

Republic of the Marshall Islands Registry Nautical Inspectors' event held in Mumbai

International Registries, Inc. and its affiliates (IRI), which provide administrative and technical support to the Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime and Corporate Registries, hosted its 5th **Nautical Inspector Seminar** on 27 May 2022 at Mumbai's Grand Hyatt Hotel. Nautical inspectors from across India and neighbouring countries Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, attended the event. The 4th edition of this event was held in Mumbai in October 2019.



Capt Sanjay Maini



John Ramage



Vinod Kumar



Hans Krijger

IRI's Captain Sanjay Maini, Country Head (Indian subcontinent) opened the seminar. The informative event covered various areas in detail, including Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Registry updates and technical presentations from: John Ramage, Chief Operating Officer, IRI London; R. Vinod Kumar, Fleet Operations Manager, IRI Mumbai; Ragini Patil, Seafarers' Documentation Deputy Manager, IRI Mumbai; and Hans Krijger, General Manager, IRI Roosendaal; Brian Poskaitis, Senior Vice President, Fleet Operations, IRI Baltimore/Annapolis, joined by Davis Kong, Fleet Operations Manager, IRI Fort Lauderdale and James Maupin, Deputy Fleet Operations Manager, IRI Houston, presented virtually.

Guest speakers Ajith Kumar Sukumaran, Chief Surveyor-cum-Additional. Directorate General, DG Shipping, GoI, and P. Gopinandan, E&SS-cum-Deputy Director General – Technical, DG Shipping, GoI, provided an update on the Indian Maritime Administration's perspective on Port State Control (PSC), while Vijay Arora, Managing Director, IRClass and K. Sahu, Head – Technical, IRClass, presented on safety in the face of COVID-19.

The seminar provided inspectors with an opportunity to receive updates on the RMI fleet, International Safety Management Code requirements, and other regulatory updates, as well as to discuss PSC and fleet management in the post-COVID-19 environment. The event also featured a role play skill-building exercise.

The same evening IRI hosted a large dinner at the hotel's expansive pillarless ballroom, graced by many from the maritime fraternity. The reception also served as an occasion to bid farewell to the humble and affable John Ramage. Mr Ramage, who has an extensive shipping background including sailing, had joined IRI's London office in March 2002 and rose to the role of Chief Operating Officer responsible for the maritime operations of 28 IRI offices worldwide. John was instrumental in the establishment of offices in Hamburg, Roosendaal, Mumbai, and Dubai. Based in England, he has been a frequent visitor to India and is 'at home' here.

TM



A.K. Sukumaran



P. Gopinandan



Ragini Patil



T.K. Sahu & Vijay Arora

IRI India presents...

R. Vinod Kumar, Fleet Operations Manager, represents India, Middle East, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Mr Kumar presented and talked about maintaining fleet quality in times of a pandemic, the state of mind of a ship's crew, the ship's management during inspection, and identifying ISM related items on board.

Excerpts from his presentation and interview...

Presentations summary

After a decline in 2020, international trade surged sharply in 2021, and so did the risks in quality management. Though the long-term impact of the pandemic on quality of shipping is yet to be documented, the indicators available are not very encouraging. The success of the RMI Registry is due to our focus on quality and service. Hence, it's important that we share with our Nautical Inspectors (NIs) the pandemic induced risks in quality management, its impact, and mitigation measures in maintaining our high standards. Factors like crew fatigue, lack of attendance by class/superintendents, survey extensions, lack of service providers, and disrupted supply chain of spares did impact ships' quality in one way or the other. As the Fleet Operations Manager for the region, ensuring that NIs verify compliance of the RMI fleet with national and international standards, my focus of interaction with them is to maintain fleet quality and sharing (with them) possible gaps in operational management of ships they are likely to see.

As part of our proactive approach to maintain quality and alerting owners/operators of commonly identified deficiencies, we routinely analyse both — ours as well as worldwide port State control (PSC) deficiency trends. Further, the rise of International Safety Management (ISM) related deficiencies is something that cannot be missed. So, awareness and identification of ISM deficiencies along with actions to be taken was another focus area.

Our NIs act as our eyes and ears on the ground and we would like them to have a balanced approach during inspections. When I say balanced, it also means they need to understand the stress seafarers undergo. Though, honing hard skills (technical ability) of our NIs is certainly on the agenda, it is also important that our NIs recognize the need of the soft skills as well, because we all know that external scrutiny like a flag safety inspection, like any other inspection, naturally adds to the pressure and stress of seafarers. This event was a great platform to share the perception seafarers have about inspections and on ways to manage that.





Farewell John Ramage

About IRI's NI events

Unlike previous NI seminar editions, this event was a tad different in the sense that the focus was on risks and challenges for a smooth transition to the new normal. Since our inspectors, presently 19 in the region, have a critical role to play in the Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Administrator's objective of maintaining high quality fleet, there was a need to share the risks and its impact on quality due to COVID-19 restrictions. In that sense, I believe this seminar intended to and was successful in sharing knowledge and equipped the NIs with additional skills needed to prepare them for the road ahead.

Need for such events

We routinely have these seminars for our NIs to pass information, knowledge, or practices that are beneficial to them in achieving the RMI Administrator's marine safety and vessel inspection objectives. Additionally, these events are designed to provide training and gain knowledge from industry experts. A seminar like this and the guided interactions that follow also helps us in evaluating different viewpoints our NIs may have.

Goodbye John

It was truly a great experience to work with John and I feel privileged to have been guided and supported by him. We will miss you John...Wishing you all the health and happiness.

Ragini Patil, Seafarers' Documentation Deputy Manager discussed Seafarers' Document Verification. Ms Patil liaises with the Seafarers' Documentation Production office in Reston.

Excerpts from her presentation and interview...

Presentation summary

Ragini gave insights about the seafarer's department, documentation, and details that NIs need to check on ships for inspection. Though inspectors are aware about documentation, it is important to make them aware about latest updates and developments in the documentation process and verification domain.

Topics discussed included the issuance of:

- Minimum Safe Manning Certificates (MSMCs) which ensures that a ship is sufficiently manned by qualified seafarers.
- Certificates of Competency (CoCs) to seafarers, as per their national CoC, rank, experience, and documents; Certificates of Receipt of Application (CRAs) and Urgent Authorizations (UAs) (they are like receipts, stating that the seafarer's Officer Certificate (OC) application is under process.
- Seafarer's Identification and Record Books (SIRBs) (every seafarer is issued an RMI SIRB, which includes seafarer details, Special Qualification Certificates (SQCs), and sea service.
- Medical/Fitness certificates (seafarers have to be medically fit to join the vessel and receive RMI documents).
- Form letters to officers on tankers according to their CoC.
- Final documents which include a Quick Response Code which can be verified online.

Ragini also made the NIs aware about another major development of their launch of the updated/new system called the Online System for Seafarers' Documentation (OSSD).

About the event

It was a great opportunity given by Capt Sanjay Maini and the IRI management to let me address the gathering; it has added a new profile to my experience and career. The event provided an opportunity to meet all inhouse inspectors from different Indian regions, as well as people from the fraternity, to share and exchange ideas and thoughts. Personally, it has increased my knowledge about shipping and its various other aspects.

