating experience in the UK North Sea.

Pouyanne also pointed to TotalEnergies' focus on low-cost and low-emissions operations, saying this approach is expected to help deliver economies of scale across the Neo Next+ portfolio and support stronger cash generation once the transaction is completed.

The deal remains subject to regulatory and other customary approvals, and the parties expect it to close in H1 2026.

This merger follows the earlier combination of Shell and Equinor's UK North Sea upstream activities into Adura, an Aberdeen-based company whose transaction closed at the beginning of December 2025.

hmt-news.com

Transocean's Deepwater Skyros set for 320-day Australia campaign

Drillship Deepwater Skyros (Photo source: marinetraffic / Andrey Lutay ©)

9, December 2025

Switzerland-based drilling contractor Transocean has secured a high-value six-well drilling contract offshore Australia with an unnamed oil and gas company for its drillship Deepwater Skyros. The 2013-built unit is scheduled to begin work in the first quarter of 2027, with the campaign expected to last about 320 days.

Transocean said the Australian programme is expected to add around $130 million to its backlog, excluding any payments related to mobilising or demobilising the rig. The award also includes priced options which, if fully exercised, could see Deepwater Skyros remain on contract in Australia into early 2030.

For now, the drillship is working off Africa. After being deployed in Angola earlier this year, Deepwater Skyros is currently drilling for Murphy in Ivorian waters.

Built to the Samsung 12000 design, Deepwater Skyros has a rated drilling depth of 40,000 feet. The ultra-deepwater unit is capable of operating in water depths up to 12,000 feet and can accommodate 215 people on board.

This latest award comes shortly after Transocean lined up further work for one drillship and two semi-submersible rigs in Brazil, Norway and Romania.

hmt-news.com

Jan De Nul boosts offshore training capacity

9, December 2025

Jan De Nul is putting two new simulators into service at its Aalst training centre, expanding its capability to prepare employees, clients and partners together for offshore projects and to strengthen safety, cooperation and project planning.

One of the systems is a crane simulator that mirrors the crane layouts on the offshore installation vessels Les Alizes and Voltaire. It is used to rehearse installation of offshore wind turbines with tip heights of 300 m and foundations weighing up to 2,000 tonnes.

The crane simulator sits inside a 7 m-wide dome that delivers a 360° view around the operator. According to Stefan Bruggeman, who oversees the simulators at Jan De Nul, the wrap-around image and sound environment is designed so that trainees feel as if they are working at sea while they run through procedures in changing weather, high waves and situations involving seabed subsidence.

Up to four different roles can operate at the same time from separate rooms linked into the same scenario. Jan De Nul said this setup is intended to reveal communication bottlenecks at an early stage and to improve coordination between teams before they mobilise offshore.

Alongside the crane system, the company is bringing a cutter suction dredger simulator into operation. This unit is based on the vessel Willem van Rubroeck and is used for project-wide training on cutter suction dredging activities.

In parallel, Jan De Nul is building three new vessels for offshore energy work and subsea cable protection and is recruiting additional engineers, technicians and operators.

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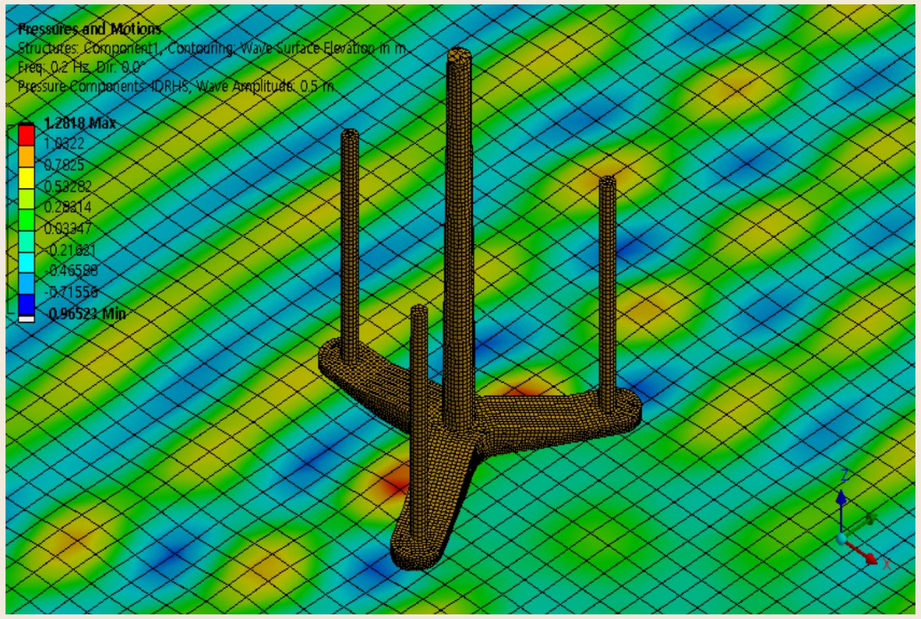
Cost-Effective Offshore Wind Turbine Installation: Tugboats Replace Anchors for 10 MW Turbines



10, December 2025

As offshore wind power continues to expand, a new installation method for large offshore wind turbines is proving to be both economically viable and environmentally efficient. A study published in Journal of Marine Science and Engineering demonstrates a groundbreaking, anchor-free installation approach for jack-up-type offshore wind turbines (OWTs) utilizing a fleet of tugboats.

The study, led by experts from KOMS Co. Ltd. and Dong-A University, analyzes the feasibility of this installation method, which eliminates the need for costly Wind Turbine Installation Vessels (WTIVs) and heavy-lift cranes, traditionally used in offshore wind turbine projects. Instead, the process relies on a tugboat fleet to maintain the position of the OWT during the installation process, lowering its legs gradually into the seabed and securing the structure in place. The proposed method aims to significantly reduce both installation costs and construction time while enhancing operational flexibility in regions with harsh environmental conditions.

Key findings from the study confirm that the tugboat-assisted method can achieve safe and efficient station-keeping of the OWT throughout the installation stages, even under challenging wave, wind, and current conditions. The numerical analysis shows that the tugboat fleet can maintain the required pulling forces without exceeding the Safe Working Load (SWL) of the towlines or the Effective Bollard Pull (BPeff) of the tugboats.

In particular, the study highlights the advantages of this method in regions such as Korea's West Sea and Jeju, where adverse weather conditions often limit the operational windows for traditional installation methods. By avoiding the need for anchor installation and removal, the anchor-free installation method enables a faster, more flexible approach that can be completed within 24 hours, compared to several days required for conventional methods.

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the potential for reducing the Levelized Cost of Energy (LCOE) for offshore wind projects, supporting the broader commercialization of large-scale offshore wind turbines.

For the full study and further details, visit Journal of Marine Science and Engineering (October 2025, Vol. 13).

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VAALCO Energy Begins Phase Three Drilling Campaign Offshore Gabon

10, December 2025

VAALCO Energy has launched its phase three drilling program offshore Gabon with the spudding of the ET-15 infill well on the Etame platform.

In December 2024, the company secured a drilling rig for this campaign in collaboration with an affiliate of Borr Drilling. The program will include drilling several development wells, appraisal and exploration wells, as well as performing workovers, with options to drill additional wells.

VAALCO plans to drill at both the Etame and Seent platforms. The company also intends to re-drill and perform workovers in the Ebouri field to recover production and reserves that were previously excluded due to the presence of hydrogen sulfide, as noted in a November statement.

In July 2025, VAALCO conducted scheduled shutdowns of its Gabon platforms for safety inspections and maintenance, aimed at improving the integrity and reliability of the assets. This was the first full field maintenance shutdown since the new Floating Storage and Offloading (FSO) vessel was commissioned in 2022. The turnaround was completed on schedule, within budget, and with no safety or environmental incidents.

George Maxwell, CEO of VAALCO, expressed enthusiasm about the start of the drilling campaign: "We're excited to begin our drilling campaign offshore Gabon and to initiate a series of near-term value creation catalysts, as outlined during our Capital Markets Day presentation in May. With the drilling rig arriving in late November, we've spudded our first well, ET-15. We are starting at the Etame platform with this infill well and pilot holes."

Following the work at the Etame platform, the rig will move to the SEENT and Ebouri platforms, where additional wells and workovers are planned to enhance production, reduce costs, and potentially add reserves.

"As we enter 2026, with significant projects underway in both Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire, we look forward to driving meaningful growth that will generate value for our shareholders throughout the decade," Maxwell added.

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Bourbon completes Eolmed float tow from Port-La Nouvelle

Photo: BOURBON / LinkedIn

9, December 2025

In a recent LinkedIn post, BOURBON reported that it has completed the tow of the Eolmed project float from the Port of Port-La Nouvelle as part of the offshore wind pilot project. The scope covered port preparations, the laying of mooring lines, and the final positioning and mooring of the unit at the offshore site. The operation followed more than three years of engineering, planning, and coordination.

According to BOURBON, the campaign required extensive marine resources and the participation of more than fifteen major subcontractors. Around 80 people, including subcontractor personnel, were mobilised on site to execute the work.

The company added that the next milestones for the Eolmed project are the installation of the remaining two floats and the laying of power cables

needed for electrical connection. Completion of this latest tow marks an important step towards commissioning of the pilot.

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Bourbon wins ExxonMobil PSV contract in Guyana

11, December 2025

French offshore marine services company Bourbon has secured a long-term vessel support assignment offshore Guyana from ExxonMobil Guyana Limited (EMGL), the local subsidiary of U.S.-based energy group ExxonMobil.

A few months after agreeing a five-year deal with ExxonMobil in Angola, Bourbon has now signed a second five-year contract, including extension options, with EMGL to provide marine services off the South American country.

The new scope will start in the first quarter of 2026, when the large platform supply vessel (PSV) Bourbon Calm is commissioned. The vessel will transport products required to support offshore activities in what has become one of the most active oil basins globally.

Oil discoveries made in 2015 helped turn Guyana into one of the fastest-growing offshore production areas, alongside plans to bring additional floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) units into operation.

Since 2019, Bourbon has been involved in the development of the offshore industry in Guyana, drawing on the technical capabilities of its fleet and the experience of its local teams. The company describes the service solution offered under the new agreement as competitive, sustainable and ready for immediate deployment.

According to Bourbon, the contract marks an important step for the local market because, for the first time, chemicals will be carried in Guyana by a PSV in accordance with the OSV Chemical Code. Once this framework is in place, Bourbon Calm will be among a small number of offshore vessels worldwide cleared to perform this type of operation.

To enable this role, a series of changes has been implemented on board, including alterations to pumping systems, upgraded tank-cleaning capability and reinforced operating procedures. These upgrades have been approved by the maritime authorities and by classification society DNV.

Bourbon's Chief Commercial Officer, Karim Mebarek, said the award shows ExxonMobil Guyana's confidence in the company's ability to provide safe, innovative and cost-efficient marine services that comply with strict regulatory standards. He added that Bourbon Calm, with its design and above-average liquid storage capacity, is intended to meet demanding technical and environmental requirements while maintaining a strong focus on operational safety.

In Guyana, ExxonMobil's approved development portfolio currently includes Liza Phase 1 and Phase 2, Payara, Yellowtail, Uaru, Whiptail and Hammerhead. A proposed eighth project, Longtail, is still undergoing regulatory review.

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DEME wins BC-Wind foundation and cable work in Poland

11, December 2025

DEME has secured three installation contracts for BC-Wind, an offshore wind project in Poland. The packages cover monopile foundation installation as well as inter-array and export cable works, and strengthen the company's role in rolling out renewable power in Poland and supporting the country's energy transition.

BC-Wind is being developed by Ocean Winds, an offshore wind specialist jointly owned on a 50-50 basis by EDP Renewables together with ENGIE. The wind farm site is located about 23 km off the Polish Baltic Sea coast and is planned to deliver up to 390 MW of capacity, providing clean electricity comparable to the annual usage of roughly half a million homes.

For the offshore construction campaign, DEME will deploy its vessel Orion, used for offshore installation work, to handle 27 monopile foundations. This scope includes 26 foundations for the wind turbines and one for the offshore electrical substation (OSS). Orion is equipped with a pile gripper featuring motion compensation, a 5,000-tonne crane and specialised ballast systems, enabling accurate installation of large foundations even when offshore conditions are demanding.

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Seatrium wins repeat Kingdom 4 jack-up contract

11, December 2025

On 10 December 2025 in Singapore, Seatrium Offshore Technology, the flagship jack-up rig design arm of Seatrium Group, has secured a repeat contract from International Maritime Industries (IMI) for the supply of equipment and a licence for Kingdom 4, a LeTourneau Super 116E Class self-elevating drilling unit (SE-MODU). Described as the MENA region's largest shipyard, IMI has once again appointed Seatrium as its technology partner on a key offshore project.

The latest award follows the earlier Kingdom 3 contract placed this year and further strengthens cooperation between Seatrium and IMI in building offshore drilling capability in the Kingdom. The Kingdom 4 project also reflects IMI's backing for the Kingdom's Vision 2030 programme, which focuses on technology leadership, sustainability and the growth of local content.

As with Kingdom 3, the project uses the LeTourneau Super 116E Class design, one of Seatrium's newer jack-up series tailored to operating conditions in the MENA region. The rigs will be built with 343-foot legs, a hook-load capacity of 1.5 million pounds and advanced cyber systems, delivering the performance and reliability required in demanding offshore environments.

Seatrium's flexible delivery model allows customers either to build units in its own yards or to use its established rig kit solutions while still meeting local content rules.

With this repeat order, Seatrium extends a track record in jack-up rig design and construction that dates back to 1955, when it was involved in developing the first jack-up drilling rig with independent legs. The Kingdom 4 award is the 45th order for the LeTourneau Super 116 series, underlining how widely this jack-up design has been deployed. In total, Seatrium has designed and contributed to the construction of more than half of the jack-up rigs now in operation worldwide, including about 65% of the units active in the Middle East.

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Shell mulls 20% stake sale in Brazil's Gato do Mato

11, December 2025

Shell is considering selling a 20% stake in Brazil's offshore Gato do Mato oil cluster to help finance the multibillion-dollar development, according to people familiar with the process.

Earlier this year, the UK-based supermajor agreed in an asset swap to acquire TotalEnergies' interest in the cluster. It is now seeking to raise funds while remaining operator, the people said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter.

Gato do Mato is scheduled to start production in 2029 with planned capacity of about 120,000 barrels of oil per day. The project is designed to support Shell's goal of staying among Brazil's largest oil producers and to compensate for falling output from older Brazilian fields that have been pumping for more than a decade. The cluster's name means "jungle cat" in Portuguese.

In Brazil's pre-salt province, Shell already holds minority positions in several other assets and, in an auction last week, increased its exposure by securing additional interests in two fields. Colombia's Ecopetrol also owns a stake in Gato do Mato.

Parque das Conchas is currently the only producing Brazilian oilfield operated by Shell. Output there has already passed its peak and now stands at around 30,000 barrels per day.

In an emailed response to questions, Shell declined to say whether it is seeking a new partner for Gato do Mato.

The potential sale underscores how even the largest international oil companies frequently share ownership of offshore projects to spread investment costs. Shell took a final investment decision on Gato do Mato in March, following several years of delay linked to rising costs.

Consultancy Wellligence Energy Analytics estimates the project will cost nearly $3 billion, assuming the production and storage vessel is leased. Shell has not published its own cost figure and declined to provide details on how large the investment will be.

The two fields that make up Gato do Mato were renamed Orca and Sul de Orca after they were declared commercial. Wellligence Energy Analytics says they represent about 10% of Shell's Brazilian portfolio.

Beyond Gato do Mato, Shell is also active in Brazil's Equatorial Margin deepwater area, an environmentally sensitive region where national oil company Petroleo Brasileiro SA started drilling in October.

Gato do Mato holds around 370 million barrels of recoverable resources. While that volume is smaller than some of Brazil's biggest deepwater discoveries, future output from the cluster is expected to help slow the pace of national production decline in the 2030s as flows from the largest fields begin to fall.

Andre Fagundes, who covers Brazil for Wellligence Energy Analytics, said the assets face the kind of challenges typical of Brazil's pre-salt developments, lying far offshore in deep reservoirs with demanding pressure and temperature conditions. He added that bringing in another partner would reduce Shell's capital exposure while allowing the company to keep control of operations.

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NOPSEMA probes incident on McDermott's Crux work

11, December 2025

Upstream reports that Australia's federal offshore regulator, the National Offshore Petroleum Safety & Environmental Management Agency (NOPSEMA), is investigating an incident that occurred during installation work on Shell's under-development Crux gas field offshore Australia. Images and video shared on social media appear to show part of a rig section dropping from height during the operation.

According to Upstream's sources, the event happened during piling activities being carried out from McDermott's derrick lay barge DLV 2000, which is executing part of the US contractor's offshore installation scope on Crux. No injuries or fatalities were reported, and it remains unclear whether any damage was sustained by the Crux facilities or by the vessel.

Industry sources told Upstream that the incident involved new drilling equipment purchased from a third-party supplier. The package had been tested before it was put into service, and the equipment has since been safely recovered from the incident location. Upstream understands that McDermott's project team is finalising a comprehensive internal investigation to determine the root cause, identify lessons learned and prevent a repeat.

A spokesperson for Shell confirmed to Upstream that an incident related to piling operations occurred on the Shell Crux project on 15 November. The company said no personnel were injured and that the matter was reported to the regulator in line with the rules.

The Offshore Alliance, a partnership between the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) and the Maritime Union of Australia, swiftly condemned McDermott's handling of the situation in a social media post. The group alleged that the contractor has cut back on safety procedures, care and maintenance, industrial relations and safety standards, relied on overseas workers instead of Australians and may face cost overruns on its Crux scope.

"Cutting corners on safety procedures, care and maintenance, industrial relations and safety standards comes at a cost," the Offshore Alliance said. "Skilled work isn't cheap and cheap work isn't skilled."

In a written response to Upstream, a McDermott spokesperson said the company remains focused on delivering the Crux project safely and efficiently, in line with customer expectations and regulatory requirements, and that safety and operational performance will continue to be its top priorities.

Upstream notes that in July McDermott loaded out the Crux jacket from its fabrication yard on Batam Island in Indonesia. The structure is one of the largest the contractor has produced, with a source estimating the jacket weight at about 24,000 tonnes and the piles taking the combined weight to more than 31,000 tonnes.

Crux is being developed to supply backfill gas to Shell's Prelude FLNG facility, with production start-up targeted in 2027. Although NOPSEMA is examining the November incident, Upstream reports that it is considered unlikely to derail the project's overall schedule.

A spokesperson for NOPSEMA told Upstream that the agency is aware of an incident that occurred on the Crux facility on 15 November. The event was reported promptly by the operator in line with regulatory requirements, and NOPSEMA is conducting an investigation and seeking further information from the company. As Australia's independent offshore regulator, the agency said it treats all safety-related incidents seriously and remains committed to protecting offshore workers and the environment. With the investigation ongoing, NOPSEMA said it is unable to provide additional detail.

Upstream also recalls that in April 2025 NOPSEMA issued McDermott with an Improvement Notice over safety breaches after a worker was injured on board DLV 2000 while the vessel was working for Woodside Energy in Australian waters.

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McDermott Awarded EPCIC Contract Offshore Brunei

10, December 2025

Houston, 09 December 2025 – McDermott has secured a subsea engineering, procurement, construction, installation and commissioning (EPCIC) contract from PETRONAS Carigali Brunei Ltd. for a natural gas development project offshore Brunei Darussalam, which is regarded as one of Brunei's more significant conventional gas developments.

The award follows McDermott's earlier completion of front-end engineering design, engineering optimization and readiness planning for the same development.

Under the new scope, McDermott is to deliver EPCIC services for a subsea production system and related infrastructure, including umbilicals, risers and flowlines that will connect six wells to a floating production unit for natural gas recovery. The company will also execute the EPCIC works for a gas export pipeline that will provide feedstock to Brunei's liquefied natural gas (LNG) sector.

According to Mahesh Swaminathan, Senior Vice President for Subsea and Floating Facilities at McDermott, the transition from FEED to a full EPCIC contract reflects the company's experience in complex subsea projects across the region and its collaborative approach with customers such as PETRONAS Carigali Brunei Ltd.

Project management will be led from McDermott's engineering center of excellence in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, supported by teams in other company offices and at project sites. The gas field is expected to provide a long-term source of natural gas, contributing to Brunei's domestic energy supply and its LNG export obligations.

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ABL Wins MWS Role on Ocean Winds' BC-Wind

Photo source: Ocean Winds via LinkedIn

10, December 2025

Marine and energy firm ABL has secured a contract from Ocean Winds to provide warranty oversight for marine operations on the BC-Wind offshore wind farm in Poland. The company will support the construction of the project by acting as a marine warranty surveyor.

The BC-Wind development is planned in Poland's part of the Baltic Sea Exclusive Economic Zone, about 23 kilometres offshore to the north of the Pomeranian Province. The lease area extends over roughly 90 square kilometres.

The wind farm will use 26 Siemens Gamesa SG 14-236 turbines that can be uprated to 15 MW each. At full output, BC-Wind is designed to deliver up to 390 MW of installed capacity, supplying renewable power for around 488,000 households.

Under its scope, ABL will review and approve transport and installation activities for all main components. This covers monopile foundations and transition pieces, the offshore substation, export and inter-array cables, as well as the wind turbines.

The contract also requires ABL to assess and approve the installation fleet, carry out technical review of project documentation during development and construction, and provide on-site monitoring of port and offshore marine operations over the execution period, which is currently scheduled between 2026 and 2028.

Will Philbedge, operations manager at ABL Germany, said BC-Wind represents a step forward in Poland's renewable energy programme. He noted that the award follows ABL's earlier appointment on the Baltica-2 offshore wind farm and gives the company another opportunity to support energy infrastructure delivery in Poland while strengthening its presence in the country.

ABL Germany will lead delivery of the work, supported by ABL's wider renewables marine warranty survey network. The team will draw on ABL Group staff based in Gdansk and Warsaw.

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Van Oord Wraps Up West White Rose Seabed Works

10, December 2025

Van Oord has completed its offshore work scope on the West White Rose project offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, concluding a multi-phase campaign of seabed preparation and rock installation.

Operations on the Grand Banks began in September 2024, when Stornes, the company's flexible fallpipe vessel, placed a prepared rock layer on the seabed at around 117 m water depth to form the base for the concrete gravity structure (CGS).

In May 2025, Stornes and the rock installation vessel Nordnes worked in tandem in Placentia Bay to load solid ballast onto the CGS, providing the stability needed for its tow-out to the offshore field location.

After the structure reached its position on the Grand Banks, Nordnes returned in July 2025 to install scour protection around the CGS. A final offshore phase followed in October 2025, when Nordnes laid rock cover over the flowlines to protect the pipelines associated with the development.

The West White Rose activities were carried out in an area exposed to hurricanes, icebergs and heavy fog, requiring close coordination between project teams and the client. Across the scope of work, Van Oord applied its seabed intervention and subsea rock installation capabilities to support development of the field.

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Borr Drilling Prices $165m in Additional 2030 Secured Notes

10, December 2025

Hamilton, Bermuda, 9 December 2025 – Borr Drilling Limited has priced an additional tranche of its 10.375% senior secured notes due 2030, raising gross proceeds of about $165 million.

The company said the notes will be issued by its wholly owned subsidiary Borr IHC Limited, together with certain other subsidiaries. The new notes will carry the same terms and conditions as Borr Drilling's existing senior secured notes maturing in 2030.

Proceeds from the additional notes, alongside funds from the company's previously announced equity offering, seller financing, and, if required, available cash, are intended to finance the acquisition of five premium jack-up rigs that Borr Drilling announced on 8 December 2025. Any remaining proceeds may be used for general corporate purposes, which can include debt service, capital expenditures, working capita,l and potential mergers and acquisitions.

Settlement of the additional notes is expected to take place on or about 19 December 2025, subject to customary closing conditions.

The company emphasised that this announcement is provided for information purposes only and does not constitute an offer to sell, or a solicitation of an offer to buy or subscribe for, any securities. The notes referred to have not been and will not be registered under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933 or applicable state securities laws and may not be offered or sold in the United States or to U.S. persons (other than distributors) unless they are registered under the U.S. Securities Act or an exemption from the registration requirements is available.

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Santos Plans Multi-Well Campaign in Bedout Basin

10, December 2025

Australian operator Santos is seeking approval for a new offshore drilling programme in the Bedout Basin, located in Commonwealth waters off Australia. The plan allows for as many as seven wells, either exploration or appraisal, as the company targets additional oil and gas resources.

Australia's offshore safety and environmental regulator NOPSEMA has opened public consultation on an environmental plan (EP) covering this multi-well exploration and appraisal activity. Santos submitted the EP in December 2025. The document sets out the proposed work scope for drilling, evaluation, well testing, and well abandonment.

In addition to drilling operations, the programme also covers a suite of site surveys at each proposed well location. These will include geotechnical, hydrographic, and geophysical work, typically lasting about one to two weeks per well site, to collect information on the seabed and underlying geology. The data will be used to position a mobile offshore drilling unit (MODU) safely and accurately before operations begin.

The EP is intended to remain in force for five years, during which Santos may carry out up to seven exploration or appraisal wells distributed across four operational areas. Current planning envisages drilling taking place between the third quarter of 2026 and the third quarter of 2031, using a moored semi-submersible MODU, a jack-up MODU, or a combination of both.

Each well is expected to require roughly 40 to 110 days for drilling, including contingency time. Wells may be drilled individually or as part of multi-well campaigns across the Bedout Basin areas named Curie, Ara, Wallace, and Mestrel/Bancroft, which are located in exploration permits WA-541-P, WA-435-P, and WA-436-P.

Among these, the Mestrel/Bancroft area is closest to mainland Western Australia, lying about 123 kilometres north of Port Hedland. Exact well coordinates within each area have not been fixed. Until further geological interpretation and engineering work is completed, wells may be located anywhere within the boundaries of the defined operational areas.

Subject to securing all necessary regulatory and commercial approvals, activities are scheduled to start in the third quarter of 2026. Operations covered by the EP may be carried out at any time of year over its five-year term.

According to the EP, each drilling campaign is expected to comprise around two to four wells. Two campaigns are currently envisaged, and a third could be needed if a jack-up rig is used at the Mestrel/Bancroft prospect. Campaigns are generally spaced at least 12 months apart to allow time to review and interpret the well data acquired.

Results from the initial exploration wells will influence the number, location, and objectives of later wells in the programme. Santos indicates that more than one exploration well may be drilled within a single operational area. Where an exploration well proves successful, an appraisal well on the same prospect is expected to follow within roughly six to eighteen months. In total, up to four appraisal wells may be drilled after the exploration phase.

The Bedout EP submission follows Santos bringing an FPSO (floating production, storage and offloading) unit on stream at a separate project off the coast of Australia's Northern Territory.

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Federal Major Project Status for Blue Mackerel Offshore Wind

10, December 2025

The Australian Federal Government has conferred Major Project Status on the 1 GW Blue Mackerel offshore wind development off Gippsland, formally recognising its planned contribution to the country's net-zero targets and its emerging offshore wind industry.

Under this designation, Blue Mackerel will be able to work with a dedicated team within the Federal Major Projects Facilitation Agency, which will assist the project in progressing environmental and regulatory approvals. That support remains conditional on the required approvals being granted and on the award of a commercial licence.

Australia country manager Anil Chanana said the decision reflects confidence in Blue Mackerel and in the role it is expected to play in the offshore wind sector and in Australia's energy transition. He pointed to the project's scale, its expected contribution to energy security and emissions reduction, the long-term benefits for the local community, and the need to secure complex approvals accurately and on time.

Chanana also highlighted that Blue Mackerel is one of the earliest offshore wind developments to receive a feasibility licence and is the first project to obtain an approved management plan under the new offshore regulations. In his view, this positions the project to help replace retiring coal-fired generation with large-scale, reliable renewable power.

The project area lies about 10 km off the Gippsland coast on Brataualung and Tatungalung Country, between the communities of Seaspray and Woodside. At full capacity, Blue Mackerel is designed to provide up to 1 GW of generation and could supply enough electricity to cover the annual demand of as many as 750,000 Victorian homes by 2032.

Blue Mackerel is being developed by JERA Nex bp, which is owned on a 50:50 basis by JERA Co. and bp. The joint venture reports more than 15 years of global offshore wind experience and a net potential generation portfolio of around 13 GW, made up of close to 1 GW of installed capacity, about 7.5 GW in development, and roughly 4.5 GW linked to secured leases.

Commenting on the broader context, Chanana said the offshore wind industry is at a pivotal stage in Australia and internationally. He added that, from the company's perspective, granting Major Project Status to renewable projects such as Blue Mackerel indicates the Australian Government's backing for offshore wind and for a cleaner energy system.

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Final inter-array cable laid at Borkum Riffgrund 3

Photo: Boskalis via LinedIn

11, December 2025

More than 18 months after the first cable was installed at the Borkum Riffgrund 3 offshore wind farm, the cable-laying vessel BOKA Ocean has completed the final inter-array cable for Ørsted's 913 MW project in the German North Sea. During this last campaign, the vessel also installed additional fiber optic cables and marine detection systems.

Work at Borkum Riffgrund 3 began when the then newly built BOKA Ocean installed the first cable in the German sector of the North Sea, marking the start of a multi-phase installation programme. Since then, the vessel has carried out four separate installation campaigns over a period of more than 18 months to bring the inter-array cable package to completion.

Throughout these works, BOKA Ocean operated in close coordination with the multipurpose offshore vessel Ndeavor. While BOKA Ocean was responsible for laying the cables, Ndeavor followed to bury them, forming a spread that handled both installation and protection of the cable system.

Borkum Riffgrund 3, which has recently delivered first power, is a familiar location for Boskalis. Earlier this year, the company installed the DolWin epsilon offshore converter station in the same area, using several oceangoing tugs and the subsea rock installation vessel Rockpiper. With the cable works completed and the wind farm progressing towards full operation, the development phase of the project is drawing to a close.

The company has thanked the crews of all vessels involved for their commitment and expressed appreciation to client Ørsted for the cooperation and trust shown during the execution of the project.

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Shell secures Deepsea Mira for Namibia

Deepsea Mira rig (Photo: Odjell Drilling)

12, December 2025

UK-based energy company Shell has entered into a new drilling contract offshore Namibia, taking the semi-submersible rig Deepsea Mira on charter. The harsh-environment unit is owned by Northern Ocean (NOL) and operated by Odfjell Drilling. Northern Ocean reported that the latest award for Deepsea Mira has been signed with a subsidiary of Shell.

The rig is scheduled to commence drilling operations off Namibia in April 2026. The agreement covers one firm well and provides an option for one additional well.

The firm well is expected to last about 45 days and is estimated to contribute around $16 million to the firm backlog. With this award, NOL's total firm backlog rises to approximately $387 million.

Managed by Odfjell Drilling, Deepsea Mira is a sixth-generation CS 60 E harsh-environment semi-submersible in an enhanced and extended configuration. Hyundai Heavy delivered the mobile offshore drilling unit (MODU), which is capable of working in water depths of up to 3,000 m.

The rig has already worked in Namibian waters on previous campaigns for TotalEnergies and Rhino Resources. Rhino Resources has recently extended its programme with the unit.

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DeepOcean–Equinor subsea IMR deal extended to 2035

11, December 2025

Equinor, Norway's state-owned oil and gas company, and ocean services provider DeepOcean have renewed their long-running frame agreement for IMR activities, ranging from subsea inspection to maintenance and repair. The latest extension secures IMR support through to 2035 and means DeepOcean will have delivered uninterrupted IMR services to Equinor from 2006 to 2035, a collaboration spanning three decades.

Under the extended arrangement, DeepOcean will deploy specialised IMR vessels and a full suite of subsea services throughout 2026 and into 2027. The scope also includes onshore engineering and project management support for a range of subsea operations.

The work will be managed from DeepOcean's office in Haugesund, Norway, with additional support from the company's remote operations centre at Killingøy.

Olaf A. Hansen, Managing Director of DeepOcean's Europe operation, said that Equinor's decision to extend the agreement ensures continuity of IMR operations until the planned delivery in 2027 of the newbuild IMR vessel Rem Ocean, which is designed with an environmental focus. He added that the extension allows for a seamless transition between the current vessel and Rem Ocean.

Hansen also noted that long-term client relationships and the use of new technology are key elements of DeepOcean's business approach, and that the long-standing cooperation with Equinor reflects this focus.

In November 2024, the two companies signed an eight-year IMR contract covering Equinor-operated assets on the Norwegian Continental Shelf (NCS) and in Europe.

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Australia opens Otway Basin offshore acreage round

11, December 2025

On Thursday, the federal government in Canberra invited bids for five offshore oil and gas exploration areas in the Otway Basin off Victoria, its first offshore acreage package since 2022. The blocks sit in Commonwealth waters, and bidding is now open, with applications due by June next year.

This national release follows a separate tender announced a day earlier by the Victorian government for acreage in state waters. At the peak of recent offerings in 2020, the government put more than 40 offshore areas – many off northern Australia – up for bidding, compared with just 10 areas made available in 2022.

Policy makers expect the east coast gas market to face supply gaps later in the decade. The newly offered Otway areas are not expected to deliver commercial gas output within that timeframe, but Canberra sees additional exploration as one way to help address potential shortfalls further out.

Resources Minister Madeleine King said exploration activity and new discoveries would continue to play an important role in meeting Australia's energy demand and in supporting domestic industry and households as the country pursues its net-zero emissions goals.

The Otway Basin is viewed as a mature oil and gas province rather than a frontier play. It already hosts pipelines and onshore gas processing facilities, providing routes for any future discoveries to be tied back to existing infrastructure.

Separately, the federal government is close to completing its review of the east coast gas market, aimed at tackling domestic supply issues while allowing liquefied natural gas exports from the region to continue.

This week ConocoPhillips (COP.N) and junior partner 3D Energi (TDO.AX) reported a gas discovery in the Otway area and began drilling a second well in their exploration programme. The U.S.-based company also holds a stake in one of three Queensland LNG export consortia being examined by the Australian government.

Samantha McCulloch, chief executive of industry group Australian Energy Producers, said this week's moves by the Victorian and federal governments show that authorities recognise the need for continued exploration to keep new gas supply projects moving forward and meet long-term energy needs.

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Caspian Rig Strike Halts Output

A photo of Russia's Vladimir Filanovsky field in the Caspian Sea, shared by Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) on Dec. 11, 2025. (SBU)

12, December 2025

Reuters reported Ukrainian aerial drones struck a Russian oil platform in the Caspian Sea on 11 December 2025, in what an official from Ukraine's Security Service described as Kyiv's first such attack in that basin. The official said production at the Lukoil-owned facility stopped.

According to the official, the Filanovsky rig—part of Russia's largest Caspian oil field—sustained at least four drone hits. As a result, extraction was suspended at more than 20 oil and gas wells served by the platform.

The same official said the Filanovsky field was discovered in 2005, inaugurated by President Vladimir Putin in 2016, and produces about 120,000 barrels per day.

According to Reuters Lukoil had not replied to a request for comment on the reported strike at the time of reporting. The launch point was not disclosed; the Caspian Sea lies more than 700 km from Ukraine's nearest border.

Kyiv has carried out repeated drone strikes on Russian oil facilities this year, with refineries in the European part of Russia a frequent focus. The campaign expanded last month to include unregulated tankers moving Russian oil through the Black Sea, with three such vessels hit by Ukrainian sea drones in the previous two weeks, the official said.

At least seven blasts have hit other tankers that called at Russian ports since December 2024, including in the Mediterranean, and Ukraine has neither confirmed nor denied any role in those incidents. Russia has accused Ukraine of piracy and has threatened to retaliate by cutting off Ukraine's maritime access in response to tanker attacks.

Source: Reuters

Seatrium lifts 2025 orderbook above $3bn

12, December 2025

Singapore-based offshore and marine company Seatrium has increased its 2025 order intake to more than S$4 billion (US$3.08 billion) after a consortium with GE Vernova secured the BalWin5 offshore wind project in Germany for TenneT, marking the consortium's first contract for TenneT in the German market.

Within the consortium, Seatrium will take charge of the converter platform for BalWin5, including its design and construction, followed by transport and offshore installation in the German North Sea. Project work is scheduled to start on 1 January 2026, and most of the platform fabrication will be carried out at Seatrium's yards in Singapore and Batam, Indonesia.

GE Vernova's Electrification Systems business is to provide the complete HVDC (high-voltage direct current) solution, supplying the technology and delivering both the onshore and offshore converter stations.

BalWin5 is being developed as a new 2.2-gigawatt offshore grid connection for TenneT. Once in service, it is expected to supply electricity to about 2.75 million households and to contribute to Germany's long-term goals for energy security and decarbonisation. The system will comprise a converter station located offshore in the North Sea, an onshore converter installation at Bremen-Werderland and a combined 325 km cable system running across sea and land. Commissioning of the connection is planned for 2032.

This latest award is the fourth project allocated to the GE Vernova–Seatrium consortium under the five-year framework agreement with TenneT that was announced in March 2023.

Samuel Wong, executive vice president of Seatrium Energy (fixed platforms), said the company intends to use the designs and experience from the first three TenneT platforms already under construction. He added that Seatrium aims to deliver BalWin5 safely and efficiently through its series-build approach and its One Seatrium Global Delivery model.

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Former CNOOC leader faces bribery indictment

12, December 2025

Yuan Guangyu, a former deputy GM at China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), has been formally charged in a bribery case by the Xuzhou People's Procuratorate in Jiangsu province, according to a statement issued Thursday by the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

Earlier, the National Supervisory Commission completed its investigation into Yuan's case and handed the matter to procuratorial authorities for examination and possible prosecution. After the Supreme People's Procuratorate designated the jurisdiction, the Jiangsu Provincial People's Procuratorate approved his arrest on suspicion of bribery.

See also: CNOOC deepwater veteran under graft watchdog probe

During the review and prosecution stage, prosecutors informed Yuan of his rights as a defendant, questioned him and heard the views of his defence lawyer.

According to the indictment, Yuan is alleged to have used his positions as director of the CNOOC Bohai oil administration bureau and as executive vice-president and president of CNOOC Limited to obtain benefits for certain entities and individuals. He is accused of illegally accepting property from others in connection with these roles, with the amount involved described as extremely large, and prosecutors state that he should bear criminal responsibility for the offence of accepting bribes.

Yuan, 66, has long worked within the CNOOC system. An investigation into his conduct began in March 2025.

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Equinor, Deep Wind consortia land Utsira Nord sites

Terje Aasland, Norwegian energy minister Photo: Bjørg Davidsen, Europower

12, December 2025

Two industry groupings – one formed by Equinor and Vargronn, the other by Deep Wind Offshore and EDF Power Solutions – have each been granted a project area in Norway's 1,500 MW Utsira Nord floating wind round.

Norway's Ministry of Energy said it had reviewed both bids for floating offshore wind development at Utsira Nord and decided to allocate a dedicated zone to each partnership.

Energy Minister Terje Aasland said he welcomed the decision to move ahead with area awards at Utsira Nord, adding that the planned schemes are expected to support further development of floating offshore wind technology and raise renewable power output in south-western Norway.

The Ministry received the two applications ahead of the 15 September 2025 deadline. Both groups fulfilled the qualification conditions and, according to the Ministry, delivered solid responses on the qualitative criteria.

With areas now assigned, the companies can draw up project-specific programmes for environmental and impact assessment, carry out the required studies and then seek project licences. Developers will have up to two years from approval of the assessment programme to file their licence applications.

Firms that apply for licences will also be able to take part in a state-aid tender. If both consortia request support, funding will go to the project that can be built with the lowest need for public aid. Under the scheme, state support is capped at NOK 35 billion.

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HD Hyundai Maps Trillion-Won Yard Project in Tamil Nadu

HD Hyundai has signed an exclusive agreement with Tamil Nadu to plan a new shipyard in the state, with Thoothukudi among the candidate sites, in a trillion-won class project tied to India's Maritime Amrit Kahl

The HD Hyundai Heavy Industries Ulsan Shipyard in Ulsan, South Korea

8, December 2025

HD Hyundai is moving ahead with plans for a new shipyard in India, as it looks to add a major production base in the country's south.

The company said on the 8th that it signed an exclusive agreement covering plans for a new shipyard in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, in southern India. The signing took place in the presence of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin, State Industries Minister Raja and Choi Han-nae, Head of Planning at HD Korea Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering. While the expected investment size and future equity structure were not disclosed, industry observers expect the project to involve spending in the trillion-won range.

For HD Hyundai, the Indian initiative forms part of a broader strategy to expand its global production base. The group is already building a joint shipyard in Saudi Arabia, has resumed local production in the Philippines and has started joint production in Peru. The latest move is also in line with the Indian government's recent policy focus on developing shipbuilding and the wider maritime sector.

New Delhi is advancing the "Maritime Amrit Kahl Vision 2047" with the goal of becoming the world's fifth-largest shipbuilding and maritime power. To that end, the government is looking at both enlarging existing yards and building new ones, backed by subsidies and related policy support. HD Hyundai was the first Korean company to receive a formal approach from the Indian authorities.

The Indian government has shortlisted several coastal states, including Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, as candidates for new yard locations and is working to identify the most suitable sites. Tamil Nadu's state government, which has prioritised attracting a shipyard to support regional economic growth, selected HD Hyundai as its partner for the new yard project after setting out a package of incentives, including subsidies, infrastructure upgrades and measures to secure skilled workers.

Within Tamil Nadu, Thoothukudi is one of the candidate locations under review. The area is seen as favourable because its climate and rainfall patterns are similar to those in Ulsan, home to the core shipyard of HD Hyundai Heavy Industries in South Korea. Tamil Nadu also hosts major Korean investors such as Samsung Electronics and Hyundai Motor, and large-scale investment is planned for nearby port facilities, offering room for future business expansion.

Photo courtesy of HD Hyundai

To support the prospective shipyard, HD Hyundai signed a "business agreement to expand crane business cooperation" with BEML in early December in Bengaluru, southern India. BEML, a state-owned enterprise under India's Ministry of Defence, produces defence and aerospace equipment, mining and construction machinery, and rail and metro vehicles, and operates several production bases in southern India, including Bengaluru and Kolar. Under the agreement, HD Hyundai intends to build up port crane manufacturing capabilities in India by working with BEML across the full production chain from design and manufacturing through to quality verification. The company expects to supply gantry cranes and jib cranes to the planned local shipyard over time, broadening its crane business in the region.

Separately, HD Hyundai signed an MOU in July with Cochin Shipyard, India's largest state-owned shipbuilder, to cooperate on design and procurement support, productivity improvements and human resources development. The scope of that partnership has recently been extended to include warship projects.

An official from HD Hyundai said that India has become an important focus market with strong government backing for the shipbuilding industry, adding that the group plans to keep expanding cooperation with Indian partners in shipbuilding and marine projects so it can establish India as a new growth engine.

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HD Hyundai Shipbuilding Manager Receives Suspended Sentence in Fatal Accident

8, December 2025

The Supreme Court has upheld the suspended prison sentence of a safety manager at HD Hyundai Heavy Industries, following a fatal workplace accident at the company's Ulsan shipyard in 2021. The incident, in which a 2.3-ton steel plate fell and killed a worker, led to charges of occupational negligence.

The court's 1st Division, with Justice Shin Sook-hee presiding, confirmed the decision from the lower courts on the 28th. HD Hyundai Heavy Industries' Shipbuilding & Ocean Engineering Division head, Lee, was sentenced to six months in prison, with the sentence suspended for one year. The company was fined 20 million Korean won for failing to implement adequate safety measures. Three other individuals, including a site manager and two workers, received fines ranging from 5 million to 8 million Korean won.

The fatal accident occurred in February 2021 at HD Hyundai Heavy Industries' shipyard in Ulsan's Dong-gu District. While workers were arranging a steel plate, part of a ship's hull, a 2.3-ton plate fell and struck a worker. The plate, curved on one side, became unstable and prone to falling. The accident happened while the plate was being lifted by a crane and secured to a support structure.

Under the Industrial Safety and Health Act, employers are required to take measures to prevent falling risks when handling heavy objects, designate restricted areas, and ensure workers wear protective gear. Investigations, however, revealed that these required safety precautions were insufficient at the site.

Both the first and second trials acknowledged the defendants' guilt, stating that the risk of falling objects in heavy-duty work was foreseeable. Despite this, no preventive methods were put in place to address the risk. The second trial also pointed out that while large-scale sites may struggle to predict all potential risks, Lee should have recognized the danger of handling heavy objects and failed to implement the necessary safeguards. The Supreme Court agreed with this reasoning and dismissed the company's appeal.

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ASRY Partners with Fincantieri and Roboze to Enhance Maritime Capabilities

Center: HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Melon. (Photo courtesy of ASRY)

8, December 2025

Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard (ASRY) has entered into significant agreements with Italian giants Fincantieri and Roboze to enhance its shipbuilding, repair, and additive manufacturing capabilities in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The agreements were formalized in a ceremony attended by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain, alongside Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. ASRY CEO Dr. Ahmed Al Abri emphasized the strategic importance of these partnerships in bolstering ASRY's position as the leading maritime fabrication and repair hub in the Arabian Gulf.

Under the partnership with Fincantieri, one of the world's largest shipbuilders, both companies will explore opportunities for designing and building naval vessels up to 80 meters in length for Bahrain's Navy and Coast Guard. The collaboration will also extend to offshore unit construction and potential export contracts within the Gulf region. Furthermore, ASRY and Fincantieri will join forces in providing maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) services for naval, commercial, and offshore vessels, while also sharing expertise in ship design and optimizing production processes.

In addition, ASRY has formed a partnership with Roboze, a leader in additive manufacturing technology for high-performance materials. This collaboration aims to establish Bahrain's first smart plant dedicated to advanced additive manufacturing within ASRY's existing facilities. The new industrial hub will serve not only marine MRO needs but also support the oil and gas, energy, aerospace, and defense sectors, which rely on durable, lightweight components.

The partnership will combine ASRY's deep industrial and maintenance knowledge with Roboze's expertise in 3D printing and advanced material processing. The resulting facility will minimize downtime, enhance spare-parts management, and provide on-demand production of critical components, significantly reducing reliance on foreign suppliers.

Dr. Al Abri stated, "This partnership strengthens our MRO capabilities and expands our access to essential technical components for the industries we serve." Roboze CEO Alessio Lorusso added, "This collaboration allows us to introduce an operations-driven production model tailored to the needs of high-demand sectors such as marine repair, energy, and defense."

ASRY, founded in 1977, is a leading maritime repair and fabrication facility in the Arabian Gulf, specializing in ship repair, rig repair, naval repair, and the fabrication of industrial components both onshore and offshore.

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China holds lead as November newbuild orders jump

9, December 2025

Global new ship orders increased sharply in November compared with the previous month, although overall volume remained slightly below the same month a year earlier. Year-to-date contracting continued to decline, while Chinese yards retained the largest share of both monthly and cumulative orders.

According to figures from Clarkson released on 5 December, newbuilding contracts in November covered 152 vessels with a combined 5.13 million CGT (compensated gross tons). On this basis, ordering was about 1% lower than in November last year, when 5.17 million CGT was booked, but 72% higher than October's 2.99 million CGT.

By ordering country, Chinese shipbuilders won 2.58 million CGT of business for 100 vessels in November, giving them a 50% share of global contracting and first place in the monthly rankings. South Korean yards followed with 1.97 million CGT across 40 vessels, equivalent to a 38% market share.

From January through November, global new ship orders reached 44.99 million CGT on 1,627 vessels, down 37% from 71.52 million CGT and 2,994 vessels in the same period a year earlier. Over this eleven-month period, Chinese shipyards took 26.64 million CGT of orders for 1,067 ships, corresponding to a 59% market share. Their order intake fell 47% year-on-year but remained the largest in the market. South Korean builders secured 10.03 million CGT and 223 vessels, representing a 22% share, with volumes down 5% year-on-year and ranking second.

At the end of November, the global newbuilding orderbook stood at 168.4 million CGT, about 1.2 million CGT lower than at the end of October. Chinese yards held 103.69 million CGT of this total, 8.48 million CGT more than a year earlier but around 10,000 CGT below the previous month, for a 62% share. South Korean shipbuilders had 33.76 million CGT in their backlog, down 3.66 million CGT year-on-year and 420,000 CGT month-on-month, giving them a 20% share and second position.

The Clarkson Newbuilding Price Index was assessed at 184.33 at the end of November, a slight 0.54-point decrease from October's 184.87 and broadly indicating stable pricing. Compared with November 2020, the index is 47% higher, showing that the general upward trend in newbuilding prices has continued.

By vessel type, the indicative price of a 174,000 m³ large LNG carrier was around $248 million, unchanged from the previous month. A VLCC crude carrier was priced at about $127.5 million, $1.5 million higher than in October. Very large container ships in the 22,000–24,000 TEU range were quoted at roughly $264 million, down $2.5 million month-on-month.

Market analysis attributes the continued high level of newbuilding prices to requirements such as specialised designs to comply with decarbonisation rules, the shift to alternative fuels including ammonia, LNG, and methanol, changes to main engines, installation of desulfurisation systems, and additional low-carbon equipment. Because the unit cost of this equipment is significantly higher than on more conventional ship types, overall contract prices for new ships have remained firm.

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Samsung Heavy opens Evergreen remote ops hub

9, December 2025

Samsung Heavy Industries has opened a shore-based remote operation center inside the Taipei headquarters of Evergreen Group, strengthening cooperation between the two companies on digitally managed ship operations.

The Samsung Remote Operation Center functions as a land-based control room where teams track vessel data and onboard equipment status in real time. According to Samsung Heavy Industries, the center is intended to support more efficient inspection and maintenance of shipboard systems. Evergreen plans to gradually increase the number of vessels connected to the facility.

Samsung Heavy Industries said this is the first remote operation center created through a collaboration between a shipbuilder and a shipping company, and reflects the long-term working relationship between the two firms.

Earlier this year, the shipyard tested its remote monitoring and autonomous navigation technologies by installing automation systems on Evergreen container ships operating on a route of about 10,000 km linking Oakland in California with Kaohsiung in Taiwan. The two companies have also agreed to expand their work on remote inspection technologies and to prepare for the future operation of remotely controlled autonomous vessels.

Choi Jong-woong, head of the autonomous navigation center at Samsung Heavy Industries, said the new center is expected to support safe ship operations and emergency response as vessels undergo digital transformation. He added that Samsung Heavy Industries sees potential for the Korean shipbuilding sector to play a leading role in autonomous navigation technologies and in shaping related global standards.

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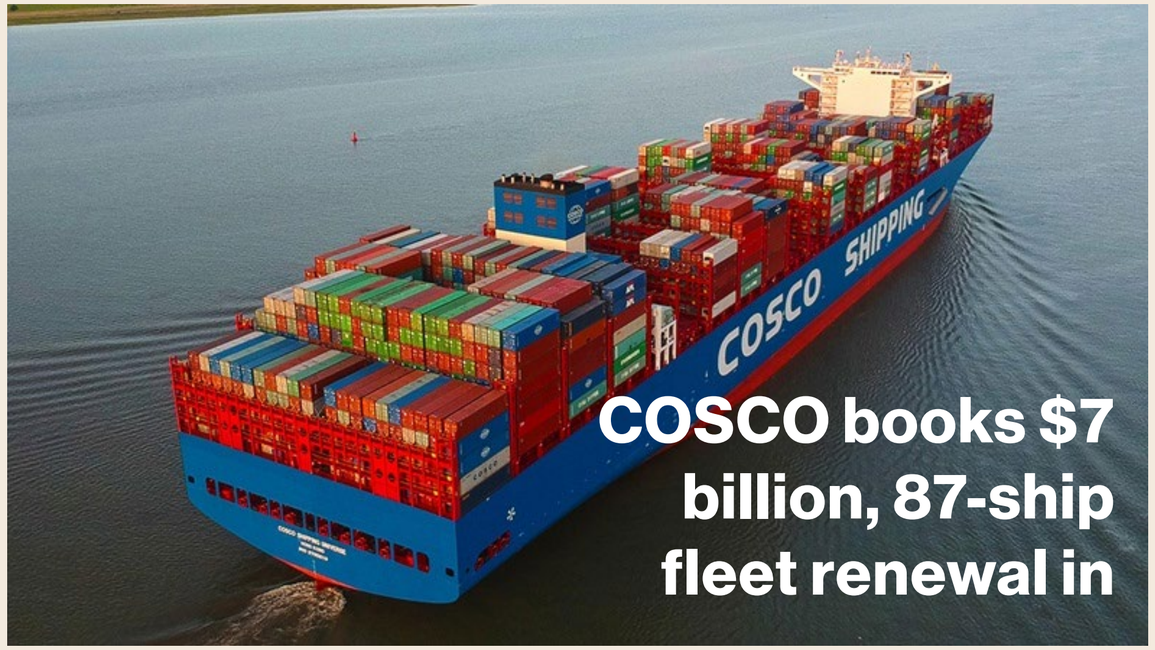

COSCO books $7 billion, 87-ship fleet renewal in

Photo source: Hasenpusch Photo

COSCO Shipping has agreed a $7 billion framework with China State Shipbuilding to build 87 new vessels across its fleet, adding to an already large orderbook of containerships, bulkers and tankers.

09, December 2025

COSCO Shipping has agreed to a large-scale fleet renewal framework with China State Shipbuilding, covering the construction of 87 new vessels across its fleet. In a stock exchange filing, China State Shipbuilding indicated a notional contract value of about $7 billion, while stressing that prices and other terms could change as individual projects move ahead.

Chinese media say the deal ranks as the largest shipbuilding contract so far between a Chinese shipping company and a domestic yard, and it was unveiled with a high-profile signing ceremony.

COSCO presents the agreement as a major step to adjust its fleet to current market conditions. The group says the new tonnage is intended to keep its scale advantages while renewing and streamlining its vessels, with designs reflecting trends toward larger ships, lower emissions and more intelligent onboard systems.

The companies have not released a detailed timetable for deliveries. They said the framework extends across all of COSCO's main business lines, including container shipping, dry bulk, oil and gas transportation, specialised vessel services and passenger operations. Vessel types referenced in the plan include ultra-large container ships, ultra-large bulk carriers, ultra-large oil tankers, grain carriers, multi-purpose heavy lift vessels, MR tankers, ro-ro vessels and small containerships.

The order framework follows a recent restructuring at China State Shipbuilding Corporation aimed at improving efficiency and competitiveness. The group said most of its key yards and related entities are expected to participate, naming Jiangnan Shipyard, Dalian Heavy Industry, Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry, Guangzhou Shipbuilding International, China Shipbuilding Chengxi and Beihai Shipbuilding among those involved.

The move comes as the U.S. plans to introduce fees on Chinese-built and Chinese-owned vessels. It had been noted that COSCO might have faced charges running into the billions of dollars if the U.S. had not agreed, as part of trade negotiations, to delay the measures for one year.

The new framework may absorb part of COSCO's previously announced newbuildings, but it also appears to enlarge an already substantial orderbook. According to Alphaliner, the group already has 82 containerships on order with a combined capacity of 1.1 million TEU. Media reports say that so far this year COSCO has ordered 25 Capesize bulk carriers, and two months earlier it added 23 additional bulk carriers and six ultra-large tankers to its backlog.

Analysts say an order programme of this size is likely to affect the industry for many months.

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Suspected Pirates Fire on Bulker in Bab el-Mandeb

Bab el-Mandeb Strait

8, December 2025

A bulk carrier sailing through the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait came under attack from suspected pirates.

According to the UK Maritime Trade Operations Center (UKMTO), small boats pursued the ship and then fired in its direction.

The vessel was attacked twice, and armed guards on board returned fire on both occasions.

All crew members were reported safe, and no injuries occurred.

The wider region has recently seen several attacks by Houthi forces linked to the Israel–Hamas conflict, along with an increase in piracy activity originating from Somalia.

The Bab el-Mandeb Strait connects the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea via the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Large exports of petroleum and natural gas from the Persian Gulf that use the Suez Canal or the SUMED pipeline pass through this strategic waterway.

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Dongwon Reignites Interest in Acquiring HMM

8, December 2025

The race to acquire HMM, South Korea's flagship shipping company, is heating up again. After a failed attempt two years ago, Dongwon Group, the country's largest fishing company, has reignited its bid, sparking renewed interest in the market.

Despite HMM's valuation now reaching KRW 10 trillion ($6.8 billion), major players such as steelmaker POSCO, HD Hyundai, and Hanwha Group are reportedly reassessing their bids in response to Dongwon's renewed interest.

HMM has been under state control since 2016, following severe financial struggles that coincided with the collapse of Hanjin Shipping. Today, it remains the largest shipping company in South Korea.

In October, HMM joined the exclusive "teu millionaires club," with its fleet now totaling 1,024,728 teu. According to Alphaliner, the company's capacity has doubled over the past five years.

Last September, HMM unveiled ambitious expansion plans through 2030, setting aside KRW 23.5 trillion ($17.48 billion) to nearly double its container fleet, while tripling its tanker and dry bulk fleets.

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China's Semi-Sub Trimaran Breaks Cover at Huangpu

Concept rendering of a next-generation Chinese trimaran arsenal ship. Image credit: Defence Blog

Satellite imagery captures an unusually configured vessel, thought to be uncrewed and semi-submersible, designed as a high-speed arsenal platform. Image: Naval News

8, December 2025

A clear view of an unusual Chinese semi-submersible trimaran has emerged from the People's Liberation Army Navy's Huangpu Shipyard in Guangzhou, showing a vessel that blends characteristics of both surface ships and submersibles.

The image, now widely shared online, seems to show the craft at the Huangpu facility, where satellite imagery has been tracking its presence for several months.

Based on visual estimates, the vessel is about 65 m long, roughly 210 feet. It uses a trimaran configuration, with a narrow central hull flanked by two side hulls, and carries a dark grey to almost black paint scheme more commonly seen on submarines than on surface warships.

The superstructure is very low, with only a slim, sail-like tower rising above the main deck. This structure appears to house a snorkel, an antenna mast, or both, leading analysts to suggest that the craft may be able to operate close to or below the surface for extended periods.

Naval specialist H. I. Sutton had earlier highlighted the vessel when it was visible under covers in satellite photos. Defence observers now note that its shape and hull markings resemble those of a submersible platform, including depth markings on the sail and along the hull sides.

At the stern, analysts have identified a shrouded propulsor that some interpret as a possible pump-jet installation. Pump-jet propulsion is understood to offer higher speeds with reduced cavitation, which can support quieter movement over long distances.

A key unknown is whether the platform is intended to be crewed. The absence of obvious accommodation spaces, missile cells or large sensor arrays has led several experts to argue that it could be uncrewed or only lightly manned. In that case, they suggest it might sit between typical uncrewed surface vessel (USV) designs and uncrewed underwater vehicle (UUV) concepts, effectively operating as a semi-submersible system.

Several potential roles have been discussed. One prominent theory is that the craft could act as a semi-submerged arsenal platform, able to carry and launch land-attack or anti-ship missiles before submerging. However, no vertical launch systems have yet been clearly identified on the deck. Analysts also recall that talk of such a vessel circulated in China as early as 2017, although much of the coverage at that time relied on unverified reports and speculative illustrations.

Another line of analysis is that the trimaran may be intended as a drone "mothership", with space inside the hull for air or underwater unmanned systems. In that scenario, the vessel would not necessarily need a conventional flight deck if drones were launched by rail or catapult, similar to methods used for some long-range attack drones.

Some commentators have also proposed that the craft could be designed to support special operations forces. They note that Western militaries operate comparable low-profile, semi-submersible craft to move troops discreetly in coastal or island regions, raising the possibility that China is pursuing a similar capability.

A more cautious assessment is that the trimaran may simply serve as an experimental test platform. For now, its exact mission and final operational role remain unclear.

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CMA CGM Becomes First to Bring Full Suez Route Back

Image source: CMA CGM

8, December 2025

French container carrier CMA CGM is preparing to bring a full service loop back through the Suez Canal and Red Sea, positioning itself to be the first major shipping line to fully reinstate an east–west route since Houthi attacks pushed global carriers onto the Cape of Good Hope diversion last year.

The company has confirmed that its INDAMEX service, linking India and Pakistan with the US East Coast, will again route both westbound and eastbound legs via the Suez Canal. The first vessel to complete the full loop on the renewed rotation will be CMA CGM VERDI, scheduled to sail from Karachi to New York on 15 January 2026.

Service data from eeSea shows that the reinstated Suez leg shortens the complete INDAMEX rotation by around two weeks, reducing the total loop to 77 days compared with the longer detour around Africa. The string is operated weekly with 11 ships in the 6,000–10,000 TEU range.

According to Xeneta Chief Analyst Peter Sand, CMA CGM's move is an encouraging sign but does not signal a rapid, industry-wide return to the Red Sea. He notes that carriers, and CMA CGM in particular, have already been testing limited Suez Canal transits in recent months, mostly on lighter-loaded backhaul voyages to Asia.

Before the new rotation is fully in place, four additional INDAMEX vessels – APL OREGON, APL LE HAVRE, CMA CGM PASSION and CMA CGM MAUPASSANT – will perform eastbound transits via Suez. Other CMA CGM vessels including APL CHANGI, CMA CGM JULES VERNE, CMA CGM GALAPAGOS, APL MERLION, CMA CGM GRACE BAY and CMA CGM KIMBERLEY have also recently passed through the canal, although only APL MERLION and CMA CGM KIMBERLEY currently appear on official schedules.

Earlier in the crisis, CMA CGM kept a limited presence in the Red Sea by sailing under naval escort as part of EUNAVFOR Operation Aspides, but the company faced delays when ships had to wait for escorted convoys to form.

Figures from Xeneta underline how far traffic flows have shifted. Only 120 containerships transited the Suez Canal in November 2025, compared with 583 in October 2023, just before attacks in the region intensified. Sand says carriers are still weighing the Houthis' "ability, opportunity and intent" to target merchant ships. Their capability is already well established, but operators want stronger assurance on intent, particularly because risk will rise as more vessels return to the route.

Security concerns were highlighted again on 5 December, when a bulker reportedly fired warning shots at approaching skiffs near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. Early indications suggested the small craft were not linked to Houthi forces, but the incident added to wider unease about navigation in the area.

Other large container lines remain cautious. Hapag-Lloyd and Maersk have both indicated that any return to the Red Sea will be slow and incremental, dependent on a clearer improvement in the security picture. ZIM has told investors it cannot resume Red Sea sailings until insurers are prepared to offer cover at acceptable terms.

The shorter INDAMEX loop via Suez will also enable CMA CGM to free up two vessels from the service rotation. Sand points out that the container market is already wrestling with substantial overcapacity, with spot rates on key Far East–US East Coast and Far East–North Europe trades down 57% and 53% respectively compared with a year ago. He warns that if other carriers follow CMA CGM and restore capacity on similar routes, tonnage could "flood the market," driving freight rates sharply lower and increasing financial pressure across the sector.

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LR and Latsco test data-driven class surveys on Hellas Margarita

9, December 2025

Lloyd's Register (LR) and Latsco have completed a proof-of-concept project that uses operational vessel data as the basis for class surveys, in a move aimed at advancing the digitalisation of ship classification and compliance.

The trial was designed to show how verified data from a ship in service can be used to satisfy class survey requirements without reducing safety, integrity or technical robustness.

The proof-of-concept was carried out on the vessel HELLAS MARGARITA during an active voyage to Singapore. Using LR's approved Digital Survey Test Procedure, the project team remotely tested, recorded, and verified the vessel's auxiliary engine alarms, controls, shutdowns, and safety systems through raw data capture.

A subsequent onboard inspection was then used to confirm that the digital process provided the same level of assurance, accuracy, and safety as a traditional physical survey. According to the partners, the results show that data-driven methods can match – and in some areas potentially exceed – the technical assurance and data integrity achieved through conventional onboard attendance.

Current rules still require surveyors to be physically present to meet survey obligations. However, LR and Latsco said the project indicates that proven operational data could, in the future, support more efficient, transparent, and scalable compliance processes, reducing the extent of physical attendance and supporting fleet management.

Following the trial, the two companies intend to apply the methodology to additional vessels and systems to confirm that it can be repeated reliably, with the goal of creating a pilot scheme for digital class assurance.

Elina Papageorgiou, Vice President, Greece and Cyprus at Lloyd's Register, said the project shows that digital tools can be used in maritime surveys without undermining safety or integrity, and that validating the use of verified operational data is a step towards more connected, data-enabled shipping.

Konstantinos Chatzitolios, Lead Client Relationship Manager at Lloyd's Register, noted that close cooperation with Latsco helped accelerate the trial and illustrated how joint work on digital solutions can support the development of new class practices.

From the owner's side, Latsco Chief Operating Officer Antonis Georgantzis said the initiative demonstrates that trusted operational data can be used to credit survey requirements while maintaining safety and technical standards, and can also provide vessels with more flexibility within tight trading schedules. Technology Manager Iasonas Zacharioudakis added that the use of telemetry allowed survey items to be credited on the basis of data-supported judgments, improving transparency and turning raw data into an operational and safety benefit.

The project forms part of LR's Digital Transformation Research Programme, which examines how digital technologies can enhance assurance, safety, and operational performance. A core element of this programme is the Digital Maturity Index (DMI), a framework that helps shipowners assess and develop their digital capabilities. Remote surveys of the type demonstrated in this project are one of the applications within the DMI, showing how verified operational data can be used to deliver data-driven assurance while supporting more efficient and resilient vessel operations.

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Maersk Advances with Ethanol-Methanol Blending Trials

8, December 2025

Maersk has completed its first successful trial of blending ethanol with methanol, marking a significant step in its efforts to develop alternative fuels for its fleet. The company now plans to increase the ethanol concentration and conduct additional trials using 100% ethanol, expanding the supply options for its dual-fuel vessels.

A major challenge for Maersk and other shipping companies is the availability of methanol and other alternative fuels. There are concerns about whether fuel suppliers can scale up production to meet the rising demand from the shipping industry. In response, Maersk aims to run more trials to ensure a stable and reliable fuel supply to support its decarbonization initiatives.

Ethanol and methanol are both alcohols, making them compatible for blending. Ethanol, which has been used since the 1970s to extend gasoline supplies, is commonly blended with gasoline in many countries, with the U.S. and Brazil being the largest producers of ethanol worldwide.

In 2023, Maersk launched its dual-fuel feeder vessel Laura Maersk (32,600 dwt) for operations in the Baltic region. This vessel has served as a test platform for methanol, which has been used for three years without any issues.

The first trial with an E10 blend—10% ethanol and 90% methanol—began in October. The fuel powered Laura Maersk for a period of one month to one and a half months, with no performance issues. During the trial, the company monitored factors such as ignition quality, combustion characteristics, corrosion, and emissions, particularly focusing on NOx emissions.

Following the successful E10 trial, Maersk plans to test an E50 blend, consisting of 50% ethanol and 50% methanol. After that, the company will conduct a trial with 100% ethanol.

Currently, Maersk operates 19 dual-fuel vessels, with more planned for delivery. Starting in 2027, the company will also incorporate time-chartered dual-fuel LNG vessels. As part of its commitment to low-emission fuels, Maersk continues to diversify its fuel offerings, including bio- and e-methanol, biodiesel, and liquefied biomethane.

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Deltamarin Secures 5 Approvals in Principle for Next-Generation Vessel Designs

20,000 CBM LNG Bunkering Vessel – AiP granted by DNV (Image courtesy of Deltamarin)

8, December 2025

Deltamarin has recently been awarded five Approvals in Principle (AiPs) by DNV and Lloyd's Register (LR) for its advanced vessel designs at Marintec China in Shanghai on December 4, 2025. The approved designs showcase innovative technologies focused on enhancing safety, operational efficiency, and sustainability in the maritime industry.

One of the key designs is the 20,000 CBM LNG Bunkering Vessel, approved by DNV. Designed for large-scale LNG bunkering with a 20,000 cubic meter capacity, this vessel is crucial in the transition to cleaner energy. It aims to improve operational efficiency, enhance safety, and support the shipping industry's emission reduction goals.

Another significant design is the Hybrid & Wind-Powered 9,500 CBM Liquefied Ethylene Gas Carrier, granted AiP by DNV. This vessel features a hybrid battery system and wind-assisted propulsion, advancing green energy solutions for small gas carriers. Additionally, it is engineered to operate in Ice Class 1A areas, emphasizing energy efficiency and environmental responsibility.

The 6,200 DWT Duplex Stainless Steel Chemical Tanker, also approved by DNV, offers improved safety for the transport of hazardous chemicals. A key feature is its ability to provide reverse propulsion through a shaft generator in case of engine failure, preventing leaks and environmental damage. The vessel is also optimized to benefit from the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) exemption for ships under 5,000 gross tonnage.

The 103,000 CBM Very Large Ethane Carrier (VLEC), granted AiP by LR, is designed for the safe and efficient transport of liquefied ethane. With a three-tank design, it significantly enhances the efficiency of the global clean energy supply chain.

Lastly, the 8,000 TEU Methanol-Ready Container Vessel, approved by LR, is prepared to operate on green methanol, supporting the transition to decarbonized shipping. This vessel reflects a forward-thinking approach in the industry's shift towards sustainable fuels.These AiPs highlight Deltamarin's leadership in developing innovative and sustainable vessel designs, reinforcing the company's commitment to improving safety, reducing emissions, and advancing operational efficiency in the maritime sector.

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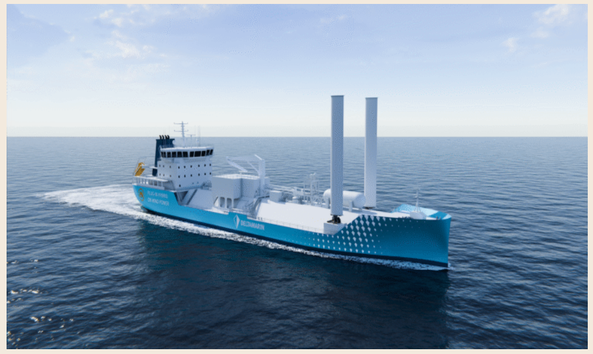

Hybrid & Wind-Powered 9,500 CBM Liquefied Ethylene Gas Carrier – AiP granted by DNV (Image courtesy of Deltamarin)

6,200 DWT Duplex Stainless Steel Chemical Tanker – AiP granted by DNV (Image courtesy of Deltamarin)

103,000 CBM VLEC with 3 GTT Mark III Cargo Tanks – AiP granted by LR (Image courtesy of Deltamarin)

8,000 TEU Methanol-Ready Container Vessel – AiP granted by LR (Image courtesy of Deltamarin)

Edison Partners with Knutsen OAS Shipping for New LNG Carrier

Image source: Knutsen

10, December 2025

Hanwha Ocean has been contracted to build a new LNG vessel for Edison, set to have a capacity of 174,000 cubic meters. The vessel will be constructed in Geoje, South Korea, following an agreement made between Edison and Knutsen OAS Shipping in Norway.

This long-term charter deal between Edison and Knutsen is aimed at boosting Edison's LNG portfolio and advancing its strategy to diversify its energy sources. The new LNG carrier is expected to support Knutsen OAS Shipping's operations starting in 2028.

Fabio Dubini, Executive Vice President of Gas & Power Portfolio Management & Optimization at Edison, emphasized that this partnership aligns with their goal to enhance collaborations with trusted suppliers while expanding Edison's global presence in the LNG supply chain. He noted that the new vessel would be crucial for managing the increasing LNG volumes Edison expects to handle in the coming years, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to market demands. This move is also expected to contribute to the broader goals of Italian energy security.

The new ship will be integrated into Edison's fleet for the management and supply of LNG cargoes, particularly under long-term free on board (FOB) contracts. This type of contract is anticipated to grow significantly, as Edison shifts toward a cleaner energy mix. Edison has previously secured contracts for U.S. LNG imports, including a major 2017 deal, as well as a recent purchase agreement for 0.7 million tonnes per year starting in 2028.

The vessel will feature four advanced membrane tanks equipped with an innovative insulation system designed to minimize boil-off gas, ensuring efficient transport of LNG. The ship will also include a dual-fuel propulsion system, enabling it to run on both LNG and marine diesel, as well as a full reliquefaction system that recovers boil-off gas, optimizing fuel consumption and emissions. These features are designed to meet the most stringent environmental standards, including the latest IMO regulations and European FuelEU Maritime rules.

This deal builds on the ongoing collaboration between Edison and Knutsen OAS Shipping, which began in 2018 with the delivery of a 30,000-cubic-meter capacity LNG vessel, Ravenna Knutsen. This earlier vessel, which has been used to supply sustainable LNG to small-scale depots and provide bunkering services, demonstrated significant operational flexibility.

Edison currently imports around 14 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually to Italy from countries like Qatar, Libya, Algeria, Azerbaijan, and the United States, meeting 23% of the country's domestic demand. The company has also recently partnered with CMA CGM to complete Italy's first ship-to-ship LNG bunkering for a containership.

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Containerised Wind Propulsion System Launches for Merchant Shipping

10, December 2025

Lomarlabs, a venture catalyst backed by the UK-based shipping company Lomar, has partnered with Advanced Wing Systems of Ireland to develop a containerised, automated sail system for commercial vessels. This collaboration aims to revolutionise wind-assisted propulsion by offering a modular, flexible solution.

Advanced Wing Systems, known for its semi-rigid wing sails, is bringing the aerodynamic benefits of rigid wings to commercial shipping, without the operational constraints. The company's wings have previously powered yachts over long oceanic distances and supported campaigns in America's Cup racing. Now, Advanced Wing Systems is adapting its technology for merchant ships, moving away from traditional wind-assist solutions that require significant retrofits and dry-dock installation.

The new system is designed for easy integration with existing ships. Its collapsible wing sails are housed in standard 40-foot containers and can be deployed with ease. Using artificial intelligence, the sails optimise their position according to real-time wind conditions. When not in use, the sails can be retracted, allowing vessels to continue port operations without interference. This makes it possible for shipowners to trial the wind propulsion system without making costly and permanent modifications to their vessels.

The containerised system offers a leasing option, much like how shipowners currently lease equipment like cold-ironing transformers or portable diesel generators for operational needs. This leasing model allows shipowners to test the system with minimal risk, without the need to take their vessels out of service.

Greg Johnston, CEO of Advanced Wing Systems, remarked, "Containerisation transforms the wind propulsion landscape. Shipowners can trial the system without taking their vessel out of operation or bearing capital costs. For the first time, wind technology is adapting to the needs of commercial shipping, not the other way around."

Stylianos Papageorgiou, Managing Director of Lomarlabs, added, "At Lomarlabs, we focus on turning innovative ideas into scalable solutions. Without a global carbon tax on shipping emissions, the business case for efficiency solutions relies on technologies that offer a clear return on investment from fuel savings. Advanced Wing Systems provides exactly that: a practical, modular, commercially viable breakthrough. This demonstrates that decarbonisation can be achieved in ways that work for both shipowners and charterers, not just regulators."

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Containers from Baltic Klipper Wash Ashore — Cleanup Underway

Baltic Klipper (Photo credit: marinetraffic / Red Snapper ©)

10, December 2025

On Saturday, 6 December 2025, a total of 16 shipping containers fell overboard from the refrigerated vessel Baltic Klipper while anchored near the Nab Tower in the Solent. Fortunately, no injuries were reported among the crew, and the cargo was deemed non-hazardous.

The lost containers contained various goods, including eight filled with bananas, two with plantains, one with avocados, and five that were empty. By the afternoon of Sunday, 7 December, five of the containers were reported to have washed ashore at Selsey. In response, emergency services, including HM Coastguard, West Sussex Fire & Rescue, and Sussex Police, quickly established cordons and restricted public access to the affected areas. Aerial searches were conducted by helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft in an attempt to locate the remaining containers.

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Svitzer books first electric TRAnsverse 2600e tugs at CSL

Render of Svitzer TRAnsverse 2600e (Image courtesy of Svitzer)

9, December 2025

Svitzer has advanced its fleet renewal plans by placing an order with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) for four battery-electric TRAnsverse 2600e tugs, with options covering a further four vessels. The contract formalises the operator's intention to introduce low-emission TRAnsverse units into regular port and terminal towage.

The four tugs will join Svitzer's global towage fleet as part of a broader newbuilding programme built around the TRAnsverse design, which the company has already employed in demanding harbour environments.

This agreement converts a Letter of Intent signed earlier in the year into a firm contract and assigns construction of the initial batch of electric TRAnsverse units to CSL's yard in Cochin. Svitzer regards the TRAnsverse 2600e as a central element in its longer-term approach to cleaner port operations, with deployment planned across its networks in Northern Europe, South America and Australia.

The TRAnsverse 2600e will use battery-electric propulsion and will operate with zero direct emissions in harbour activities when supplied with power from green electricity sources. The tug design features a patented towing staple, a double-ended hull form and in-line propulsion. According to Svitzer, this combination broadens the tug's manoeuvring range and supports performance in confined and high-demand towage work.

Kasper Karlsen, Chief Operating Officer at Svitzer, said the contract with Cochin Shipyard Limited supports the company's commitment to "Make in India" and to port and terminal operators pursuing green transition and decarbonisation goals. He noted that India offers established shipbuilding capacity and a skilled workforce, and that the collaboration allows Svitzer both to invest in a new series of tugs for its own operations and to contribute to building capability for low- and zero-emission tug construction in India.

For Cochin Shipyard Limited, the project provides an opportunity to extend its work in technically advanced tug projects. Dr Harikrishnan S, Operations Director at Cochin Shipyard Limited, said the yard looks forward to delivering the TRAnsverse 2600e using its workforce and experience with complex, high-specification vessels. He described the agreement as a natural step in expanding CSL's role in modern tug design and in the industrialisation of battery-electric and future-fuel-ready technologies in India.

Construction of the first tug is scheduled to start within the next few months, with delivery planned for late 2027 or early 2028. Svitzer has indicated that additional orders may follow in line with fleet requirements and customer demand, giving the operator a defined route toward wider use of low-emission harbour towage assets.

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Ukraine hits third Russian shadow fleet tanker

11, December 2025

A Comoros-flagged tanker linked to Russia's shadow fleet has become the third such vessel hit by a Ukrainian sea drone in the Black Sea, as Kyiv steps up efforts to disrupt Moscow's seaborne oil trade.

According to reports, the Dashan was struck inside Ukraine's exclusive economic zone while sailing toward the Russian oil terminal at Novorossiysk. Video posted online indicates the tanker was not carrying cargo at the time of the strike.

The attack on Dashan follows earlier sea drone strikes on the tankers Kairos and Virat on 28 and 29 November, forming a pattern of operations against ships suspected of transporting Russian oil in breach of Western sanctions.

These incidents have unsettled maritime players, particularly in the insurance sector, with war-risk premiums for vessels trading to the Black Sea reported to have risen sharply.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has responded with a series of warnings, pledging more attacks on Ukrainian facilities and vessels. He said Russia could target tankers belonging to states that support Ukraine and threatened to cut off Ukraine's access to the sea.

Large volumes of grain, crude and oil products move through the Black Sea, whose coastline is shared by Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Turkey, Russia and Ukraine.

The shadow fleet, made up largely of older tankers with opaque ownership and operating arrangements, has become central to Russia's efforts to keep oil exports flowing despite Western sanctions. By striking these vessels, Ukraine is aiming to disrupt that trade route and increase economic pressure on Moscow's war effort.

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US seizes suspected shadow-fleet VLCC off Venezuela

11, December 2025

US forces have taken control of a very large crude carrier off Venezuela that many analysts regard as the VLCC Skipper, after satellite imagery showed the 310,000 dwt tanker quietly taking on about 1.1 million barrels of Venezuelan Merey crude subject to sanctions at the Jose export terminal while it was transmitting falsified AIS positions.

The Trump administration confirmed the operation on Wednesday, saying only that the target was a very large tanker and the biggest vessel it had ever seized. Maritime intelligence firms including Vanguard and Kpler have pointed to the ship as the Skipper, a vessel long linked to sanctions-evading oil movements involving Venezuela, Iran and Asia. The tanker, which previously traded as Adisa, is operating under a fraudulent Guyanese flag.

The boarding follows several weeks of US military reinforcement in the Caribbean, including the deployment of an aircraft carrier, fighter jets and tens of thousands of troops, as Washington moves to clamp down on dark-fleet logistics that support Caracas and Tehran. In November, Venezuela's crude exports were running at about 700,000 barrels a day.

Data compiled by Kpler show the Skipper alongside at Jose on 14 November, in contrast to AIS signals that placed the ship near the Liza Destiny and Liza Unity FPSOs off Guyana. Market reports indicate the tanker loaded roughly 1.1 million barrels of Merey on 16 November, with Cuba listed as the destination and Cubametales as charterer.

The tanker has repeatedly been associated with falsified AIS tracks, misdeclared cargoes and deceptive ship-to-ship operations. In July, the Skipper broadcast a track suggesting a call at Iraq's Basrah oil terminal, but satellite imagery reviewed by Kpler instead showed the vessel at Iran's Kharg Island loading crude while sending spoofed coordinates. After sailing east, it carried out an STS transfer with the VLCC Luois off Hong Kong in August; that cargo was later discharged in China under documents that incorrectly described the oil as Angolan Girassol.

After returning to Iranian waters, the tanker turned west, passed the Cape of Good Hope and reappeared off Guyana and Suriname in late October — a route typical of dark-fleet operations designed to conceal the true origin of shipments.

The US has not disclosed where the seized vessel is now being held or the status of its crew. Even so, the capture represents one of Washington's most notable recent enforcement steps against the shadow fleet and adds to uncertainty over Venezuela's ability to maintain its crude export flows.

Venezuela's government has denounced the US action against the VLCC off its coast as "blatant theft" and "an act of international piracy." Interior minister Diosdado Cabello went further, calling US authorities "murderers, thieves, [and] pirates." Caracas said it will take the case to international bodies and has pledged to formally denounce the seizure on the global stage.

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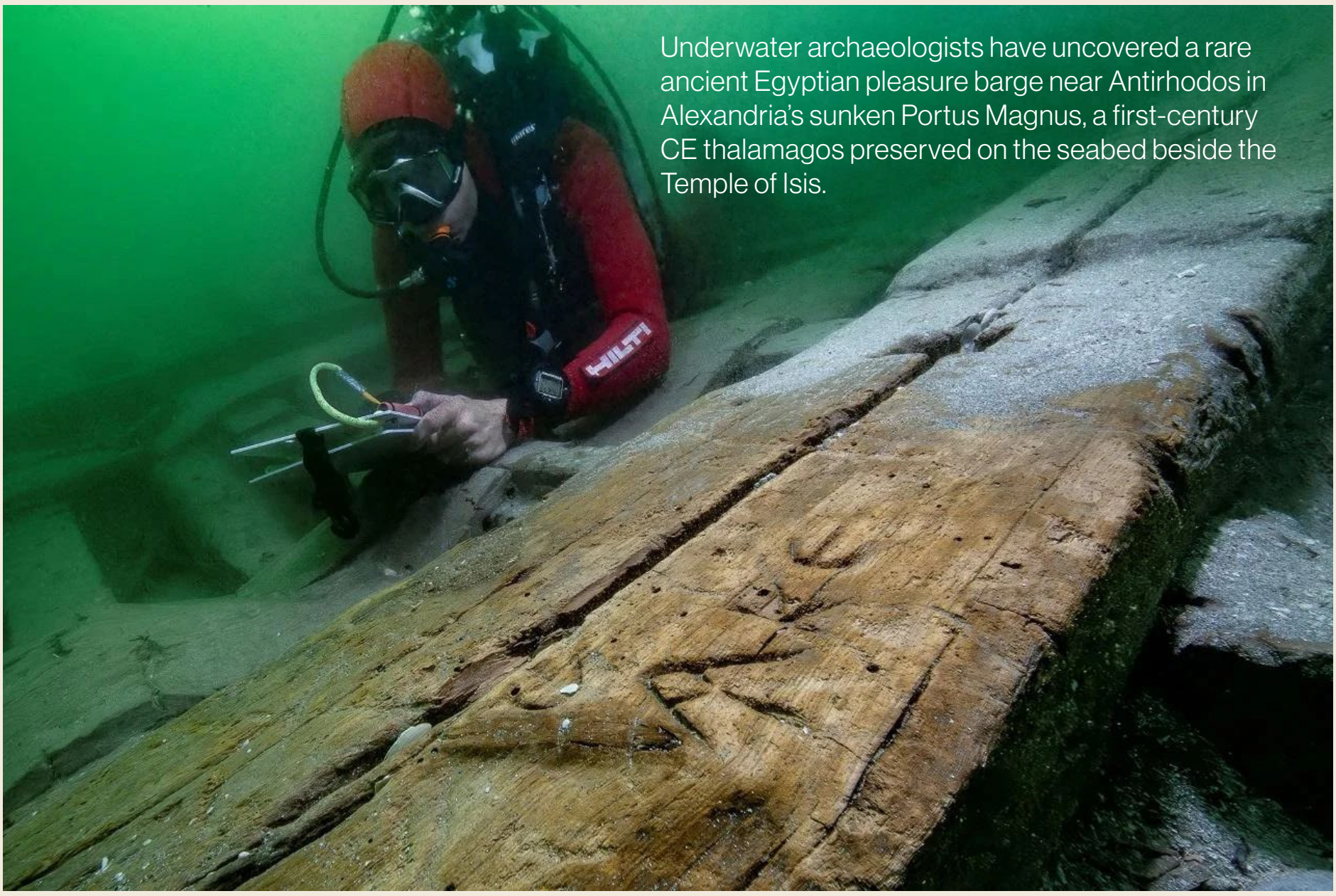
Ancient festival barge found in sunken Alexandria harbor



Underwater archaeologists have uncovered a rare ancient Egyptian pleasure barge near Antirhodos in Alexandria's sunken Portus Magnus, a first-century CE thalamagos preserved on the seabed beside the Temple of Isis.

Greek graffiti on the central carling, dated to the first half of the 1st century CE. Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation

11, December 2025

Archaeologists working in Alexandria's ancient harbor, now submerged, have uncovered the remains of a rare luxury vessel long known from classical texts but never before identified on the seabed: an Egyptian pleasure barge, or thalamagos. The wreck was located off the submerged island of Antirhodos, once within Alexandria's Portus Magnus, during underwater work directed by the European Institute for Underwater Archaeology (IEASM).

The team has exposed a series of exceptionally preserved wooden timbers about 28 m in length from a hull originally measuring roughly 35 m long and 7 m across. The lines of the vessel show that it was built with an unusually broad beam to allow room for a central pavilion and an ornate cabin structure. Its flat bottom, sharp chine at the bow and rounded stern point to a highly specialized design for quiet, shallow waters rather than open-sea voyages. Researchers say the barge relied entirely on oars and would have required more than 20 rowers.

Greek graffiti on the boat's central superstructure place it in the early first century CE and indicate that it was built locally in Alexandria. This dating fits with the writings of the geographer Strabo, who had visited the city a few decades earlier and described cabin-boats used for festivals, leisure outings and religious events along canal banks dense with vegetation.

The wreck lies less than 50 m from the remains of the Temple of Isis, which is also under excavation. Based on the barge's location and age, one line of research links its loss to a destructive episode around CE 50, when earthquakes and tidal waves caused major sections of Alexandria's waterfront, palaces and sanctuaries to collapse into the sea. Another interpretation suggests a ritual role: the vessel may have been attached to the Isis sanctuary and used in the annual navigium Isidis, a ceremonial waterborne procession reenacting the goddess's solar journey toward Canopus.

Vessels of this general type appear in ancient images, including the well-known Nile mosaic of Palestrina, but the newly documented barge is considerably larger than most of those scenes. The find also echoes literary accounts of the Ptolemaic rulers' floating palaces, including those associated with Cleopatra VII, underscoring a long Egyptian tradition of ceremonial and pleasure craft.

Study of the wreck is only beginning, and under UNESCO rules the structure will be left on the seabed to aid preservation. Excavations around the site are expected to continue and are likely to provide further information on daily routines, religious practice and elite leisure in early Roman Alexandria. The scientific results from work at the Temple of Isis in Alexandria's Portus Magnus have recently been released by the Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology.

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