

Suez Canal Authority swiftly repairs container ship after sudden engine failure

Sat, 2021-05-29 16:20

CAIRO: The Suez Canal Authority has quickly dealt with a sudden failure in the engines of container ship the Maersk Emerald – one of the ships crossing the canal – during its transit within the northern channel.

The Maersk Emerald container ship, flying the Singapore flag, is 353 meters long and 48 meters wide. It has a draft of 15.50 meters and weighs 146,000 tons.

The ship ran aground after a sudden failure in its engines and steering devices.

Osama Rabie, chairman of the authority, said that teams were swiftly dispatched to carry out rescue and flotation work using four locomotives, led by the locomotive Baraka 1 with a force of 160 tons.

The ship resumed its passage through the canal after the malfunction was addressed.

“It is now in the waiting area in the Great Lakes so its technical condition may be checked,” Rabie said.

Navigation movement in the canal was not affected, as the route of the northern channel was diverted to pass through the eastern channel to cross the New Suez Canal, said the chairman.

These measures prove the importance of the New Suez Canal in improving navigation safety and the ability to face emergencies, he added.

Rabie sent a message of reassurance regarding the regularity of navigation in the canal. He emphasized that the authority possesses the rescue expertise, infrastructure, and technical insurance capabilities necessary to deal with emergency issues, especially after the launch of the New Suez Canal project and the development projects for the establishment of garages on the new waterway.

The Suez Canal enjoys a unique strategic position in the maritime community.

It is the most important navigational facility to serve the global trade movement, as evidenced by the global interest in the grounding of giant container ship Ever Given, which the authority also managed successfully.

Rabie said that the Suez Canal Authority intends to complete the ambitious development project to maintain the leading position of the canal.

He stressed that the New Suez Canal is one of the most important pillars of the project to develop the Suez Canal area and transform its surroundings into a global economic zone that enjoys all the elements of an attractive investment hub.



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Suez Canal Authority says door still open to negotiation with container ship owner says Suez Canal was at fault over Ever Given grounding – lawyer

[Jordan warns against unauthorized gatherings](#)

Author:

Sat, 2021-05-29 15:43

DUBAI: Jordan's minister of interior warned against unauthorized gatherings and demonstrations which threaten the national cohesion, state news agency Petra reported.

"[In] recent days we have witnessed practices and gatherings that undermine the cohesion of the Jordanian national fabric, peace, community and security," Mazen Al-Faraya said.

The minister said security forces will reinforce the rule of law.



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By NOHA ELHENNAWY | AP

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Fri, 2021-05-28 16:28

CAIRO: Securing Libya's southern borders is a priority for the country's transitional government as it aims to stem the flow of illegal migrants setting off from its shores, Libya's interim foreign minister said Friday. Najla Al-Manqoush made the statements in a press conference following meetings with Foreign Minister of Italy Luigi Di Maio, his Maltese counterpart Evarist Bartolo and European Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi who visited the country Friday, along with Libya's Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

"The whole problem starts in the south," Al-Manqoush said, adding that Libya would need additional resources from the EU to tackle this problem.

Since the election of Libya's new interim government in February, a series of senior European and American diplomats have visited the North African country, placing their faith in the new Libyan administration that is expected to lead the nation through general elections in December 2021.

Many European leaders are also hoping that the new government could prove more effective than its predecessors in cutting off the smuggling routes that migrants have used to first enter and cross Libya, before setting off for Europe. Italy and other European governments have faced criticism at home for their handling of the migrant issue.

"We talked about how to strengthen our partnership on fighting illegal migration and monitoring water borders by adopting short-term as well as long-term strategies," Italy's Di Maio said.

Libya has experienced years of conflict and chaos since a NATO-backed uprising toppled longtime dictator Muammar Qaddafi in 2011. The uprising divided the oil-rich country between a UN-supported government in the capital, Tripoli, and rival authorities based in the country's east. Each were backed by armed groups and foreign governments. But an October cease-fire has stopped most of the violence, and stipulated that all foreign mercenaries should leave.

For almost a decade, war-torn Libya has been the dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East and aspiring to settle in Europe. Smugglers often pack desperate families into ill-equipped rubber boats that stall and founder along the perilous central Mediterranean route.

In recent years, the EU has partnered with Libya's coast guard and other local groups to stem such dangerous sea crossings. Rights groups, however, say those policies leave migrants at the mercy of either the sea or Libya's armed groups, with many ending up confined in squalid detention centers rife with abuses.

According to the International Organization for Migration's Missing Migrants project, at least 612 people are known to have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean so far this year. That's significantly higher than during the same time period last year, when 278 died or disappeared. Attempts to cross the sea often increase in the warmer summer months.



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[UN report supports claims by Turkish mafia boss over drug scheme](#)

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Fri, 2021-05-28 18:07

JEDDAH: A UN report appears to confirm allegations made by an exiled Turkish mafia boss about government involvement in an international cocaine trafficking scheme.

According to Sedat Peker, who lives in Dubai, the son of Turkey's former Prime Minister Binali Yildirim frequently traveled to Caracas in January and

February to design a new trade route for drugs after nearly five tons of cocaine were seized last year by Colombia.

The UN report, which was released in February, said that drug dealing around the world took on new methods by using personal protective equipment as a cover to facilitate trafficking.

Yildirim denied Peker's claims and said that his son, Erkan, traveled to personally deliver COVID-19 tests and protective equipment to those in need. "It is an insult to link us with drugs," Yildirim, who is now the deputy leader of the ruling Justice and Development Party, told reporters in Istanbul on May 23.

But there has been skepticism about his remarks as Venezuela had a low number of COVID-19 cases at the time of his son's visit.

Journalist Cuneyt Ozdemir also revealed an official tweet from the Turkish embassy in Caracas from Dec. 7, 2020 that showed the son posing with the delegation that went to Venezuela as part of an official visit.

Prof. Sevil Atasoy, a Turkish member of the UN International Narcotics Control Board, said the February report showed how the pandemic had changed the illegal drug trade.

"They began using the mail or postal services, even protective masks, gloves and disinfectants to give the impression that they were trading medical equipment rather than drugs," she said.

The report said the largest quantities of opiates were seized in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey.

"The Balkan route, which passed through Iran, Turkey and the Balkan countries on the way to destination markets in western and central Europe, remained the main route for the trafficking of opiates originating in Afghanistan," it added.

Turkey's opposition parties have put the government on the spot for its account on trade relations with Venezuela since last year, suggesting that these ties might serve as a cover for facilitating drug dealing.

The breakaway DEVA party, founded by Turkey's former economy tsar and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's former confidant Ali Babacan, recently asked the government about the reason for lifting the tariff imposed on cheese from Venezuela, following Peker's claims that Turkey was part of a significant cocaine trafficking scheme from the South American country.

Last August Turkey allowed, through a presidential decree, the import of food products, including all kinds of cheese, from Venezuela with a zero customs tariff.

The decision followed the visit of the country's foreign minister to Venezuela a week before, while the decree was criticized by Turkish agriculture sector representatives at the time who said it would damage the industry.

The main opposition Republican People's Party also asked the Turkish trade minister which politicians and their relatives were involved in cheese imports from Venezuela.

Peker is an ally-turned-foe of the government and an infamous organized crime boss who fled the country ahead of a criminal investigation into him.

He has been releasing bombshell videos on YouTube for the past few weeks that have shaken domestic politics and leveled serious accusations against current and former politicians and bureaucrats associated with the government.



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[Prosecutors seek up to four-year jail term for Istanbul mayor](#)

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Fri, 2021-05-28 14:23

ISTANBUL: Turkish prosecutors are seeking a jail sentence of up to four years for the mayor of Istanbul, who is accused of having insulted public officials, local media reported Friday.

Ekrem Imamoglu of the main opposition party has been mayor since 2019, when he pulled off a major upset in local elections. It was the first time in 25 years that the opposition had won against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan – or its predecessor from an Islamic-rooted political movement that dominated in Istanbul. Erdogan rejected the initial result in favor of Imamoglu in March 2019 and there was another vote in Istanbul for mayor in June. Imamoglu won the second vote by a landslide. The Istanbul public prosecutor accuses Imamoglu of having insulted Turkey's top election body in November 2019 over the canceled first result, the private DHA news agency said. Imamoglu has rejected the charge in a written statement, the agency said, quoting the mayor as saying: "The discourse was political, it was strong political criticism." The prosecutor has called for a prison term of between one year and four years on suspicion of "a series of public insults against officials because of their duties," the agency added. Imamoglu faces several other investigations. Earlier this month, prosecutors launched a probe over his allegedly "disrespectful" behavior during a visit to a shrine. He also faces investigation over his opposition to Erdogan's flagship project creating an alternative to the Bosphorus strait, a major world shipping lane. The allegation here is that public money was improperly spent on posters questioning Erdogan's project. According to polls, Imamoglu is the strongest potential candidate against Erdogan in a presidential election expected in June 2023.



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