

## From the Editor's Desk



Our focus on Maritime Industrial needs, to make "INDIA" a destination for better qualified manpower, focussing particularly on the overall safety performance of vessels and the best technological role, thriving to keep consistent improvement in performance, with forward looking challenges for Seafarer's working life and the environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond. This realisation strongly felt with an emphasis on upgrading Maritime Education to seafarers in the late 1980's, the resultant of which Maritime Colleges and Institutions sprang up mushrooming in such an unregulated manner, resulting to 'off the shelf certificates' leaving the administration receiving a severe jolt following some break applied, owing to the constructive criticism expressed

in the "Times of India" newspaper, by Forward Seamen's Union Leader Naresh Birwadkar, Mumbai, referring to off the shelf certificates. This started soon after STCW (Standards of Training, Certificate of Watch keeping) courses introduced and made mandatory to all class of seamen, thus to imbibe systematic basics of job skill ness, instilling dignity and discipline, dutifulness, and dedication to the profession. This followed with ship's squeezed manning onboard. Some of the old timers, crewmembers who though drawing their wages with L.T.I. (left thumb impression) were also not spared, but to undergo STCW courses. The most funny part was that the officers and ratings were clubbed together in the class for PSSR course, in a national institution, with a self styled young master mariner taking class in English with an egoistic style, when requested to take class in Hindi, a common language, to benefit the crew (ratings) who were in the same class. He however continued the class proceedings in English, saying that he does not know Hindi, saying the final test would be in English, however all the candidates were provided the course certificate, at the end of the course. Institutional record of my report to the Director, should speak of this, if required.

Young able-bodied, literate men got inducted into shipping, as they carry the national image overseas, the choice of crew selection left to the respective shipping company to compete with the world market thus this boost, to the Indian seafarers image overseas. Men with the right aptitude, who loved their job, mastered their skill with specialisation and made a career of international class. Therefore, the marine industry has seen a steady decline, in the total losses of ships during the last 15 years from 4 per thousand at risk to about 1 per thousand at risk. While the average age of the world fleet has increased from 13 years to over 21 years and ship numbers from 73,500 to 90,120 ships. Enhancements to survey inspection regimes introduced, for higher risk ships, by increasing the scope and intensity of the surveys as the ship's age. The significant changes were:- globalisation in shipping, the technical advances in scale we have made. The ships were small 20 years ago and specialised at every level, besides the focus on the environment has led to major technical and operational changes. Alas move to common rules, with a concept of standardisation and raising the quality benchmark with a minimum functional requirement in the Care, Operation and Maintenance, primarily towards safety and seaworthiness of vessels of the highest order with quality conscious approach, all this added to the rise in, number of international conventions regulating increased issues covered by classification rules. Bureau of Indian Standards notified of a serious flaw in the national standard in 1994, noticed in a shipyard in Gujarat, despite consistent follow up with the Bureau of Indian Standards, corrective action could only be taken at snails rate by BIS in 2004, after ten long years. Non-egoistic men with the right aptitude, needs to be employed in service, or else it reflects on governance and our national STANDARDS.

The dramatic changes towards safety of life at sea, owed primarily to the introduction of ISM Code, and increased legislation on tankers. As we all know the impetus for the ISM Code, the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster, in which around 200 people died. Enquiry into the said disaster revealed, owing to series of management failures for which IMO adopted Resolutions. A.647(16), guidelines in management of safe operations of ships and for Pollution Prevention. Classification standards evolved as a result of in-service experience, expanded research and analytical tools, continuing evolution incorporating sophisticated risk-assessment methodologies, into the classification rule making process. Hence, there is now a general safety culture, which did not exist before the introduction of the ISM Code, which eye browed classification societies, assuming auditing responsibilities for Safety Management Systems. It has further expanded with the introduction of ISPS (Ship & Port Security) Code. Adding to responsibilities, guidelines for the application of ergonomics and human factors of engineering to marine facilities and systems, which needs to be addressed:- Issues of vibration, lighting, varying temperature, noise variations-sound in the engine-room, oxygen content in working areas, morale of the working group onboard-disturbed mind-set etc. The need for an open forum to discuss, interact and analyse with the like-minded people. Make the most of your theory and practice backed rich experience in the field with an open mind, to leap ahead, which is a similar approach in the Researchers Forum, so that one could perceive each other with creativity, which would yield better results to excel, for a better tomorrow as the advent of computers, has made information to reach and receive fast, far and wide with ease.

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**ONE DAY'S TOKEN STRIKE on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2005, to register protest against the lowering of PF interest rate on deposits of Seamen's Provident Fund, calling for restoration of swindled Seamen's Provident Fund money, by recouping to a tune of about Rs. 100 Crores by the Government administrative machinery, which is responsible.**

We have addressed our letter reference: FSUI/INSA/MASSA/FOSMA/206/2k5 dated 10/10/2005, addressed to all relevant authorities, bringing to their notice the circumstances that constrains us, to take this harsh step of calling a token strike on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2005, though much against our wish, owing to the following reasons :-

1. Redemption of misappropriated Seamen's Provident Fund amount of around 100 Crores of Indian Rupees.
2. Restoration of Seamen's Provident Fund interest to national level of 9.5% from the present level of 5.5%.

We seek your kind cooperation in publicising the grave injustice caused to the Indian seamen brothers, seeking fair play and justice. It should have been our government's endeavour to primarily safeguard and protect the Indian seamen's rights and interest. Penalising the seamen by reducing the interest on seamen's Provident Fund, is not a fair solution for the loss sustained on account of the lapse of "the guardians of government administrative machinery". Why at the cost of the aggrieved seamen, for no fault of theirs? It's like, Govt. encouraging such misappropriation of funds of wilful acts, misuse of public money, causing injustice to my seamen brethren, a grave injustice.

Then Chairman, Board of Trustees of the Seamen's Provident Fund Trust and Seamen's Provident Fund Commissioner had embezzled Seamen's Provident Fund to the tune of Rs. 100 Crores with the connivance of the members of the Board of

Trustees by making illegal investments of the trust fund by throwing to the winds. What was expected, is to seriously view the wrong acts, avoid reoccurrence through timely corrective measures, ensure the losses sustained are recouped back into seamen's provident fund account. Relevant authorities remained a mute spectator keeping in oblivion the yeoman's services being rendered by the seamen to the shipping industry, while seamen are helping the country to cater to its both national as well as international sea borne trade, earning the country valuable foreign exchange by sacrificing their social life as they, while on duty, have to remain away not only from their families but also from the society for months together. As is clear from the circumstances narrated above, seamen are forced to take an extreme step of proceeding on strike as they have a feeling that they are being let down badly both by the government and the shipping companies. – **Naresh Birwadkar**, Secretary - FSUI.

**Bajpae Elected by ISMA:**

Rajaish Bajpae, President and Group Managing Director of Eurasia, has been elected to serve a second two year term as President of the International Ship Managers' Association. The decision to elect him was taken unanimously at the Association's Annual General Meeting in Hong Kong, 12th October 2005. Bajpae has been instrumental in guiding the Association to a new era of quality assessment through the ongoing development, with the ship owning and management industry at large, of a set of common industry-wide operational Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Bajpae said "There are presently huge gaps between the discussions and decisions made at policy making bodies and what actually goes on at sea. The practitioners' viewpoint is missing from the legislative process." KPIs remain at the top of the Association's operating agenda as the association continues its policy of

highlighting the role shipmanagement practitioners must play in developing and moulding future regulation of the industry. Work is also underway to move ISMA's emphasis away from being an association representing members' interests, into becoming a bone fide trade association fully representing the needs of the global ship management sector.

**Public Service Training Institutes in India go Hi-Tech:**

Indian Portal on Networking Premier Training Institutes is inaugurated by Shri B. K. Chaturvedi, Cabinet Secretary, here today. This is a website specifically developed as a portal for the 21 Training Institutes of the country that will function as the virtual regional chapter of Common wealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM). CAPAM is an organization dedicated to strengthening public management and consolidating democracy and good governance throughout the Commonwealth. This portal, through its link with CAPAM, would be able to access expertise of the other national and regional networks of training institutes in the Commonwealth. The Portal is a meeting point for all those who are interested in exploring the capabilities and training services provided by these institutions. One can access the portal with simply typing- [www.trgnetindia.gov.in](http://www.trgnetindia.gov.in). The home page of the Network has hyper links to all the 21 Institutions, their core competencies, their training programmes, contact persons, their phone numbers, etc.

Inaugurating the portal, Shri Chaturvedi underlined the core issues facing the bureaucracy today, especially with the changing times. The Cabinet Secretary emphasized that the perspective should also change for the civil servants. A rule of law, welfare activities are not enough – what is needed more is 'a friendly administration', Shri Chaturvedi added. He also stressed upon the need of having an 'efficient judicial system' which in turn would eventually lead to