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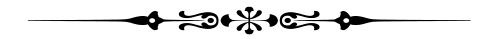


IMO Presents Crew of Tanker & Tugboat with Exceptional Bravery at Sea 2024 Award

VOLUME NO. 24, ISSUE NO. 11 November, 2024 TRAINING SHIP RAHAMAN NHAVA

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

File No. 23-MISC/33/2024-CREW-DGS (C. No. 28779)

Date: 25.11.2024

DGS Order 19 of 2024

Subject: Establishment of Task Force for nurturing and supporting the Directorate's initiative of "Sagar Mein Yog - Wellness at Sea / Shore" - reg.

Reference is invited to the growth of Indian seafarers in the global maritime industry which has been significant in recent years, with India emerging as one of the leading suppliers of skilled seafarers worldwide. Indian seafarers are highly regarded for their technical skills, English proficiency and adaptability. This demand has led to an increasing number of Indian officers and ratings on international vessels.

The Directorate General of Shipping and Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways in India have implemented policies and programs to support seafarer training, welfare and employment. These include providing more cadet berths, simplifying recruitment procedures, and addressing welfare issues.

3. The seafaring profession is inherently stressful, given the unique set of challenges faced by seafarers. The life of a seafarer involves physical demands, mental strain and social isolation, all of which contribute to stress. The factors such as isolation and loneliness, long working hours, mental health challenges, job uncertainty and economic pressure, physical strain and limited medical facilities, cultural and language barriers, environmental challenge and safety and security threats leads to increased stress level in seafaring profession.

4. Yoga is an ancient practice originating in India that combines physical postures, breathing exercises, meditation, and ethical principles to promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Rooted in Hindu philosophy, yoga is much more than a physical exercise; it's a holistic approach to health that seeks to unify the mind, body, and spirit.

5. Directorates initiative of "Sagar Mein Yog" (Yoga at Sea) is a concept that would promote integrating yoga practices into the daily routines of seafarers to help them manage stress, improve physical fitness and enhance mental well-being. The idea recognizes the unique challenges of life at sea, prolonged isolation, confined spaces, and unpredictable routine that can lead to mental and physical health issues. By incorporating yoga into their daily lives, seafarers can build resilience, reduce anxiety, and improve overall quality of life onboard.



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7. Whereas, the future of Indian seafarers depends on their ability to adapt to technological advancements, regulatory changes and global market dynamics while fostering sustainable and inclusive growth. The constituted Task Force shall serve as a consultative body dedicated to analyzing and devising comprehensive Yog Syllabus to combat them.

 The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the constituted Maritime Task Force by the Directorate shall be following but not limited to:

i. Preparing "Sagar Mein Yog" - Yog Syllabus document

Preparing Yoga syllabus for seafarers attending courses such pre-sea and post-sea courses
 Preparing Yoga syllabus for seafarers to perform yoga at sea

9. The constituted Task Force by the Directorate may further co-opt experts who can guide and support them for providing direction, advice and recommendations as deemed fit. Also, the Task Force may accordingly convene meetings as required in-person or virtually with all such meetings minutes be documented and shared with all members as required.

10. Participation by the members / officials shall be purely voluntary and will not be subject to any manner of remuneration, honorarium etc. and any incidental expenditures for conduct of meetings or specific activities arrived at by due consensus in the Task Force meetings shall be subject to the stipulations as mandated on raising a charge on the public exchequer as per due process.

 The constituted Task Force may explore potential funding sources to support its initiatives, including partnerships with industry stakeholders, grants from governmental organisations and sponsorships as required.

(Shyam Jagannathan) Director General of Shipping

Encl: As above

To,

- All Task Force members
- 2. Maritime Unions MUI / NUSI etc.
- 3. Industry Associations MASSA / FOSMA / INSA / ICCSA / IMF
- 4. Professional Organisations CMMI / IMEI / WMU India Alumni Association

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

File No. 23-MISC/38/2024-CREW-DGS (C. No. 28971)

Date: 25.11.2024

DGS Order 18 of 2024

Subject: Establishment of Task Force for Women in Maritime for nurturing and supporting the Directorate's initiative of "Sagar Mein Samman" - reg.

Reference is invited to the growth of women in every aspect related to maritime industry. "Sagar Mein Samman" speaks about the diversified culture of the maritime sector where women are found to be prominent and included for their nature and values. It consists of the number of women seafarers in this industry being honoured and rewarded for their hard work and perseverance, which will lead in empowering young women in the coming future in the maritime industry.

2. Recognizing the pressing need to address the issues and challenges being faced by women in maritime sector effectively the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) is pleased to constitute "Task Force for Women in Maritime" comprising the following members (As enclosed in Annexure 1 list) from the maritime industry, including representatives from reputable shipping companies, allied offices and other relevant stakeholders to work and look after the Women Seafarers cause, issues and support the Women Seafarers well-being at sea and ashore.

3. Whereas, the future of Women Seafarers and Women in Maritime depends on their ability to adapt to technological advancements, regulatory changes and global market dynamics while fostering sustainable and inclusive growth. The constituted Task Force shall serve as a consultative body dedicated to analyzing and devising comprehensive maritime strategies to combat them.

 The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the constituted Maritime Task Force by the Directorate shall be following but not limited to:

 Preparing "Sagar Mein Samman" - Complete policy document, which may include the following aspects:

- a) Zero tolerance policy document for women in maritime
- b) Diversity / Equity and inclusion framework for all concerns in maritime sector
- Model Code of conduct for seafarers
- d) Gender perspective strategies

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- e) Infrastructure requirement with gender perspective
- f) Social media engagement to create pull factor for a career in maritime for women
- g) Institutional mechanism for promotional and sustained campaign on social media
- h) Other engagements such as programmes / drives to attract women in maritime sector
- i) Proposals of scholarships in maritime sector
- j) Motivate women for career in maritime with sponsorships
- k) Strategies to mobilise MTIs for more admissions to women
- Strategies and proposals for situational engagement of women such as including mentorship programs, training opportunities and networking events etc.
- m) Standards prescribed for medical care, leave, women friendly infrastructure requirement on shore and on board
- n) Best practices globally for promoting women to take up careers in maritime
- o) Existing rule framework, POSH policies etc. and efforts needed to improvise the same
- p) Regulatory framework to be provisioned for women empowerment in maritime sector
- q) Corporate gender engagement framework structure for companies, unions and other stakeholders to promote women in maritime
- r) Institutional account for providing congenial work environment for women in maritime
- s) Strategies for improving alternate careers for on shore and on board for women
- t) Standardized modules for MTIs (Post and Pre-Sea) for gender sensitization training and gradual progress to Gender parity
- Proposal of initiatives such as buddy program for women at sea to be mentored and made mandatory for crewing concerns, ship operators and ship managers
- v) Strategies to motivate and remove the stigma / myth associated with in the society with respect to women in maritime sector
- w) Strategies and propose solutions to effectively curb male prejudice mind
- x) Strategies for women to work efficiently with multinational male crew
- y) Creation of course map such as creating awareness in young minds, school and colleges etc. with promotional events, collaborate with industry stakeholders, educational institutions and governmental organisations to promote policies and practices that enhance gender equality in maritime
- z) Proposals related to work ethics, manning policies etc.
- aa) Availability of infrastructures on board (wash room, toilets, separate change rooms etc.) with gender perspective
- bb) Availability of infrastructures in ports with gender perspective

ii. Identify barriers to entry, retention, and advancement for women in both seafaring and shore-based roles and propose solutions

iii. Raise awareness about the contributions of women in maritime through advocacy, partnerships and outreach activities

iv. Preparing status report of women in maritime (India & Global wise)

v. Year wise action plan in multiple engagement, budget, funding and collated from industry partnership and sovereign funding for promoting the cause of women in maritime

vi. Strategies to promote women in cruise and other maritime associated industry and requisite support thereof

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5. The constituted "Task Force for Women in Maritime" by the Directorate General of Shipping to address challenges and issues facing women in the maritime sector may further co-opt experts, specialists etc. who can guide and support them for providing direction, advice and recommendations as deemed fit.

6. The constituted "Task Force for Women in Maritime" may develop their own rules to govern and may accordingly convene meetings as required in-person or virtually with all such meetings minutes be documented and shared with all members as required.

7. Participation by the members / officials shall be purely voluntary and will not be subject to any manner of remuneration, honorarium etc. and any incidental expenditures for conduct of meetings or specific activities arrived at by due consensus in the Task Force meetings shall be subject to the stipulations as mandated on raising a charge on the public exchequer as per due process.

 The constituted Task Force may explore potential funding sources to support its initiatives, including partnerships with industry stakeholders, grants from governmental organisations and sponsorships as required.

(Shyam Jagannathan) Director General of Shipping

Encl: As above

To,

- 1. All Task Force members
- 2. Seafarer Unions MUI / NUSI etc.
- 3. Industry Associations MASSA / FOSMA / INSA / ICCSA / IMF etc.
- 4. Professional Organisations CMMI / IMEI / WMU India Alumni Association

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F. No. 25-13011/1/2024-NT - DGS

Date: 29.11.2024

Merchant Shipping Notice No. 15 of 2024

Sub: Near Coastal Voyages (NCV) Deck cadet scheme for GP Rating candidates.

Purpose: This MS Notice introduces revised Near Coastal Voyages (NCV) Deck Cadet Scheme for GP Rating candidates. It supersedes and consolidates the provisions of NCV Certification stipulated in MS Notice No. 15 of 2012, MS Notice 05 of 2008 and 14 of 2007. It partially modifies the NCV Deck Cadet Scheme given in TEAP Manual Part-A (Ref. Flow Chart-II/7-1).

To: This notice is addressed to shipowners, operators, charterers, managers, shipping agencies, RPSL agencies, mercantile marine departments, maritime training institutes, masters, ships officers, trainees, ratings, and other relevant stakeholders.

Background: NCV Cadre, though envisaged in the earlier version of the META manual and the present TEAP Manual, has not picked up due to several reasons. This has led to a situation where Indian coastal vessels are perforce manned by officers holding foreign-going CoCs and/or coastal ship owners seeking dispensation on manning levels. Considering the renewed emphasis on the growth of coastal shipping, it is imperative that the challenges in the development of a dedicated cadre of officers for coastal ships are suitably addressed and criteria for NCV training and certification is suitably revised.

Further, representations were received from Indian Shipowners to review the existing provisions of the NCV Deck Cadet Scheme, to make the scheme attractive to the GP deck ratings while still complying with the provisions of Rules 26 of the M S (STCW) rules 2014. The matter has been examined in the Directorate and this has also been discussed with other Industry representatives and maritime training institutes.

Accordingly, the Directorate introduces the revised NCV Deck Cadet scheme for General Purpose (GP) Rating candidates which are as follows;

Revised Scheme for Deck Ratings to appear for Navigational Watch Keeping Officer (Near Coastal Voyages) examination.

1. Entry Qualification:

1.1 Xth Std Or XIIth Std Pass from Govt Recognized board Or Pass in 2 year ITI course from an approved institute. (Same as the entry criteria for joining the GP Rating course).

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1.2 Minimum of 40 % marks in English either in Xth or XIIth or ITI course (Same as the entry criteria for joining the GP Rating course).

2. Age Criteria: Minimum 18 years at the time of commencement of onboard training. Minimum and Maximum Age for joining the GP Rating course will be same as prescribed in the course guidelines issued by DGS. The relaxation in Maximum age limit provided by DGS for specific category of candidates will also be applicable for this scheme.

Medical fitness: As per Merchant Shipping (Medical Examination) Rules, 2000.

 Eyesight and Colour vision: As per Merchant Shipping (Medical Examination) Rules, 2000.

 Pre-Sea training: Successfully completed Pre Sea GP rating training and passed the Exit Examination approved by Directorate General of Shipping with minimum 60% aggregate marks in the Exit examination.

6. Sea Service Requirement:

6.1 36 months of approved seagoing service, which includes Bridge watch-keeping duties under the supervision of the master or a qualified officer for a period of not less than 6 months. However, the candidate may be permitted to undertake the NWKO (NCV) competency course and the written examination and/or the modular courses on completion of 30 months of sea service. An EXN-45 form will be issued to these candidates as communication of the result of the written examination. Subsequently, the candidate may complete the requisite Bridge watch-keeping duties (documented in an approved training record book) under the supervision of the master or a qualified officer for a period of not less than 6 months and thereafter appear for the oral examination.

<u>OR</u>

6.2 12 months of approved sea-going service, including bridge watchkeeping duties under the supervision of the master or a qualified officer for a period of not less than 6 months, for those undergoing the Structured Training Programme (SSTP) based on the principles described in section B-II/1 of the STCW code, provided that the trainee, employed on a ship is in addition to the minimum safe manning prescribed for the vessel.

The SSTP shall be documented in a Training Record Book (TRB). The template of TRB is as specified in Annex II of this Notice. The SSTP along with TRB will be required to be approved by this Directorate. The trainee is required to undergo SSTP which is approved by the DGS and to be implemented by the Company Training officer or by an entity duly approved by the DGS. The list of such approvals will be listed on the DG Shipping website.

7. Foundation Course: Not Applicable

8. Advanced Modular Courses:

8.1 All Modular courses required for the award of Certificate of Competency as NWKO NCV, i.e. AFF, PSCRB, MFA ROC, ARPA & GMDSS-GOC.

9. Post-Sea Course and NWKO (NCV) Certification:

9.1 Post-sea NWKO (NCV) course from an approved institute and passing a written and oral examination for NWKO (NCV) certification.

9.2 On completion of the written and oral examination including the required modular courses as per the requirement of the Section M-II/5 of META manual Vol. I, the candidate will be awarded a Certificate of Competency as Navigational Watch-keeping Officer (Near Coastal Voyages) on board ships of 500 Gross tons or more as per the provisions of regulation II/1 read with Reg I/3 of STCW 1978 as amended.

 Implementation: This revised scheme will come into effect from the date of issuance of this M S Notice.

This is issued with the approval of Chief Examiner of Master and Mates.

(Capt. Ravi Singh Sikarwar) Nautical Surveyor-cum-DDG (Tech)

II. IMO NEWS

IMO Presents Crew of Tanker & Tugboat with Exceptional Bravery at Sea 2024 Award

The International Maritime Organization presented the prestigious 2024 Exceptional Bravery at Sea Award to the Captain and crew of the oil tanker Marlin Luanda and the Captain and crew of the tugboat Pemex Maya. The recipients were honoured during the annual IMO awards ceremony in London on December 2, 2024, for their extraordinary bravery in saving lives during dangerous situations.

Captain Avhilash Rawat and the crew of the Marlin Luanda were recognised for their exceptional courage and leadership when an uncrewed aerial device struck the tanker on January 26, 2024.

The attack, which started a fire on the ship carrying 84,147 tons of Naphtha, created a critical situation. Despite facing a blazing fire and a threat of more attacks, Captain Rawat coordinated firefighting efforts, ensuring the crew's safety while maintaining the vessel's navigability.

After four and a half hours of intense firefighting with the support from the merchant tanker Achilles and military assistance from the French frigate FS Alsace, the U.S frigate USS Carney, and the Indian Warship INS Visakhapatnam, the fire was eventually extinguished.

Captain Rawat thanked his crew for their unwavering dedication and courage.

In another incident, Captain Jorge Fernando Galaviz Fuentes and the crew of the tugboat Pemex Maya were recognized for their heroic efforts during Hurricane Otis, a category five storm that hit Mexico's Pacific coast on October 25, 2023.

Captain Fuentes and his team risked their own safety to rescue six shipwrecked persons from four different vessels. The crew managed to rescue the survivors using daring manoeuvres, even in the darkness of night with waves exceeding 5 meters.

The survivors were later transferred to medical care with non-suffering life-threatening injuries.

During the ceremony, IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez commended the bravery of the recipients, saying, "It is truly an honour to recognise the valiant efforts of these heroic individuals, who acted in the face of extreme danger to save lives. Their courage is an inspiration to all."

Additionally, Captain Ian Finley received the prestigious International Maritime Prize for his exemplary contributions to maritime safety.

Certificates of commendation were also awarded to Captain Jerôme Noël Mougoula Saguiliba and Lieutenant Crépin Manfoumbi Mengara for their roles in the rescue operations after the sinking of the passenger ferry Esther Miracle off the coast of Gabon in March 2023.

Despite dangerous conditions and hazardous debris, their efforts in saving 123 passengers and crew showed the courage and dedication required in maritime rescue operations.



Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden States push coordinated action on maritime security

States around the western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden have reiterated their commitment to working together to address common maritime security threats in the region.

The Signatory States to the Dibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) and its Jeddah Amendment concerning the security of the western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden were meeting at the Seventh High-level Meeting on the implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment, in Dar Es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania (28-30 November). The meeting brought together high-level stakeholders to discuss how to continue to work together to protect the region from piracy, armed robbery against ships and other illicit maritime activities.

The meeting decided to establish a working group on operational cooperation and coordination at sea. The resolution establishing the Working Group recognized that the successful implementation of the DCoC and its Jeddah Amendment needs a whole-of-government approach, making full use of all of the competences, skills and capabilities of national authorities, both civilian and military. Agencies working together and sharing capabilities act as a "force multiplier", increasing effective results while reducing costs to signatory States' taxpayers.

The Participants also recognized the potential of national, regional and international naval forces to assist maritime law enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies to carry out their duties. This will require close cooperation, coordination and communication between navies, law enforcement and civilian authorities and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre; and between navies themselves at the national, regional and international levels. It will also require consistency and compliance with national legislation and international law.

Vessels of interest (VOI) database

The participants agreed to establish a regionally owned, shared vessels of interest (VOI) database, primarily to assist in countering illicit activities in the maritime domain.

The meeting was opened by IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez, who drew attention to the need for all parties to work in cooperation, to develop meaningful action plans, to implement those action plans and to be able to demonstrate concrete success in order to secure further support in the future.

The High-Level Meeting was convened jointly by IMO with the United Republic of Tanzania and supported by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The meeting was chaired by Dr. Lufunyo S. Hussein (United Republic of Tanzania) and co-chaired by Mr. Metse Ralephenya (Republic of South Africa and Chair of DCoC/JA).

It was attended by participants from 17 DCoC countries, as well as implementing partners from 20 States; and organizations, including CRIMARIO II, European Union, European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) OP ATALANTA, European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP - Somalia), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), INTERPOL, INTERPORTPOLICE, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Regional Coordination of Operations Centre (RCOC), Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC), United Kingdom Maritime Trade Organization (UKMTO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and SKYLIGHT.

DCoC/JA National Focal Points meeting

Signatory States of the Djibouti Code of Conduct convened a meeting of the DCoC/JA National Focal Points (29 November). The Participants raised concerns about the growing threats in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and western Indian Ocean, and agreed to highlight and keep these areas of concern in focus while making efforts to find regional solutions to mitigate them. They highlighted the need to expedite the operationalization of the Regional Information Sharing Network (ISN) to enhance awareness of threats and boost response capabilities.

Friends of the DCoC Meeting

In its parallel meeting, the Friends of the DCOC – which includes organizations and States that have shown demonstrable capabilities in support of the work of the DCoC(JA) – proposed improvement to the DCOC Capacity Building Matrix, to make it a more effective tool for matching regional States' needs with development partners' assistance programmes.

The Friends of the DCOC also considered how to enhance information sharing, capability development, capacity building, and operational coordination.

*Representatives from the following participating States: Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, Republic of South Africa, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, and Yemen.

*Representatives from partnering nations: Denmark, France, India, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States of America.

III. SHIPPING NEWS

NATO Plans to Deploy Fleet of Unmanned Boats in Baltic Sea to Increase Security

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, commonly known as NATO, which is an intergovernmental military alliance between 32 member states is preparing to deploy a fleet of unmanned boats to increase security around the critical undersea infrastructure in the Baltic and Mediterranean seas. The decision comes after a series of incidents in the area, including the recent damage to undersea cables.

Admiral Pierre Vandier, in charge of NATO's maritime transformation efforts, described the new initiative as a CCTV system for the seas, similar to how streetlights are equipped with cameras in cities to keep watch over high-risk areas.

According to Vandier, the goal is to have unmanned surface vessels (USVs) constantly monitoring both the surface and underwater environments, offering a layer of surveillance that never sleeps.

The project is still in its initial phase, with plans to first deploy USVs to monitor the surface of the seas, followed by the ability to track underwater activity. NATO will likely choose proven technology already in use by the U.S. Navy's Task Force 59, which has been experimenting with unmanned systems in the Middle East since 2021. The U.S. Navy has successfully integrated drones, unmanned boats, and other autonomous vehicles to monitor maritime activity.

The urgency of the project is due to the recent suspected sabotage activities in the Baltic Sea. On November 17 and 18, 2024, two undersea cables one linking Lithuania to Sweden and the other connecting Finland to Germany were damaged. Investigations are still underway to determine the cause of the damage, but NATO sees these threats to undersea infrastructure as a major concern.

The damage to the critical infrastructure reflects the need for better monitoring of maritime activity. Vandier explained that having eyes on the waters, both above and below the surface, could help prevent similar incidents in the future.

"It's essential to have a continuous watch over these areas to spot any potential threats," he said. What makes this project particularly promising is that NATO doesn't have to start from scratch.

The technology needed to deploy unmanned boats already exists. NATO can build on the existing technology, which has been field-tested in real-world situations, making the implementation much less risky. The new unmanned boat fleet is expected to launch soon. While many details are still being worked out, NATO has already begun discussions with its member nations to ensure the technology is ready.

Houthi-Hit Tanker Successfully Unloads 150,000 Tons of Crude Oil After 3 Months of Attack

After months of uncertainty, the Greek-flagged oil tanker Sounion has successfully unloaded its cargo of 150,000 tons of crude oil. The Sounion tanker was damaged by the Houthi attack in August which left the tanker severely damaged and raised serious fears of a massive oil spill.

The MV Sounion was attacked on August 21, 2024, by Houthi rebels while it was travelling in the Red Sea near Yemen. The attack left the tanker on fire and without power, creating a dangerous situation.

Experts had warned that if the tanker had broken up or exploded, it could have caused an environmental disaster larger than the infamous Exxon Valdez spill in 1989. The salvage operation began soon after the attack, with the crew of the Sounion evacuated safely. The Greek tanker company, Delta Tankers, sent another ship, the Delta Blue, to help transfer the oil. Due to the severe damage caused by the Houthi attack, including explosions that set off multiple fires, the operation was incredibly complicated and dangerous. Egyptian authorities and Greek officials worked together to create a plan to safely unload the oil. The transfer process started on October 7, after a team of specialists worked to extinguish the fires and stabilise the ship. The Sounion had no power after the attack, which meant the crew had to rely on portable pumps to get the oil out.

The operation was made more difficult by the fact that the ship had been burning for weeks. The fire had caused major structural damage to the tanker, including the destruction of its engine room and control systems.Despite these challenges, the team was able to transfer the oil to the Delta Blue tanker, which took the crude oil to safety. The transfer took place at the Suez Anchorage, south of the Suez Canal, and involved close monitoring to make sure everything went smoothly. With the oil now safely offloaded, the immediate threat of a disastrous oil spill has been avoided. Officials estimate the entire operation took about three to four weeks to complete. The Houthis have claimed responsibility for several attacks on commercial vessels since the start of the Israel-Gaza conflict, saying that they are targeting ships linked to the U.S. and the U.K. Though the Sounion had no direct connection to the conflict, it became one of the latest victims of this growing threat.

Container Ship Collides with Autonomous Barge in Rotterdam, Spilling Several Containers in Water

An autonomous barge and a container ship collided in the Scheur River near Rotterdam on December 5, 2024, spilling at least four empty containers into the water.

The incident happened around 6:15 a.m. near Koning Willem Alexander Boulevard in Maassluis, within the river channel leading into Rotterdam's inner harbour.

Both vessels remained afloat after the accident, but several containers fell overboard. According to local news reports, at least four empty containers were found washed up on the Maassluis riverbank.

The Hebo Cat 7, a maintenance and salvage vessel, was sent to recover the containers from the shore. One of the vessels involved has been identified as the River Drone 5, part of a fleet of autonomous dry cargo barges operated by a Dutch company. This barge is one of the first autonomous vessels of its kind in the world. AIS data confirms the River Drone 5 was at the scene of the collision, though it's still unclear whether the barge was operating in fully autonomous mode at the time.

Other news outlets reported that the barge performed a turn shortly after the collision.

The River Drone fleet is one of Europe's largest experiments in autonomous and remote-controlled shipping. These barges are equipped with technology that allows them to operate without any crew on board.

Each barge is approximately 100 meters long and can carry up to 3,850 tonnes of cargo. The first barge in this fleet started operating in January 2023.

The Netherlands is preparing to update its laws on inland navigation. Starting January 1, 2025, it will be legal to operate commercial vessels on Dutch inland waterways without any crew on board.

Until then, all vessels, whether autonomous or not, must still meet the legal requirements for crew members. Strict safety measures are needed before adopting these new technologies, which could further improve efficiency and reduce the need for crew members onboard a vessel.

Dominican Republic Makes Its Largest-Ever Drug Seizure of \$250M at Caucedo Port

In a historic drug bust, Dominican Republic authorities have seized 9.5 tons of cocaine, marking the largest-ever seizure in the country's history.

The massive haul was hidden inside a banana shipment that arrived at Caucedo port, Santo Domingo, the nation's capital and most important seaport.

The drugs, packed in 320 bags, were found in a container shipped from Guatemala. Officials revealed that smugglers planned to transfer the cocaine into another container destined for Belgium.

The street value of the drug is estimated to be \$250 million.

Carlos Devers, a spokesperson for the Dominican Republic's anti-drug agency, confirmed the details during a press conference. He also reported that ten people have been arrested so far, with investigations ongoing to identify others involved in the operation.

This seizure is more than triple the size of the country's previous record set in 2006 when authorities found 2,580 kilograms (approximately 5,680 pounds) of cocaine at the same port.

Officials said that Caucedo is a critical transit point for international shipping, making it a frequent target for smugglers. The Dominican Republic has seized nearly 47 tons of drugs in 2024 alone. Earlier this year, authorities intercepted 660 pounds of cocaine on a boat near Puerto Rico, adding to the year's haul. Experts say the Caribbean is becoming a hotspot for smuggling cocaine from South America to Europe, where demand has soared in recent years.

According to crime analysis organisation InSight Crime, Europe's consumption of cocaine has more than doubled between 2011 and 2023.

"The Caribbean is now a key route for traffickers trying to meet this growing demand," the group said in a recent report. Large Dominican transport hubs, like Caucedo, offer traffickers a convenient gateway to move drugs into European markets.

The bust follows similar record-breaking seizures in other parts of the world. Earlier this year, Spain confiscated 13 tons of cocaine from a banana shipment, while British authorities found over 12,500 pounds of the drug hidden in another shipment of bananas.

Authorities in the Dominican Republic have vowed to increase efforts to combat smuggling. This recordbreaking bust, they say, is a major step forward in their fight against drug trafficking.

"We are committed to protecting our ports and borders," Devers said, adding that the anti-drug agency will continue its crackdown on smuggling networks operating in the region.

IV. **CATERING & HOSPITALITY**

Five types of Eco-Friendly Food packaging

Approximately 60% of all plastics produced worldwide are used for food packaging.

That means that of the 380 million metric tons of plastics produced in 2015, 228 million metric tons were food packaging alone. Due to the environmental and human health effects of non-degradable plastic packaging, many people are fighting to drastically reduce plastic production and increase recycling — as well as promote more sustainable food packaging.

This article explains the need for eco-friendly food packaging, lists 5 types to try, and tells you a few to avoid. Why is sustainable food packaging important?

Particular concerns surrounding plastics include their accumulation in the oceans and landfills, the generation of micro- and nanoplastics, and human exposure to toxins when chemicals in food packaging transfer to foods. In addition to the chemicals that are intentionally used to produce plastics, many nonintentionally added substances (NIAS) are found in food packages. These chemicals pose toxicity and endocrine-disrupting risks in humans.

Yet, environmentally friendly packaging alternatives are becoming ever more widespread.

These eco-friendly food packages often use sustainable bioplastics and plant-based extracts, such as wheat, wood, and bamboo, that are biodegradable, reusable, and free of hazardous chemicals.

While they've also been shown to contain chemicals and NIAS, studies demonstrate that the movement of chemicals into food and your body is much lower with eco-friendly packaging than it is with plastics. making them safer for the environment and human health. Exposure to chemicals in food packaging is unavoidable, but efforts to reduce the transfer of these chemicals into food are vital for human health. Here are 5 eco-friendly food packaging options that are better for the planet — and your health.

1. Glass containers

Glass has a multitude of uses and benefits for daily life.

It's a reusable, recyclable, and durable material that's also easy to clean and use as transportable food packaging. Glass food and drink containers include water bottles and bento boxes.

However, glass lids aren't leak-free, making them unideal for portable containers to take to work or school or on an outing. Therefore, most of these transportable glass food containers use snap-locking plastic lids with a silicone seal or bamboo lids that double as portable cutting boards. Be sure to choose lids that are free of bisphenol-A (BPA), a known endocrine disruptor shown to play a role in both male and female infertility and tumor development. Unless broken, these containers have a lifespan 3.5 times that of plastics and can be recycled when discarded, reducing the negative environmental impact of plastics.

2. Stainless steel

Food-grade stainless steel is durable, rust-free, and heat resistant, making it a safe choice for food storage. It's also reusable and recyclable. Stainless steel bento lunch boxes are widely available, but most products use silicone to make them leak-free, either via a silicone seal with lockable steel clips or colorful, BPA-free, food-safe silicone lids. Glass storage jars with stainless steel, airtight lids for keeping bulk foods like flours, grains, and spices offer the best of both worlds.

3. Bamboo

Bamboo is biodegradable and possesses many desirable traits for food packaging, as it's durable and heat resistant. Bamboo-containing food packaging includes countertop glass jars with bamboo lids, portable plastic-free lunch boxes with bamboo lids, bamboo bread boxes, and bamboo serving bowls.

Keep in mind that food containers made from bamboo or other plant fibers are less durable than glass or stainless steel and wear and tear more easily.

4. Rice husk

Rice husk is a byproduct of rice farming that's low cost, renewable, and biodegradable.

In one study, rice husk was shown to have bio-adsorbent properties, which means that it absorbs pollutants from its surrounding environment.

Products made from this compound include sealable lunch boxes and shatterproof serving bowls.

5. Gelatin films

Gelatin films are becoming more popular for food packaging due to their nontoxic properties, low cost, and reliable film-forming capacity. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), gelatin is generally recognized as safe (GRAS) as a food additive. Gelatin films are filled with antimicrobial cellulose, which inhibits the growth of common pathogens that cause foodborne illness, including Staphylococcus aureus and E. coli. These active fillers make gelatin films safer alternatives to conventional plastics. Microcrystalline cellulose (MCC) and rosin-grafted cellulose nanocrystals (r-CNCs) are two main fillers for gelatin food packaging.

V. ARTICLE INDEXING

DG Shipping has a five-pronged strategy to arrest recruitment fraud in the maritime sector

The Directorate General of Shipping has planned a multi-pronged strategy to arrest the menace of the illicit and surreptitious practices by manning agencies fleecing the Indian seafarers.

A recent report by Gujarat Maritime University and ISWAN found that India, being one of the world's leading providers of seafarers with a workforce of around 2,50,000, continues to see many of its seafarers fall prey to unregistered agents.

Reacting to the report, the Director General of Shipping (DGS), Shyam Jagannathan agrees: "there is a serious concern of illicit surreptitious practices by manning agencies."

One major issue faced by the DGS is the old technology stack used for the existing Recruitment and Placement Services Licensee (RPSL) and E-migrate module, which is managed by the Ministry of External Affairs.

According to the rules, an RPSL cannot charge any fees from the seafarer; their income comes from the ship manning firm. The seafarer has to be signed-on as per either a Common Bargaining Agreement or Seafarers Employment Agreement, which then binds the seafarer to a convention vessel.

Unfortunately, illicit practices are still prevalent. The RPSL often creates many agents unofficially, who do not go by the compliance requirements. They entice the seafarer by saying, "look, you have already spent about 5 lakh for your education for six months. If you want to get on a ship, I can arrange it for 3-4 lakh. Once the seafarer takes the illicit consideration, the agent also takes their documentation - the Continuous Certificate of Discharge or the passport - trapping the seafarer in a difficult situation," Jagannathan explained to businessline in Chennai.

There is no sanctity to this arrangement because the agent does not have the credentials of RPSL, who are licenced by the DGS. There are 582 RPSLs in the country and only 5 per cent are doing these illicit practices, he said.

Due to outdated technology, the DGS has issues tracking the vessels they have been on-boarded. "An RPSL can show a particular vessel registered under its inventory and then put the seafarer on that vessel but actually sign him on to another vessel. This has been detected in multiple cases, including in the ship Prestige Falcon, which sank. Four seafarers who passed away were technically on another vessel in our system, but they were physically on another vessel. This is an illegal practice," he said.

Previously, the DGS was not able to trigger SMS alerts to seafarers. However, from August 14, 2024, it started SMS alerts. Every time a seafarer is signed on to a ship by an RPSL, he/she receives an SMS. He has to log in to his credentials in the DGS website and accept the vessel and the port of sign-on, he said.

The five-pronged strategy

To prevent all the above, the DGS is doing five things to ensure that seafarers are not cheated. The first is moving to a new technology stack where the RPSL are to be monitored for all on-boarding and signons.

The second, is working on a social media connection to inform seafarers about their rights and responsibilities. This will be ready by April of 2025, he said.

The third, is to provide seafarers with basic training courses informing them about their rights, privileges and how they should not be duped lead astray by such criminal elements.

The fourth, is a law to take or initiate criminal action against lumpen and criminal elements in the garb of either RPSL or any other agent, misleading, cheating and creating fraud with seafarers, he said.

The fifth is a 24/7 grievance helpline to be operational hopefully by April or May to help seafarers to reach out to DGS in case of any trouble. Each of these inputs can be mapped to the unique ID and there will be a dedicated escalation matrix. This will allow cutting edge reach, he said

VI. NEW PUBLICATION

JUST PUBLISHED

<u>TITLE</u> 1. Model Course: Operational use of integrated bridge systems including integrated navigational systems (digital only)		E I <u>SB</u>	N	PUBLISHED DATE				
		9789280117875		31 st Oct. 2024				
2. IMDG Code, 2024 Edition (Amdt. 42-24) (digital) £195 978928			80117974	1 st Oct. 2024				
3. IMDG Code Supplement, 2024 Edition (digital)	ement, 2024 Edition (digital) £95 97892801179		80117998	1 st Oct. 2024				
FUTURE PUBLICATION								
TITLE			PRICE	PUBLISHED DATE				
1. Model Course: Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanker cargo ballast handling simulator (digital only)			£60	December 2024				
2. SOLAS Consolidated Edition, 2024 Edition	£160	January 2025						
3. IMDG Code, 2024 (Amdt 42-24)	£195	January 2025						
4. IMDG Code Supplement, 2024 Edition			£95	January 2025				
5. Model Course: Survey of electrical installations (dig	£60	March 2025						

VII. NEW ARRIVAL

<u>Accn No</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Authors</u>	Year
5139	Your health & you	Stanborough	Shryock, H,Swartout, H,	1970
5140	Computer Network	Technical	Bagad, V.S,Dhotre, LA,	2003
5141	Operating system	Pearson	William S,,	2001
5142	Systems development	McGraw	Bahrami, A,,	1999
5144	Physics (Class xi, v.1)	Dhanpat Rai	Arora S L,,	2024
5145	Physics (Class xi, v.2)	Dhanpat Rai	Arora S L,,	2024
5146	Physics (Class xii, v.1)	Dhanpat Rai	Arora S L,,	2024
5147	Physics (Class xii, v.2)	Dhanpat Rai	Arora S L,,	2024

QUOTES

"Watch your thoughts, they become your works.
Watch your words, they become your actions.
Watch your actions, they become your habits.
Watch your habits, they become your character.
Watch your character, it becomes your destiny."

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

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Editor Mr. Ram Chandra Pollai, Librarian