



"Waves of Change: Navigating the Latest in Seafaring News".



Recent Challenges and Support Initiatives for Indian Seafarers

Seafarer Abandonment Crisis

In 2024, Indian seafarers were the most abandoned worldwide, with 899 cases reported. This marks an 87% increase from 2023, highlighting persistent issues such as unpaid wages, lack of provisions, and abusive working conditions. The prevalence of "Flags of Convenience" exacerbates these challenges by allowing ship owners to evade labour and safety regulations. Times of India



Piracy Incident in West Africa

Families of 10 seafarers, including Indians and Romanians, are appealing for their release after being abducted by pirates from the product tanker *Bitu River* off the coast of West Africa. The incident underscores ongoing security risks in certain maritime regions. Trade Winds

Mental Health Initiatives

In response to rising mental health concerns among seafarers, India and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) have partnered to incorporate stress management training into India's national maritime curriculum. This initiative aims to provide seafarers with coping mechanisms to handle the unique stresses of their profession. ITF Seafarers

Global Support for Seafarers

Organizations like **Stella Maris** continue to offer essential support to seafarers worldwide, including religious services, practical aid, and advocacy for their rights. Their efforts are crucial in addressing the challenges faced by seafarers, especially during festive seasons



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In a significant stride towards enhancing the welfare and safety of Indian seafarers, the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sailors' Society in January 2025. This collaboration aims to bolster support systems for seafarers, particularly focusing on mental health, crisis management, and educational initiatives.

Key Objectives of the Collaboration:

- **Mental Health Support:** Addressing the pressing issue of mental well-being, the partnership seeks to implement comprehensive support mechanisms for seafarers, acknowledging the unique stresses associated with their profession.
- **Crisis Management:** Developing robust crisis intervention strategies to assist seafarers during emergencies, ensuring timely and effective responses to critical situations at sea.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Providing educational resources and training to enhance the skills and knowledge of seafarers, promoting continuous professional development within the maritime sector.

This MoU aligns with the DGS's broader initiative to elevate seafarers' welfare and safety standards, positively impacting the Indian maritime industry by leveraging Sailors' Society's global expertise.

Additional Initiatives Enhancing Seafarers' Welfare:

- **Shore Leave Process Improvements:** The DGS is actively collaborating with the Ministry of Home Affairs and immigration officials to streamline and expedite the shore leave process for seafarers, aiming to make shore leave more accessible and efficient while ensuring regulatory compliance.
- **Establishment of Seafarers' Welfare Board Audit Team (SWBAT):** The Seafarers Welfare Fund Society (SWFS) aims to provide and maintain welfare facilities for seafarers both in Indian ports and ports abroad, in accordance with the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.

These concerted efforts underscore a collective commitment to improving the lives of seafarers, addressing challenges such as mental health issues, unsafe working conditions, and exploitation. By enhancing support systems, streamlining processes, and enforcing regulations, stakeholders aim to create a safer and more supportive environment for seafarers, who are vital to global trade and commerce. Hellenic Shipping news