

International Commission on Shipping

Thursday, 27 July 2000

India's role crucial to International Commission

The Chairman of the International Commission on Shipping (ICONS), The Hon. Peter Morris, believes India's emergence as a shipping nation and a source of trained seafarers gives the nation a crucial role in the Commission's inquiry into sub-standard shipping.

Mr Morris made the observation on his arrival in India today, where ICONS will be holding discussions with representatives from the country's shipping industry and government representatives.

The talks represent part of the first global inquiry into the effectiveness of international shipping safety standards, laws and practices.

On July 28, ICONS will conduct public discussions with India's Director General of Shipping as well as representatives from the Shipping Corporation of India, Anglo Eastern Shipping Company, and the Indian Shipping Association.

Mr Morris, a former Australian Federal Minister for Transport, said India's position as a major provider of the world's trained seafarers would provide an insight into one of the most important areas of the Commission's investigations.

"We must prevent any injustices or inhumane treatment of seafarers worldwide," Mr Morris said.

"Because of its international contribution of trained seafarers, we believe India, its government and its maritime industry can play a major role in shaping the future of the industry.

"As a major maritime nation, India and its Surface Transport Authority are able to provide the world's shipping industry leadership with vital information relating to seafarers' safety, which includes inhumane treatment and the safe operation of international shipping."

The Indian inquiry will centre on:

- Excessive tonnage by ship owners/operators.
- Ship owners/operators who are committed to 'profits at all cost'.
- Low freight rates.
- No incentives to ship owners/managers who maintain their vessels to the highest standards.
- Flag states' preferential treatment to its own vessels.
- Drastic reductions in manning levels.

This information will help shape the Commission's report, which is to be presented at the APEC Shipping Safety Symposium at Sydney in March 2001.

ICONS was established at the request of the International Transport Workers Federation and operates with the collective support of governments throughout the APEC region, the Americas, Europe and Africa.

The members of the Commission are; The Hon. Peter Morris (Australia, Chairman), James Bell (London, Commissioner), Professor Moritaka Hayashi (Tokyo, Commissioner) and Captain Barry McKay (Ottawa, Commissioner).

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