

13 June 2024



Special Report - Increasing of Incidents in Bangladesh

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SR 01/2024

13 June 2024

Increasing of Incidents in Bangladesh

1. There has been an increase in the number of incidents reported in Bangladesh since January 2024. During January-May 2024, a total of nine incidents were reported in Bangladesh, compared to only one incident reported in the entire year of 2023.

2. The aim of this special report is to alert the shipping community regarding the increase in the number of incidents in Bangladesh, and provide the latest situation update, insights of the modus operandi of the incidents, advisories by Bangladesh authorities and related agencies, and recommendations to ships that are passing through the area of concern.

3. The shipping community is advised to adopt the following measures when anchored/berthed in Bangladesh:

- All ships are to exercise enhanced vigilance, alertness and report all incidents to the relevant authorities immediately.
- Maintain communication over VHF channel with the port control and law enforcement agencies when entering Bangladesh waters.
- Request for port-approved watchmen through the local shipping agent.
- Keep a watchful lookout and do not allow any boats to come nearby ship.

For more information on the specific recommendations to ship master, SSO and crew by the authorities of Bangladesh, please refer to **Annex A**.

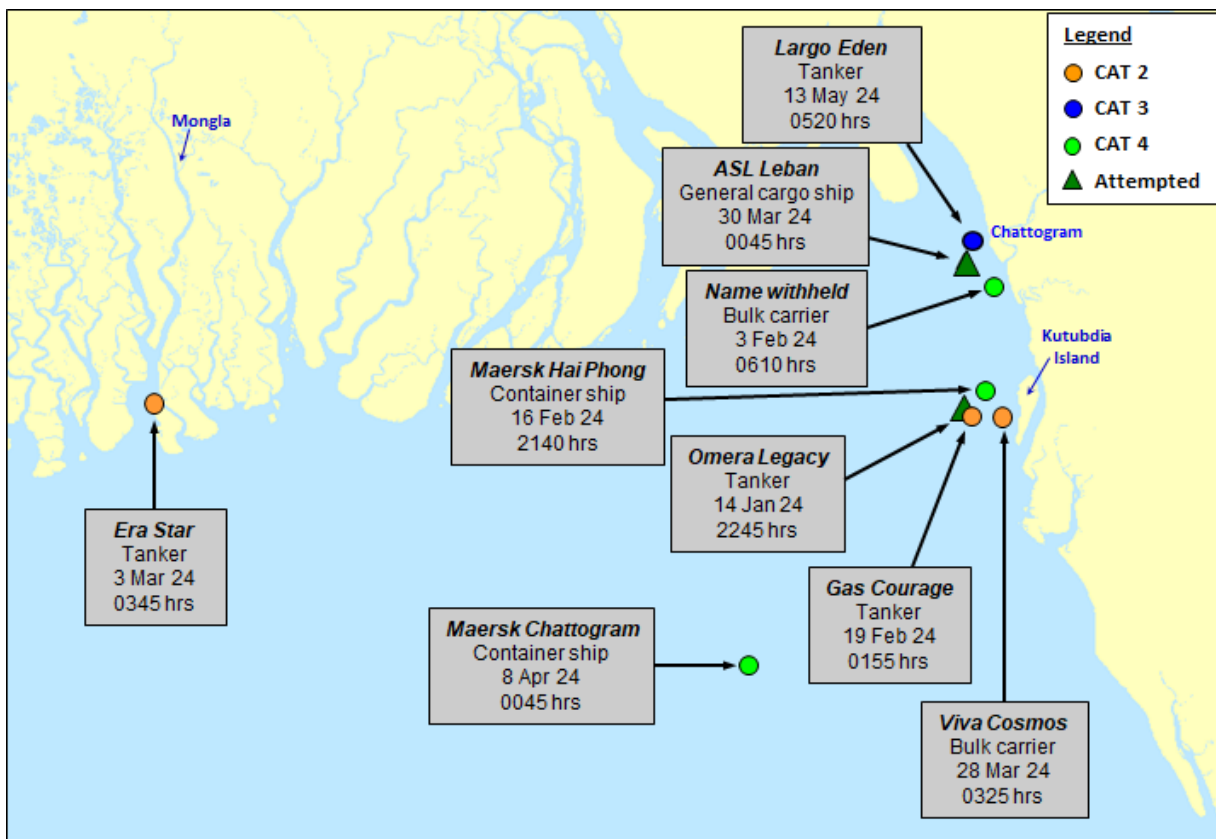
4. Ship masters are advised to immediately report all incidents to the law enforcement agencies and local authorities. The contact details for ships bound for Bangladesh are as follows:

	Name of organisation	Tel No.	Mobile No.	Email address
A	MRCC Dhaka	+88 02 9836314 +88 02 8711439	+88 01 769-701111	mrcdchk@navy.mil.bd
B	Bangladesh Coast Guard, Dhaka	+88 02 8181618	+88 01 769-440702	ddcgq@gmail.com
C	Bangladesh Navy, Dhaka	+88 02 983 6141-9	+88 01 769-702112	ddnohq@gmail.com
D	Chittagong Port Authority, Chattogram	+88 02 33332 220-29	+88 01 733-228266 +88 01 733-228267	dscpa2015@gmail.com pfsocpa@gmail.com
E	Department of Shipping, Dhaka	+88 02 9513305	+88 01 768-417758 +88 01 780-441236	shaker395@yahoo.com
F	Mongla Port Authority, Bagerhat	+88 04662-75232	+88 01 404-411960	cso@mpa.gov.bd

Increasing of Incidents in Bangladesh

Situation update

1. Of the nine incidents reported during January-May 2024, seven were actual incidents¹ and two were attempted incidents². The incidents occurred off Kutubdia Island and at Chattogram Anchorage, as shown in Map 1 below. Of the seven actual incidents, there were three CAT 2, one CAT 3 and three CAT 4 incidents. **Annex B** provides a description of the nine incidents.



Map 1 – Location of incidents in Bangladesh (January-May 2024)

Observations of Incidents in Bangladesh (2007-2023 & Jan-May 2024)

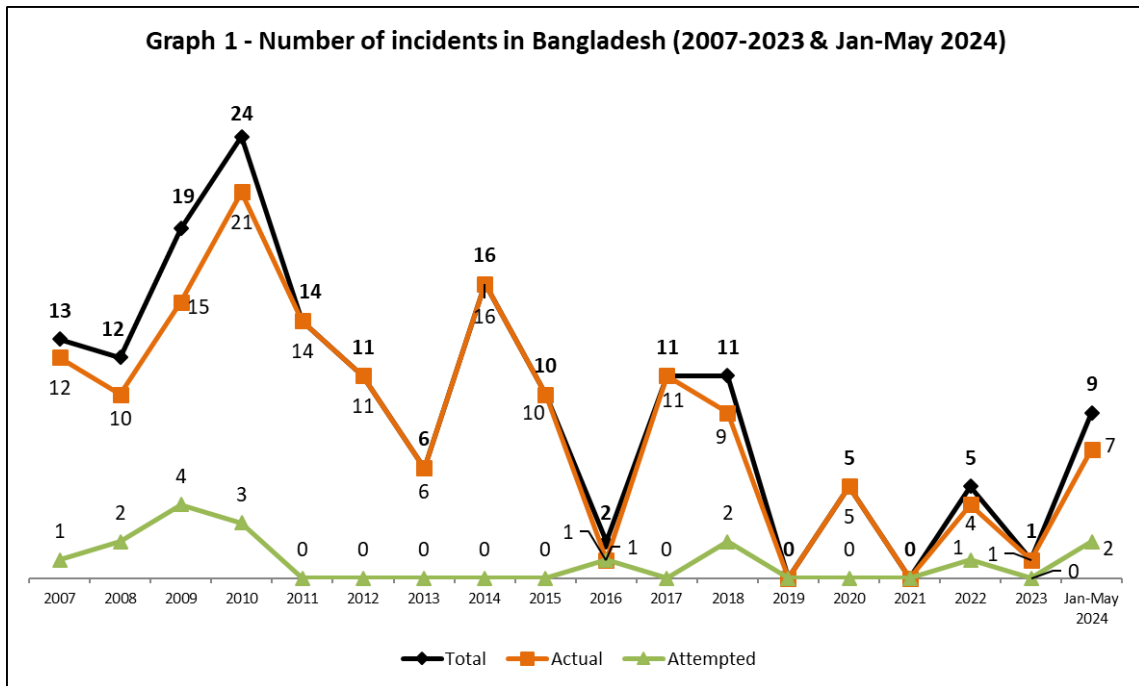
2. Some key observations are derived from incidents that occurred in Bangladesh for the past 18 years (2007-2023 & Jan-May 2024).

- a. Number of incidents. There was a total of 169 incidents (153 actual incidents and 16 attempted incidents) reported during the period in review. Of these, a total of 158 incidents (93%) occurred in the ports/anchorages while 11 incidents (7%)

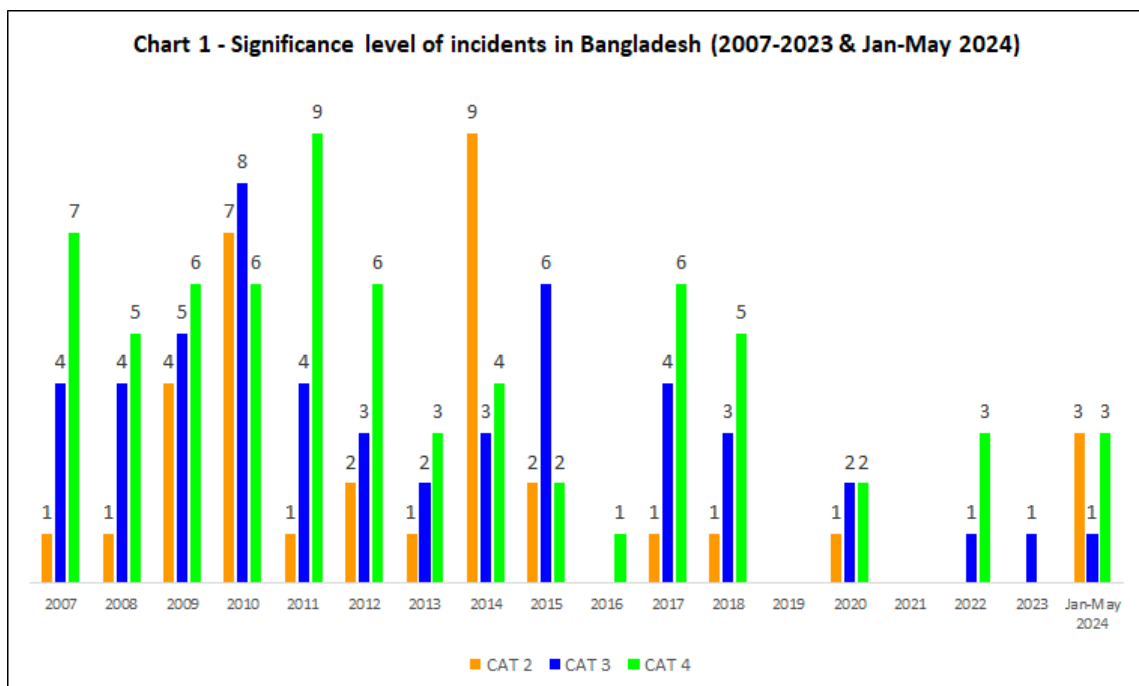
¹ Actual incidents refer to incidents whereby the pirates/robbers boarded the ship; regardless of whether they stole any items from the crew or took anything onboard the ship.

² Attempted incidents refer to incidents whereby the pirates/robbers tried but failed in their attempt to board the ship.

occurred onboard ships while underway. During the 18-year period, 2010 saw the highest number of incidents - 24 incidents (21 actual and three attempted incidents). The Centre observes that there has been a pattern of an increase of incidents at an interval of three to four years during 2007 to 2014; and an interval of two years during 2020 to 2024. Graph 1 shows the number of incidents reported in Bangladesh during 2007-2023 and January-May 2024.



b. Significance Level. Out of the 153 actual incidents reported during the 18-year period, there were 34 CAT 2 incidents (22%), 51 CAT 3 incidents (33%) and 68 CAT 4 incidents (45%).



c. Modus operandi. The majority of the incidents reported over the 18-year period involved 4 to 6 men, and in 47% of the incidents the perpetrators carried knives/machetes. However, the crew did not sustain injuries in 58% of the incidents, and ship property/stores were targeted. Container ships were mostly boarded, and boarding occurred during hours of darkness and during darker moon phase. The details of the modus operandi of the 169 incidents over the 18-year period is tabulated below:

Factors	Bangladesh (169 incidents)
Number of perpetrators	1 to 3 men (35) 4 to 6 men (53) – 31% 7 to 9 men (17) More than 9 men (30) Unknown (34)
Type of weapons carried	Guns & knives (3) Knives/Machetes/Others (80) – 47% Not armed (24) Not stated (62)
Treatment of crew	Assaulted (9) Temporarily restrained (6) Threatened (9) No injuries (97) – 58% Not stated (48)
Stolen items	Cash/Personal belongings (7) Ship property/Stores (112) – 66% Engine spares (1) Unsecured items (11) Nothing stolen (35) Not stated (3)
Types of ships	Bulk carrier (44) Container ship (51) – 30% General cargo ship (16) Tanker (40) Tug boat/Supply vessel (12) Others (6)
Time of incidents	Hours of darkness (149) – 88% Daylight hours (20)
Moon Phases	Darker moon (81) – 48% Half moon (33) Brighter moon (55)

3. The incidents which occurred during January-May 2024 are consistent with the trend for the past 18-year period except that the majority of incidents reported during January-May 2024 involved 1-3 men (34%), perpetrators were not known to carry weapons (67%) and tankers were boarded (45%).

Efforts by the Bangladesh Authorities

4. Following the spate of incidents reported during January-May 2024, the Bangladesh Focal Point called for the enhancement of maritime patrol/presence in port and anchorages, mooring outer anchorage and ships while underway, with emphasis in the areas where incidents occurred more frequently. Restrictions have also been implemented at ports, anchorages and outer anchorages for country boats, fishing boats and motorboats that cannot ply or come alongside anchored ships without any valid documents. Barter trade is also prohibited in the port, anchorages and outer anchorage areas.

5. The Bangladesh Navy, on its part has increased its vigilance and sea patrols to respond to any potential ships in distress.

6. The Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG) has also increased its patrols and surveillance as well as the monitoring of any illegal boat activities in the areas of concern. With its AOR of up to the territorial waters, ports, anchorages and outer anchorages, the BCG is responsible for immediate incident response, arrest of perpetrators and investigation of the incidents occurred within its jurisdiction.

7. With the increasing number of incidents at the Chittagong Port and Anchorage, the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has established a Visual Tracking Information Management System (VTIMS) to monitor the movement of small country boats in the anchorage and outer anchorage areas. The Port Authorities of Chittagong and Mongla have also conducted port-arranged random boat patrols with its security personnel onboard in the port water areas.

Arrests of Perpetrators & Recovery of Stolen Items

8. During January to May 2024, the Bangladesh authorities have successfully boarded three ships, arrested the perpetrators and recovered the stolen items. The description of the incidents are as follows:

19 Feb

While anchored off Kutubdia Anchorage, nine perpetrators boarded tanker, *MV Gas Courage*, tied up the watchman and stole ship stores. The incident was reported to the Bangladesh authorities who responded immediately and apprehended the nine perpetrators. The authorities also recovered all stolen ship stores and handed the items over to the ship crew.

8 Apr

While container ship, *MV Maersk Chattogram* was anchored at Chattogram Outer Anchorage, the duty watchman sighted two perpetrators onboard the deck and later escaped in a country boat. Upon inspection, ship stores were stolen. The incident was immediately reported to the BCG and the Port Control Authority. The BCG carried out patrol in the location of the incident, recovered the stolen items and handed over to the ship master.

13 May

Tanker, *MV Largo Eden* was anchored at Chattogram Anchorage when the AB on his rounds spotted movement on the poop deck and raised the alarm. The store watchmen were found tied and it was reported that six perpetrators had boarded the ship and subsequently escaped. The paint store lock was found broken and ship property and stores were stolen. The incident was reported to the port control, BCG and Bangladesh Navy. The BCG investigated the incident, and conducted combing operation in the vicinity and shore areas. The perpetrators were apprehended, all stolen items recovered and handed over to the ship master.

Advisory to ship master, SSO and crew

9. The Bangladesh's Department of Shipping (ReCAAP Focal Point) advises ships bound for Bangladesh to adopt the following measures:

- Exercise enhanced vigilance, alertness and report all incidents to the relevant authorities immediately.
- Slow-speed ships, deep draft ships, tug boats and towed vessels are to avoid the fishing zone. For ships sailing to Chattogram port and anchorages, they are to commence their voyage from Saint Martin Island to Cox's Bazar areas and navigate on safe route.

10. In addition, ships at ports/anchorages are advised to:

- Maintain communication over VHF channel with the port control and law enforcement agencies when entering Bangladesh waters.
- While at anchor, request for port-approved watchmen via the local shipping agent.
- No barter trade or any types of business are permitted at anchorages and in the port and berthing areas
- While at anchor, keep sharp lookout and do not allow any boats to come near ship.

11. For more information on the specific recommendations to ship master, SSO and crew by the various authorities in Bangladesh, please refer to **Annex A**.

Conclusion

12. In view of the increase in the number of incidents in Bangladesh for January-May 2024, the ReCAAP ISC reiterates the need for collective efforts and shared responsibilities by all stakeholders to combat the increasing of robbery/theft incidents in the area. Ship master and crew are strongly advised to exercise vigilance, maintain constant look-out for suspicious boats in the vicinity, report all incidents immediately to the relevant authorities and implement preventive measures recommended in the '*Regional Guide 2 to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia*'.

In consultation with the Focal Point for Bangladesh (Department of Shipping)

Enclosures:

Annex A: Advisory and recommendations to ship master, SSO and crew by the various authorities in Bangladesh

Annex B: Description of incidents in Bangladesh (January-May 2024)

Advisory and recommendations to ship master, SSO and crew by the various authorities in Bangladesh

S/No.	Authority	Advisory and recommendations
1.	ReCAAP Focal Point (Bangladesh) – Department of Shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained watchman/guard from port authority must be deployed onboard the ship while anchored at port, berth and outer anchorages. • Timely reporting of incidents to the relevant authorities. Ship masters to report incident to the concerned authority via HF Channel 12/16 and over VHF channel. Bangladesh LEA underscores the importance of timely reporting so that the authorities can respond and make arrest. • Ship master and crew are to exercise vigilance while transiting areas of concerns at anchorages, ports and outer anchorages as well as mooring area, and to make immediate report of incident to LEA, port control and Focal Point. • Bangladesh Focal Point encourages ship master and crew to heighten vigilance when transiting Bangladesh territorial waters, Saint Martin’s Island, Cox’s Bazar, Moheshkhali, Kutubdia Island and outer anchorage as well as mooring areas; and adopt the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maximise alertness of lookouts for suspicious small boats and increase watch keeping onboard ship particularly during daytime for tug boat and barges, slow-speed vessels and deep draught ships; and during night time for larger ships. ➤ Maintain communication with VHF/HF channel 12 and/or 16 with port control, Bangladesh Navy and BCG while transiting areas of concern for port, anchorages and outer anchorages of Bangladesh. ➤ Report all incidents, suspicious activities and presence of suspicious small boats in the vicinity to the nearest coast and ships. ➤ Sound alarm when suspicious boats are sighted loitering in the vicinity of ships, or when there are suspicious individuals onboard the ship. ➤ Barter trader and illegal boat hire is prohibited for all in Bangladesh port, anchorages and outer anchorages. ➤ While at anchor or at port jetty berth, ships gangway to be kept upward position when there is no gangway attendance or when not in use.

S/No.	Authority	Advisory and recommendations
2.	Bangladesh Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ships bound for Bangladesh waters are to maintain communication with HF channel 12 &/or 16 as well as VHF coast area. Ships are to report any sea robbery incident immediately to Naval ship on sea patrol. Naval ships are always present in Bangladesh waters.
3.	Bangladesh Coast Guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ship owner, local shipping agent and ship's superintendent may be brought to accountability for violation of order/SOP/rules and regulation. Ship crew may be warned regarding the calling/allowing of country boats alongside for the buying of mobile SIM, commodities and various services. Barter trade is prohibited in the port anchorages mooring and outer anchorages area of Bangladesh. As per ISPS code, concerned shipping agent or owners may be instructed to ensure that the respective ships must be fitted with security equipment – CCTV cameras. Local shipping agents, ship superintendents and ship owners may be strongly advised and instructed to employ port authorised and trained workmen when the ships are in berth, anchorages or outer anchorages. Shipping agents, ship superintendents, ship owners may be instructed to guide respective ships to have their anchor position within the port limit and keep communication with port control.
4.	Chittagong Port Authority & Mongla Port Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When ship is at berth, duty watchman is to be deployed at gangway. Mobile patrol on deck to be maintained. When gangway is not in use, keep up and away. Stay in communication with the PFSO of the ports. Keen vigilance is to be maintained during hours of darkness.

Annex B

Description of incidents in Bangladesh (January-May 2024)

S/No.	Ship name/Ship type / Date & time of incident	Location of incident	Description of Incident
1.	<i>Omera Legacy</i> Oil/Chemical/Gas tanker 14 Jan 2245 hrs	21° 50.5' N, 91° 41.84' E Off Kutubdia, Chattogram Port, Bangladesh	While anchored, an unknown number of perpetrators onboard a country boat propelled by engine approached the ship's port bow. However, the country boat could not come alongside the ship; hence, the perpetrators were not able to board the ship. They eventually aborted the attempt and escaped. The ship master was advised to report incident immediately to BCG and port control.
2.	Name withheld Container ship 3 Feb 0610 hrs	22° 9.8' N, 91° 46.4' E Chattogram Inner Anchorage, Bangladesh	While anchored, two perpetrators boarded the container ship. The alarm was raised and the crew mustered. Upon realising the crew had been alerted, <u>the perpetrators escaped empty-handed.</u>
3.	<i>Maersk Hai Phong</i> Container ship 16 Feb 2140 hrs	21° 53' N, 91° 45' E Kutubdia Outer Anchorage, Bangladesh	While anchored, four perpetrators boarded the ship, <u>stole a rope (about 50m)</u> and escaped. <u>The crew was not injured.</u> The incident was reported to BCG, who boarded the ship for investigation.
4.	<i>Gas Courage</i> Tanker 19 Feb 0155 hrs	21° 49' N, 91° 42.8' E Off Kutubdia Anchorage, Bangladesh	While anchored, nine perpetrators boarded the ship from a country boat. <u>They tied up the watchman and stole ship stores.</u> The incident was reported to the Bangladesh authorities who responded immediately and apprehended the nine perpetrators. The authorities also recovered all stolen ship stores and handed the items over to the ship crew.

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S/No.	Ship name/Ship type / Date & time of incident	Location of incident	Description of Incident
5.	<i>Era Star</i> Chemical/Gas tanker 3 Mar 0345 hrs	21° 50.93' N, 89° 31.82' E Hiron Pilot Station, Mongla, Bangladesh	While anchored, ship crew reported that <u>eight to 10 perpetrators armed with long knives</u> boarded the ship using hook at the port forward of the ship, and managed to escape onboard a country boat. Upon inspection, it was found out that <u>heave lines and messenger lines were stolen.</u> The alarm was sounded, announcement was made through the PA, and the crew was mustered. <u>The crew was not injured.</u> The incident was reported to the local agent.
6.	<i>Viva Cosmos</i> Bulk carrier 28 Mar 0325hrs	21° 48.7' N, 91° 47.9' E Chattogram Anchorage, Bangladesh	While anchored, <u>eight perpetrators armed with knives</u> boarded the bulk carrier. The alarm was raised, crew mustered, and a search onboard the ship was conducted. Upon realising the crew had been alerted, the perpetrators escaped with <u>stolen ship store. All crew members were safe.</u>
7.	<i>ASL Leban</i> General cargo ship 30 Mar 0045hrs	22° 14' N, 91° 42' E Chattogram Anchorage, Bangladesh	While anchored, the crew noticed three perpetrators in a boat attempting to board the ship using a rope and hook. The alarm was raised and crew was mustered. Upon realising that the crew was alerted, the perpetrators aborted the attempt. Nothing was stolen and the crew was not injured.
8.	<i>Maersk Chattogram</i> Container ship 8 Apr 0045 hrs	21° 9' N, 91° 7' E Chattogram Outer Anchorage, Bangladesh	While anchored, the duty watchman noticed two perpetrators onboard the deck, and managed to escape onboard a country boat. Upon inspection, it was found out that <u>600 litres of paint, 150 metres of safety chain, 16 pieces of brass fire hydrant caps and 2 pieces of fire hoses were stolen.</u> The incident was immediately reported to the BCG and Port Control Authority. <u>The crew was not injured.</u> BCG carried out patrol in the incident area, and recovered all stolen ships items and handed over to the ship master. It is recommended and advised for all ships, low draft ships, and tug boats heading towards Bangladesh ports and territorial waters, to maintain communication with law enforcement agencies (LEAs) through HF/ VHF channels 12 and 16 for help.

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S/No.	Ship name/Ship type / Date & time of incident	Location of incident	Description of Incident
9.	<i>Largo Eden</i> Oil/Chemical/Gas tanker 13 May 0520hrs	22° 17' N, 91° 43' E Chattogram Anchorage A20, Bangladesh	<p>While anchored, the AB on rounds spotted movement on the poop deck and raised the alarm. The shore watchmen were found tied, who reported six perpetrators had boarded the ship and escaped into the water. The paint store lock was found broken, and <u>unsecured rope, fire hoses, tools, paint drums, messenger line and heaving line were stolen.</u></p> <p>The <u>shore watchmen were tied by the perpetrators.</u></p> <p>The incident was reported to the local authorities including the port control, Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG) and Bangladesh Navy. BCG investigated the incident, and conducted combing operations in the vicinity and shore areas. The perpetrators were apprehended, all stolen items recovered and will be handed over to the ship.</p>