

THE ACTIVIST



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MAERSK ACCUSED OF RISKING ANOTHER SHIPPING DISASTER

Lessons from the Rena disaster clearly haven't been learnt, as new evidence emerges of deliberate attempts by shipping company Maersk to interfere with the navigation systems of two ships arriving into Auckland during the current Auckland Ports dispute, according to the Maritime Union of New Zealand.

Maritime workers tracking coastal shipping movements noticed that the Irenes Remedy and Maersk Aberdeen have in recent days both turned off their automatic identification systems (AIS) as they approached New Zealand.

The two ships coming into Auckland came in without their navigational equipment turned on, despite it being in good working order, the Maritime Union said.

If deliberate, this was deeply concerning and showed a complete disregard for the safe passage of the ships and their workforce, MUNZ General Secretary Joe Fleetwood said.

Joe Fleetwood said the experienced maritime workers who noticed the anomaly believe the vessels were trying to be 'silent'

to prevent their movement being tracked during the current industrial dispute.

Mr Fleetwood said he had asked the Maersk Aberdeen captain in Wellington if he had been turning AIS off on New Zealand's coast, and wasn't satisfied with the response. The AIS tracking device was of high concern, and he had wanted to go aboard the vessel immediately on arrival, not two hours later as had occurred, Fleetwood said.

"We will be asking shipping authorities at Maritime New Zealand what on earth is going on," he said.

"There is no obvious explanation for this occurring only on vessels involved in the industrial dispute in this way. We are looking forward to hearing an answer from Maritime New Zealand on this."

Mr Fleetwood says if there was any suggestion that navigational or safety procedures were being deliberately circumvented it would be unforgivable.

"Obviously the Ports of Auckland and Port of Tauranga should be queried as to their awareness of this situation, and whether they have any concerns about it.

"But we also want an assurance from Maritime New Zealand that they will not tolerate this deliberate interference with a ship's navigation systems.

"Given the vessels are operating in the same area as the site of the Rena disaster, this is even more disturbing," he said.

Help save
our Port

**BRITOMART 4PM
SATURDAY MARCH 10**

**Join the rally to support
job security for our families
and a sustainable port.**

Please - sign our petition today at:

SaveOurPort.com



This is for the information and guidance of RMTU members only!

The Irenes Remedy and Maersk Aberdeen container ships have worked at the Ports of Auckland in recent days despite strike action.

ITF REDOUBLES SUPPORT FOR NZ DOCKERS

The ITF today promised redoubled action in support of Port of Auckland Dockers who have been told they are being made compulsorily redundant.

The decision by Ports of Auckland CEO Tony Gibson rejects a negotiated solution and dramatically escalates the dispute at the port. It would throw 320 dockers out of work and devastate their families and community relations in the city. In Gibson's words the workers are "superfluous to our needs".

The ITF has already mobilised support among its member unions*, and ITF president Paddy Crumlin today vowed to ramp up solidarity with the dockers and their community even further. He stated: "Unless Tony Gibson's decision is reversed it makes Auckland a 'port of convenience' – a known labour relations disaster area.

That can have real consequences in how dockers worldwide react to these cargoes. And it can have consequences among seafarers, among shipping companies looking for ports where they will find efficient and co-operative loading and unloading, and potentially even among customers of New Zealand goods – including the supermarkets who have embraced ethical trading standards along their supply chains, ports included."

He continued: "The ITF and its members will go all out in support of our New Zealand colleagues. We are seeking an urgent meeting with New Zealand government representatives, with the High Commission in London, and asking our affiliates to do the same in their home

countries, and we are all finalising plans to ensure that these dockers get all the international support they need. New Zealand is a trusted 'brand' worldwide, a home of fairness. This shameful decision by the company risks serious damage to that reputation, with all that that may imply."

See www.itfglobal.org/solidarity/solidarity-3502.cfm

0900 NUMBERS TO SUPPORT MEAT AND PORT WORKERS

Please let your friends, family etc know that this is another way to raise funds to support the striking Auckland port workers and the locked out (or striking) Affco workers.

For the Port Workers 0900OURPORT (0900 6877678)

For the Affco workers 0900LOCKOUT (0900 5625688)

Call cost is \$5.00 flat rate plus GST. Apart from an admin fee (around 50 cents), this will be a donation to support these workers.

Some landlines and mobiles are blocked for 0900 calls, so if anyone reports difficulties connecting that is likely to be the reason.

PORTS OF AUCKLAND ACTIONS IN SACKING WORKERS DISGRACEFUL

The Ports of Auckland's actions in sacking 300 staff sets a terrible precedent for all workers in New Zealand, Green Party Co-leader Dr Russel Norman said today.

The Ports of Auckland today announced it is making its striking workers redundant and will contract the work out.

"The Ports of Auckland's actions in dismissing staff because they are in a union and willing to stand up for decent work



practices, including regular shifts and time with family, is appalling," said Dr Norman.

The Government's legislative changes in the last term have set the scene for employers such as the Ports of Auckland to clamp down hard on workers and unions.

"The Government's legislative changes in the last term have set the scene for employers such as the Ports of Auckland to clamp down hard on workers and unions.

"John Key should realise that we will never catch Australia by driving down New Zealand wages and working conditions. We will just make New Zealand workers poorer.

"The Mayor of Auckland Len Brown and the Auckland Council have sat on their hands over this dispute for too long.

"It's time for Mayor Brown to take a stand in support of the workers that voted for him," Dr Norman said.

CTU AND MARITIME UNION RELEASE UNION BARGAINING POSITION IN PORT MEDIATION

The Maritime Union and the CTU are releasing the latest bargaining position of the Maritime Union in talks with Ports of Auckland.

Peter Conway, CTU Secretary joined Garry Parsloe, Maritime Union National President and the union bargaining team at mediation with Ports of Auckland on Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd March last week.

Peter Conway has said that "Richard Pearson, Board Chair of Ports of Auckland has claimed that the contract negotiations are 'completed' and he claims that I ended the talks last Friday".

"This is simply not true", says Peter Conway.

The Maritime Union has every interest in continuing the negotiations and indicated a willingness to attend ongoing mediation.

Garry Parsloe said that it is true that the union indicated they could not accept the Ports of Auckland proposed agreement.

"But that is very different from breaking off negotiations".

"In fact", he says, "the union offered several concessions including flexibility in rosters and hours, reduced overtime payments, and indicated other areas where discussions could continue".

Garry Parsloe said that the real issue now is the fact that Ports of Auckland have not agreed to resume mediation despite the union request, and has instead indicated it intends to dismiss all workers covered by the bargaining. We want Ports of Auckland to remove that threat and return to negotiations. We will continue to vigorously oppose the dismissal of these workers.

"In the interests of transparency on the issue of what happened in mediation last Friday, we are releasing the Maritime Union position tabled that afternoon".

MUNZ revised position
2nd March 2012

Given the progress made in talks over the last two days, MUNZ is prepared, without prejudice, to take the following position to a meeting of members on Monday, 5th March for consideration. We can be available for mediation for part of 6th March and 7th March.

1. 12 hour shifts to be worked on a basis to be agreed.
2. Removal of 1, 2 roster to allow greater flexibility in rosters across all 24 hours. This addresses interchangeability between shifts as everyone is in the floating roster.
3. Overtime of time and a half for 2 or 4 hours worked in addition and therefore the amendment of the automatic



payment of 8 additional hours. This provides real savings for POA.

4. Increase number of part-timers (P24).
5. Changeover times – reduce. We are prepared to discuss this and believe that there are reasonable savings there for POA.
6. The above five matters as advised on 12th January 2012.
7. More effective use of ADOs and GDOs for P24s. We believe there is room for improvement.
8. Drug and alcohol policy as per MUNZ proposal.
9. Move between 8 and 12 hour shifts can be discussed but key issues will be – a reasonable lock-in period on a shift, reasonable notice of a change, and mutual agreement.
10. We note that POA are now saying that 160 hours can be guaranteed in their proposed collective agreement for each month but we advise that this appears to mean there could be huge variations in weekly hours and a major effect on workers and their families without a more regular work pattern across each week in the month. We believe that pattern is established in current provisions as well as the flexibility we have agreed in negotiations.
11. The contracting out provision of the collective agreement remains an important matter to be addressed in bargaining. We cannot accept the current wording given the conduct of POA. We accept that there is a statutory requirement for a collective agreement to refer to what must happen if there is a proposal to contract out. We will discuss wording on this.
12. Other claims by MUNZ remain 'live' unless amended in bargaining. You have made no response to our claims which are very minimal compared with your extensive list of major claims.
13. Labour utilisation, flexibility in shifts, work practices, and work allocation issues not addressed in this process of agreeing a collective agreement to be referred to a Continuous Improvement Working Party with agreed terms of

reference and which reports to POA Chief Executive and MUNZ monthly on progress.

14. Pay increase 2.5%.
15. We believe that POA paying non-union staff a higher rate will continue to cause major concern on the port and we invite POA to consider how this can be resolved given the offers we have made to provide for more flexibility.
16. Conlinxx. We need to find a mutually acceptable way that this matter concerning a company 90% owned by POA can be addressed in a reasonable timeframe. We want to see shuttles fully utilised by our members and we are prepared to use this timeframe to achieve that.
17. We believe we have responded to your claims and are happy to clarify this accordingly in further discussions. We have provided you with an analysis of the major differences between the current collective agreement and your proposals. We have explained to you why we cannot accept your offer and it is important now that POA move from their extreme position of seeking huge variations in the current collective agreement or you will dismiss all workers and contract out their work.
18. There needs to be a commitment by POA to resolve all matters in collective bargaining.



**RTBU SAYS NTC IS
"SLASHING FATIGUE
SAFETY STANDARDS"**

The Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) of Australia has expressed alarm at what it says are moves to remove the regulation of maximum 12-hour shifts for train drivers, however, the Australasian Railway Association (ARA) is stressing that rail fatigue management is "much more sophisticated" than shift time limits.

The RTBU's comments are in relation to the National Transport Commission's (NTC) draft regulatory impact statement (RIS) which is examining options for further regulations for the hours of work and rest for rail safety

workers beyond those currently included in the Rail Safety National Law. The new Rail Safety National Law (endorsed by the Australia's Transport Ministers on 4 November last year) once enacted, will establish a single national rail regulator, and create a single consistent body of rail safety law for that regulator to administer across Australia. According to the RTBU, the NTC's draft RIS recommends "scrapping" train drivers' maximum shift limits in arguing for "...streamlining regulatory arrangements and reducing the compliance burden and costs to industry".

The RTBU says the recommendation of 12 hours maximum shifts for train drivers by the McInerney Inquiry into the Waterfall Train Accident was "introduced for a good reason".

RTBU national secretary Bob Nanva said in a statement released on Monday that there was no safe level of fatigue, and to scrap maximum shifts to make "life easier for operators flies in the face of safe work practices".

"Cost should never come before safety and it's alarming that a responsible body such as the NTC would put its name to this report," Nanva said.

"If harmonisation is simply a race to the bottom based on slashing costs it won't serve the public interest," he said.

ARE YOUR HIPS CAUSING PROBLEMS?

Recent medical studies have shown that men with jobs involving regular heavy lifting (20-25kg+) are 2-3 times more likely to develop osteoarthritis in both hips. The studies involved builders, dockyard workers and other heavy manual trades. These studies have been used to obtain cover for hip osteoarthritis from ACC, as a workplace gradual process injury. The ACC cover pays for treatment, weekly compensation while recovering from surgery and will help get you back working at full capacity.

If you, or someone you know, had or has a job involving regular heavy lifting and has now been told that you have bilateral osteoarthritis (both hips) you should have

your doctor make a claim to ACC for a workplace gradual process injury.

If you want to discuss this please call Chris Boys at Hazel Armstrong Law 04 4736767.

TOLL TRANZ LINK WAGE REMITS CALLED

The Toll Tranz Link Collective Agreement expires 30 June 2012. The renewal of the CA will see both the Union and the employer table claims. The RMTU claims come from members who are covered by the CA and have to have been raised and voted on and carried at a bona fide meeting of the branch.

The RMTU negotiation team shall be led by Northern Regional Organiser Scott Wilson.

The remits will be prioritised by the negotiation team. Regular updates will be disseminated to members.

All remits for the Toll Tranz Link Wageround must be submitted to National Office by Friday 30 March 2012. No late remits will be accepted.

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY – 28 APRIL

We are hopeful that there will once again be many ceremonies and services held to commemorate this very important Day throughout NZ by RMTU members. The RMTU and its membership pioneered the marking of the day here in NZ by Union's.

The purpose of this notice is to enable anyone wishing to organize or to attend a service to put it in their diaries. Please distribute this to your contacts who may be interested in attending or organising a short commemoration.

We can assist to organize speakers, local dignitaries or politicians. In many cases representatives of the families of killed workers attend and speak if they wish.

We expect trains to as usual stop at midday as a mark of respect wherever they are (clear of bridges, tunnels etc as per the rules) for 1 minute.



RMTU PORTS FORUM

The 2012 RMTU Ports Forum will be held in Wellington on 14 and 15 March 2012.

The Forum will follow the usual format, with each branch reporting briefly on local issues and activities. In particular, a number of ports are involved in Collective Agreement negotiations, so the discussion will be interesting.

The current Ports of Auckland dispute and its impact on RMTU members undertaking solidarity actions will be reviewed and discussed.

VEOLIA TO SELL STAKE IN TRANSDEV UNIT TO NATIXIS FUND

French utility Veolia Environnement SA (VE) is likely to start negotiations to sell its 50% stake in transport unit Transdev Veolia to equity fund Cube Infrastructure, which is managed by French bank Natixis SA (KN.FR), newspaper Les Echos reported Wednesday, citing an unnamed source familiar with the matter.

Cube Infrastructure, which is based in Luxembourg, has filed an offer for Transdev that is high enough for Veolia to start negotiations, the newspaper reported.

CAMPAIGN CALLS FOR REFERENDUM ON ASSET SALES

A campaign comprising a wide range of community organisations are calling for a citizens initiated referendum on asset sales today.

Concerned that New Zealanders haven't had a chance to voice their concerns about selling our state owned assets (SOEs), the campaign is seeking to get enough petition signatures to hold a referendum on the issue.

"Voters need the chance to have a direct say in whether they think the Government should sell our assets," said Campaign Spokesperson and Grey Power President, Roy Reid.

"The Government does not have the mandate to sell our strategic assets and it is time the public had their say," said fellow Campaign Spokesperson and CTU President, Helen Kelly.

The campaign will actively engage the public to seek support for a citizens initiated referendum on the following question:

Do you support the Government selling up to 49% of Meridian Energy, Mighty River Power, Genesis Power, Solid Energy and Air NZ?

The petition question aims to be as close to the Government's policy as possible to determine whether the Government has the mandate or not to sell off New Zealand's SOEs.

The Clerk of the House of Representatives will consult the public on the wording of the petition before the wording is finalised and ready for collecting signatures.

"It is vital all New Zealanders get to have their say on the issue of asset sales. Once they are sold, they are gone for good. Partial privatisation will inevitably result in foreign ownership with the profits disappearing overseas" said Mr Reid.

PIKE RIVER – DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN

The 2010 Pike River Coal (PRC) explosions were a disaster waiting to happen, according to evidence assembled as the third phase of the New Zealand government's Royal Commission of Inquiry ended February 17 in the Greymouth District Court.

The final phase of the inquiry will begin in April and the commission is due to report its findings in September. The Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union (EPMU) had 65 members at Pike River mine and has long criticised mine safety procedures in the industry.

Meanwhile, the bodies of the 29 men who died after a series of methane gas explosions ripped through the mine have not been recovered.

The Commission began its inquiry in July 2011 and has heard testimony from mining experts and former employees that PRC sacrificed workers' safety and cut costs for greater profit. The Department of Labour in

November laid 25 charges against PRC, which is currently in liquidation, the company's former chief executive Peter Whittall, and mining contractor VLI Drilling Limited for alleged breaches of health and safety regulations.

BHP BUYS THE BEST

Downer EDI has scored a potential \$400m contract with BHP Billiton for the supply of locomotives in the Pilbara which the company says marks a step in the right direction in building on its plans for more customers in Western Australia. The rolling stock contract is for the supply of Downer Electro-Motive Diesel (EMD) Model SD70ACe/LCi locomotives to BHP Billiton Iron Ore in the Pilbara for the next five years. The contract has a core value of \$292m with options offered that could bring the total value to over \$400m.

The SD70ACe/LCi locomotive and its key components and systems are designed and built by EMD, a member of the Caterpillar family of companies. Downer and EMD have worked together for more than 60 years supplying and maintaining locomotives in Australia.

The contract follows the award to Downer, in partnership with Progress Rail USA (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Caterpillar), of a rolling stock supply contract to design, build and deliver 17 new PR22L locomotives to TasRail, Tasmania's State owned rail company.

The contract was awarded in December 2011 and the first new locomotives are expected to be delivered in mid-2013. The total value of the project is over \$60m.

"This fleet of locomotives will bring significant performance benefits to TasRail including fuel consumption improvements, exhaust emission benefits and reliability improvements," Fenn said.

The PR22L locomotive and its key components and systems are designed and built by Progress Rail USA and EMD.

DAMS COULD BE SOLD UNDER PARTIAL PRIVATISATION

The Government's plans to retain 51 percent of our state-owned enterprises does not guarantee individual strategic assets, like our dams, will not fall 100 percent into foreign private control, the Green Party said today.

Treasury advised the Finance and Expenditure Committee today that partially privatised state-owned energy companies should be managed in a strictly commercial way and wouldn't rule out the possibility that individual assets could fall into foreign ownership.

If it makes commercial sense to sell a dam or two — they're gone.

"Shareholding Ministers will manage their 51 percent shareholding according to 'best commercial practice' rather than what is in the best public interest. If it makes commercial sense to sell a dam or two — they're gone," said Green Party Co-leader Dr Russel Norman.

"Holding 51 percent of an energy company will not, by itself, guarantee that individual assets remain in New Zealand control.

"Under the Government's privatisation plans, if Mighty River Power is offered a commercially attractive bid for their Waikato River dams from an Australian or Chinese investor, the Crown's directors on the board will be obligated to act in the best commercial interest of the company and possibly sell those dams.

"The Government's partial privatisation plans mean they will be giving up New Zealand's long-term strategic interests for short-term commercial expediency."

The Government previously admitted to Maori in their consultation that, 'Under the Mixed Ownership Model, Ministers' legal powers will be those afforded to shareholders under the Companies Act 1993. In practice, Ministers will look to best commercial practice in how they exercise those powers'.

"The possible loss of individual strategic energy assets under the National Government's plan for privatisation is very



real and hasn't been solved," Dr Norman added.

"It's yet another reason why the Government's asset sale programme is plain dumb.

"An alternative plan to selling off the best of our last remaining SOEs is to keep them and refocus their largely domestic operations towards booming renewable energy export markets abroad.

"We can create tens of thousands of new, clean technology jobs here at home if we're smart."

WESTPAC CHANGE OF GUARD PROVIDES CHANCE TO END EXCESS CULTURE AT THE TOP

New leadership at Westpac bank means it's a good time for a change of culture in the organisation, the union for bank workers said today.

Westpac NZ CEO George Frazis is leaving the New Zealand operation, returning to Australia.

Andrew Casidy, Finance Secretary of FIRST Union, said that a rebalancing was needed, away from simply repatriating big profits back to Australia and paying \$5.8 million CEO salaries, to an organisation where its loyal workforce was prioritised more.

A key concern for Westpac and other bank workers was unfair target systems, which served to drive more debt onto communities and create stress for bank workers, he said.

"Despite the global financial crisis, and the Canterbury earthquake, Westpac has escalated its sales targets regime in the last two years."

"Staff are paying the price for Westpac persisting with unrealistic and irresponsible sales targets. Customers expect more of the banks and are turned off by these practices."

"Westpac is a wealthy employer who could and should be leading by example with better work practices," Andrew Casidy said.

At the end of last year Westpac announced a 41% rise in New Zealand annual cash earnings, he said.

Andrew Casidy said FIRST Union would welcome the opportunity to brief incoming CEO Peter Clare on these and other matters for Westpac workers

PARTNERS CALL ON DIPLOMATS TO JUMP SHIP

The staffing crisis facing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade deepened today when it was revealed that diplomats' partners are encouraging them to leave the Ministry en masse.

In a letter to be presented to MFAT CEO John Allen on Monday, a group representing 180 diplomats' partners wrote "We will be encouraging our partners, and supporting their efforts, to pursue a career beyond MFAT."

Responding to proposals to radically change the Ministry's structure and remuneration, the letter says:

"We have travelled and served in inhospitable and insecure environments, accepted disruption to careers and schooling, absorbed loss of income and pension, and felt the impacts of long absences from family and friends."

"The proposed changes to career and remuneration could end up discriminating against families, providing us with little reason to continue making the personal, financial and professional contributions and sacrifices for MFAT and New Zealand's international reputation."

Bronwen Golder, the group's spokesperson, said: "Diplomats' partners

and families feel insulted by the proposals. Our partners' career decisions result in us resigning our jobs and taking our families away from loved ones, friends and New Zealand's way of life to live where education, healthcare, culture and language are very different. Partners usually either aren't able to work or aren't allowed to when they're abroad for New Zealand. In a recent poll of partners, 83% had not been able to find

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comparable employment while on posting or on return to New Zealand, as they had had when they left.

"It's already hard to convince MFAT partners to move overseas. The proposed changes are so significant that many MFAT couples will not consider another posting for MFAT. That will represent a great loss of MFAT talent, experience and diversity."

Warren Fraser, President of the Foreign Service Association, said: "When partners, usually highly qualified in their own right, give up their job to follow an MFAT staff member overseas it's a decision to halve their income. What John Allen is saying in the proposals is that the sacrifices and costs that come with representing New Zealand overseas should no longer be recognised. These proposals are bad for families, and bad for New Zealand."

PSA National Secretary Brenda Pilott said: "Partners' concerns are further proof that the Ministry needs to rethink its proposal to cut over 300 jobs. The proposal has already raised questions about New Zealand's and New Zealanders' interests overseas being put at risk. Now it's clear that it's pushing our best and brightest to look elsewhere for jobs that better support them and their partners."

ASK WHAT SCHOOLS REALLY THINK ABOUT NATIONAL STANDARDS

The education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa says it's a shame the Education Review Office doesn't report on what schools really think of National Standards, because it would paint a very different picture.

ERO has told a parliamentary select committee that at least 80 percent of schools are getting on with the business of implementing National Standards.

"If you are just measuring compliance that is the simplistic picture you're going to get," says NZEI President Ian Leckie.

"However the back-story is that schools are coming at National Standards from a position of forced or reluctant compliance

and they have no confidence that they will do anything to raise student achievement".

"There is deep concern about the statistical validity and reliability of National Standards information, particularly with schools expected to submit National Standards student achievement data to Education Ministry with their annual financial statement by May 31," he says.

That means the information will be publicly available and will be able to be aggregated into crude league tables that will unfairly label students, schools and their communities.

Ian Leckie says the threat of National Standards based league tables is causing a lot of anxiety and nervousness among schools.

"There is huge variation in the way National Standards are being implemented and interpreted and they do not accurately reflect each child's overall achievement or progress. To use them to compare schools or base funding and resourcing decisions on, would be completely unfair."

"It's all very well for ERO to report high levels of National Standards compliance because compliance is all the government is interested in. What it doesn't want to hear is the back-story of reluctant implementation, serious lack of confidence in National Standards data and real concern over the prospect of unfair and misleading league tables," Mr Leckie says.

SIMPLE QUESTION MAERSK – WERE THE NAVIGATION SYSTEMS ON OR OFF?

The Maritime Union says it is not satisfied with the response from shipping company Maersk over its navigation systems on two ships last week, and will be laying a complaint with Maritime NZ.

Yesterday, the Maritime Union released correspondence between a ship spotter at Ports of Auckland and Maritime New Zealand, indicating Maersk had interfered with the navigation systems of two ships entering Auckland last week.



Joe Fleetwood, Maritime Union General Secretary, said that the response the Port worker received from Maritime NZ when it was raised on March 2 reads (emphasis added):

"Subsequent to your query regarding the captioned matter, we have raised concern to the operator of both vessels. The operator confirms that the AIS system on both vessels is in good working order. The masters are now aware of this issue and have put the AIS system back into service."

"The Maritime NZ response to the Port worker makes it absolutely clear that the AIS systems were in good working order, but had to be put 'back into service'."

"Maersk also confirmed yesterday that their AIS navigation systems were fully functional."

"Given this, for their ships not to turn up for several hours in the AIS navigational tracking, says to us that they were deliberately turned off."

"We await a response from Maersk that properly accounts for these discrepancies," Joe Fleetwood said.

"In the meantime, it is our view that Maritime New Zealand needs to commence a detailed investigation to get to the bottom of this."

BITS AND BOBS

- Millions of workers went on strike across India February 28 to protest soaring prices and back demands for improved workers' rights. Major unions called the countrywide strike to protest the "anti-labour" policies of the government, rising prices and disinvestment of state-owned enterprises. The strike included workers from

state-run phone companies, bus drivers and postal workers and other sectors. "We will have to think about our future course of action if the government does not come forward with proposals on how it will react to our demands," G. Sanjeeva Reddy, president of the Indian National Trade Union Congress, the ruling party's trade union, said. Among their demands is government action to contain inflation, provide universal social security cover for workers in the vast unorganised labour sector, and to stop selling stakes in state-run companies. India is expected to grow by about 7 per cent in the fiscal year that ends this month, but the economy has been hit by high interest rates and stubborn inflation. The strike is the 14th general strike since India opened up its economy with major reforms in 1991.

- KiwiRail has proposed an increase in the LE Minder payment to \$5.00. This will be discussed at the KIC meeting next week. The proposal includes a requirement that the rate agreed would not alter during this year's wages negotiation when the MECA is renewed.

Let's Be Safe Out There & Remember.....

"WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER"!

