

Apeejay Shipping in expansion mode, buys Panamax

Our Bureau

KOLKATA

APEEJAY Shipping Ltd, an Apeejay Surrendra Group company, on Tuesday announced the acquisition of a 67,359 DWT (deadweight tonnage) gearless Panamax of Japanese make for an undisclosed amount. The ship will be renamed as APJ Mahalaxmi. This is in line with Apeejay Shipping's target to become a one million DWT company offering total sea logistics solutions by 2010.

The expansion plans of Apeejay Shipping is also according to schedule with APJ Kais — the first of the three geared Supramaxes that the company has ordered from China's Cosco Shipyard Group — expected to join by April 2009. This will increase the fleet size of the company to six with a total DWT of 3,57,653.



Apeejay Shipping expects the other two ships to be delivered in 2010 and 2011.

"Ship values being what they are today, provide a good opportunity for a company like us.

"Even though markets remain bleak and have been pretty much at the bottom for the last two quarters, judicious addition to the fleet with second hand tonnage, at prices that would have been unimaginable, will definitely provide an upside. This strategy is to ensure our expansion and growth plans are intact," Apeejay Shipping Ltd CEO Captain Mahapatra said in a statement issued here on Tuesday.

Apeejay Shipping has been augmenting and upgrading its fleet to meet the requirements of global trade. Specialising in dry bulk cargo, the fleet comprises a mix of panamax, handymax and supramax vessels.

Currently in operation are the 71,037-DWT APJ Suryavir, 64,100-DWT APJ Sridevi, 52,454-DWT APJ Jad and 45,703-DWT APJ Akhil.

The company is also working towards enhancing value by growing technologically and improving operational efficiencies to reduce turnaround time.