

# Call to seize 'golden opportunity' on cadet training to prevent crisis

**Manpower conference told the time is right to stem future shortfall**

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Singapore

BOTH shipowners and managers are calling for immediate action to train more seafarers, and warning that the shortage of officers is set to get worse in the next couple of years

Speaking at Maritime Manpower Singapore 2007, K Line managing director Kenichi Kuroya stressed the need to act while the industry is making money.

"While the market is good, many owners can afford to provide money and cadet berths. This is a golden opportunity for us to take action," he told the conference organised by the Singapore Maritime Officers Union. "When the market place is down, maybe its not the opportune time. We would like to see action today because education simply takes a long time," he said.

Pradeep Chawla, director of quality assurance and training for Anglo-Eastern Ship Management, lashed out at shipowners for having failed to provide cadet berths in the past.

"All these years we've been shouting we need cadet berths. How do we put the people for training if you don't give us the berths?" he asked.

"Two cadets per ship is the minimum intake required to sustain the supply of human resources in the maritime industry, and perhaps the only way to prevent future shortages is to make two cadets a mandatory requirement in the manning scales for ships."

According to Capt Chawla, there was a failure to train cadets in the 1980s and 1990s. "Now the crisis is very much around us."

Painting a grim picture for the next cou-



Kenichi Kuroya, managing director of K Line: "We would like to see action today, because education simply takes a long time."

ple of years, he said, "I can guarantee the availability of officers is going down."

He predicted that the worldwide shortage would continue in 2008 and 2009,

even though crew supplying nations kept increasing the number of trainees being inducted into the seafaring profession.

For shipowners this will mean having to

pay even more for crew next year, and Capt Chawla predicts wage rates will rise 15%. For senior officers on gas carriers, sector rises are expected to be higher, and

he said described getting crew for LNG and LPG as being like "an auction", with seafarers simply moving to the highest bidder.