

Joshi reveals potential SCI tanker expansion move

Indian largest shipowner wants to add more tankers to its fleet over the coming year

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By Jonathan Boonzaier

Shipping Corp of India chairperson and managing director Harjeet Kaur Joshi wants the company she leads to add more tankers to its fleet. Speaking at a TMS-organized webinar on Wednesday, Joshi revealed that tankers purchases are part of its 2021 financial year plans.



Renewed charter activity pushes VLCC rates to jump 40% this week

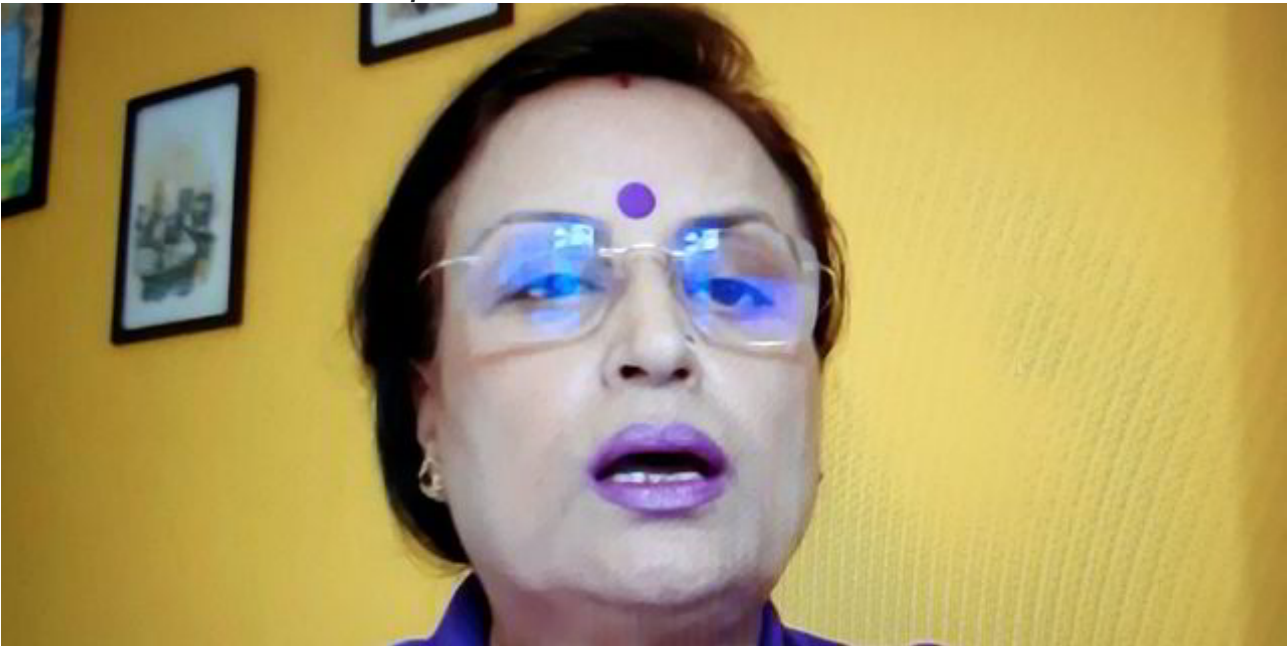
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Joshi did not specify what types of tankers are under consideration, nor did she say whether these would be newbuildings or second-hand purchases.

“SCI is a very optimistic and aggressive company,” said Joshi, who explained that SCI’s fleet of 31 tankers performed extremely well during the first quarter of the 2020 calendar year thanks to strong demand for storage.

SCI, she said was lucky as it had its vessels at the right ports to allow it to take advantage of the demand for floating storage as oil prices collapsed do to the effects of the Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak.

Minimal coronavirus impact



SCI chairperson and managing director Harjeet Kaur Joshi Photo: Jonathan Boonzaier

SCI's tanker fleet comprises of five VLCCs, four suezmaxes, 11 aframaxs, six panamaxs and five handytankers.

Overall, Joshi said that SCI felt minimal impact from the coronavirus, and since the second quarter of the 2020 calendar year, which is the first quarter of SCI's 2021 financial year, dry-bulk rates have started picking up.

"Rates are starting to surpass 2019 levels, so we are making up our losses from the last quarter," she said.

Only the liner sector – where SCI is a small player with just two 2,810-teu containerships – remains challenging as lockdowns and economic uncertainty has drastically cut consumer spending.

"We are not concentrating much on our container fleet. People's preferences have changed. Humans have gone back to basics and are not buying things they can do without, or luxury goods. For the container market that is not good."

Joshi said she believed that shipping fared fairly well during the coronavirus pandemic and she remained optimistic about its future.

"Only shipping continued continuously throughout the pandemic. Air transport, rail transport all experienced disruptions.

“I always say that without shipping, half the world would starve, and the other half would die from the cold,” she concluded