PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY

Following the sinking of the passenger ferry* Shariatpur-1*, on 13\textsuperscript{th} March after being hit by a small cargo ship in the Meghna River, south-west of the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu offered his condolences and sympathies to the families of all those who lost their life.

Speaking to the Organization’s Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR), in session last month the Secretary-General also expressed the solidarity of IMO, at these difficult times, with the Government of Bangladesh. He reiterated IMO’s readiness to respond to any request from Bangladesh for assistance for technical co-operation.

This latest incident comes in the wake of the *Costa Concordia* incident earlier this year, in the aftermath of which the Secretary-General included an item on Passenger ship safety on the agenda of the Maritime Safety Committee. He also urged the Italian Maritime Administration to carry out its investigation into the casualty and to report its findings to IMO as soon as possible.

Furthermore, following the sinking in February of MV *Rabaul Queen* and upon request of the Government of Papua New Guinea, a team of two IMO officers have carried out a needs assessment mission to assist the Government of Papua New Guinea in improving its safety system.

Secretary-General Sekimizu also reminded the Sub-Committee of IMO’s on-going project on domestic ferry safety and related technical co-operation activities undertaken by the Organization. He referred specifically to a regional forum on domestic ferry safety held in Bali last December. This adopted an eight-point action plan. He indicated that IMO is ready to carry out further technical co-operation activities related to the domestic ferry safety project.