Report for February 2008

Executive Summary

In February 2008, a total of six incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships were reported in the Asian region. Of these, four were actual incidents and two were attempted incidents. One of the two attempted incidents that occurred in the South China Sea was a case of attempted piracy in accordance with the ReCAAP ISC's definition. Compared to February 2007, there was a slight increase in the total number of incidents reported in February 2008. The details of the incidents that occurred in February 2008 are described in the Annex.

Part 1 - Definitions & Methodology Used

1.1   Definitions Adopted by ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre

The definitions of piracy and armed robbery adopted by the Information Sharing Centre (ISC) are in accordance with the ReCAAP Agreement, wherein:

Piracy in accordance with Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is defined as:

(1)   any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:

(a)   on the high seas, against another ship or persons or property on board such ship;

(b)   against a ship, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;

(2)   any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;

(3)   any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).

Armed Robbery in accordance with the International Maritime Organisation's Code of Practice for the Investigation of the Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships, is defined as:

(1)   any illegal act of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends and directed against a ship, or against persons or property on board such ship, in a place within a Contracting Party's jurisdiction over such offences;

(2)   any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship with knowledge of facts making it a ship for armed robbery against ships;

(3)   any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraphs (1) or (2).

1.2 Methodology for Classifying Incidents

1.2.1　　To provide some perspective on incidents of piracy and armed robbery, the ISC evaluates the significance of each incident in terms of two factors – the level of violence and the economic loss incurred. The indicators for these two factors are as follows:

　　　a.　**Violence Factor**.　This factor refers to the intensity of violence in an incident, and the three indicators used to determine this are:

　　　　　(1)　Types of weapons used. Incidents of pirates/robbers who board a ship with no visible weapons are generally deemed as less violent compared to those equipped with pistols, knives, machetes, or other dangerous weapons. In cases where more sophisticated weapons are used, such incidents would be considered more violent.

　　　　　(2)　Treatment of the crew. Incidents where pirates/robbers kill or kidnap crew are deemed to be more violent compared to petty thieves who flee upon being noticed.　Other cases could include threatening crew members, assault, or serious injury.

　　　　　(3)　Number of pirates/robbers engaged in an attack. As a rule, an incident where a larger number of pirates/robbers were involved would be considered more significant as having a large capacity (as well as probability) for use of force. A larger number of pirates/robbers may also indicate the involvement of gangs or organised syndicates rather than petty and opportunistic pirates who *generally* operate in small groups.

　　　b.　**Economic Factor**.　This factor takes into consideration the type of the property taken from the ship.　Cases of theft of cash or personal effects are generally less significant incidents compared to cases where the entire ship is hijacked either for the cargo onboard or theft of the vessel.

1.2.2　　Using these indicators, the ISC categorises all incidents into one of the three categories to determine their overall significance.

Category	Significance of Incident
CAT 1	Very Significant
CAT 2	Moderately Significant
CAT 3	Less Significant

1.2.3   This classification of incidents allows the ReCAAP ISC to provide some perspective of the piracy and armed robbery situation in Asia.

1.3   Note on Sources of Information

The ISC makes use of various sources of information in producing its reports. The primary source is the ReCAAP ISC's Information Network System (IFN). Where necessary, the ISC leverages on other secondary sources of information, including those from the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Chamber of Commerce-International Maritime Bureau (ICC-IMB), and other publicly available sources to facilitate analysis on patterns and trends, and to make recommendations. The ISC makes every effort to acknowledge these sources.

1.4   Note on Maps Used to Depict Location of Incidents

The maps used in this report are for illustrative purposes only. They are not drawn to scale, and do not imply the opinion on the part of the ReCAAP ISC concerning the status of any country or territory, or the delimitation of frontiers or boundaries.

Part 2 - Report for February 2008

2.1 Number and Significance of Incidents

2.1.1   A total of six incidents were reported in February 2008. Of these, four were actual incidents and two were attempted incidents. The details of the incidents are provided in the Annex. Overall, the total number of incidents in February 2008 has increased slightly compared to February 2007. A total of four incidents were reported in February 2007, of which three were actual incidents and one was an attempted incident. Please see *Table 1* below.

	February 2008	February 2007
Actual	4	3
Attempted	2	1
Total	**6**	**4**

Table 1 – Number of actual and attempted incidents (February 2008 and February 2007)

2.1.2   Of the four actual incidents reported in February 2008, one was a Category 2 incident and three were Category 3 incidents. In February 2007, all actual incidents were Category 3 incidents. Please see *Table 2* below.

Significance Level	February 2008	February 2007
Category 1 (Very Significant)	0	0
Category 2 (Moderately Significant)	1	0
Category 3 (Less Significant)	3	3
Total	**4**	**3**

Table 2 – Significance level of actual incidents (February 2008 and February 2007)

2.1.3   Figure 1 shows the number of actual and attempted incidents that occurred between February 2007 and February 2008. During this period, total activity was highest during the period July 2007 – August 2007, and lowest in December 2007.
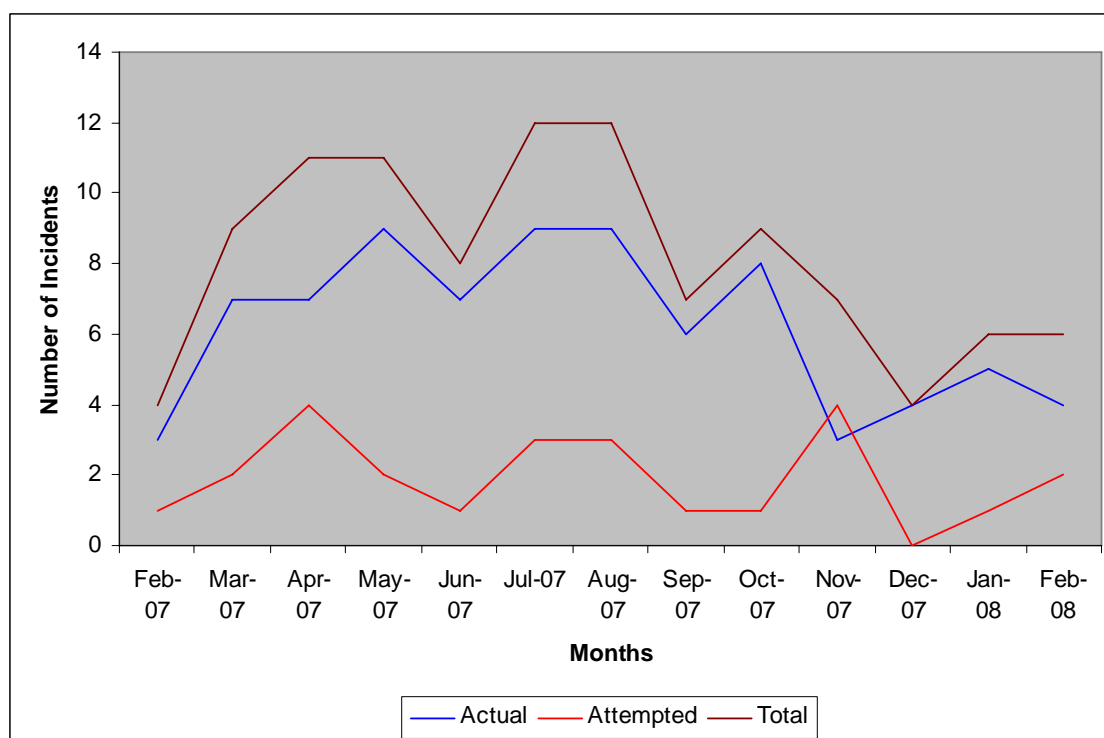
Figure 1 – Number of incidents from February 2007 to February 2008

2.2   Analysis of Incidents for February 2008

2.2.1   **Location of Actual and Attempted Incidents**. *Table 3* shows the location of incidents reported in February 2008 and February 2007. There was a slight increase in the number of incidents in India in February 2008 compared to February 2007. Notably, there was no incident reported in Indonesia in February 2008 compared to February 2007 when one incident was reported.

	February 2008		February 2007	
	Actual	**Attempted**	**Actual**	**Attempted**
Bangladesh	1		1	
India	2		1	
Indonesia			1	
Malaysia	1			
Straits of Malacca & Singapore		1		
South China Sea		1		
Arabian Sea				1
Total	**4**	**2**	**3**	**1**

Table 3 – Location of incidents (February 2008 and February 2007)

7

2.2.2   **Weapons Used**. Table 4 shows the weapons used in actual incidents in February 2008 and February 2007. No substantive conclusion can be drawn by comparing the weapons used in the incidents reported during these two periods.

Weapons Used	Guns/Knives	Not stated/Nil	Total
February 2008	1	3	**4**
February 2007	1	2	**3**

Table 4 – Weapons used in actual incidents (February 2008 and February 2007)

2.2.3   **Type of Ships**.   Table 5 reveals that general cargo ship was more susceptible to attack compared to other ship types in February 2008. In contrast, no particular type of ships was more susceptible to attack in February 2007.

Type of Ships	February 2008	February 2007
Container ship	1	
Bulk carrier		1
Chemical tanker	1	
Oil tanker		1
General cargo ship	2	
Tug/Barge		1
Total	**4**	**3**

Table 5 – Types of ships involved in actual incidents (February 2008 and February 2007)

2.2.4   **Status of Ships**. Of the four actual incidents reported in February 2008, one involved a ship that was berthed and three involved ships that were anchored. In February 2007, two out of three actual incidents involved ships that were anchored and one involved a ship that was underway (steaming). The ReCAAP ISC notes that all attempted incidents reported in February 2008 and February 2007 occurred when the ships were underway.

Status of ships	February 2008		February 2007	
	Actual	Attempted	Actual	Attempted
Berthed	1			
Anchored	3		2	
Steaming		2	1	1
Total	**4**	**2**	**3**	**1**

Table 6 – Status of ships during incidents (February2008 and February 2007)

2.2.5 **Status of Ships and the Significance Level**. Table 7 below shows the status of ships and the significance level. In February 2008, three of the four incidents involved ships at anchor and at berth were Category 3 incidents, and one was a Category 2 incident. This is comparable to February 2007 when two of the three Category 3 incidents involved ships at anchor. The ReCAAP ISC notes that incidents involving ships at anchor are usually Category 3 incidents.

Status of ships	February 2008				February 2007			
	CAT 1	CAT 2	CAT 3	Total	CAT 1	CAT 2	CAT 3	Total
Berthed			1	1				
Anchored		1	2	3			2	2
Steaming							1	1
Total		1	3	4			3	3

Table 7 – Status of ships during incidents and the significance level (February 2008 and February 2007)

2.2.6 **Time of Incidents**. In February 2008, 75% (three out of four) of the total number of actual incidents occurred between 0000 hrs and 0559 hrs. This is comparable to February 2007 when 67% (two out of three) incidents occurred during the same time.

	1800 hrs to 2359 hrs	0000 hrs to 0559 hrs	0600hrs to 1159 hrs	1200 hrs to 1759 hrs	Total
February 2008		3	1		**4**
February 2007		2	1		**3**

Table 8 – Local time of actual incidents (February 2008 and February 2007)
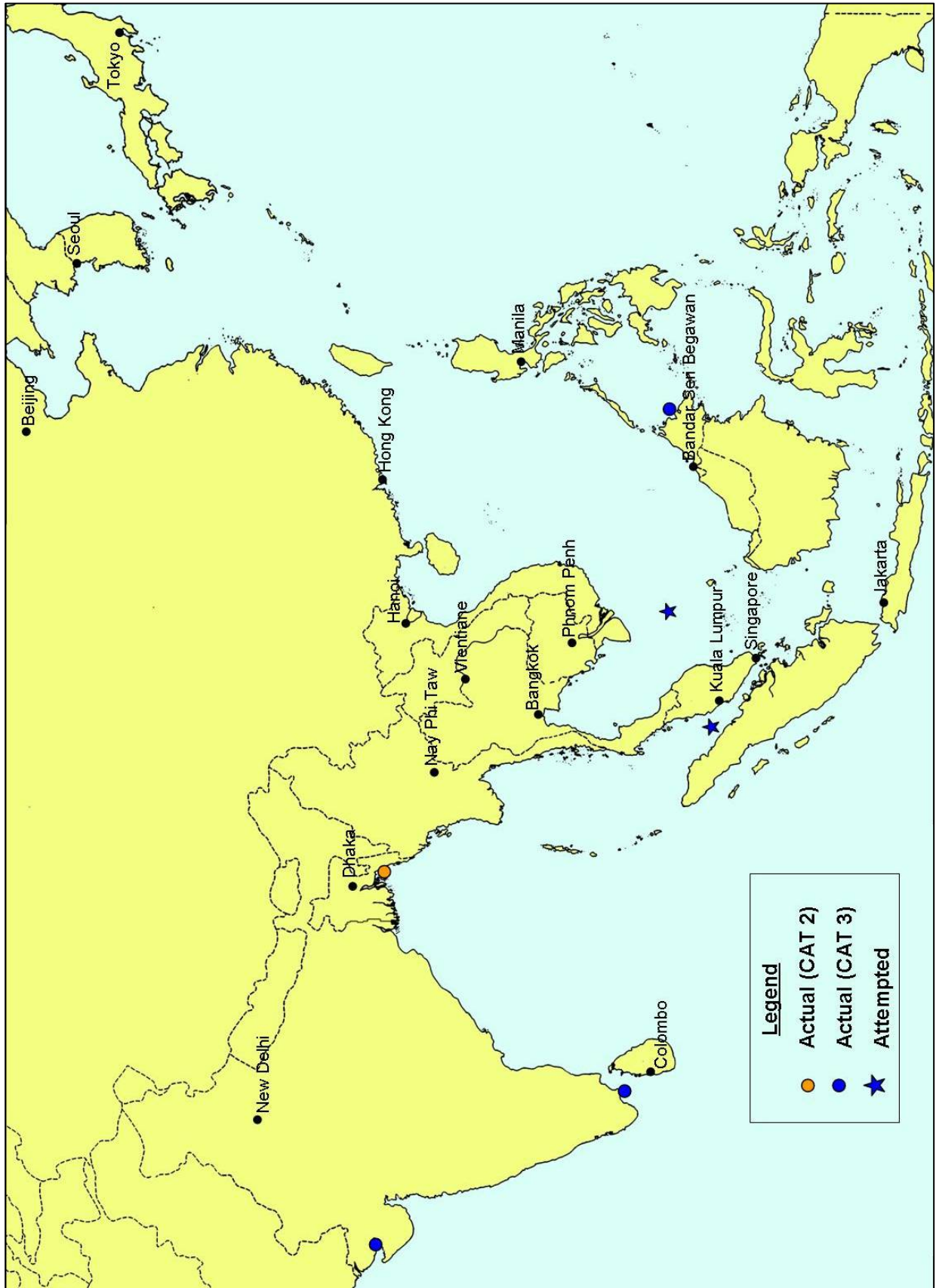
Figure 2 : **Location of incidents during February 2008**

Legend

Actual (CAT 2)
Actual (CAT 3)
Attempted

Part 3 - Details of Selected Incidents

3.1 Armed Robbery on board the *MV Kota Tegap* 13 February 2008

Name of Ship   : *MV Kota Tegap*
Type of Ship   : Container ship
Flag of Ship   : Singapore
IMO Number   : 9251145
GT   : 7,683

3.1.1   The ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore) reported to the ReCAAP ISC an incident on board the *MV Kota Tegap*. On 13 February 2008, the Singapore-registered container ship was anchored at the 'C' anchorage at the port of Chittagong, Bangladesh at approximately 22 $^{\circ}$ 25'N, 091° 36'E. Please refer to the map below.
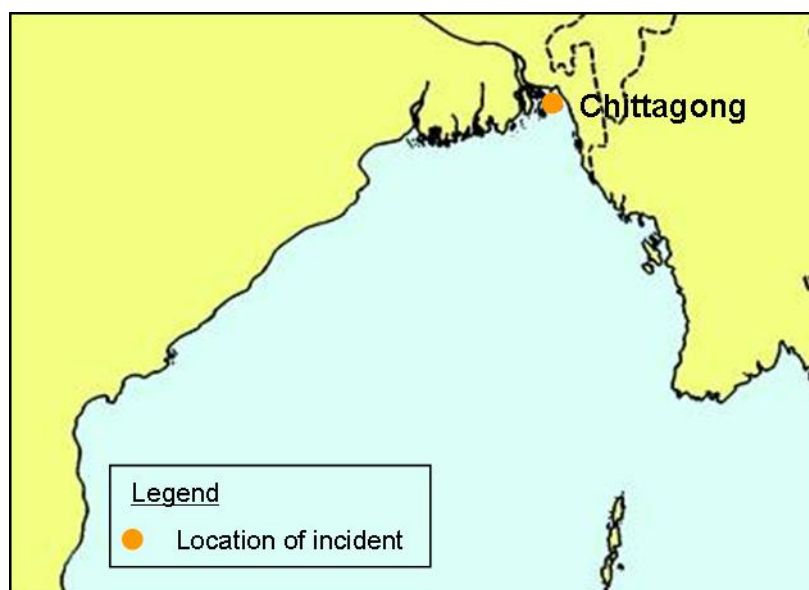
Location of Incident

3.1.2   At 0315 hrs on 13 February 2008, 12 robbers armed with knives and a revolver boarded the ship from the aft. The robbers overpowered the deck watchman, took over his intercommunications microphone and tied him to the winch.

3.1.3   The robbers unlocked the aft mooring stores, and stole two mooring ropes and two lifebuoys. They also broke open the CO_2 room and dry provision store. However, nothing was reported stolen. When the robbers tried to open the general deck store, they were spotted by a deck watch keeper who raised the alarm and alerted the bridge. Upon hearing the alarm, the robbers fled and left the ship.

3.1.4   The deck watchman who had been tied up was reportedly traumatised by the incident. However, his condition was reported to be stable. The ship master reported the incident to the shipping company which relayed the report to the Chittagong Port Control and the Bangladesh Coast Guard. The ReCAAP ISC classifies this incident as a Category 2 (i.e. moderately significant) incident.


Recommendation

3.1.5   The ship master was encouraged to report the incident to the nearest coastal state or port authorities, whichever appropriate, immediately after an incident.

3.2   Robbery on board the *Shahrazade Dream* on 17 February 2008

Name of Ship   : *Shahrazade Dream*
Type of Ship   : General cargo ship
Flag of Ship   : Hong Kong
IMO Number   : 8811704
GT   : 16,075

3.2.1   The ReCAAP Focal Point (Japan) and the ReCAAP Contact Point (Hong Kong) reported to the ReCAAP ISC an incident on board the *Shahrazade Dream*. On 17 February 2008, the Hong Kong-registered general cargo ship was preparing to berth at the port of Sandakan, East Malaysia at approximately $5^o\,50'$N, $118^o\,07'$E.   Please refer to the map below.
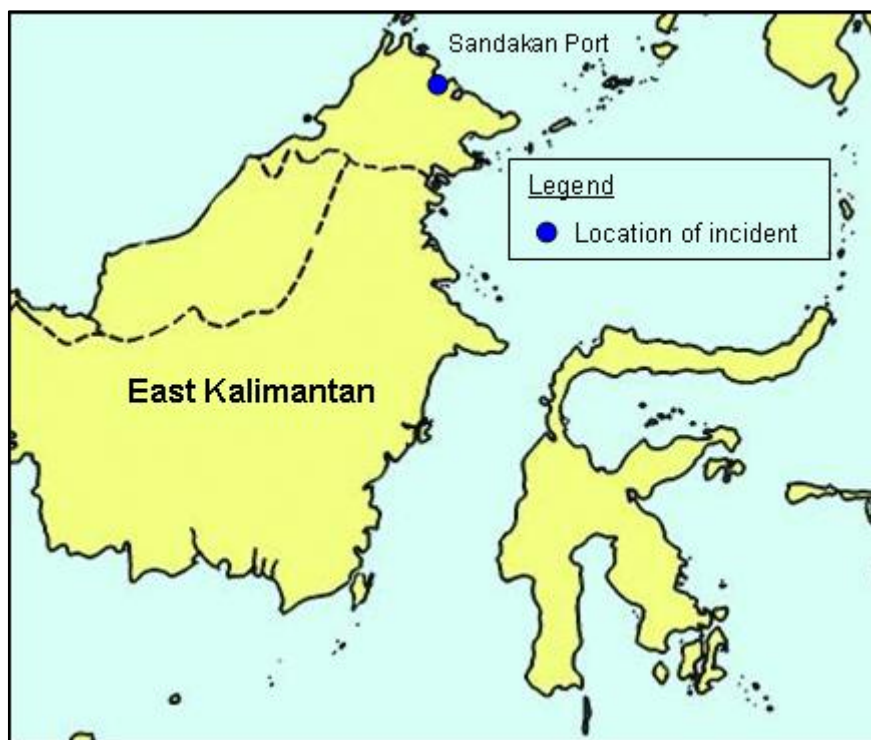
Location of Incident

3.2.2   At about 0540 hrs on 17 February 2008, the crew on security watch noticed three robbers at the forward deck of the ship while the ship was preparing to berth at the port. Upon being spotted by the crew, the robbers jumped overboard and escaped with four shackles of the anchor chain and one chain string. The lock to the forward bosun store room was reportedly damaged.
   .

3.2.3   The ship master reported the incident to the authorities who boarded the ship and conducted a search.   The investigation carried out revealed that two of the robbers jumped into the sea and one of them descended using the anchor rope.

3.2.4.   The authorities also discovered some stack of metal slabs which had been tied up but left behind by the robbers who escaped when spotted by the crew. Please see photograph below.

Observation

3.2.5   The attack appears to be more opportunistic in nature as the robbers boarded the ship when the crew was busy preparing to berth.

Recommendation

3.2.6   The ReCAAP ISC advises ship masters and crew to remain vigilant and adopt countermeasures to deter opportunistic attackers. The ReCAAP ISC strongly recommends ship master to report all piracy and armed robbery incidents to the port authorities immediately.

3.3   Robbery on board the *MV Thianjin* on 20 February 2008

Name of Ship   : *MV Thianjin*
Type of Ship   : General cargo ship
Flag of Ship   : Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
IMO Number   : 7729215
GT   : 23,239

3.3.1   The ReCAAP Focal Point (India) reported to the ReCAAP ISC an incident on board the *MV Thianjin*. On 20 February 2008, the St Vincent and the Grenadines-registered general cargo ship was anchored at the port of Tuticorin, India at approximately 08° 45.08'N, 078° 16.3'E. Please refer to the map below.

Location of Incident

3.3.2   At about 0930hrs on 20 February 2008, three fishing boats approached the general cargo ship. Two groups of men boarded the ship from the fishing boats by climbing up the general cargo ship using grapnel and ropes. One group reportedly consisted of 18 men and the other comprised 10 men. The ship master alerted the crew and reported the incident to the Tuticorin port control via the VHF.

3.3.3   The Tuticorin port control in turn alerted the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) which dispatched a patrol boat to the incident area. At about 1013hrs on the same day, the patrol boat intercepted one of the fishing boats and apprehended seven men. The men were handed over to the local police for further investigation. Nothing was reported stolen from the ship.

Observation

3.3.4   The prompt reporting by the ship master to the port authorities via the VHF enabled the ICG to take immediate action by dispatching a patrol boat to the location of the incident. This led to the arrest of the robbers.

Recommendations

3.3.5   The ReCAAP ISC advises ship masters to remain vigilant and maintain security watches while at anchor or at berth.

3.3.6   The ReCAAP ISC also encourages ship masters to report all incidents of piracy and armed robbery to the nearest coastal state immediately. Timely reporting would enable the law enforcement authorities to arrive at the location of the incident quickly to conduct investigation.

3.4   Attempted boarding of the *Kasagisan* on 1 February 2008

Name of Ship   : *Kasagisan*
Type of Ship   : VLCC
Flag of Ship   : Bahamas
IMO Number   : 9324100
GT   : 160,216

3.4.1   The ReCAAP Focal Point (Japan) and the ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore) reported to the ReCAAP ISC an incident involving the *Kasagisan.* The Bahamas-registered VLCC left the port of Juaymah, Saudi Arabia on 22 January 2008 for the port of Ube, Japan with 26 crew on board. On 1 February 2008 at 0940 hrs, the VLCC was under way through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore at approximately 04° 00.'N, 099° 35'E when six small boats were sighted in close proximity to the VLCC. Please refer to the map below.

Location of Incident

3.4.2   The ship master and crew activated the fire hose, sounded the ship's siren and undertook evasive manoeuvres. Subsequently, the boats aborted the attempt. One of the boats was noted to have a ladder rigged in its bow. The heavy rain and bad weather at the time of the incident may have prevented the boats from coming alongside the ship. There was no damage to the ship and no injuries were sustained by the crew.

Observation

3.4.3   The quick evasive measures undertaken by the ship master prevented the boarding by the robbers. The ship master was commended for activating the anti-piracy countermeasures which included raising the alarm, activation of the fire hose and mustering of the crew.

Recommendation

3.4.4   Early detection of a possible attack by vigilant crew is the most effective deterrent and reduces risk to the crew. It provides an opportunity for the crew to sound the alarm and undertake anti-piracy countermeasures.

Part 4 - Observations for February 2008

4.1   Compared to February 2007, the total number of reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Asian region in February 2008 has increased slightly. Overall, the following observations can be made regarding incidents which occurred in February 2008:

> a.   The total number of incidents reported in February 2008 has increased slightly compared to February 2007.

> b.   There was one Category 2 (moderately significant) incident reported in February 2008 compared to none reported in February 2007. The number of Category 3 incidents remains the same during these two periods.

> c.   There was no incident reported in Indonesia in February 2008 compared to one incident reported in February 2007.

> d.   All the actual incidents reported in February 2008 occurred while ships were at anchor or at berth. Three of the four actual incidents were Category 3 (less significant) incidents.

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS REPORTED IN FEBRUARY 2008

Actual Incidents

S/N	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, IMO No., GT	Date Time	Location of Incident	Status of Ship	Details of Incidents	Reporting Agency	Significance Level (as classified by the ReCAAP ISC)
1.	*MT Bow Clipper* Chemical Tanker Norway 9047518 23,197	09/02/2008 0030hrs	22° 50.08' N 070° 07.08' E Kandla Port, India	Anchored	The duty watchman spotted some robbers at the forecastle of the ship attempting to break open the store's padlock. He raised the alarm. The robbers jumped overboard and fled in a small boat. The padlock of the forecastle store was broken. However, nothing was reported missing.	ReCAAP Focal Point (India)	CAT 3
2.	*Kota Tegap* Container ship Singapore 9251145 7,683	13/02/2008 0315hrs	22° 25' N 091° 36' E Chittagong 'C' Anchorage, Bangladesh	Anchored	Twelve robbers armed with knives and a revolver boarded the ship from the aft. The robbers overpowered the deck watchman, took over his intercommunications microphone and tied him to the winch. The robbers unlocked the aft mooring stores, and stole two mooring ropes and two lifebuoys. They also broke open the CO_2 room and dry provision store. However, nothing was stolen. When the robbers tried to open the general deck store, they were spotted by a deck watch keeper who raised the alarm and alerted the bridge. Upon hearing the alarm, the robbers fled and left the ship. The deck watchman who had been tied up	ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)	CAT 2

					was reportedly traumatised by the incident. However, his condition was reported to be stable. The ship master reported the incident to the shipping company which relayed the report to the Chittagong Port Control and the Bangladesh Coast Guard.		
3.	*Shahrazade Dream* General cargo ship Hong Kong 8811704 16,075	17/02/2008 0540hrs	05° 50' N 118° 7' E Port of Sandakan, Malaysia	Berthed	The crew on security watch noticed three robbers at the forward deck of the ship while the ship was preparing to berth at the port. Upon being spotted by the crew, the robbers jumped overboard and escaped with four shackles of the anchor chain and one chain string. The lock to the forward bosun store room was reportedly damaged. The ship master reported the incident to the authorities who boarded the ship and conducted a search. The investigation carried out revealed that two of the robbers jumped into the sea and one of them descended using the anchor rope. The authorities also discovered some stack of metal slabs which had been tied up but left behind by the robbers who were probably anxious to escape upon spotted by the crew.	ReCAAP Focal Point (Japan) ReCAAP Contact Point (Hong Kong) Malaysian authorities	CAT 3
4.	*MV Thianjin* General cargo ship Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 7729215 23,239	20/02/2008 0930hrs	08° 45.8'N 078° 16.3' E Tuticorin, South-east India	Anchored	Three fishing boats approached the general cargo ship. Two groups of men boarded the ship from the fishing boats by climbing up the general cargo ship using grapnel and ropes. One group reportedly consisted of 18 men and the other comprised 10 men. The ship master alerted the crew and reported the incident to the Tuticorin port control via the VHF. The Tuticorin port control in turn alerted the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) which dispatched	ReCAAP Focal Point (India)	CAT 3

					a patrol boat to the incident area. At about 1013hrs on the same day, the patrol boat intercepted one of the fishing boats and apprehended seven men. The men were handed over to the local police for further investigation. Nothing was reported stolen from the ship.		

Attempted Incident

S/N	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, IMO No., GT	Date Time	Location of Incident	Status of Ship	Details of Incidents	Reporting Agency
1.	*Kasagisan* VLCC Bahamas 9324100 160,216	01/02/2008 0940hrs	04° 0'N 099° 35' E 100nm west of Lumut, Straits of Malacca and Singapore	Steaming	Six small boats were in close proximity to the VLCC when she was transiting the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. The ship master and crew activated the fire hose, sounded the ship's siren and undertook evasive manoeuvres. Subsequently, the boats aborted the attempt. One of the boats was noted to have a ladder rigged in its bow. The heavy rain and bad weather at the time of the incident may have prevented the boats from coming alongside the ship. There was no damage to the ship and no injuries were sustained by the crew.	ReCAAP Focal Point (Japan) ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)
2.	NA Bulk Carrier	02/02/08 0030 hrs	05° 09'N 106° 51' E South China Sea	Steaming	Two unlit white-hull speedboats about five meters long approached a bulk carrier while it was underway. The master raised the alarm, alerted the crew, activated the fire hose and commenced on a zig-zag course. The speedboats aborted the attempt subsequently. The bad sea condition was believed to have prevented the boarding.	ICC-IMB