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सत्यमेव जयते

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पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

DGS Order No.11 of 2026

[*Addendum to DGS Order No. 10 of 2026*]

File No. 20-19/3/2026-TRG - DGS	**Date: 01.06.2026**
Subject: Permission to MTIs for conducting foreign administration approved courses	
References:	a) DGS Order No. 8 of 2025 issued on 01/08/2025 b) DGS Order No. 4 of 2026 issued on 16/04/2026 c) DGS Order No.10 of 2026 issued on 19/05/2026

The Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) had issued DGS Order No. 10 of 2026 which had a detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) specified for the grant of 'No Objection Certificate' to a DGS approved Maritime Training Institute for conducting foreign administration approved maritime courses. In the interest of clarity, the following clarifications are issued:

i. The DGS approved MTIs desirous of applying for the 'NOC' have to submit a fee of ₹100,000/- for each course approved by a foreign administration.

ii. As there are number of DGS approved MTIs that have been conducting these courses, these MTIs shall submit the application along with the fee mentioned in (i) above, for considering issuance of the NOC, which shall be followed by a physical inspection for verification by the jurisdictional Mercantile Marine Department

iii. For any MTI which is not DGS approved, the MTI has to apply for an 'in-principle' approval and follow the procedures, submit fees as mandated for approval as a DGS approved MTI in the first place.

iv. This Order supplements the DGS Order No.5 of 2016 and the DGS Order No.7 of 2016. In the event that any provision in this Order directly conflicts with the earlier issued DGS Order(s), the provisions of this Order shall prevail.

v. The DGS MTI module expected to be operational from 1st September 2026, has a specific module where the entire process of issuance of NOC shall be rendered online and in the interim is being processed manually.

07/6/2026

(Shyam Jagannathan)

Director General of Shipping

To

1. The Principal Officers, Mercantile Marine Department, Mumbai/Kolkata/Chennai/Kandla/Kochi.
2. The Surveyor-in-Charge, Mercantile Marine Department, Goa/Jamnagar/Port Blair/Visakhapatnam/Tuticorin/Noida/Haldia/Paradip/Mangalore
3. Indian National Shipowner's Association (INSA), Mumbai.
4. Foreign Owner and Ship-Managers Association (FOSMA)
5. The Maritime Association of Ship Owners, Ship Managers and Agents (MASSA)
6. Indian Coastal Conference Shipping Association (ICCSA), Mumbai
7. Hindi cell
8. Computer cell
9. All MTIs

Copy to:

10. The Chief Surveyor with the Govt.of India
11. Nautical Advisor to the Govt.of India

भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
समुद्रीय प्रशासन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF MARITIME ADMINISTRATION, MUMBAI

August 7, 2026

Notice to Seafarers

Sub: Update of Personal Details to avail Seafarer related Services from DGMA – reg.

The Directorate General of Maritime Administration is continuously undertaking digitisation and upgradation of its online systems to enhance efficiency and transparency.

2. In furtherance of this objective, Seafarers encountering incorrect basic information in examination portal post clicking https://exams.dgma.gov.in/login/user are advised to follow the procedure mentioned in the Annexure below.

This Circular shall be given wide circulation to ensure awareness and compliance among all Seafarers with regards to correction of their basic details.

This is issued with the approval of competent authority.

(Praveen Nair)
Dy. Chief Surveyor &
Sr. Dy. Director General (Tech.)

9वीं मंज़िल, बीटा बिल्डिंग, आई थिंक टेक्नो कैम्पस, कांजुर गाँव रोड, कांजुरमार्ग (पूर्व) मुंबई- 400042
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See annexure : 1786424330_6a7aac0ac6d9c_07082026-notice-to-seafarers

II. IMO NEWS

IMO completes first global audit cycle of its member states

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has completed the first audit cycle under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS), with 168 Member States audited on how effectively they implement IMO regulations, since the Scheme became mandatory in 2016. IMSAS helps Member States strengthen how they implement and enforce IMO regulations, making shipping safer, more secure and more environmentally sustainable. With 94% of IMO Member States audited, the first cycle represents one of the most extensive collective assessments of global maritime governance ever undertaken.

Audits driving stronger technical assistance.

The first audit cycle has generated a valuable body of evidence on how IMO instruments are being implemented around the world. Audit findings, corrective action plans (CAPs) and the analysis of consolidated audit reports (CASRs) have highlighted recurrent areas requiring attention and their underlying root causes. This information enables IMO to target technical assistance where it is needed most, helping Member States address gaps, implement corrective actions, and enhance the implementation and enforcement of applicable IMO instruments.

It also supports the implementation of IMO's Capacity-Development Strategy (resolution A.1205(34)), which recognises IMSAS outcomes as a key driver in shaping needs-based capacity-development programmes and projects under the Organization's thematic technical cooperation framework.

Second cycle begins in 2027

The second audit cycle will commence in July 2027 under the revised Framework and Procedures for IMSAS (resolution A.1211(34)). The revised Scheme introduces the IMSAS Continuous Monitoring Mechanism (ICMM), featuring a more risk-based, data-driven and transparent approach. This supports continuous monitoring, audit prioritisation and stronger integration of audit outcomes into IMO's capacity-development and technical cooperation activities.

Strong commitment from Member States

The completion of the first audit cycle highlights the strong and sustained commitment of Member States to ensuring the effective and consistent implementation of applicable IMO instruments, globally.

The active participation of Member States and the work of the hundreds of auditors nominated by Governments have been central to the Scheme's success./

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Strengthening global port state control data exchange with two new agreement

IMO has concluded the latest updated data-exchange agreements with the Black Sea and Caribbean Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on Port State Control (PSC) in order to strengthen the global exchange of PSC inspection information. The agreements were signed at IMO Headquarters in London (21 July) by IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez, Mr. Onur Turhan, Secretary of the Black Sea MoU Secretariat, and Mrs. Jodi Munn Barrow, Secretary General of the Caribbean MoU Secretariat.

The signings strengthen cooperation by expanding the exchange of PSC inspection information and supporting the continued development of the PSC module within IMO's Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS).

With these agreements, IMO has now concluded updated data-exchange agreements with eight regional PSC regimes. Similar agreements have previously been signed with the Abuja, Indian Ocean, Tokyo, Mediterranean, Paris and Riyadh MoUs, while discussions continue with the Viña del Mar Agreement and the United States Coast Guard.

Supporting the PSC Overarching Database

The updated agreements represent another important milestone towards the development of a PSC Overarching Database (ODB), which will enable more comprehensive, harmonized and efficient sharing of PSC inspection data worldwide. The expanded exchange of validated inspection data will improve transparency, consistency and data integrity, while reducing duplication in reporting by Member States.

The IMO-led ODB project aims to facilitate near real-time information sharing among PSC regimes, strengthen risk-based inspection planning and support the effective implementation of IMO instruments.

Strengthening global PSC cooperation

Port State control regimes inspect foreign-flagged ships visiting ports to verify compliance with internationally agreed safety, security and environmental standards.

The updated agreements enhance cooperation between IMO and regional PSC regimes. They will increase transparency, support the harmonization of PSC activities, improve monitoring of implementation by Member States and contribute to safer, more secure and environmentally sound shipping worldwide.

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III. ILO NEWS

Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 Strengthens Seafarer Safety Framework Amid Emerging Maritime Risks

The Government of India has significantly strengthened the legal and operational framework for the safety, welfare, and protection of Indian seafarers through the implementation of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, which came into force on 15 March 2026. The legislation aligns India's maritime laws with contemporary international standards while introducing stronger safeguards to address emerging maritime risks. The Act provides enhanced statutory protection for abandoned seafarers, strengthens the regulation of Recruitment and Placement Services (RPSL), and establishes a robust legal framework for implementing evolving international maritime labour standards, reinforcing India's commitment to safeguarding the rights and welfare of its seafarers. In response to the evolving security situation in conflict-prone maritime regions, the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA), under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, has also issued a series of advisories and circulars to ensure the safety of Indian seafarers operating in high-risk areas, particularly in and around Iran, the Persian Gulf, and the Strait of Hormuz. The advisories direct shipping companies to exercise heightened caution, restrict deployment of Indian seafarers to identified conflict zones, establish 24x7 emergency communication mechanisms, maintain close coordination with Indian Missions abroad, and ensure continuous monitoring and reporting of crew in affected regions. Guidance has also been issued on emergency preparedness, compliance with the ISPS Code, dissemination of verified information, and psychological support for seafarers and their families during crisis situations. To counter misinformation during emergencies, maritime stakeholders have been advised to rely only on authenticated information issued by official agencies and avoid circulating unverified reports on social media. The Government has further established a dedicated seafarers' helpline to provide timely assistance during emergencies. Shipping companies and recruitment agencies have also been instructed to strengthen emergency response mechanisms, facilitate communication with Indian diplomatic missions, and extend all necessary support to Indian seafarers facing distress abroad. These initiatives underscore India's proactive approach to enhancing seafarer safety and welfare while ensuring that Indian maritime personnel remain protected against the evolving security challenges in the global shipping environment.

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India Reinforces Commitment to Seafarer Security, Safety and Welfare

Digital transformation, enhanced welfare measures, real-time grievance redressal and stronger maritime security framework to benefit Indian seafarers The Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA), under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), today organized a national stakeholder interaction on “Seafarer Security, Safety & Welfare and Inauguration of E-Samudra” at Taj Lands' End, Mumbai. The event was graced by Hon'ble Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, and brought together representatives from the maritime industry, seafarer organizations, Recruitment and Placement Services (RPSLs), maritime training institutes, shipowners, government agencies and maritime professionals. A major highlight was the inauguration of E-Samudra, a comprehensive digital maritime governance platform designed to provide seamless, transparent and citizen-centric services to seafarers and other maritime stakeholders. Addressing the gathering, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal emphasized that seafarers remain at the heart of India's maritime growth story. He stated that E-Samudra is an important step towards simpler, more transparent and stakeholder-centric maritime governance, ensuring that every seafarer is “safe, respected and supported.” The Hon. Minister highlighted India's growing position as a global maritime power, noting that the country is now the second-largest supplier of seafarers globally, with the ambition to soon become number one. He also highlighted India's leadership in ship recycling and the Government's vision to position the country among the top five shipbuilding nations globally. He emphasized that as global maritime activity increasingly looks towards the East, India is emerging as a key maritime leader under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. India Reinforces Commitment to Seafarer Security, Safety and Welfare.

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IV. SHIPPING NEWS

India Tells Seafarers to Assess Risk Before Taking Black Sea Ship Jobs After Five Deaths

India has advised its seafarers to weigh security risks carefully before accepting employment on commercial vessels operating in or transiting the Black Sea, after five Indian seafarers were killed in attacks on merchant ships since April 2026.

The advisory issued by the Ministry of External Affairs on 26 July describes the security situation in the Black Sea and adjoining maritime areas as highly volatile because of the continuing Russia-Ukraine conflict, with commercial vessels in those waters facing significant risks from missile and drone attacks.

The warning was published on the same day the Embassy of India in Ukraine confirmed that four Indian nationals were on board the merchant vessel AGN Ragnar when it was struck at the Port of Odesa, with two of them confirmed safe and information still awaited on the remaining two while search and rescue operations continued.

Four of the five Indian nationals aboard the bulk carrier Golden Leo were killed and a fifth was hospitalised in critical condition when the vessel was attacked on the evening of 19 July while departing Odesa with a cargo of grain, according to the MEA, which said 17 crew members were on board at the time and that eight were evacuated to a hospital in the city.

The Ukrainian Navy attributed the strike to three cruise missiles, one of which it said hit the starboard side of the Guinea-Bissau-flagged ship's superstructure and started a fire, while the Russian Ministry of Defence stated that its forces had struck Ukrainian ports and vessels operating in the interests of Ukraine's armed forces. The MEA condemned the attack without assigning responsibility for it.

A day earlier, the commercial vessel OMORFI was attacked while transiting the Black Sea in what the MEA described as reportedly Russian territorial waters, killing one of the three Indian nationals among its 10 crew members, with the other two reported safe.

The Directorate General of Maritime Administration had already instructed Indian-flagged vessels and foreign-flagged ships employing Indian crew to exercise the highest degree of caution in the region in an advisory issued on 23 July, which called for voyage-specific security risk assessments before entry and counted 10 attacks since April involving Indian seafarers serving aboard foreign-flagged ships.

Seafarers who still take up such assignments have been asked to obtain full information from employers, recruitment agencies and ship operators on the intended route, ports of call, security arrangements, insurance cover and emergency response procedures, and to confirm that their terms of employment meet applicable international maritime standards and provide for medical care, evacuation, repatriation and compensation. The ministry also asked them to keep families informed of their itineraries, maintain regular contact, follow instructions issued by vessel operators, and use the emergency numbers published for the Indian embassies in Russia and Ukraine.

India is among the largest suppliers of crew to the world fleet, with more than 320,000 active seafarers recorded in 2025 and Indian nationals accounting for roughly 12 percent of the global seafaring workforce according to figures cited by the Directorate General of Shipping, and the overwhelming majority of them sail aboard foreign-flagged tonnage.

The Black Sea advisory follows the regulator's instruction earlier in July asking Indian and foreign shipowners not to deploy Indian seafarers on vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, and a June circular restricting their deployment to conflict areas in the Gulf region except for emergency crew changes made with the seafarer's consent. New Delhi summoned Russia's ambassador after the Golden Leo attack, and the Indian mission in Kyiv said it remains in contact with Ukrainian authorities over the two seafarers still unaccounted for from the AGN Ragnar.

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India Races Towards A 200-Ship Fleet by 2035 To Counter China and Pakistan

The Indian Navy is driving towards a fleet of more than 200 ships by 2035, and New Delhi has presented two commissionings within a fortnight as evidence that the target is now within reach. The force currently operates around 150 ships and submarines, of which roughly 135 are counted as frontline combatants such as frigates, destroyers and submarines, with close to 50 further hulls under construction in Indian yards.

INS Malvan, the second Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC), was commissioned at Karwar in Karnataka on 22 July. Built by Cochin Shipyard Limited with more than 80 per cent indigenous content, the 78-metre craft displaces about 1,100 tonnes and runs three diesel engines driving waterjets for a maximum speed of 25 knots. The Ministry of Defence has described the vessel as equipped for underwater surveillance, anti-submarine warfare, low-intensity maritime operations, and mine laying, with sensors from DRDO and Bharat Electronics Limited, and lightweight torpedoes supplied through DRDO and Bharat Dynamics Limited.

Malvan is the sixth of 16 ASW-SWCs to enter service and the second of the eight boats allotted to Cochin Shipyard under a Rs 13,000 crore programme split with Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, work on which began in 2019.

Eleven days earlier at Visakhapatnam, India's Defence Minister commissioned INS Mahendragiri, the sixth Nilgiri-class stealth frigate built under Project 17A, designed in-house by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau and constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited with more than 75 per cent indigenous content. A seventh and final ship of the class, Vindhyagiri, is reported to be months away from delivery, with a further batch of next-generation frigates under Project 17B already queued behind it.

The Chief of the Naval Staff, has put the current tempo at one indigenously built warship or submarine entering service roughly every 40 days, following 12 warships and one submarine commissioned during 2025. Behind the ships already afloat sits a pipeline the Defence Acquisition Council has cleared through Acceptance of Necessity for 74 further warships worth Rs 2.35 lakh crore, comprising 65 surface vessels and nine submarines, alongside the long-delayed Project 75(I) programme for six air-independent propulsion submarines.

The urgency behind those numbers is being read in the Indian Ocean rather than in the shipyards. The Pentagon's annual assessment of Chinese military power puts the People's Liberation Army Navy battle force at more than 370 ships and submarines, the largest fleet in the world by hull count, and Beijing has steadily widened its footprint across the Indian Ocean Region through port access, survey vessels and submarine deployments. Pakistan commissioned the first of eight Chinese-built Hangor-class attack submarines, PNS/M Hangor, at Sanya in China on 30 April, with four of the class being assembled at Wuchang Shipbuilding and four more at Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works under a technology transfer arrangement.

Shallow-water hunters such as Malvan are the Indian Navy's answer to the coastal end of that problem, screening approaches to ports, anchorages and offshore infrastructure where deep-water frigates lose their advantage and conventional submarines can sit quietly on the bottom.

India's own conventional submarine arm remains the weakest link in the 2035 arithmetic, with only six Scorpène vessels delivered against an earlier plan for 24 new conventional submarines by 2030. INS Tamal, handed over from Russia in July 2025, was the last foreign-origin warship the Navy intends to take, and every hull counted towards the 200-ship goal is now expected to be built in an Indian yard.

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45 Rescued, 17 Missing After Cargo Ship Sinks in South China Sea

Rescuers pulled 45 people alive from the South China Sea after the Vietnamese cargo ship Khoi Nguyen 18 sank near Fiery Cross Reef with 62 aboard, leaving 17 unaccounted for, according to Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ministry spokesperson said the vessel went down while operating in poor weather and that Vietnamese agencies moved to the scene as soon as the loss was reported. According to the statement, the number of people rescued was 45 as of midday on Sunday, 26 July, and said Vietnamese fishing vessels working nearby had joined the search alongside the official response.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported that maritime authorities in Hainan province identified the vessel as Khoi Nguyen 18 with 62 Vietnamese nationals aboard and placed the distress position in waters near Fiery Cross Reef, which China administers as Yongshu Reef. The alarm was raised at about 6:23 pm local time on Saturday, when the Chinese rescue ship Nanhai Jiu 115 sighted what was assessed to be a rocket parachute distress flare, state news agency Xinhua reported.

Six Chinese vessels, a rescue helicopter and one Vietnamese ship were working on the rescue through Sunday, according to Xinhua. The Nanhai Jiu 115 vessel belongs to the Nanhai Rescue Bureau of China's Ministry of Transport, which maintains salvage and rescue units stationed at the reef.

Chinese state media first reported 37 rescued, then revised the figure to 39 in a second bulletin on Sunday morning, before Hanoi gave the higher count of 45. Neither government has released a confirmed death toll, and no bodies had been reported recovered.

Khoi Nguyen 18 is a Vietnam-flagged general cargo vessel built in 2017, measuring 69.9 metres in length with a 10.8-metre beam, a gross tonnage of 999 and a deadweight of just over 1,900 tonnes. The reported number of crew of 62 sits far above the manning level a coastal cargo ship of that size would

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normally carry, and neither Vietnamese nor Chinese authorities have explained who else was aboard, what the ship was carrying, or where it was bound.
Fiery Cross Reef lies in the Spratly Islands, a contested group of reefs, atolls and islets claimed in whole or in part by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan. China has built the feature into an artificial island carrying a runway, port infrastructure and a maritime rescue centre, and has claimed sovereignty over almost the entire waterway despite a 2016 arbitral ruling that found no legal basis for that claim. Vietnam thanked Chinese search and rescue units for their response and said Hanoi expected the two sides to keep working together to find those still missing.
Search operations around Fiery Cross Reef were continuing on Sunday evening, with no cause established for the loss of Khoi Nguyen 18 beyond the weather conditions described by Vietnam's Foreign Ministry.

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9 Indian Women Complete World's First Tri-Services Circumnavigation

Nine women officers from the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force made history as they sailed into Mumbai after completing the world's first all-women tri-services global circumnavigation.
The remarkable feat was achieved by Sqn Ldr Shradha P. Raju, Wg Cdr Vibha Singh, Sqn Ldr Vaishali Bhandari and Sqn Ldr Aruvi Jayadev from the Air Force, Lt Cdr Priyanka Gusain from the Navy and Maj Karamjeet Kaur, Maj Omita Dalvi, Maj Prajakta Nikam and Lt Col Anuja Varudkar from the Army.
The 314-day Samudra Pradakshina expedition covered 25,500 nautical miles across 4 oceans and rounded the 3 Great Capes.
Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who had flagged off the expedition, addressed the crew via video link during the flag-in ceremony, where they were received by Southern Army Commander Lt Gen Rajesh Pushkar.
The team for this voyage was selected from dozens of volunteers and involved 2 years of preparation, after which they also went on a 4000 nm qualifying trip to the Seychelles.
The voyage was completed aboard the IASV Triveni, a 50-foot yacht built in Puducherry.
To meet international circumnavigation criteria, the yacht crossed the Equator twice, traversed every meridian of longitude, and rounded Cape Leeuwin, Cape Horn, and the Cape of Good Hope.
The journey included 4 international port calls, including stops in Fremantle, Australia, and Cape Town, South Africa.
The team faced its toughest conditions in the Southern Ocean, battling 8 to 12 m swells and sub-zero wind chills through the Roaring Forties and Furious Fifties.
In December, they crossed the International Date Line in the Southern Ocean, marking the longitudinal halfway point. After navigating the dangerous Drake Passage, the crew rounded Cape Horn in February. After this, the team crossed the Equator northbound into the Indian Ocean and then sailed back to Mumbai. In 2009 and 2010, Commander Dilip Donde completed India's first solo circumnavigation aboard INSV Mhadei. In 2013, Commander Abhilash Tomy achieved the first solo, non-stop, unassisted circumnavigation by an Indian. In 2018, the Navy's Navika Sagar Parikrama saw 6 women officers complete an all-women circumnavigation aboard INSV Tarini.
Recently, Lt Cdr Dilna K and Lt Cdr Roopa A. completed a two-handed global circumnavigation on INSV Tarini, and earned the Shaurya Chakra.

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India Strengthens Maritime Strategy with ₹ 69,725 Crore Development Plan

India is accelerating the development of its maritime sector through a comprehensive strategy that combines infrastructure expansion, digital transformation, legislative reforms, and international cooperation. Guided by the Neighbourhood First policy and Vision MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions), the Government is strengthening maritime partnerships across the Indian Ocean Region while promoting sustainable economic growth and maritime security. The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) continues to drive port-led development through the Sagarmala Programme, providing financial assistance under five key pillars—Port Modernisation, Port Connectivity, Port-Led Industrialisation, Coastal Community Development, and Coastal Shipping & Inland Water Transport. Digitalisation remains a major focus area, with initiatives such as One Nation One Port Process, Maritime Single Window (Sagar Setu), e-Samudra, e-Pariksha, Jalyan, and Navic streamlining documentation, reducing manual interventions, and improving operational efficiency across ports and waterways. To modernise the regulatory framework, the Government has enacted several landmark legislations, including the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, Coastal Shipping Act, 2025, Indian Ports Act, 2025, Bills of Lading Act, 2025, and the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 2025, complementing earlier reforms such as the Major Port Authorities Act, 2021, Marine Aids to Navigation Act, 2021,and Inland Vessels Act, 2021.A key highlight is the Government's approval of a ¹ 69,725 crore maritime development package aimed at revitalising India's shipping and shipbuilding sectors. The package focuses on expanding domestic shipbuilding capacity, developing world-class shipyards, strengthening maritime financing, enhancing skill development, and implementing structural reforms to improve the sector's global competitiveness. India is also deepening maritime cooperation with countries in the Indian Ocean Region through development assistance, capacity building, connectivity initiatives, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), and defence and maritime security collaboration. Complementing these efforts, the Coastal Shipping Act, 2025, along with measures such as the High Seas Fisheries Guidelines and Exclusive Economic Zone Rules, supports the country's vision of promoting a sustainable Blue Economy.

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Tanker Captain Sentenced to Jail and Deportation for Not Obeying USCG

A U.S. District Court on August 7 sentenced the captain of the shadow fleet tanker Marinera (Bella 1) to jail, followed by deportation for his role in fleeing the U.S. Coast Guard and not obeying orders to stop his vessel. The sentencing follows a guilty plea in June on one count of failing to “heave to” when ordered to by the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Munro.

Avtandil Kalandadze, age 47 and a citizen of Georgia, was in command of the tanker Bella 1 from September 2025 until late December 2025. The Bella 1 (318,518 dwt) was bound for Venezuela when it was intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Munro, which attempted to stop the vessel as part of the blockade. The empty tanker failed to comply with the Coast Guard's orders and fled across the Atlantic Ocean. The Munro pursued the Bella 1, which, during the Atlantic crossing, declared it had changed its name to Marinera and claimed to have switched to the Russian flag. The vessel was finally stopped on January 7 and brought to Scotland under U.S. command.

The U.S. reports the tanker had existed in the shadow fleet for the past few years after starting its life in 2000, built by Hyundai Heavy Industries in South Korea. She went through five names and various owners before emerging in 2023 as Bella 1. In 2024, the United States sanctioned the shipping company, Louis Marine Shipholding Enterprises, as the registered owner of the Panama-flagged Bella 1 for their role in carrying sanctioned cargo on behalf of Hizballah. By late 2024, the ship was falsely claiming to be sailing under the flag of Guyana.

The U.S. Attorney's Office asserted in charges against the master that while Kalandadze was the master of the tanker, it transported approximately 1.8 million barrels of Iran-origin oil to Asia. Further, they said that during this time, Kalandadze employed common obfuscation techniques to hide the activities of the Bella 1, including sailing with an inactivated Automatic Identification System (AIS) and concealing the name of the Bella 1 while engaging in a ship-to-ship transfer of the Iran-origin oil to another vessel.

It was reported that the U.S. rushed the captain out of Scotland in January as lawyers attempted to stop his extradition. The court sentenced him to 10 months in jail, and then he will be deported. He had faced a maximum sentence of five years in prison, absent aggravating circumstances.

The vessel was one of several that the United States seized during its blockade of Venezuela, as well as several others that were stopped during the blockade of Iran. The U.S. was reported to be pursuing forfeiture cases against the vessels.

GMS, the world's largest cash buyer, had confirmed as early as January that it was in discussions to acquire the tankers. The Bella 1 was towed to the United States and, in early June, got underway using the name Era, and registered in Comoros. Equasis now lists the owner as Global Marketing Systems and the status as “to be broken up.”

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V. HEALTH ZONE

Seafarer happiness falls as "acute shock" hardens into "chronic strain"

Overall seafarer happiness has fallen to 6.87 out of 10 in the second quarter of 2026, down from 7.18 in Q1, according to the latest Seafarers Happiness Index (SHI) published by The Mission to Seafarers. The decline confirms that the hoped-for recovery after a challenging start to the year has failed to take hold, marking what the report calls a transition "from acute shock to chronic strain." Whilst the first quarter of 2026 was defined by the sudden shock of conflict in the Persian Gulf, the second quarter shows those pressures settling into the everyday baseline of life at sea. It is the daily norms – i.e. limited shore leave, excessive workloads and stagnant real-wage buying power – that are steadily eroding crew morale. Sadly, shore leave scores fell to 5.72, the lowest by a significant margin, with time ashore increasingly sacrificed to intense schedules, short port stays, and restrictions on port and terminal access. Workload management scored 6.20, amid a relentless cycle of six-on, six-off watchkeeping, rapid turnarounds, heavy paperwork and inspections, with rest hours, most alarmingly, recorded "just for authorities and filing. "Nevertheless, the report firmly rejects a narrative of pure negativity. The strongest categories were crew interactions at 7.49 and connectivity at 7.46, showing that seafarers continue to draw strength from crew relationships and from staying connected with family. Where companies get it right, the best operators respect sign-off dates, ensure timely reliefs, offer merit-based promotions and maintain modern tonnage. As one seafarer noted, "I am heard, my company looks after the crew." The report also frames a deepening recruitment and retention challenge, with pay increasingly judged against the total life package available ashore rather than historical maritime wages. One respondent warned that young crew see "no advantages remaining compared with a shore job. "Demographic data shows where pressure is greatest. The average score from female respondents was 6.06, against 7.13 for men; by region and vessel type, the Middle East (4.94) and container ships (5.85) fell well below the average; and mid-career professionals aged 35 to 55 reported the lowest morale of any age group. Ben Bailey, Director of Programme, The Mission to Seafarers, said, "This quarter's data should trouble the entire industry. Seafarers are extraordinarily resilient, but we must not mistake resilience for unlimited capacity; endurance is not the same as wellbeing. The fundamentals that crews are asking for are strikingly basic: enough rest to recover, connectivity to sustain family life, quality food, and pay that justifies the sacrifice. The brightest results prove happiness at sea is achievable."Gert-Jan Panken, GM and Vice President of Inmarsat Maritime commented, "This report is an important reminder that seafarer wellbeing is shaped by the choices we make as an industry every day. While the overall findings show there is still much work to do, they also demonstrate that when companies invest in their people, through reliable connectivity, supportive leadership and an onboard environment where crews feel safe and valued, the impact is real. Technology alone is never the answer, but when combined with a genuine commitment to crew welfare and safety, it can help create a more connected, resilient and rewarding experience at sea. As our industry continues to evolve, we must ensure that progress is measured not only by operational performance, but by the safety and wellbeing of the people who keep global trade moving." Thom Herbert, Idwal's Head of Global Strategic Accounts and part of the seafarer advocacy team, added, "Idwal is proud to support the Seafarers' Happiness Index because it brings the realities of life at sea into clear view. Many of our technical team are recent former seafarers, while our surveyors spend every day working alongside crews on board, so we recognise both the resilience described in this report and the pressures behind it. Strong leadership, respectful relationships and meaningful support from shore make a tangible difference. The industry must ensure that seafarers' professionalism and commitment are valued, not simply relied upon." The SHI continues its collaboration with Idwal, the global provider of independent vessel inspections, whose surveyors attend fifteen vessels a day. Reading seafarers' feedback alongside objective vessel-condition data aims to eliminate welfare blind spots and target social-impact investment more precisely as everyday pressures wear down a resilient but stretched global workforce.

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VI. ARTICLE INDEXING

Layman's understanding of Maritime law and how it differs from other branches of international law

What is maritime law ?

The easiest way to understand maritime law is to think of it as "the law of the sea." It is a special set of legal rules that applies to ships, seafarers, cargo, ports, and activities at sea.
An Everyday Example
Imagine a cargo ship carrying thousands of containers from India to Europe.
Questions might arise such as:

- Who is responsible if the cargo is damaged?
- What happens if two ships collide?
- Which country's laws apply if the ship is registered in Panama, owned by a Greek company, and crewed by Indians?
- Who pays if an oil spill pollutes the ocean?
- Can a country stop a ship from passing near its coast?

Maritime law provides answers to these kinds of questions.

Why do we need a separate maritime law?

Imagine a cargo ship leaves Mumbai carrying machinery to Rotterdam.
Along the voyage:
The ship passes through the territorial waters of several countries.
The owner is from Greece.
The crew comes from India, the Philippines, and Ukraine.
The cargo belongs to a company in Germany.
The ship is registered (flagged) in Liberia.
The insurance company is in London.
Now suppose the cargo is damaged.
Which country's law applies?
Indian law?
Greek law?
German law?
Liberian law?
Dutch law?
Without internationally accepted maritime rules, every country could reach a different answer. Maritime law provides common principles so international shipping can operate more predictably.

What Does Maritime Law Cover?

Maritime law deals with things like:
Shipping and transport of goods
Ship ownership and registration
Marine insurance
Injuries to sailors and crew members
Ship collisions
Salvage (rescuing ships in distress)
Pollution from ships
Piracy
Rights of ports and harbors
Fishing and ocean resources
What are the unique concepts in Maritime law ?
To understand maritime law, it helps to see what makes it unique:
Boundary-Crossing Nature: Ships constantly travel between different national jurisdictions or through international waters where no single country has exclusive control.
Unique Ancient Concepts: It includes centuries-old legal doctrines that exist nowhere else, such as:

Salvage: If a person saves a endangered vessel at sea, they are legally entitled to a reward based on the value saved.
General Average: If cargo must be intentionally thrown overboard to save a sinking ship, all cargo owners and the shipowner share the financial loss proportionally.
Limitation of Liability: Shipowners can often limit their financial liability to the value of the ship and freight after an accident under specific conditions.
Maritime law includes ideas that don't really exist elsewhere.
For example:
Salvage
If one ship saves another ship in danger at sea, the salvers may be entitled to a financial reward even if there was no prior contract.
General Average
Suppose a ship catches fire.
The master orders some containers to be thrown overboard to save the ship.
Those containers belong to only a few cargo owners.
Under the principle of General Average, everyone whose property was saved—the shipowner and all cargo owners—contributes toward the loss, because the sacrifice benefited them all.
You don't usually see an equivalent principle in ordinary land transport.
Maritime Liens
A ship itself can sometimes be treated almost like the wrongdoer.
For example, if a ship causes damage or certain maritime debts remain unpaid, a court may allow the ship to be arrested and sold to satisfy the claim.
You generally cannot “arrest” a building or a truck in the same way under ordinary law.
Example: A car versus a ship
Car accident
Two cars collide in Mumbai.
The matter is handled under Indian motor vehicle and civil law.
Ship collision
Two cargo ships collide in the English Channel.
The legal questions may involve:
The collision regulations (COLREGs)
The law of the ships' flag states
International conventions
Marine insurers
Admiralty courts
Limitation of liability rules
The case is often much more international and specialized.

Where does maritime law come from?

Maritime law comes from several sources, including:
International conventions (such as the Hague-Visby Rules and SOLAS)
National legislation
Court decisions that are long-established

How does it differ from other branches of International law ?

International law is a vast field. Here is how maritime law sets itself apart:
Hybrid of Private and Public Law
Public International Law: Deals strictly with state-to-state relationships (e.g., treaties, borders, warfare, diplomacy).
Maritime Law: Blends public rules (such as territorial sea boundaries under UNCLOS—the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea) with private commercial law (such as shipping contracts between private companies, cargo claims, and marine insurance).
High Degree of Practical Uniformity
Other International Laws: Laws like human rights law or international environmental law are often treaty-based and rely heavily on local enforcement, leading to varied interpretation and enforcement.

Maritime Law: Heavily standardized worldwide through international conventions (like SOLAS for safety, MARPOL for marine pollution, and Hague-Visby for cargo). Because shipping companies, insurers, and ports operate globally, they use nearly identical standard-form contracts and legal standards everywhere.
Specialized Jurisdiction and Courts
Other International Laws: Disputes are often handled by general civil courts, international tribunals (like the International Court of Justice), or arbitration panels.
Maritime Law: Most major maritime nations have dedicated Admiralty courts or specialized maritime arbitration centers (e.g., in London, New York, or Singapore) with judges who specialize exclusively in maritime matters.
Direct Action Against Property (In Rem Jurisdiction)
Standard Civil Law: You usually sue a person or a company (in personam).
Maritime Law: You can actually sue the vessel itself (in rem). If a ship damages a dock or owes unpaid bills, a court can order the ship to be physically arrested at port and sold to pay off the debt, regardless of who owns it or where the owner lives.
International law governs relationships between countries and international organizations.
Examples:

- Human rights treaties
- Laws of war
- Climate agreements
- Diplomatic relations
- Trade agreements

Question it answers:
"How should countries behave toward one another?"
Maritime Law
Focuses specifically on the seas and activities taking place there.
Question it answers:
"What are the rules for ships, oceans, marine trade, and maritime disputes?"
So:

- International law is the whole tree.
- Maritime law is one important branch of that tree.

Maritime Law vs International Trade Law
Trade Law
Deals with buying and selling goods across borders.
Example:

- Tariffs
- Import/export restrictions
- WTO rules

Maritime Law
Deals with the transportation of those goods by sea.
For example:

- Trade law determines whether India can import certain goods.
- Maritime law determines who is liable if the ship carrying those goods loses them during a storm.

Maritime Law vs Human Rights Law
Human Rights Law
Protects people from abuse and guarantees fundamental freedoms.
Examples:

- Freedom of expression
- Protection from torture
- Rights of refugees

Maritime Law
Focuses on shipping and maritime activities.
There can be overlap—for example, the treatment of seafarers or migrants rescued at sea—but maritime law's primary concern is maritime operations, not human rights generally.
Maritime Law vs Law of the Sea
This is where people often get confused.

Law of the Sea
A branch of international law that regulates the use of oceans by states.
Questions include:

- Where does a country's territorial sea end?
- Who owns offshore oil and gas?
- What are Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)?
- Can foreign ships sail through another country's waters?

Maritime Law
Is broader in a practical, commercial sense.
It covers:

- Shipping contracts
- Cargo claims
- Marine insurance
- Ship arrests
- Crew disputes

Think of it this way:
Law of the Sea = rules between countries regarding oceans.
Maritime Law = rules governing ships and maritime activities.

Why should a ships officer care about Maritime law?

Even if you're not a lawyer, maritime law affects your daily work.
For example:
Following the COLREGs helps avoid collisions and legal liability.
Keeping accurate logbook entries can become vital evidence after an incident.
Proper cargo care helps meet the carrier's legal obligations.

- Following pollution regulations can prevent severe fines and criminal penalties.

Understanding your responsibilities under conventions such as SOLAS, MARPOL, and STCW is part of complying with maritime law

Bottom Line

Maritime law is the specialized body of law governing ships, shipping, navigation, maritime commerce, and activities at sea. While it forms part of the broader framework of international law, it is much more focused on the practical and commercial issues that arise on oceans and waterways, whereas other branches of international law deal with wider subjects such as humsan rights, trade, diplomacy, war, or environmental protection.

Contributed by
Captain James Maddela
Faculty / TS Rahaman

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QUOTES !

"To desire nothing beyond what you have is surely happiness. Aboard a boat, it is frequently possible to achieve just that. That is why sailing is a way of life, one of the finest of lives."

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"We can battle the sea, or we can embrace it. Sometimes she will be sweet and sometimes mean as a snake. We must embrace the experience and trust we will get through it."

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Any suggestions for improvement in quality of this Bulletin will be highly appreciated.

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