The annual AMETIAP in India Conference "Maritime Education and Training in India: Meeting Future Challenges", held at the Taj President Hotel, Mumbai, on 9 March attracted well over 130 participants, mainly from India but also from at least 10 other countries like Norway, New Zealand, Netherlands, Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and the United States.

The presentation by the Guest of Honour, Dr. Vijay Khole, Vice Chancellor of the University of Mumbai, and by the Chief Guest Shri G. S. Sahni, Director General of Shipping set the stage by outlining educational developments in India relevant to the provision of high quality MET and the strong Govt. support for these developments.

* THE FIRST SESSION was addressed and chaired by Capt. M.M. Saggi, Nautical Advisor to the Govt. of India. Eminent overseas speakers were Capt. Tim Wilson of New Zealand, Director, New Zealand Maritime School, and professor Stephen Cross, of the Maritime Institute, "William Barnetsz", Netherlands, spoke on assessment techniques and ways to make them more, effective in judging a student's competence. Mr. Prashant Bhaskar of Australian Maritime College, Capt. A.D. Antao of Barber Ship Management, Kuala Lumpur and Mr. Bobby Oberoi, Technical Marine consultant focussed the mismatch between the required skill sets and the current knowledge and skills of international standards of officers on board. Further they believe that it is essential to have internationally agreed standards for specialization competences failing out side current IMO conventions.

* SESSION II topics Supported upon a variety of subjects by Capt. S.V. Sule of LR5 CAMSAR Comparing Aviation and Marine Industry. Capt. Stephen Cross introduced a modular competence based curriculum with its advantage over traditional based
THE SESSION was rounded off by Mr. Swapan Das Sarma Teledata Marine Systems (Leading business solutions for the marine industries stream line vessel management) emphasized the need of generation e-learning system and its KEY BENEFITS who have to comply with ever-growing demands and statutory regulations while maintaining effective and safety.

The LAST SESSION was a group discussion chaired by Capt. Kiriti Guha, Chairman & Managing Director of WILCO group. A key element of the deliberation is that shipping industry has not till date taken serious attention to the developments, operation with sub-standard ships, incompetence crews, absence of high level of awareness to project the need improved training delivery and training to meet the requirements of the maritime industry and other stake holders and encouraging the use of state-of-the-art METHODOLOGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES.

THIS IS THE SIXTH YEAR IN WHICH AMETIAP CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS ARE HELD IN INDIA AND THIS CONFERENCE SIGNIFIES INITIATIVES IN A MAJOR THROUGH LARGELY UNRECOGNISED INDUSTRY.

**SHIPPING CORPORATION OF INDIA IN TALKS WITH DOMESTIC OIL MAJORS, GLOBAL SHIP OWNERS FOR JOINT VENTURE**

National flag carrier Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) is in talks with domestic oil majors for setting up joint ventures to ferrying incremental tonnage, arising a part from the contract of affreightment (COA). SCI is also in dialogue with international owners of tankers and bulk carriers. Confirming the development, SCI Chairman and Managing Director S Hajara said: “SCI has identified joint ventures as the parallel route of growth for the company. Nothing has been finalized yet.” Hajara declined to divulge further details.

Industry sources said the crude oil requirements are shooting up in the light of increased refining capacities. Oil companies such as Indian Oil Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation and Bharat Petroleum Corporation would be required to ferry more crude.

“With this proposed joint venture, the oil majors will get shipping expertise while SCI will get assured business. Though joint venture models is not profitable for SCI, this will be best option as the vessel acquisition is delayed due to long government procedures,” analysts said.

SCI has requested government for extending a block approval for acquiring 28 vessels at an indicative price of Rs 5,948 crore.

Senior government official said the Financial Ministry is reluctant to give block approval as the price of vessels at the time of acquisition would be different. However, SCI executives are asking freedom of 10 to 20 percent flexibility in indicative prices at the time of acquisition.

Analysts feel appropriate for giving orders for vessels was 2002 and 2003. “Moreover, SCI has wasted two years in the name of divestment. Now joint ventures will ensure sufficient vessels with assured business through tie-ups,” they said.

SCI has also signed a memorandum of understanding between Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) to form a non-PSU joint venture company (JVC) for offshore marine services. In the proposed JVC, ONGC and SCI would hold 24.5 percent stake each as principal promoters. The JVC would rope in an overseas offshore supply vessels construction company with 21 percent stake and remaining 30 percent would be giving to Indian or overseas financial institutions.

Though it is a PSU, SCI currently has four joint ventures including Irano Hind Shipping Company, Irano Shipping Line set up at Teheran in March 1975. Earlier, SCI had floated three different joint venture for expansion of project of Petronet LNG Ltd partners including Mistui OSK Lines, Japan, Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha, and Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha.

**GROVER IS NEW SCI DIRECTOR**

Mr. UC Grover has assumed the charge of Director (Offshore & Tanker) of the Shipping Corporation of India from April 1 He is taking the baton form retiring Capt TD Hazari, who left a prestigious mark in SCI’s achievements. Grover, who was Indian chief of IPBCC, is no stranger to Indian shipping industry.