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I. D. G. S. CIRCULAR / ORDER



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

Merchant Shipping Notice 10 of 2024

File No: 25-17011/173/2021-NT - DGS (C-No/14294)

Date: 31.05.2024

Sub: Addendum-1 to the MS notice no 08 of 2023- Amendment to the procedure for approval of Medical Examiner of Seafarers as per rule 4 of MS Medical Examination Rules 2000-reg

This Directorate vide MS Notice 08 of 2023, had revised the parameters for all future approval of medical examiners of seafarers, as per the provisions of the M.S. Medical Examination Rules 2000, and in continuation of the M.S. Notice 01 of 2015.

Whereas this Directorate has received grievances from the Medical Examiners of Seafarers for:

- Prescribing ownership of clinic/premises by Medical Examiners [clause 5(b) of Notice 08 of 2023]
- Prescribing an upper age limit for the Examiners presently empanelled with this Directorate [clause 5(h) of Notice 08 of 2023]

In order to assess the validity of the grievances, a virtual meeting of all the industry stakeholders was held on 2nd May 2024 wherein large number of medical examiners from across the country participated. In view of valid submissions made in the meeting, it was unanimously decided that there should be no age bar for Medical Examiners empanelled as on date of issuance of MS notice 08 of 2023.

In view of the same, this addendum is being issued by this Directorate, which shall be read with Merchant Shipping Notice No. 08 of 2023 dated 4th July 2023.

Additional provisions to be complied with are as follows:

Whereas the prescribed clause 5(b) of Notice 08 of 2023 mandates "a doctor having his own clinic/hospital with basic minimum infrastructure requirement, i.e. waiting area for seafarer, examining room, testing lab, collection of blood and urine sample etc. as per the guideline of MS Medical Examination Rules 2000"

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b1. The above paragraph may include the new provisions as below for the doctor not having their own clinic and working with other clinic and hospital:

- a) A doctor employed by a clinic or hospital, upon presentation of a valid appointment letter from the respective clinic or hospital OR a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a clinic or hospital, along with a “No Objection Certificate” (NOC) issued by the clinic or hospital, is authorized to conduct medical fitness examinations for seafarers in the said place;
- b) A doctor who has entered into a partnership with a clinic or hospital may present a partnership agreement, appointment letter or authorization letter, and an NOC from the management of the clinic or hospital as acceptable documentation to conduct medical fitness examination for seafarers in the said place.
- c) The number of approved medical examiners in any clinic or hospital should be limited to a maximum of 02(Two).

b2. Approved doctors are obligated to conduct examinations of seafarers exclusively at the address provided to the Directorate General of Shipping at the time of their application for approval as medical examiners.

b3. Approval will be revoked if a doctor is found to be examining seafarers at any address other than the one registered with the Directorate General of Shipping and displayed on its official portal.

b4. In the event of a change of address, the doctor must obtain approval from the office of the Directorate General of Shipping prior commencing the services in the new address in adherence to the provisions outlined in clause b1 (a, b, and c) and clause 5(e) of Notice 08 of 2023.

b5. The owner of the clinic and/or hospital shall notify the Directorate within one (1) month of the departure of any doctor from the clinic or hospital.

b6. The approved doctor, along with the associated laboratory, will be held responsible for any disputes or issues arising from the issuance of the Medical Fitness Certificate.

Whereas the prescribed clause 5(g) and 5(h) of Notice 08 of 2023 establishes an upper age limit for the examiners currently empaneled with this Directorate, the following revised provisions are to be complied with:

h1. The upper age limit of 70 years for renewal of approval shall not be applicable to the medical examiners of seafarers who were or are empanelled with this Directorate as on the date of issuance of this Notice. However, beyond 70 years they are required to submit only a medical fitness certificate annually from a government approved hospital failing which the approval shall be withdrawn / suspended.

h2. No upper age limit shall be prescribed for the renewal of approval by this Directorate for existing Medical Examiners.

h3. Any Medical Examiner who has been adversely affected by clause 5(h) of MS Notice 08 of 2023 shall, however, be continued on the panel of this Directorate without any age bar, subject to providing a "Certificate of Good Standing" from the appropriate medical council. These doctors need to apply to the directorate for empanelment by fulfilling all requirements and guidelines prescribed by the directorate.

h4. The validity period of approval on the panel of the Directorate General of Shipping shall be for a duration of five years from the date of completion of the Familiarization/Refresher Course, or until the expiration of registration with the appropriate medical council or upon attaining the age of 75 years whichever occurs earlier.

h5. Beyond 75 years of age, the approval for the medical examiner will be renewed on an annual basis, subject to the submission of a fitness certificate from a government approved hospital after the completion of 75 years, and subject to the satisfactory biennial (once in two year) audit of the clinic and the doctor by the Jurisdictional Mercantile Marine Department.

This Addendum comes in effect immediately from the date of issue.

This is issued with the approval of the Directorate General of Shipping.



(Capt. Nitin Mukesh)
Deputy Nautical Adviser -cum-Sr. DDG (Tech)



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MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

F. No. 23-CIR/1/2024-CREW-DGS (Comp. No.: 29100)

Date: 03.06.2024

MS NOTICE 11 OF 2024

Subject: Action against Recruitment & Placement Services (RPS) agencies and seafarers for utilizing deceitful practices - reg.

Whereas, Indian seafarers are recruited to serve onboard merchant shipping vessels either directly by the ship-owners themselves or through Indian registered Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers (RPS) agencies. The enactment of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006 has significantly influenced the recruitment and placement processes of seafarers on vessels worldwide.

2. Whereas, with the MLC Convention in force, the recruitment and placement of seafarers have fallen within the purview of the Merchant Shipping (Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers) Rules, 2016. India, having ratified the MLC Convention 2006, has accordingly promulgated the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour) Rules, 2016 and the Merchant Shipping (Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers) Rules, 2016. These rules ensure that the recruitment and placement of seafarers adhere to international standards set forth by the MLC, thus safeguarding the rights and welfare of seafarers in the maritime industry.

3. Whereas, the Recruitment and Placement Services (RPS) are assigned with various obligations concerning payment of wages, abandonment, and repatriation of seafarers, as outlined in the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006 and its associated guidelines, such as:

1. Regulation 2.2 of the MLC 2006 mandates that the seafarers are entitled to be paid wages as agreed in their employment agreements and payment should be made regularly and directly to the seafarer. RPS agency must ensure that seafarers receive their wages promptly and without any unauthorized deductions.
2. Regulation 2.5 of the MLC 2006 mandates that shipowners are responsible for the repatriation of seafarers in the event of abandonment. However, if the shipowner fails to fulfill this obligation, RPS operating in a member's territory must ensure that seafarers are repatriated at the shipowner's expense, in accordance with Standard A2.5 MLC 2006.
3. Regulation 2.5 of MLC 2006 enshrines that Seafarers have the right to be repatriated at no cost to themselves if they are entitled to be repatriated under their employment agreements or applicable collective agreements. Further, RPS agency must facilitate the repatriation process for seafarers stranded abroad, ensuring that they return home safely and promptly.

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4. Standard A2.5 of MLC 2006 also requires RPS agency to ensure that seafarers receive financial security in the event of the shipowner's insolvency or abandonment. This may include providing access to financial security systems such as insurance or other equivalent measures to compensate seafarers for unpaid wages and repatriation expenses.
5. RPS Companies are obligated to cooperate with competent authorities in overseeing and enforcing regulations related to payment of wages, abandonment and repatriation. This includes providing necessary information and assistance during investigations or proceedings concerning these matters.

4. Whereas, the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour) Rules 2016 also outline various rules and provisions, in line with the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, to protect the Rights and Interest of seafarers, such as:

1. Section 2 of the said Rules states that the ship owners must pay seafarers at least monthly, as per agreements. Seafarers should receive a monthly account of payments and amounts paid, including wages and additional payments. Ship owners must facilitate the transfer of earnings to seafarers' families, including allotment systems for remittance via bank transfers or similar means,
2. Section 4 of the said Rules states that the seafarers must have a signed original copy of the Employment Agreement. Ship owners or licensed recruitment services must submit signed agreements with the relevant authority. Copies of collective bargaining agreements must be on board and in English and seafarers must have access to repatriation provisions in English,
3. Section 5 of the said Rules states that the ship owners must provide financial security to ensure repatriation of seafarers. Seafarers are entitled to repatriation at no cost under certain conditions, including employment termination, inability to perform duties, compassionate grounds or abandonment. Abandonment includes failure to cover repatriation costs, lack of maintenance, or non-payment of wages for two months. Ship owners cannot charge seafarers for repatriation costs, except in default cases.
4. Section 8 states that the ship owners are responsible for making arrangements for the repatriation of seafarers.

5. Whereas, this Directorate is in receipt of various incident reports of Indian seafarers abandoned / stranded at foreign ports on foreign-flagged ships, often without wages for months and lacking essential provisions and fresh water on board. Many of these incidents involve vessels flying Flags of Convenience (FoC) with regulatory lapses and are found to be in serious non-compliance with the mandatory provisions of MLC 2006. These reports also suggests that the seafarers are made to join substandard vessels then the ones they were initially recruited for.

6. Whereas, instances and complaint are also received in this Directorate regarding fraudulent activities being carried out by some Recruitment and Placement Service (RPS) agencies. These complaints were examined and these indicate that RPS agents are employing deceptive methods to lure seafarers by employing touts / agents to show seafarers a promising ship profile and generate Form 1 for a lucrative vessel. However, once the seafarer's e-migration is processed at the immigration check post, they are assigned to a different vessel which is often found to be substandard vessel.

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7. Whereas, the seafarers often do not report such incidents of being onboard a different vessel than the one which their form 1 is generated for and often such vessels are found to be substandard vessel. The seafarer reluctantly works on these inferior or substandard ships due to the pressing need to meet their sea service requirements.

8. Additionally, there are reports of RPS agents submitting fake documents, including fake Protection & Indemnity (P&I) certificates, fake employment agreements and fake copies of Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) that are not genuinely signed between ship-owners and seafarers' unions. These fraudulent documents lead to seafarers being placed on substandard vessels with expired P&I certificates, compromising their safety and well-being.

9. Now therefore, in order to address the increasing reports of fraudulent practices by some RPS agencies, this Directorate office will implement a zero-tolerance policy towards any RPS agency found engaging in fraudulent practices such as mis-representing ship assignments, generating fake documents and submitting falsified documents including P&I Certificate; Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) etc.

10. The Directorate is in the process of examining the authenticity of the online submitted documents such as MLC details, P&I Certificates, Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) etc. in E-Governance portal by RPS agencies. If any RPS agency is found to be involved in fraudulent activities such **mis-representing ship assignments, generating fake documents and submitting falsified documents including P&I Certificate and Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) etc. will face the following actions:**

1. Immediate blockage of online privileges in DG Shipping E-Governance portal
2. RPS agency will undergo thorough audits and investigations by DG Shipping to determine the full extent of their misconduct
3. Subsequent suspension / withdrawal of the agency's RPS license
4. Concerned Directors of RPS agencies would be debarred from carrying out any maritime related activities for a period of five (05) years
5. Recommendation of the matter to Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA), Govt. of India for further necessary actions as per Company's Act such as blacklisting of RPS agency Directors DIN numbers and not to allow them to carry out any business activities in India for a period of five (05) years
6. Further necessary actions will be initiated as per provisions of MS Act 1958 and RPS Rules 2016

11. Further, the Indian seafarers are here by reminded to immediately report any such fraudulent activities and failure to report such incident and **utilizing fraudulent means to obtain sea service on ships not actually sailed on** will result in serious consequences, such as blocking of seafarers Indos No., including cancellation, withdrawal or suspension of their Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC) under the provisions of MS CDC Rules 2017. Non-compliance with reporting requirements and engagement in fraudulent practices will be strictly penalized to uphold the integrity of the maritime profession.

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12. It is reiterated that this Directorate is committed to safeguarding the rights and well-being of seafarers and maintaining the integrity of the maritime recruitment process. All RPS agencies are hereby warned that any involvement in fraudulent activities will be dealt with severely and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

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



Capt. (Dr.) Daniel Joseph
Dy Director General of Shipping (Crew)

II. IMO NEWS

IMO 2024 Bravery at Sea Award Honors Crew of Marlin Luanda & Pemex Maya for Their Heroism

The 2024 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea will be given to two sets of nominees: the Captain and crew of the oil tanker Marlin Luanda for their heroic efforts in containing a fire caused by an anti-ship missile strike and the Captain and crew of the tugboat Pemex Maya, for rescuing six shipwrecked individuals during a hurricane.

Captain Avhilash Rawat and the crew of the Marlin Luanda, nominated by the Marshall Islands, are recognized for their extraordinary courage and determination.

On January 26, 2024, the Marlin Luanda, carrying 84,147 tons of Naphtha, was hit by a missile, causing a fire that the crew fought bravely for over 24 hours, with the help of other naval forces, before finally extinguishing it and preventing an environmental disaster.

Captain Jorge Fernando Galaviz Fuentes and the crew of the Pemex Maya, nominated by Mexico, are recognized for their exceptional seamanship and resolve.

On October 25, 2023, during Hurricane Otis, they rescued six stranded people from four vessels in extreme weather conditions, demonstrating exceptional bravery and skill.

Two individuals will receive certificates of commendation for their bravery, while 15 letters of commendation will be awarded.

An assessment panel assessed the nominees, and a Panel of judges selected them. The IMO Council adopted their recommendations during its 132nd session, which took place July 8-12, 2024. Forty-one nominations were received from 15 member states and three non-governmental organizations.

Gabon's Captain Jérôme Noël Mougoula Saguiliba and Lieutenant Crépin Manfoumbi Mengara will receive certificates for rescuing 150 passengers and crew members from the sinking ferry Esther Miracle. They demonstrated outstanding leadership and determination.

Women's career fair seeks new talent in ship recycling

Ship recycling companies in Bangladesh have confirmed their intentions to hire more women, after acknowledging the "wasted talent" in an industry that has traditionally barred females from employment.

A careers fair hosted by the City of Chattogram, organised by IMO's Safe and Environmentally Sound Ship Recycling (SENSREC) Project in collaboration with the Women in International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA) in Bangladesh, focused on supporting women's access to the country's ship recycling sector.

The event brought together the country's leading ship recycling companies along with women seafarers, maritime professionals, graduates and students from the Asian Women University and other leading institutions in the city. Participants had the opportunity to visit the exhibition stands to speak directly with potential employers.

Women participants had the opportunity to learn about the wide range of roles in ship recycling and get in-person tips for seeking employment and developing a professional career.

Discussions highlighted the recently published *Gender Sensitisation Manual for the Ship Recycling Sector*, which raises awareness of the benefits of gender inclusive workforce and includes recommendations on how to achieve gender balance while avoiding common bias and discrimination.

India raises seafarer abandonment crisis at IMO; secures membership in key working group

India has called for effective measures to resolve the issue of seafarer abandonment and ensuring the safety of maritime workforce, an official statement said on Wednesday. A high-level Indian delegation led by Ports, Shipping and Waterways Secretary T K Ramachandaran raised the issue at the 132nd session of the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London.

In recognition of its continued commitment to address seafarers' issues, India secured its position as one of the eight governments representing IMO in the joint tripartite working group, it said.

“India, an elected member of the IMO Council in the category of countries with the largest interest in international seaborne trade, emphasised the urgent issue of seafarer abandonment,” the statement said.

The delegation pointed out that despite efforts, there are 44 active cases involving 292 Indian seafarers, the statement added.

“India’s strong stance on the need for effective measures and oversight to resolve such issues was well received,” it said.

According to the statement, India reiterated its proposal for the South Asian Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMaT).

This group is dedicated to identifying and tackling seafarers’ issues and the human element in maritime operations. Other proposed members include the Philippines, Thailand, Liberia, Panama, Greece, the US, and France, it added.

Ramachandaran said, “India remains deeply committed to addressing the issue of seafarer abandonment and ensuring the safety and welfare of our maritime workforce.”

According to the statement, the Indian delegation also addressed concerns over disruptions in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and adjoining areas, which have been impacting shipping and trade logistics.

Highlighting India’s commitment to maritime safety and security, the delegation cited two significant incidents where the Indian Navy successfully intervened.

“These included the rescue of a Marshall Island-flagged crude oil carrier, MV Marlyn Luanda, and the interception of the vessel MV Ruen off the coast of Somalia, ensuring the safety of crew members and handling piracy threats effectively,” it said.

India’s participation in the IMO Council session underscores dedication to international maritime cooperation and innovation.

The 132nd session of the IMO Council, which commenced on July 8, will continue till July 12, addressing various critical issues and proposals for the future of global maritime operations.

III. ILO NEWS

Indian Authorities Warn Seafarers of “Deceitful” Recruiters and Scammers

India’s shipping ministry is warning seafarers to avoid unscrupulous operators and recruiters who abandon mariners at overseas ports. The practice of seafarer abandonment has been growing, according to the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF), and the directorate’s guidance is intended to help mariners secure their rights if and when their employer stops paying their wages. As a starting point, the directorate advises new seafarers to check up on the reputation of an employer or manning agency before signing on for a position, and to carefully review the terms of their employment contract. “[The] market is flooded with various scam agents,” the agency said. “New joiners have very little knowledge about the maritime industry, and they easily fall prey to agents.”

If the crew does run into a problem with wage payment, the directorate advises notifying Indian authorities right away, then starting the process to get the ship’s P&I insurer to cover the shipowner’s debts using their MLC financial security coverage.

If the owner or agent does not respond to inquiries about unpaid wages, and abandons the vessel to its fate, the directorate advises seafarers to get the ship arrested and sold in order to cover the owner’s debts, just like an unpaid bunker broker or banker would - not as a last resort, but immediately.

“Seafarers are not paid for wages, food, accommodation, drinking water supplies, fuel for survival and medical care then seafarer should immediately approach their seafarers trade union or Indian embassy or Indian consulate or welfare organizations to arrange for a local lawyer to enforce their rights under maritime lien,” the directorate advised.

The notice includes a list of legitimate maritime academies and advises new entrants in the industry to avoid uncertified, uncredentialed maritime schools, which may be fraudulent.

“This notice is seen as a beneficial step towards safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of seafarers and ensuring the integrity of the maritime recruitment process. It will not only serve as a guide for current seafarers but will also be of great help to new seafarers who are looking to apply for recruitment in the maritime industry,” said Frank Viegas, president of the Goan Seamen Association of India (GSAI).

Last month, the directorate also issued an urgent warning about another unscrupulous practice: a scam that preys on seafarers’ families. The agency has received multiple reports of a fraudulent scheme that targets the family members of seafarers while they are away: the fraudsters contact the family via phone or email and say that the crewmember has been involved in illegal activity, and demand money from the family in exchange for the seafarer’s “release.” (In reality, the seafarer is simply away at work, and the scammer makes off with the money.) The directorate urged seafarers and their families to be sure to verify the identity of the caller, and not to transfer any money to anyone without first validating their request.

“There have been incidents involving individuals falsely claiming to be associated with seafarers *on-board* vessels or pretending to be as from law enforcing authorities such as Customs, State Police Departments, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Immigration Officials and Govt. officials from Ministry etc., and soliciting money from their family members under fraudulent pretences,” warned Indian Deputy Director General of Shipping Capt. Daniel J Joseph. “These claims are generally false and are designed to deceive and exploit unsuspecting family members.”

Seafarer Welfare Charity, Mission to Seafarers Launches First-ever Maritime Mountain Race

Seafarer welfare charity The Mission to Seafarers (MtS) has announced the launch of its first-ever Maritime Mountain Race, an endurance event scheduled for September 13 to 15, 2024.

The action-packed race, to be held amid the breath taking Bouveret region overlooking Lake Geneva, will include 32 teams of three trail hikers and runners from the maritime community.

The participants will trek through the rugged terrain of the Swiss Alps, passing through lush forests, hidden pathways, and magnificent views of the Alps and Lake Geneva.

Participants are encouraged to raise at least \$5,000 per team, with rewards granted to the top fundraisers.

Entries are available in two difficulty levels: hiking and running, catering to both experienced athletes and those seeking a challenging yet achievable challenge.

The last date for team registration is Wednesday, July 31st, 2024.

The Maritime Mountain Race is more than a physical challenge; it celebrates collaboration, perseverance, and a shared dedication to seafarers' well-being.

Participants will have two evenings in a neutral, charity-driven setting to build connections and meet with other industry professionals.

The event will begin with a welcome reception and finish with a Gala Dinner at César Ritz Colleges Switzerland in Le Bouveret.

Jan Webber, Director of Development at The Mission to Seafarers, emphasized the race's importance, stating that the Maritime Mountain Race offers the shipping industry an adrenaline-fueled opportunity to commemorate the power of teamwork, adventure, determination, and a shared commitment to the welfare of seafarers.

In addition to the challenge of two days on Alpine trails overlooking Lake Geneva, participants will have the opportunity to network, connect, and forge lasting connections with industry colleagues over two evenings.

Sponsorship possibilities are available for businesses and individuals seeking branding and networking opportunities.

Current sponsors include Cargill Ocean Transportation (gold) and Holman Fenwick Willan (polo shirt).

The Mission to Seafarers is well-known for hosting high-quality events with meticulous attention to detail. This inaugural race promises to provide a genuinely unique experience for all participants.

IV. SHIPPING NEWS

Singapore Port Faces 90% Vessel Delays Due To Red Sea Diversions

Almost 90% of container ships arrive in Singapore off-schedule, a significant increase from 77% in 2023, according to Transport Minister Chee Hong Tat.

The ongoing Red Sea crisis is to blame for the delays, forcing ships to take the longer routes between Europe and Asia around the Cape of Good Hope.

Chee Hong Tat revealed these details in a written response to Parliament on July 2, 2024, emphasising the widespread impact of the crisis on global shipping schedules.

The diversion of the vessels has led to an increase in off-schedule arrivals at ports worldwide.

Singapore, a crucial transshipment hub, has been particularly impacted since shipping lines depend on it to rearrange containers and facilitate operations.

The increased volume of container vessels has extended their stay in the port, increasing the wait time of incoming ships and causing congestion at container berths. Several ships arrive within a short period of time, causing a bunching effect that exacerbates congestion.

In response, port management agencies have reactivated additional berths and yard space and plan to continue scaling up handling capacity in the coming months to meet the expected demand.

Despite these challenges, Singapore's container throughput increased by 7.7 per cent from January to May. The expansion demonstrates the port's resilience and importance in global trade.

Philippines Restricts Seafarers from Transiting Via Red Sea & Gulf of Aden, 78 Crew Refuse to Sail the Risky Zone

The Philippines is taking steps to restrict its seafarers from working on vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea due to escalating tensions from the Houthi operations.

During a press briefing in Manila, the Department of Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Cacdac revealed intentions to increase safety precautions for Filipino seafarers on commercial ships in response to recent Houthi attacks. The decision comes after a series of alarming incidents, including the seizure of the car carrier *Galaxy Leader* in November 2023 and attacks on the bulk carriers *Tutor* and *Transworld Navigator*, all of which had large numbers of Filipino crew members.

The Philippines has already repatriated the 21 surviving crew members from the *MV Tutor*.

Cacdac intends to remove the 27 Filipino seafarers from the *Transworld Navigation* once it arrives at the port. Cacdac emphasized the situation's complexity, citing ongoing security and risk evaluations with industry partners and the Philippine Navy and Coast Guard.

Filipinos make up a sizable share of the worldwide maritime workforce, increasing the impact of these initiatives. In the initial phase, the Department will target three shipping companies: Evalend Shipping, Ray Car Carriers, and the owner of *True Confidence*.

Filipino seafarers will be forbidden from working on these companies' ships transiting the Red Sea.

The prohibition could be extended to more ships as the department reviews the records of vessels targeted by the Houthis. Shipowners will be required to provide affirmation letters stating that they will not employ Filipino seafarers in the Red Sea or the Gulf of Aden. Previous guidelines recommend rerouting and prohibiting Filipino seafarers on passenger and cruise ships from travelling through these high-risk zones. The Philippines also requires shipowners to notify Filipino crewmembers of planned transits via the Red Sea so that they can disembark. 78 Filipino seamen have already exercised their right to refuse such deployments. Cacdac ordered shipowners to increase notice times and warned of consequences for anyone who failed to comply.

While not an absolute prohibition, the new guidelines attempt to improve the safety of Filipino seafarers by allowing them to travel on ships from banned companies only provided they avoid high-risk zones.

The Department will revise existing regulations to improve safety measures for Filipino seafarers. Despite these safety measures, many Filipino sailors continue to accept journeys in dangerous waters due to the double hazard pay. Cacdac accepted this but emphasised that protection takes priority before money. Seafarers operating in high-risk zones must be accompanied by maritime security escorts and armed guards and undergo extensive risk evaluations.

Licensed manning agencies are also instructed to avoid these dangerous routes and to provide additional compensation and security for people who agree to sail through high-risk areas. Seafarers must be given adequate time to determine whether to continue their journey or refuse to board ships navigating these zones.

Ukraine Seizes Cargo Ship & Detains Its Captain for Transporting Looted Grain to Russia

Ukraine has seized a foreign cargo ship and detained its captain on suspicion of assisting Moscow in exporting Ukrainian grain from Russian-occupied Crimea on the Danube River, officials reported on July 11, 2024. Since the beginning of the 2022 conflict, Kyiv has accused Russia of transporting looted Ukrainian grain, but ship seizures have been rare, raising concerns among maritime sources about potential retaliation at a crucial time for Ukraine's grain exports.

The Usko Mfu, a Cameroonian-flagged vessel, was stopped by Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) near the Odesa region in the Black Sea. According to the SBU, the ship arrived at the Crimean Sea Port of Sevastopol repeatedly in 2023-24 to collect agricultural products.

The captain, an Azerbaijani national, was detained along with 12 other crew members.

The captain could face up to five years in prison for violating travel restrictions in Ukraine's Russian-occupied territory. According to Ukraine's SBU, an inquiry is ongoing to determine the crime's circumstances and identify anyone else involved in the illegal activity.

The detained vessel was carrying grain allegedly stolen from Ukraine's southern agricultural regions, which have been under Russian control since the first year of the invasion.

The SBU stated that the vessel was turning off its GPS tracker and logging fake travel information to hide its movements. On one voyage in November 2023, the ship allegedly carried over 3,000 metric tons of agricultural supplies at Sevastopol for a Turkish company.

The ship's manager, Turkey-based Iyem Asya, denied any wrongdoing.

A person commented that the ship did not take any cargo from Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine and never used Ukrainian ports under their management.

They further stated that Ukrainian forces boarded the ship on the Danube with a Romanian pilot present and forcibly anchored it on Ukraine's side of the river. Ukraine's prosecutor's office confirmed that according to LSEG ship-tracking data, the ship was last spotted at the Reni port on the Danube on July 8. The incident highlights the constant tension and challenges of maritime operations in the Black Sea region. The Danube remains vital for Ukraine's grain exports, especially after Russia withdrew a UN-brokered agreement last summer that allowed Kyiv to sell grain during the crisis.

Ukraine has since resumed Black Sea exports, irrespective of Russian approval.

In response to the seizure, an anonymous law enforcement source stated that the vessel and its captain worked for the occupants, and he has now entered Ukrainian waters.

The European Union has also imposed prohibitive duties on Russian grain imports to reduce revenue flows to Moscow, complicating the region's grain export scenario.

Manning the World's Largest Ship – The Maiden Voyage of The Maersk Triple-E

The first Triple-E has commenced its maiden voyage in Busan, South Korea. At the helm, the crew of the Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller whose members have been selected among Maersk Line's finest. A selection of highly qualified crew members, specifically chosen because of their background and experience, will man the largest ship in the world. The ship can accommodate 34, and in principle run with as few as 13, but in regular service approximately 22 persons will make out the crew.

Understanding of roles and responsibilities on the vessel is of utmost importance to ensure smooth sailing and safety.

On the Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller, the Captains are Jes Meinertz and Niels Vestergaard Pedersen, and the Chief Engineers are Per Schilling Nielsen and Niels Peter Svarer.

All of them were present at the naming ceremony in Korea on 14 June. "You are among the finest in your fields, and you should be honoured by being selected to take this vessel into service," said Maersk Line CEO in his speech on that occasion. "May you always have fair winds and following seas."

Away from home

Working on a ship is different from a regular nine to five job, the most obvious being the long periods spent away from home. All four testify that the hardest is that you cannot be there for special occasions, good and bad. On the other hand, modern communication has reduced the feeling of solitude significantly. Although bandwidth is limited, crew members these days can use email, Skype or FaceTime to be in regular contact with friends and family back home.

On another level, however, it is a job like any other job, and sometimes you hardly notice that you're at sea," says Per. "We had a trip two years ago where we sailed south of Africa and were at sea for 45 days. I was never bored. There was always something to do." It's like any other job," adds Jes. "There are periods with interesting tasks and periods where it's more routine."

Breaking in a new ship

Taking a new ship to sea, however, is not routine. There are many surprises and things to get used to. The crew is involved in the sea trials, but will also use the first voyages to really get the hang of how the ship performs.

The Triple-E is designed for slow speeds and energy performance. But this doesn't make it less interesting, insists Niels Peter. "It is a huge satisfaction," he says "when you know the enormous costs involved which are pumped through the system, if you can cut a few percent off that" Niels adds that the Triple-E is quite different from previous vessels with its added weight and more box-like hull shape. "It will take some getting used to, and the captain will need to be aware of the capabilities of the vessel," continues Niels.

They are fully confident, however, that sailing the Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller will indeed be a special experience. The maiden voyage begins today. The crew is ready for the attention the vessel will receive in ports along the way, creating history with the latest record-breaking member of Maersk Line's fleet.

European Shipowners & Maritime Transport Unions Launch 'Seafarers Go Digital' Initiative

The European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) and the European Transport Workers Federation (ETF) have launched the "Seafarers Go Digital" initiative, a collaborative effort to assist the shipping sector and the seafarers in the digital transition. The initiative intends to address digitalization's problems while protecting seafarers' welfare and rights.

'Seafarers Go Digital' aims to adapt to international regulations, training programs and operational procedures to integrate digital technologies while protecting the seafarers' employment rights and well-being.

The program focuses on critical issues such as cybersecurity, digital skills, e-certification, internet access on-board, on-board digitalization, and the appeal of maritime careers.

It also provides policy recommendations for increased collaboration between industrial stakeholders, unions and policymakers. ECSA Secretary General Sotiris Raptis emphasized the importance of educating and reskilling seafarers to operate with new digital tools and technologies.

He emphasized the potential of digitalization to make the maritime profession more appealing and diverse by providing career opportunities both on-board and ashore, increasing the participation of women and marginalized groups.

ETF Secretary General Livia Spera reiterated that the project intends to prepare marine professionals for the digital age while encouraging a fair and inclusive digital transition.

Spera emphasized the importance of collaboration in maximising the benefits of digital transition while reducing its risks. The 'Seafarers Go Digital' initiative was launched at an event in Brussels that included speeches from Barbara Sellier, the Acting Head of Unit Maritime Safety at the European Commission, Manuela Tomassini, the Head of Department at the European Maritime Safety Agency, and Rhiannon Ducas from the WESS project.

The initiative builds on the outcomes of joint ECSA-ETF projects SkillSea and WESS.

The collaborative initiative is a crucial step towards a more sustainable and appealing future for seafarers, ensuring they are well-prepared and supported in the maritime industry's evolving digital landscape.

V. CATERING & HOSPITALITY

Improved refrigerated supply chains could save nearly half of global food waste, says new study

University of Michigan researchers have found nearly half of global food waste could be stopped with better refrigeration, saving food and cutting climate impact.

About a third of the food produced globally each year goes to waste, while approximately 800 million people suffer from hunger, according to the United Nations' (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). However, a new University of Michigan study has concluded that nearly half of the food waste, about 620 million metric tons, could be eliminated by fully refrigerated food supply chains worldwide.

At the same time, fully refrigerated supply chains, or 'cold chains', could cut food waste-related emissions of climate-warming greenhouse gases (GHG) by 41 percent globally, according to the study (*The impact of refrigeration on food losses and associated greenhouse gas emissions throughout the supply chain* (DOI: 10.1088/1748-9326/ad4c7b)) published online on 28 May 2024 in the peer-reviewed journal, *Environmental Research Letters*.

Sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia have the greatest potential for reductions in both food losses and related emissions through increased cold-chain implementation, according to the study.

South and Southeast Asia could see a 45 percent reduction in food losses and a 54 percent decrease in associated emissions under an optimised refrigeration scenario. Sub-Saharan Africa has tremendous opportunities for both food loss (47 percent) and emissions (66 percent) reductions under optimised refrigeration conditions, the study shows.

And, in many situations, developing more localised, less industrialised 'farm-to-table' food supply chains may yield food savings comparable to optimised cold chains, according to the study.

"I was surprised to find the scale of our opportunity for reducing food loss and waste globally," said study lead author, Aaron Friedman-Heiman, a master's student at the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability and Ross School of Business. "Approximately half of the roughly 1.3 billion tons of food that goes to waste annually can be solved through food supply chain optimisation."

The other author is Shelie Miller, a professor at the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability and at the College of Engineering.

Food losses produce an estimated eight percent of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. The new University of Michigan study focuses on food losses in the post-harvest to retail stages of the food supply chain and does not address on-farm or at-home losses.

The study accounts for the greenhouse gases emitted during food production. It does not include emissions tied to refrigeration or other supply-chain operations and does not include emissions from food waste in landfills.

The study, funded in part by Carrier Global Corp., found that:

- The greatest opportunity to improve food losses in less industrialised economies is the supply chain between the farm and the consumer. But, in North America, Europe and other more industrialised regions, most food loss happens at the household level, so cold chain improvements would not have a major impact on total food losses
- Reinforcing previous research, the University of Michigan study highlights the importance of meat-related food losses. While the amount of fruit and vegetable losses is much higher, by weight, throughout the world, the climate-related emissions associated with meat losses are consistently greater than those associated with any other food type – due mainly to the high greenhouse gas intensity of meat production
- Unlike previous studies of this topic, the University of Michigan researchers compared the benefits of globalised, technologically advanced food supply chains with those of localised 'farm-to-table' food systems. "Hyper-localised food systems resulted in lower food losses than optimised global, refrigerated supply chains," Friedman-Heiman said. "The results help to quantify the value of maintaining and supporting local food chains."

For the study, researchers built a food-loss estimation tool to assess how improved access to the cold chain could impact food loss and its associated greenhouse gas emissions for seven food types in seven regions. They used data from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and other sources.

By modeling food losses at each stage of the supply chain, the study highlights where the cold chain can be optimised to reduce food losses and emissions. The researchers analysed the effects of moving from the current state of inconsistent and variable quality cold chains throughout the world to an optimised system, defined as one with high quality refrigeration across all stages. The study estimates that poor cold chain infrastructure could be responsible for up to 620 million metric tons of global food loss annually, resulting in emissions of 1.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalents, the equivalent of 28 percent of US annual greenhouse gas emissions.

The researchers say that their adaptable, easy-to-use tool will be of use to anyone involved in the food supply chain, including farmers, grocery retailers, government officials and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

"Although cold chain infrastructure is rapidly increasing worldwide, an optimised cold chain will likely develop at different rates and in different ways across the globe," Miller said. "This analysis demonstrates that, while increased refrigeration should lead to improvements in both food loss and greenhouse gas emissions associated with food loss, there are important tradeoffs associated with cold chain improvements by food type and region."

Miller also said that investment decisions will need to be prioritised to maximise the desired outcomes and impacts. For example, if an NGO's top priority is ending hunger, then cold chain upgrades that provide the greatest overall food loss reductions may best meet that objective.

But organisations that prioritise climate action may choose to focus on reducing meat losses specifically, rather than total food losses.

The study found that meat accounts for more than 50 percent of food loss-related greenhouse gas emissions, despite accounting for less than 10% of global food losses by weight. Optimized refrigeration of meat could result in the elimination of more than 43% of emissions associated with meat loss, according to the study.

The researchers emphasize that the actual amount of greenhouse gas emissions savings will depend on the efficiency of cold-chain technologies and the carbon intensity of local electrical grids, since climate emissions associated with refrigeration can be significant.

The U-M study was supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation and by Carrier Global Corp., a global leader in intelligent climate and energy solutions.

VI. ARTICLE INDEXING

Levels of snack and sweet consumption impacted by income, new study finds

The study found that lower income areas are unjustly exposed to greater targeted marketing for snacks and sweets, as well as higher prices for healthy food and fewer healthy food options in stores. People living in lower-income neighbourhoods and in areas without local food stores eat more snacks and sweets than those in higher-income areas and in neighbourhoods with many food stores, a new study has shown.

Researchers at the University of Michigan and the University of Alabama-Birmingham looked at the overall consumption of snacks and sweets, and four subcategories: bakery sweets; candy and desserts; savoury snacks and crackers; and nutrition bars and low-fat snacks and sweets.

The findings show:

- People who live in neighbourhoods with many food stores ate nine percent fewer snacks and sweets overall, 10 percent fewer sweet bakery products and six percent fewer candy and desserts than people in neighbourhoods without food stores nearby
- People in the highest income areas ate 11 percent fewer snacks and sweets overall, 19 percent fewer bakery products and six percent fewer savoury snacks and crackers
- Higher-income households ate more nutrition bars and low-fat snacks and sweets compared to lower-income households
- People in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-defined food deserts ate the same amount of snacks as those who are not in USDA-defined food deserts, regardless of income.

Ian-Marshall Lang, a researcher at the University of Michigan's School of Kinesiology and first author of the study, said that his team didn't examine 'the why' behind the findings, but hypothesised that people in neighbourhoods without food stores might buy more shelf-stable foods like snacks and sweets, or buy food at less traditional food stores like dollar stores, which carry fewer healthy options.

"Our neighbourhood income findings may be explained by previous research showing that lower income areas are unjustly exposed to greater targeted marketing for snacks and sweets, higher prices for healthy food, fewer healthy food options in stores and greater stress," he said.

The findings are important for several reasons, Lang said: "A lot of research on the residential food environment and dietary intake focuses on fruit and vegetable consumption and overall diet quality, leaving far less known about the intake of snacks and sweets," he said. "Additionally, US-based studies that have examined food store availability and intake of snacks and sweets among adults have been limited to select cities and specific store types. The size of the study and the novelty of our methods help to fill these gaps in the literature."

Surprisingly, the study found that people living in USDA-defined food deserts ate the same amount of snacks and sweets as people who did not live in food deserts. This could be because the USDA defines food stores as large supermarkets (Walmart, Meijer), whereas Lang's study defines primary food stores as places where 94% of US households do the majority of their food shopping, regardless of income. It includes supermarkets, supercentres and select food retailers (small grocery stores, fruit and vegetable markets, bakeries, convenience stores and drug stores).

"In identifying potential settings for future programming and interventions that target snacks and sweets intake, it may be important to consider places devoid of primary food retailers (defined more broadly) rather than places only devoid of large traditional supermarkets," Lang said.

So, what do these numbers mean in terms of healthy food choices and overall health?

"Though we didn't look at the health impacts of snacks and sweets consumption in this paper, we do know from previous research that consumption of snacks and sweets like the ones examined in this study is associated with higher calorie intake and body weight in adults," Lang said. "We also know that making even small, positive dietary changes – like swapping one calorie-dense snack or sweet for a more nutrient-dense snack like fresh fruit – can have benefits for population health."

The study did not conclude a causal relationship between income and neighbourhood food store availability and snack consumption. Researchers used data from 21,204 participants in the ongoing

Reasons for Geographic and Racial Differences in Stroke study, which is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and housed at the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

The study appeared in the Journal of Nutrition. Co-authors include Natalie Colabianchi and Cathy Antonakos of the University of Michigan's School of Kinesiology and Suzanne Judd of the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

Preparing the hospitality workforce for 2027

Nidheesh Saxena, Senior Director of Admissions at Gitam Deemed to be University, writes about the essential skills and knowledge required to navigate the future requirements of hospitality industry. The convergence of technological innovations and evolving global priorities is reshaping the employability landscape within the hospitality industry. The increase in domestic and international tourism in India will lead to a significant expansion in the hospitality industry. With the growing economy, the hospitality industry offers opportunities for employment and growth.

As we look towards 2027, the workforce for the hospitality sector requires a robust educational framework responsive to industry trends and demands. Several colleges, such as the Indian Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM), the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT), and numerous private institutions, offer diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate programmes. They provide comprehensive training in areas such as hotel management, culinary arts, tourism management, and event management.

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) projects that by 2027, India's travel and tourism sector will support around 46 million jobs, underscoring the need for a well-trained workforce. According to the Ministry of Tourism, India's tourism sector is expected to grow at an annual rate of 6.9%, contributing significantly to the GDP and creating millions of jobs.

A visionary approach is needed to prepare a workforce for the 2027 job market in the hospitality sector. This means investing in education and training, leveraging technology, and fostering an adaptable, skilled workforce. To boost the hospitality sector in India, the government has launched various campaigns, such as "Dekho Apna Desh" to increase tourism and subsequently increase the demand for skilled hospitality professionals.

Digital literacy: Proficiency in hospitality management software such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems and online booking platforms is essential for modern hospitality professionals. Additionally, training in AI applications, data analytics, and cybersecurity will be crucial to effectively managing and protecting digital resources, enhancing guest experiences, and optimising operational efficiency.

Sustainable practices: It is important to provide students with the knowledge and skills by incorporating courses on sustainable tourism, corporate social responsibility, and green hotel management that will help students manage eco-friendly initiatives. These courses make students efficient in integrating sustainability into operations and preparing strategies for sustainable growth.

Collaborating with industry partners: To provide experience and practical knowledge through internships and training at the colleges, forming collaborations with industry partners such as hotels, resorts, and tourism companies is essential. To fully prepare students and make them industry-ready, these partnerships are important to gain insights into industry expectations and skill requirements for careers in hospitality.

Development of skills: Institutions need to focus on skill development programmes that enhance soft skills, leadership qualities, and entrepreneurial ability. These programmes sharpen interpersonal skills and develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are crucial in the hospitality industry. Through workshops, real-world projects, and mentorship opportunities, these initiatives prepare students to excel in various roles within hospitality.

THOUGHTS

Conquer the angry one by not getting angry;
conquer the wicked by goodness;
conquer the stingy by generosity,
and the liar by speaking the truth.

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

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