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Women in maritime begin specialized leadership training under SMART-C Women Project

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I. D. G. S. CIRCULAR / ORDER



भारतसरकार/ GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोतपरिवहन और जलमार्गमंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
नौवहनमहानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

File No. 23-POL/2/2025-CREW-DGS (C. No. 33054)

Date: 04.03.2025

M. S. Notice No. 03 of 2025

Subject: Addendum to M.S. Notice No. 16 of 2016 dated 08.12.2016: Implementation of Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 - inspection and certification of the Maritime Labour Conditions of Indian Flagged ships – reg.

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 218A, read with Section 457, of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 (44 of 1958), as amended, the Central Government, having regard to the provisions of the Maritime Labour convention, has notified the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour) Rules, 2016, which came into force with effect from 29.02.2016, vide the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India's Notification G.R.F. 202 (E) dated 29.02.2016.

2. Whereas, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (3) of section 95 and section 457 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 (44 of 1958), and in supersession of the Merchant Shipping (Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers) Rules, 2005, the Central Government has notified Merchant Shipping (Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers) Rules, 2016 which came into force with effect from 15.02.2016, vide the Ministry of Shipping, Govt. of India's Notification G.S.R. 169 (E) dated 15.02.2016 and further amended the Rules as Merchant Shipping (Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers) Amendment Rules, 2022, which came into force with effect from 26.02.2022 vide G.S.R. 319 (E).

3. Whereas, the International Labour Conference (ILO) in its 110th session adopted a series of significant amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006. These amendments were adopted to address the challenges observed during the COVID-19 pandemic and are intended to strengthen the rights of seafarers, ensure their well-being, provide them secure environment in the Maritime Industry and are set to enter into force globally on 23rd December 2024.

4. Whereas, member states party to MLC, 2006 including India, are responsible for implementing the said amendments. The Directorate General of Shipping, Govt. of India has issued DGS Order No. 21 of 2024 dated 19.12.2024 for applicable for all the MLC amendments effective and in force from 23.12.2024. The Directorate had issued directives to Indian shipowners, Managers and Recruitment and Placement Service Licenses (RPSL) agencies to ensure full and effective compliance to the listed MLC 2022 amendments by updating their Safety Management Systems (SMS), Crewing Manuals and Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance (DMLC) as required.

5. In view of the above amendments to Maritime Labour Convention, the necessary amendments incorporated in the Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance (DMLC) Part-I

[Signature]
04/03/2025-2

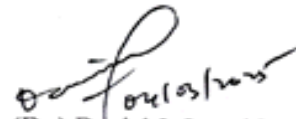
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(as in Annexure I) is issued for uniform compliance of all concerned. All the owners may apply for issuance of the DMLC to the respective Mercantile Marine Department (MMD's) and ship owners may make necessary amendments to DMLC Part-II in line with changes incorporated in DMLC Part-I (as enclosed) and submit to respective MMD's for necessary verification and endorsements.

6. This issues with the approval of Director General of Shipping



[Capt. (Dr.) Daniel J. Joseph]
Dy. Director General of Shipping

Encl.: As above.

To,

1. Nautical / Engineering / Naval Architecture / Training / SD Branch of the Directorate.
2. Principal Officer, Mercantile Marine Department Offices (Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Kandla, Kochi)
3. Surveyor-in-charge, Mercantile Marine Department Office (Jamnagar, Marmugoa, Mangalore, Tuticorin, Vishakhapatnam, Paradip, Haldia, Port Blair, Noida)
4. All Shipping Companies / INSA / ICCSA
5. Hindi Branch (for translation)
6. Computer Section for uploading on website.

Copy To,

1. The Secretary to Govt. of India, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Transport Bhavan, 1, Parliament Street, New Delhi – 110001

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पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

File No.: 28-11/4/2023-NT - DGS

Date: 15.04.2025

DGS ORDER: 02 of 2025

Subject: 'Standard Operating Procedure for Safety and Security for Indian Mechanised Sailing Vessels (2025)' – reg.

Whereas, during the Inter-Ministerial Group of Officers (IMGO) meeting which was held from April 4 to 13, 2017, regarding the armed robbery of the Indian mechanised sailing vessel 'Al Kausar', a decision was made to establish a committee to formulate a comprehensive security and operating plan for the safe operation of Indian sailing vessels on international voyages. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) developed in 2018 primarily focused on piracy and armed robbery mitigation.

The previous "Standard Operating Procedure - 2018 (version 0)" was established pursuant to the Directorate General of Shipping Order No. 11 of 2018, dated December 7, 2018, entitled 'Standard Operating Procedure for Operation of Indian Sailing Vessels on International Voyages.'

Whereas due to the evolving maritime security environment, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) constituted a new committee in 2024 comprising of stakeholders involved in the operation, regulation, and security of Mechanised Sailing Vessels (MSVs) to undertake a comprehensive review and update the 2018 SOP.

Whereas the committee meetings and stakeholder consultations were conducted, and the committee recommended the revised SOP which has been titled as "Standard Operating Procedures for Safety & Security of Indian Mechanised Sailing Vessels (2025)".

Whereas the revised SOP has been finalized by the committee and the same has been incorporated into the present order for implementation. The 2025 SOP addresses the current maritime challenges with the aim of enhancing the safety, security and furthermore the preparedness of the MSVs and crew in the evolving global maritime environment.


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This SOP supersedes the 2018 version and is applicable from the date of issuance of this order.

The 2025 SOP has been approved by the competent authority and is mandatory to be complied with by all sailing vessels registered under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, as amended. Non-compliance of this SOP will result in severe penal action as specified under Part XVI 'Penalties and Procedure' of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, as amended.


(Shyam Jagannathan)
Director General of Shipping

Encl: As above.

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II. IMO NEWS

IMO opens global talks to secure net-zero deal for shipping

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) opened a critical round of negotiations aimed at finalizing new binding regulations to steer international shipping towards net-zero emissions over the next 25 years.

Speaking at the opening of the 83rd session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 83) on Monday, 7 April, in London, IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez welcomed the progress made towards agreement on the draft IMO Net-Zero Framework, which will bolster maritime action on climate change.

This includes proposed regulations for mandatory reductions in ships' greenhouse gas (GHG) fuel intensity, a global emissions pricing mechanism, and the establishment of an IMO Net-Zero Fund. The fund would incentivize the use of zero and near-zero emission fuels and technologies, while also supporting developing countries through promoting a just and equitable transition.

These measures will be included in Annex VI (Prevention of air pollution from ships) of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), which covers 97% of the world's merchant shipping fleet by tonnage.

"I have no doubt you will achieve the necessary compromise so that, by the end of the week, we can take another significant step forward in delivering the goals of the IMO GHG Strategy," Secretary-General Dominguez told more than 1200 international delegates. He praised Member States for their efforts to find common ground, while noting that key issues remain under negotiation.

"The work is not yet done. But we are nearly there - and I am sure in the coming days we will reach that point. What we do here will have a global impact on an industry that continues to demonstrate its essential role in the world," he added.

Talks continue through Friday 11 April, with a draft legal text expected to be approved by the end of the session. Following the legal processes for amending the MARPOL treaty, the draft amendments would then be circulated to Parties to MARPOL Annex VI and all IMO members, for adoption in October 2025 at an extraordinary session of the Committee.

Plastic litter and key environmental issues

On Monday, MEPC 83 took the following decisions:

- adopted a new 2025 Action Plan to combat marine plastic litter from ships
- approved Interim guidance on the carriage of blends of biofuels and MARPOL Annex I cargoes by conventional bunker ships
- approved Guidance on in-water cleaning of ships' biofouling
- adopted Amendments to the 2023 Guidelines for the development of the Inventory of Hazardous Materials

Throughout the week, the Committee will consider other key environmental issues, including the establishment of new Emissions Control Areas and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas for marine protection, and the continuation of the review of the Ballast Water Management Convention.

Pacific women in maritime begin specialized leadership training under SMART-C Women Project

Women maritime professionals from the Pacific region have completed their first training session under the IMO-Republic of Korea SMART-C Women Project.

The Project aims to advance gender diversity in the Asia-Pacific maritime sector by providing specialized training for selected women, targeting ASEAN countries and Pacific small island developing states (SIDS).

The first session for this year's programme (3-7 March) took place online, boosting the technical and leadership skills of 19 maritime professionals from Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Vanuatu, in the areas of decarbonization, digitalization and gender.

This will lead into the next training session (17 - 21 March), aimed at deepening participants' knowledge and competencies, while building strong regional networks.

Selected trainees from the online programme will have the opportunity to attend an on-site training session in the Republic of Korea, where they will gain hands-on experience and further develop practical skills that can be applied in their home countries.

About the SMART-C Women Project

The IMO-Republic of Korea SMART-C Women Project offers tailored training programmes for women from developing countries in Asia and the Pacific, enabling them to expand their career and leadership opportunities.

The training focuses on three areas: Decarbonization, Digitalization and Gender, exploring topics such as alternative energy solutions for shipping, IMO's Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships, maritime digitalization (including the Maritime Single Window, cybersecurity) and digital transformation in Pacific SIDS. It covers cultural awareness around gender, unconscious bias and advancing women's leadership within the sector.

The Project is structured around four key pillars:

- Online and on-site training to develop professional competencies;
- Fully funded fellowships for selected participants to study at WMU or the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI);
- Global networking initiatives to facilitate international collaboration and knowledge-sharing;
- Pilot consultancy projects supporting the development of national master plans for women's empowerment in the maritime sector.

New Maritime Labour Convention amendments set to boost seafarers' conditions

Seafarers are set to benefit from improved working and living conditions following the adoption of important amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO), which participated in the MLC Special Tripartite Committee meeting at ILO in Geneva (7-11 April) welcomes these developments.

The amendments reflect a continued commitment by the international community to ensure fair treatment, enhance safety and wellbeing at sea, and recognize the vital contribution of seafarers to global trade.

More specifically the meeting adopted the following amendments:

- Protecting seafarers against violence and harassment on board;
- Calling for the designation and recognition of seafarers as key workers;
- Strengthening the rights of seafarers with respect to shore leave, for the benefit of their health and wellbeing;
- Facilitating the movement of seafarers for the purpose of repatriation;
- Requiring States to cooperate and take due account of the IMO/ILO Guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident, and the recently adopted IMO/ILO Guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers detained in connection with alleged crimes;
- Recommending that ships have the most up-to-date medical information and guidance on board, to be available for the person responsible for medical care on board.

The amendments will now be submitted for approval at the next session of the International Labour Conference, taking place from 2 to 13 June 2025. If endorsed, they are expected to enter into force by December 2027.

Alongside the amendments, the Special Tripartite Committee also adopted a number of key resolutions. Of particular relevance to IMO are the recommendations to extend the mandate of the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group (JTWG), to conduct a final review to update the ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers and continue cooperation on seafarers' welfare.

This meeting has underscored the power of tripartite dialogue and multilateral cooperation in delivering meaningful, effective solutions to global challenges.

III. ILO NEWS

Miki Yano Becomes NYK's First Female Chief Engineer in 140 Years

On April 1, Miki Yano became the first woman in NYK's nearly 140-year history to be promoted to the rank of chief engineer. Since joining NYK in 2011, Yano has gained experience on board LNG carriers, car carriers, and other vessels. She has also been active in many fields, including using the knowledge and skills she has gained on board to support the operation of cruise ships at an office on land.

The company has hired female seafarers since 2004 and currently has 33 worldwide, both on land and at sea. NYK continues to promote the creation of a workplace environment where diverse human resources can play an active role.

Upon hearing the news, Chief Engineer Yano commented: "Becoming a chief engineer was a goal for me. Now that I have achieved it, this moment will be a new start. I will continue to work hard to acquire skills and knowledge and aim to become a chief engineer trusted by those around me."



Seafarers struggle as over a quarter get no shore leave at all, report reveals

A new report from the ITF Seafarers' Trust (ITFST) and the World Maritime University (WMU) highlights the continuing absence of shore leave for the world's seafarers.

Analysing the data from 5879 seafarers who responded to the ITFST's Shore Leave Survey, WMU researchers concluded that more than a quarter of seafarers did not get any shore leave at all, and a third only got ashore once or twice during their entire contract, based on an average of 6.6 months onboard.

The ITF Seafarers' Trust opened the Shore Leave Survey in mid-2024 to test the concern that shore leave seemed to be progressively harder to access. Working with the team at the WMU to analyse the data, the resulting report seeks to give a true picture of the current levels of shore leave available to seafarers, how often it happened, how long it lasted, and to look at possible barriers.

The report paints a sorry picture of access to shore leave and shore-based services. Officers were least likely to get shore leave, and seafarers on offshore vessels and tankers were the least likely to get ashore. Across all respondents, even when seafarers did get shore leave, 47% were able to spend less than 3 hours ashore and overall, 93.5% spent less than 6 hours ashore.

The report also includes feedback from seafarers themselves, showing a strong depth of feeling evident from their responses to the open questions.

A Turkish deck officer, after 4.5 months on board a tanker, reported "As a deck officer, most of the time, our shore leave is based on our port watch schedule and chief officers' approach to officers; while having 6 on 6 off watch it is almost impossible to go out without making another officer take your watch for a couple of hours, and after you are back in port you have to take night watch which makes it hard to stand. [...]"

The data shows that the barriers to shore leave are multiple and systemic: minimal crewing and high workloads, increasing inspections, port security and operational efficiencies leading to lack of time in port, lack of shore-based facilities and costs of transport.

All these and multiple other issues result in a situation where the current system means that for seafarers to recuperate with shore leave is an unattainable dream in many ports.

An Indian deck officer, after 6 months on board stated: "I have been working in the shipping industry since 2006. I have noticed that all the ports have slowly found ways to deny shore leave to the ship's crew. If they can't tell NO! straightaway, then they will impose heavy charges so that everyone automatically refuses to go ashore.

Plus, the workload and the commercial pressure on senior officers are so much that they find it difficult to go ashore. Generally, oil/chemical refineries where our tankers go for loading or discharging are far

away from the cities. There is nothing close by where we can go and relax a bit, have some nice food or go shopping.

There are ports which force us to use boats for shore leave, and those boats are very expensive and unaffordable! After a long sailing, we feel exhausted, and it's our right, I think, to get a shore leave."

Katie Higginbottom, Head of ITF Seafarers' Trust said 'This survey confirms our fears. Seafarers are not getting shore leave because it hasn't been prioritised as essential for crew wellbeing and the safety of the vessel.

This is about setting the scene, and it is stark. We hope that the findings will promote discussion and acknowledgement that seafarers deserve a break from the vessel. Action must be taken to preserve the possibility of shore leave.'

The report is clear that the problem is systemic and multifaceted. All stakeholders, from flag States to port States, agents to shipping companies and seafarers themselves, need to collaborate to ensure that this vital component of life at sea is maintained and expanded.

All parties need to recognise that, unchecked, the current regime risks the extinction of shore leave as a viable concept reinforcing the strains on an already pressurised workforce.

Indian Crew Stranded Without Pay Calls Renewed Attention to Abandonment

The crew aboard an offshore support vessel has taken to social media with the aid of the International Transport Workers' Federation to highlight their plight. It comes after the union groups called 2024 the "worst year on record for seafarer abandonment."

The ITF posted on its social media channels a video of the 15 Indian crewmembers aboard the vessel which has remained in Indonesia since October 2024. They are holding handwritten signs saying they do not have proper food and the ship's managers have threatened them when they ask for their back pay. They are appealing for the help of the Indian seafarer unions and the flag state of the vessel for help. The crewmembers want their pay and reparation back to India.

According to the ITF, the vessel named *Star Apollo* (1,500 gross tons) has been in the Batamec Shipyard in Indonesia since last year. There are 15 people, all Indian nationals, aboard who report they have not been paid since their contracts began between four and eight months ago. The ITF says it is trying to aid in the recovery of nearly \$80,000 in unpaid wages.

The vessel, built in 2012, was sold in 2025 to Mumbai-based Vindhyawashini Offshore, according to the Equasis database. The ship is registered in St. Kitts & Nevis.

"The crew are extremely frustrated, and the stress of not being paid is taking a toll on their health," writes ITF Global Inspectorate Coordinator Steve Townsdale on his social media account.

The ITF issued a warning in January that the abandonment of seafarers is "spiraling out of control." It said abandonment of seafarers skyrocketed 87 percent (3,313 seafarers compared to 1,676) in 2024 vs 2023. Vessel abandonment they reported was up a staggering 136 percent to 312 vessels in 2024.

Abandoned seafarers the ITF warned can experience months of unpaid wages, extremely poor on-board conditions, inadequate food and clean drinking water, and long periods of work without proper rest. In some cases, they are left completely stranded for months – even years – on end.

Under maritime regulations and the Maritime Labour Convention overseen by the International Labour Organization, flag states are obliged to step in when seafarers are abandoned. It calls for the states to arrange the transport home of seafarers, but many are reluctant to leave the ship until they settle their wages.

The lack of enforcement and responsiveness from flag and port states, the lack of insurance for vessels, and shipowners refusing to accept that they are mistreating their crew are common factors the ITF said that contribute to abandonment and complicate the resolution of cases.

IV. SHIPPING NEWS

Russian Oil Tanker denied entry in India due to inadequate documentation

The Indian port authorities have refused entry to the Tanzanian-flagged oil tanker Andaman Skies on March 27, 2025, due to inadequate documentation, per sources.

The tanker carrying 100,000 metric tons (around 800,000 barrels) of Russian Varandey crude, was on its way to Vadinar Port for delivery to Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) before it was turned away.

Indian port regulations mandate that tankers older than 20 years must have a seaworthiness certification issued by a classification society recognised by the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) or an organization authorised by India's maritime authority.

The Andaman Skies, built in 2004, was certified by Dakar Class, an India-based classification society that is not recognised by Indian shipping authorities.

This led to port authorities refusing entry, even though the tanker had previously entered Indian waters as recently as December 2024.

India, the world's third-largest oil consumer and importer, is also the largest buyer of Russian crude transported by sea. In 2024, Russian oil made up around 35% of India's total crude imports.

However, Western sanctions on Russian oil have complicated shipments, leading to closer scrutiny of vessels and suppliers.

The tanker Andaman Skies has been sanctioned by the UK and the EU, but it is not under US or UN sanctions. India follows only UN sanctions, but recent actions indicate that the country is exercising strict measures when it comes to Russian crude shipments.

Since January 2024, the US imposed strict sanctions on more than 100 Russian oil tankers, making it harder for Russian oil suppliers to secure compliant vessels for deliveries.

India's oil secretary recently stated that Indian refiners would only purchase Russian oil from non-sanctioned companies and vessels. This policy has limited the number of available ships and cargoes.

Indian refiners usually buy Russian oil on a delivered basis, meaning the seller is responsible for arranging shipping, insurance, and other logistics. The Andaman Skies had insurance coverage from the Russian company Soglasie, but this did not help in securing its entry.

Per data, US crude exports to India reached 357,000 barrels per day in February 2025, up from 221,000 bpd in 2024.

Lukoil, the seller of the oil and Soglasie, the Russian insurance provider, did not provide any comment.

The Vadinar port authorities and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) also did not respond to the inquiries.

India's growing maritime role

With a population of 1.5 billion, India is the world's fastest growing major economy (2025f: +7 per cent), and on track to be-come the third largest globally by 2030. Against this backdrop, India's role in maritime is evolving, with the government increasing strategic focus on the sector. India is already the fifth largest source of seafarers (12 per cent of world total, government target 20 per cent). And India has for many decades been a prominent recycling destination, with facilities handling a third of tonnage recycled 2004- 24. In 2024, India ranked second for volumes (30 per cent share) but Indian re-cyclers also seem to be leading Bangladesh and Pakistan in preparing facilities for compliance with the HK Convention green treaty (in force from June 2025).

Across global seaborne trade, India is an increasingly key driver. Over the last decade, Indian seaborne imports grew by a CAGR of 2.9 per cent (global 1.7 per cent, China 4.1 per cent) to reach 830mt in 2024, 7 per cent of the global total and second only to China (3.2bt, 25 per cent). India is now the second largest importer of a range of key car-goes, including coal (19 per cent of global total), crude oil (12 per cent, including a shift to longer haul Russian crude since 2022) and LPG (16 per cent), and across all cargoes has driven 15 per cent of growth in global trade in the last decade (again behind only China that has contributed 55 per cent of growth).

We project the balance of this growth share will lean towards India in the next decade, with India reaching >1.2bt of imports by 2035 (this would still be a third of China however). Indian exports have shown more muted growth, totalling 225mt in 2024, 2 per cent of the global total (India: 10th largest ex-porter), up only slightly vs 2010 (218mt), with oil products exports steady, and more minor bulk and container exports offsetting lower iron ore. Meanwhile, India's >80 ports handled >70,000 vessel calls last year (largest tonnage handler, Mundra, is only the 50th largest globally with 224.5m GT of port calls in 2024, policy targets three 'mega' ports by 2030).

The Indian government has a range of policies aiming to strengthen the maritime sector, including across ports, shipbuilding and recycling. Today, India is the 19th largest ship owning cluster (an underweighted 1.5 per cent of world fleet, headed by SCI, Great Eastern, Chellaram and Seven Islands) and 22nd largest flag state (0.7%), but aims to have a top 5 fleet of 100m GT by 2047. Shipbuilding (and ship repair) has a long history in India (although with a some-times mixed track record), and policy is targeting a top 10 builder by 2030 and top 5 by 2047 (2024: 13th largest order-book by CGT, 0.3 per cent share, Cochin leading).

Chinese Bulker Sinks Within 5 Minutes After Colliding with Containership in Ningbo

A newly delivered domestic containership collided with a dry bulk carrier in the early hours of March 29, 2025, in the waters near Yangmao Island, Ningbo.

According to the Ningbo Maritime Safety Administration, the dry bulk carrier sank immediately after the collision, killing one seafarer and injuring three others.

The incident happened at approximately 2:50 am when the containership Ningyuan Beilun (15,000 dwt) owned by Ningbo Ocean Shipping, collided with the dry bulk carrier Jianghai Zhida 66 (14,000 dwt).

The containership had recently entered service in February 2025 and was departing Ningbo with 934 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) onboard.

The Jianghai Zhida 66, which was built in May 2023 and operated by Zhoushan Hongtong Shipping Development Co, Ltd, was scheduled to load cargo at Ningbo Port before heading to Jiangyin Port.

After the collision, the Jianghai Zhida 66 started taking on water and sank within five minutes. All 13 crew members aboard were thrown into the sea.

A rescue operation was launched immediately and lasted about four hours. Nine crew members were rescued unharmed, while three were hospitalised. Unfortunately, one crew member was found dead.

The Ningyuan Beilun sustained only minor damage and is currently anchored at Zhoushan Anchorage as investigations continue.

Authorities have yet to determine whether the bulk carrier was loaded at the time of the incident. Maritime authorities have issued a navigation warning, advising all vessels to avoid the accident site at coordinates 29-54. 18N 122-10. 99E.

Per ShipView data, the Jianghai Zhida 66 was a small and flexible dry bulk carrier with an overall length of 129.7 meters and a width of 22.6 meters. It had a gross tonnage of 8,470 tons and a speed of 11 knots. The Ningyuan Beilun, meanwhile, measured 136.1 meters by 25.0 meters, with a gross tonnage of 11,736 and a speed of 12.7 knots.

It departed Ningbo Meishan Island Container Terminal at 00:56 am and was scheduled to arrive at Zhapu Port by 5:30 pm on March 29, 2025.

Families of 10 kidnapped Seafarers urge Governments to secure their release

Ten crew members, including seven Indians and three Romanians, were kidnapped by armed pirates who attacked the Panama-flagged tanker Bitu River on March 17, 2025, off the coast of São Tomé and Príncipe.

The families of the missing crew have now made a public appeal for immediate intervention by the Indian and Romanian governments, seeking urgent actions for their safe return.

Per reports, the 16,500 dwt tanker, managed by Maritec Tanker Management and operated by Rubis Asphalt, was travelling from Lome, Togo, to Douala, Cameroon, when pirates struck at around 7:45 p.m. The vessel was about 40nm southeast of Santo Antonio do Principe when heavily armed attackers boarded the vessel. Crew members activated emergency alarms and sought refuge, some in the ship's citadel and others in the engine room.

However, the pirates managed to force their way in. Per reports, gunfire was heard during the attack. At around 11:30 p.m., communication with the crew was lost, and soon after, the pirates abducted 10 seafarers. The remaining crew members were locked inside a cabin and warned of execution if they tried to leave.

Among the kidnapped Indians are Lakshmana Pradeep Muruga from Tamil Nadu, who has been serving as a second officer with Maritec Tanker Management for over three years.

Others include Asif Ali from Minicoy, Sandeep Kumar Singh from Bihar, Sathish Kumar Selvaraj from Karur, Mirka Sameen Javeed, Rajeendran Bhargavan from Kerela, and Solkar Rihan Shabbir from Maharashtra.

The names of the Romanian crew members have not been disclosed. A relative of one of the abducted crew members revealed that the company informed families the next day about the incident, stating that the seafarers were unharmed. However, no concrete updates have been shared since, leaving families in distress. Another family member mentioned that the pirates looted valuables, including gold, mobile phones, and a laptop before leaving the vessel. Maritime security sources reported that the ship's speed reduced drastically from 9 knots to 0.6 knots within 20 minutes before the attack. After the incident, the vessel proceeded to Libreville, Gabon, and is currently anchored at Owendo Anchorage. The Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade-Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GoG) recorded the attack on March 18. No further details were provided apart from confirming that the pirates eventually abandoned the vessel. French shipowner Rubis Energie, which owns the vessel, has not commented on the incident. The families of the crew members are urging the Indian and Romanian governments to intervene diplomatically and take immediate steps. Authorities have yet to issue an official statement regarding rescue efforts.

India's First Green Hydrogen Manufacturing Plant set to launch soon

Kandla Port in Gujarat is set to become the first port in India to operate a Green Hydrogen Manufacturing plant. The project is expected to be fully operational by July 2025.

The plant will use renewable energy from solar and wind sources to produce hydrogen, which will be used in industries like transportation, cement, steel and power generation.

With an estimated production capacity of 18kg per hour or around 80-90 tones annually, the facility will play an important role in reducing India's reliance on fossil fuels.

The initiative is part of the government's plan to promote clean energy and cut carbon emissions.

Authorities believe this project will not only boost India's green energy ambitions but also create jobs and attract global investments in the sector.

The Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) has partnered with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) for the manufacturing of electrolyzers- one of the most critical components of hydrogen production.

L&T has already proven its capabilities in this field by successfully setting up a 1MW Green Hydrogen Plant in Hazira, which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister over a year ago.

The company built those electrolyzers in just three months. The site work at Kandla has already completed and the installation of the electrolyzers will begin soon.

Once operational, the plant will provide engineers and staff with hands-on experience in hydrogen production, processing and storage. The hydrogen produced at Kandla port will cater to multiple industries:

Public Transport- Hydrogen powered fuel cells could replace diesel and petrol engines, leading to cleaner mobility solutions.

Heavy Industries- The steel and cement sectors which consume vast amounts of energy, could use hydrogen as a low emission alternative.

Power Generation- Hydrogen can be stored and converted into electricity, ensuring a continuous supply of renewable power.

DPA also plans to expand the facility to manufacture green ammonia. This will enhance the plant's industrial applications and support India's transition to cleaner energy sources.

Govt taken several legislative reforms to make India a Top Maritime Nation

Key to this strategy is developing new ports with deeper drafts, increasing draft of the existing ports, establishing port clusters and transshipment hubs, developing automated ports, increasing private sector involvement, and enhancing policy support. Central Government has introduced several legislative reforms to enhance India's maritime capabilities, including the Major Port Authorities Act, 2021, Marine Aids to Navigation Act, 2021, Inland Vessels Act, 2021, Relaxation of Cabotage Rules, 2018, Recycling of Ships Act, 2019, National Waterways Act, 2016, the Policy for the Award of Waterfront and Associated Land to Port-Dependent Industries (Captive Policy), 2016, and Guidelines for Dealing with Stressed Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Projects at Major Ports.

Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) has launched the Green Tug Transition Programme (GTTP) which aims to reduce carbon emissions and minimize environmental impact by encouraging adoption of environmentally sustainable tugboat operations. Additionally, Government has launched HaritSagar Guideline for Major Ports and Harit Nauka guidelines for inland vessels which aim to promote the adoption of greener technologies.

MoPSW aligns maritime policies with international best practices through high-level events like the Global Maritime India Summit, Sagarmathan, Chintan Shivir, Post-Budget Industry Meets, and stakeholder consultations, fostering dialogue among policymakers, industry, and grassroots communities. Regular engagements with global maritime leaders and participation in international forums ensure that India's policies meet global standards, positioning the country as a key player in the maritime sector.

This information was given by the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal in a written reply to a Question in the Lok Sabha.

Six More Ships Robbed in Singapore Strait in 48 Hours

ReCAAP, the regional monitoring operation for Asia, issued a new alert to ships in the area of the Singapore and Malacca Strait warning of the continuing surge in sea robbery incidents and while cautioning of the possibility of further incidents. They received reports of six incidents between March 28 and 30 prompting the continued caution based on the increase in activity so far in 2025.

As with the incidents earlier this year, the perpetrators seem more brazen in their efforts but during the last incidents there was no direct interaction and none of the crewmembers were attacked. Other incidents in 2025 have included crewmembers being assaulted and tied up, but as with the prior incidents in several of the cases in the past few days, the boarders appeared to be armed.

Three vessels were boarded in a period of one and a half hours on March 30, between 0125 and 0255 all in the Phillip Channel in the eastbound lane in the Singapore Strait. This area has seen a concentration of piracy activity in 2025.

Among the ships boarded was the containership *Kota Halus* (18,872 dwt with a capacity of 1,080 TEU) which is operating for Pacific International Line (PIL). Three perpetrators were seen aboard the vessel, but they jumped overboard into a small boat when discovered. A search showed that they had entered an air conditioning room and a portable welding machine was missing.

In the other two incidents on March 30, bulkers were boarded, *Junior* (92,995 dwt) and *Andreas Petrakis* (76,000 dwt), in each case by a single perpetrator. In both cases, the person fled when discovered and the ships reported nothing was stolen.

Four perpetrators were sighted aboard the *Wan Hai 327* (37,160 dwt) containership on March 29. They were moving between a small boat and the stern of the ship but also fled. Nothing was stolen. About an hour earlier that same day, five perpetrators were seen aboard a VLCC tanker, *Agneta Pallas III* (319,000 dwt). They also fled without taking anything from the ship.

The containership *Selatan Damai* (8,150 dwt with a capacity of 28 TEU) was boarded on March 28. The vessel, which also operates for PIL, reported four individuals were sighted going to the engine room. They escaped from the ship but the crew said that some engine spares were stolen.

ReCAAP emphasizes that there have now been 35 incidents reported in 2025 in the area around the Straits of Malacca and Singapore versus just 11 in 2024. A total of 18 incidents were in March, while 12 took place in February.

Ships are being told to intensify vigilance and maintain a sharp lookout while transiting the area. ReCAAP has also repeated its urging for the littoral states to increase patrols and surveillance in their waters.

V. CATERING & HOSPITALITY

Indian seafood industry calls for removal of 30% duty on US shrimps

The request was reportedly submitted by the stakeholders in the industry during a meeting with the Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal while he was in Kochi to attend the Invest Kerala Global Summit 2025.

Although the US is the largest export market for Indian shrimps with a share of 34 per cent out of the total seafood export turnover, the value of shrimp imported into the country including from the US is negligible, according to industry sources.

The withdrawal of the current customs duty of 30 per cent on the US shrimps will not affect the local industry. But they expressed concerns that persisting with the duty may force the US to retaliate and impose reciprocal tariff on Indian shrimp exports which could deal the industry a heavy blow. As the US is the biggest market for Indian shrimps, such a move for high tariff will undermine India's position in the global seafood market and lead to sheer business loss, the sources said.

It is pointed out that discussions are currently going on the imposition of Countervailing Duty at 5.77 per cent by the US Department of Commerce on all shrimps exported to the US. The US has initiated an investigation for levy of anti-dumping duty. India has in place a tariff rate of 30 per cent for import of shrimps. As per the statistics provided by the Department of Commerce, the total quantity of imports from the US in 2024-25 till November was \$3.16 million, while exports during the same period were \$1319.68 million. In the previous fiscal, it was \$2.91 million and \$1809 million respectively.

Seafood exporters also cited the difficulties faced due to state biodiversity boards initiating action against units citing seafood as a biological resource and demanding payment of access and benefit sharing charges.

The sector sought the support of the Minister for including seafood under list of items that can be excluded from the purview of Biological Diversity Act of 2002.

Thomas Cook India reports 35% growth in women's travel segment

Thomas Cook India and SOTC Travel have reported a 35 per cent growth in demand from women travellers across India, according to their Women's Travel Trend Report 2025 released 6 Mar '25 ahead of International Women's Day.

The report highlights significant shifts in women's travel preferences, with adventure experiences seeing a 37 per cent surge. Spa and wellness tourism grew by 28 per cent, while cruise holidays increased by 23 per cent. Culinary experiences showed 17 per cent growth, and milestone celebrations emerged as a key driver with 35 per cent of women choosing to travel for special occasions.

Women travellers are also spending 15-20 per cent more year-over-year, with budgets ranging from ₹ 1-1.5 lakh for domestic trips to ₹ 4-5 lakh for long-haul destinations. Trip durations have increased across all categories.

The report indicates strong interest from both metropolitan areas and tier 2-3 cities. Popular domestic destinations include Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir, and Goa, while international favorites are Thailand, Malaysia, and Switzerland.

VI. HEALTH ZONE

224 Passengers & 17 Crew members affected by Norovirus outbreak on Cruise Ship

A norovirus outbreak aboard Cunard Line's Queen Mary 2 has affected 224 passengers and 17 crew members, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The ship, currently sailing a 29-day round trip from Southampton, England, to the Eastern Caribbean has 2,538 passengers and 1,232 crew members onboard.

The outbreak was first reported on March 18, 2025, when the cruise made a scheduled stop in New York, as per data from the tracking website Cruise Mapper.

Passengers and crew began experiencing vomiting and diarrhea, which are the most common symptoms of norovirus.

In response, the ship's crew increased cleaning and disinfection procedures, isolated those who were sick, and collected stool samples for testing, according to the CDC.

A statement from Cunard mentioned that the ship had been deep cleaned and that affected individuals were being closely monitored.

The company also said that the situation was improving with a decline in reported cases, due to the swift response of the crew.

The Queen Mary 2 departed from Southampton on March 8, for a month long journey through the Caribbean, with the cruise scheduled to conclude on April 6.

After leaving England, the ship made stops in New York (March 15), St Maarten, St Lucia, Grenada, Barbados, Dominica, St. Kitts, and Tortola before heading back across the Atlantic.

The CDC noted that norovirus spreads quickly, especially in confined spaces like cruise ships, where passengers share dining areas and public facilities.

Norovirus is a highly contagious gastrointestinal virus that spreads through contaminated food, drinks, surfaces, and direct contact with infected individuals. It is often called the "stomach flu" or "stomach bug", though it is not related to influenza.

According to the CDC, norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne illness in the United States, responsible for 19-21 million illnesses, 109,000 hospitalisations, and around 900 deaths annually.

In 2025 alone, there have already been 12 gastrointestinal outbreaks on cruise ships. People infected with norovirus typically experience diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, fever, headaches, body aches, and dehydration.

Symptoms appear 12 to 48 hours after exposure and usually last one to three days, but an infected person can still spread the virus for up to two weeks after recovery.

There is no specific antiviral treatment for norovirus, and recovery relies on hydration and symptom management.

The CDC recommends drinking fluids with electrolytes to prevent dehydration and practicing proper hygiene, including washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

The agency also advises ensuring fruits and vegetables are washed properly and that shellfish is cooked at an internal temperature of at least 145°F to prevent infection.

In 2013, an outbreak on the same ship affected over 200 people.

Other recent cases include a March 16 outbreak on Seabourn Encore, where 12 passengers and 22 crew members fell sick, and a Holland America cruise in February, where 89 passengers and four crew members were affected during a nine-day trip from Fort Lauderdale to the Southern Caribbean.

Sailors' Society Launches 24/7 Helpline for Female Seafarers on Women's Day

Female seafarers face different challenges while at sea, from isolation to workplace struggles that many men may never experience. On the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8, 2025, the global maritime charity Sailors' Society has launched a 24/7 helpline designed exclusively for female cadets and seafarers.

The helpline will provide a safe, confidential space where they can speak to a female team member whenever they need emotional support, crisis assistance, or simply someone who understands their experiences.

This much-needed initiative is being funded by international marine insurer Skuld, to support gender inclusivity in the maritime industry. Women make up just 2% of the global seafaring workforce, according to a study by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the Women's International Shipping &

Trading Association (WISTA). Most of them work on cruise ships, and many feel alone in an industry dominated by men.

Sailors' Society CEO Sara Baade says that being a seafarer is already challenging, but being a woman at sea brings additional challenges.

Baade believes that having a female-led support system can make a real difference for those who may not feel comfortable discussing their concerns with male colleagues. She also said that this helpline will work alongside Sailors' Society's female Peer-to-Peer Support Groups, creating a stronger network where women can connect and share their experiences.

Skuld's President and CEO, Stale Hansen, said that gender equality is essential for the future of the maritime industry. He pointed out that to attract more women to seafaring careers, the industry must create a safer and more inclusive environment.

Last October, Skuld employees from around the world participated in the Skuld Walking for Seafarers week, raising funds to help bring this helpline to female seafarers.

VII. ARTICLE INDEXING

Future Generali India Insurance opens first all-women's branch in Kochi

Aimed at empowering women in the workforce, Future Generali India Insurance Company has opened its first all-women's branch in the country at Kochi. The branch named Shakti was inaugurated by Anup Rau, MD & CEO of Future Generali India Insurance. Speaking to reporters, Rau said the branch will be manned by 12 women and the company has plans to on-board even more in the coming months. The sales team will provide expert insurance solutions while paving the way for greater representation of women in the industry. "We hope this initiative inspires more women to pursue careers in insurance and financial services, nurturing the next generation of women leaders at FGI", he said.

Asked why Kochi has been chosen the first city, Rau said Kerala has a history of enlightenment when it comes to diversity and gender access. Women here are highly educated and their participation rate is lower. Moving forward, he said the company plans to scale this model by expanding similar branches across other key cities in the country. For a country the size of India, where women comprise roughly half of the nation's population, at around 49 per cent, less than one-third, or only about 30 per cent are covered under health insurance between 2019-21, as per data from the National Family Health Survey India. Around 34.20 per cent of women are covered under life insurance, IRDAI's annual report 2022-23 said.

Understanding the need gap, he said the company launched a comprehensive health insurance plan "Health Power" to address the various needs of women across the different stages of their lives last year. On the business plans, he said the company has tripled its top line in the last six years and will double the top line in the next five years. "We will grow about 14-15 per cent a year", he added.

The company has over ₹ 7473.30 crore of assets under management and gross written premium of ₹ 5002.80 crore as on FY24. The insurance penetration in the country, according to him, is 1-1.2 per cent for general insurance. Of this, health insurance has grown slightly faster. Overall, the insurance industry has grown at a CAGR of 14-16 per cent.



VIII. NEW ARRIVAL

1. SOLAS consolidated edition 2024 by IMO
2. Hotelier India : Monthly magazine
3. Bakery Biz : Bi-monthly magazine
4. Int. Journal of hospitality & tourism system
5. Journal of hospitality application & research
6. ATITHYA : A Journal of hospitality
7. Int. Journal of tourism & hotel management
8. Sea & Jobs

IMO Future Publications

<u>PRICE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PLANNED DELIVERY</u>
1. £30	Facilitation Convention (FAL), 2024 Edition, (digital only)	April 2025
2. £79	Model Course: General operator's certificate for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) (digital only)	April 2025
3. £79	Model Course: Survey of electrical installations (digital only)	April 2025
4. £79	Model Course: Restricted operator's certificate for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) (digital only)	June 2025
5. £79	Model Course: Company security officer (digital only)	July 2025
6. £79	Model Course: Port facility security officer (digital only)	August 2025
7. £79	Model Course: Actions to be taken to prevent acts of piracy and armed robbery (digital only)	September 2025
8. £79	Model Course: Survey of fire appliances and provisions (digital only)	October 2025
9. £79	Model Course: SAR mission coordinator (IAMSAR Manual vol. 2) (digital only)	November 2025
10. £79	Model Course: Port State Control (digital only)	December 2025

QUOTES

Plenty of people miss their share of happiness, not because they never found it, but because they did not stop to enjoy it.

If you cannot find the brighter side of life, then polish the darker side. Attitude of adjustment is the only instrument to live a better life.

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

Editor

Mr. Ram Chandra Pollai, Librarian