



Guiding Spirit to Shipping Industry

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**PAGE - 2**

Three new ports to boost maritime trade....

**PAGE - 5**

Students Corner - 196....

**PAGE - 9**

Token investment for toning up port infra

**PAGE - 12**

IMO 2021 - Achieving Digitalisation and

“IRClass Review of 2020 and Outlook for 2021 – The road to revitalisation” - Mr Arun Sharma, Executive Chairman, IR Class & Chairman, IACS



IRCLASS
Indian Register of Shipping

2020 brought about an unprecedented situation in the form of the pandemic. Indian Register of Shipping (IRClass) responded swiftly by taking a pragmatic and practical approach in maintaining its services to its clients during this period of global restriction in population movement to reduce the spread of COVID-19.



Mr Arun Sharma, Executive Chairman, IR Class & Chairman, IACS

IRClass Executive Chairman Mr Arun Sharma, as Chairman of the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS), led the organisation's rapid response to assist the industry during the lockdown period. The first wave of mitigative measures which included maintaining the validity of certificates and allowing the sharing of IACS members' exclusive surveyors, were quickly implemented to allow ships to continue operations and hence,

facilitating trade.

During his tenure as IACS Chairman, Mr. Sharma started an initiative to encourage class to engage more deeply and frequently with industry partners through a structured programme of engagement. A data driven policy was another initiative embarked upon so that decisions within IACS could be made on objectively justified and scientifically evidenced positions.

2020 also marked IRClass' 10 years as an IACS member. During its membership, IRClass participated in various important IACS bodies and has chaired the IACS group on Quality Policy, the Safety Panel, the Steering Committee on Strategy and Expert Group on Formal Safety Assessment. Further IRClass also chaired the General Policy Group (GPG) which is the highest technical body in IACS while making regular contributions in various panels and expert groups. With rapid advancement in technologies and ever-changing regulatory requirements, the role of class is also changing. Expanding class society's verification fields into the new and emerging areas of data quality assurance is another important aspect which IRClass will continue to champion through its membership of IACS. IRClass intends to further strengthen the data driven policy initiatives taken by IACS.

As a classification society, IRClass has maintained its ranking in Lloyd's List "Top

10 Classification Societies 2020". IRClass saw consistent growth in its foreign flag fleet which is approx. 20% of the total seagoing fleet. The increase is a direct reflection of clients' increasing confidence and the growing international profile of the organisation.

IRClass is also proud of the many milestones it managed to achieve this year. Top of list is having received authorisation as a Recognized Organisation (RO) from the US Flag Administration. Today, IRClass enjoys recognition from various flags collectively representing 58% of global tonnage.

IRClass adapted to the use of remote surveys to overcome movement restrictions and to ensure that its services remained unhindered to customers. Subsequently physical surveys were also conducted prior to the certificate expiry to check the efficacy of remote surveys.

IRClass continues to closely work and assist shipowners by providing approval and certification services, as well as technical guidance to improve energy efficiency of ships and achieve compliance.

IRClass is working with industry organisations on technological and regulatory aspects of alternate fuels like methanol, hydrogen, and ammonia to evaluate their safety and potential contribution to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. There is an increasing trend towards use of batteries for ship's propulsion to reduce carbon footprint. IRClass is carrying out type approval of Li-Ion battery system based on international standards and Class rules.

Towards development of autonomous shipping, IRClass is working in partnership with a large Indian conglomerate for development of remote-controlled ship project.

2020 was also the year of two important deadlines for vessel owners as cyber risks onboard ships must be addressed as well as the certification of Inventory of hazardous materials (IHM) onboard for ships visiting EU ports. IRClass played a key role in advising owners on the regulations and ran regular courses on the topic to assist owners towards their compliance needs.

Offshore projects continue to be a main consideration for IRClass as it classed India's first LNG-FSRU (Floating Storage Regasification Unit) marking a milestone in India's energy shift towards natural gas. IRClass is proud to be part of the project as it signals the gradual move towards clean energy, cutting emissions in the future. It also oversaw two Floating Production Storage and Offloading ("FPSO") conversion projects.

Domestically, IRClass is proud to continue its strong and growing relationship with the Indian Navy as Defence remains an important growth area. In a major 'first' the Indian Navy entrusted IRClass with single class certification of three major new construction projects – Survey Vessels (Large), Diving Support Vessels and ASW-SW Corvettes. IRClass is also engaged in similar areas with other paramilitary and government services, including the Indian Coast Guard, BSF, NDRE, State Police Departments etc.

IRClass is also actively engaged with all coastal shipping operators and Inland

Waterways Authority of India towards strengthening this sector which has a strong growth potential.

The pandemic has also changed the way IRClass communicates with its clients. From organising workshops, seminars successfully earlier, IRClass pivoted to online webinars to share its expertise and views. Today, IRClass experts are invited to speak to an audience no longer limited by geographical boundaries.

Looking into 2021, IRClass will continue to grow footprints across the world with plans for opening more offices in the Middle East and new offices in Africa to boost our presence. We see significant growth opportunities there and IRClass sets its sight in building long-term commitment in the region.

IRClass Academy has ramped up its e-learning courses and continues to see the opportunity to expand. Digitalisation continues to be a key part of our strategy to enhance our service offerings and value add to our clients.

Mr. Arun Sharma stated '2020 has been an unprecedented year which caused unforeseen disruption worldwide. However, the industry handled it incredibly well and ensured the steady flow of global trade. The pandemic has indirectly been a catalyst the world needed to make the leap towards digitalisation. This is the revitalisation the industry needs, and we need to do all we can to support the change. The learnings from this pandemic hit year will help us emerge stronger and we look forward toward 2021 with renewed vigour and remain steadfast in our commitment to maritime safety and quality'.