

From the Editor's Desk



By virtue of my long rich experience in the service and reputed manufacturing industries and associated with long period of membership with various professional institutions. Having been attending many industrial and maritime business related talks. What strikes me over the years is that seafarers are the only professionals who have been left in the lurch without any after service benefits. There are many marine luminaries in many disciplines with their specialized experience i.e. with long rich active sea-experience, ship repair and construction experience, long rich-teaching experience, long rich ship management experience, etc. We need them to share their rich experience, to be passed on to the budding marine engineers and navigating officers, with deliberations as guest lecturers in their good line of experience. All of them are the crucial element in shipping. Slowly the

Shipping industry is beginning to realize the central importance of seafarers. We often refer to "recruitment and retention" of seafarers while there is shortage of qualified mariners to man ships, of global demand. This crunch has arrived with the need for involving more specialized professionals i.e. H.R. Management, Social Scientists, Environmentalists and Maritime Lawyers. The industry is awakening to the fact that it must deal with the human element in its business "recruitment and retention" of quality professionals who are knowledgeable, willing to work hard and sincere and be loyal to their employer for increased productivity making optimum use of men materials and machines, thereby transporting cargo and men onboard safely, timely, efficiently and cost-effectively, with application of the Code of Professional Ethics. Time has therefore come for the stakeholders to share seafarer's real and main needs and how to improve their living and working conditions unlike earlier the control of Safety at Sea, has traditionally been limited to an inspection of the hull, machinery and equipment. Control has been mainly focused on hardware. Legislation in this field has gradually become more and more detailed and comprehensive. Today, it must seem an almost insurmountable task to those onboard, to have a complete overview of all the requirements that are formally to be satisfied at all times. This may be a difficult job even for the qualified surveyors. Reports usually therefore short-sightedly concluded, by the findings of ill-conceived old timer surveyors as " human error " without the requisite detailed investigation or a class of professional touch.

Port Based Welfare Services include, international seafarers calling in ports/ harbours, counseling by Port Chaplain:- Outlining the profound needs of seafarers and the gaps in services which reflects upon the importance they attach to these Services:- Local Guide: Transport to Shopping, International Phone, Transport to City Centers, Cheap Phone Cards, Internet & Email to contact their wards, Counseling etc. Clearly from this survey, Technology has become a major factor with the advent of phone cards, Internet and email - all unheard of or unavailable in 1990's.

What does the maritime industry provide to seafarers as welfare? There is a mud and sky below difference between Port employees & Seafarer's working, and their service conditions. Due thought be given, prior to clubbing them together, for welfare measures.

Why ?

- *Restrict medical attention to the genuinely sick, during the vessel's port stay.*
- *Shipping Companies surveyed have no welfare budget for their ships.*
- *Many (Unions/Associations etc.) debit seafarer's salaries for welfare/ entertainment services - all without their consent/permission.*
- *Very few ships have email services for their crews.*
- *Many owners and captains need a change in their attitude towards seafarers. Live and Let live others. They "ought to know what is best" for their crews. Avoid internal politics within the crew, however they should not be allowed to grow but controlled, for maintaining " high morale of each crew ". Why would anyone, want to serve out at sea but for primarily money, with all the risks and sacrifices and the increasing piracy.*

If at all to improve the productivity of Indian ports, we need to replace the existing bureaucrats holding Chairman / Deputy chairman posts by qualified marine professionals, but not with those with ill-conceived knowledge, by virtue of unregulated old Certificate Of Competency of professional trade, relevant to operation and maintenance of ships, the upgrading examination eligibility was practically then given by govt. clerks of MMD. Hence, the MMD Clerks were the writers of mariner's fate, whether it was for Engineers Exam. or for Navigating Officers Exam. No one could then raise his eye-brows against them; since they were totally backed by Mariners who were inducted into MMD, they have no time to deal with the seafarers but for finding their own ways to fill their own coffers, comparing the earnings of the hard-working seafarers, with risks and sacrifice. Examination & Viva Voce was conducted within the MMD office, question papers were taken back, answer papers could also be manipulated, it was a big racket suiting to the unqualified entries. Viva- Voce never conducted in the scheduled date and time, the candidates had to keep trying their luck, coming and going to the convenience of the surveyors. Only the qualified brave souls could take bold, fair and unbiased decisions. It's high time the Viva Voce be dispensed with and only the best on merit be inducted into the National Shipping Administration. Secondly, the need to corporatise the existing port management structure from the Trust to Corporate structure will do more good. I am of the opinion that the coastal region be safe guarded by the Indian Coastguard, who should be empowered with more responsibilities and rights to protect the nation from external threats through sea, similar to protection of our national border on land.

"Corrupted people have a good network and they are united." pkc.

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state, university, medical engineering, school Govt. fake certificate & mark-sheets (51,579), trace paper (80), master print (86), etc.

Police officials have appealed saying, "We request the candidates that they should not approach any unknown or any agents. They should follow legal ways and procedures to obtain a CDC from Mumbai. The candidates should approach

Shipping Master, Mumbai to avoid being cheated. If any candidate, came in contact with the above arrested accused for getting CDC, they should contact Yellowgate Police Station Mumbai and cooperate with them."

W o r l d I n f o D e s k

5 dead, 3 missing after container ship sinks off NE China:

DALIAN, Nov. 2 (Xinhua) -- Five seamen are confirmed dead and another three are still missing after a container ship sank off a port in northeast China's Liaoning Province on Saturday.

Rescuers found five bodies at around 9:35 a.m. on Sunday 12 nautical miles from the site where "Xinmingfa 17" went down, according to the Liaoning provincial maritime search and rescue center.

The ship with 146 containers and 14 people aboard sank off Yingkou City around 1:30 p.m. Saturday. Six were saved by passing ships and rescue helicopters.

The vessel, 91.6 meters long and weighing 2,815 gross tonnes, belonged to Fuzhou Mingfa Shipping Co. Ltd. It was on its way from Yingkou to eastern Fujian province when it sank.

Two helicopters and 16 ships were still searching for the three missing. Rescuers were also cleaning up an oil slick four meters wide and one nautical mile long.

Maritime piracy round-up:

With nine vessels hijacked and 182 seafarers held by Somalian pirates (source: Lloyd's List), the issue continues to remain in the headlines with debate raging in legal and insurance circles as to the best ways to both deal with and solve the problem.

Nautilus national secretary Allan Graveson believes that the UK government should use the Piracy Act of 1837 to prosecute pirates captured by the Royal Navy. Commenting on reports that the UK is reluctant to instruct the RN to capture pirates in the Gulf of Aden because of potential difficulties in prosecuting them, Allan Graveson told London Matters that there was no reason at all why pirates captured on the high seas should not be prosecuted under sections of the 1837 Act which still remain on the statute book.

Mr Graveson said suggestions that the Human Rights Act would prevent the prosecution of suspected pirates or that they even could claim political asylum were "spurious".

He insisted: "The Human Rights Act doesn't stop us prosecuting for murder or other crimes. Why should it stop prosecutions for piracy?" He said that when the Law Commission looked at whether the Aviation and Maritime Security Act made the Piracy Act redundant, the union successfully argued that certain sections of the 1837 Act should be kept as these ensured that piracy was treated as a specific and exceptionally serious crime. It was a capital offence in the UK until 1997 and now carries a penalty of life imprisonment.

Should crew be armed? Law firm Ince & Co has produced a piracy round-up covering issues such as arming of crew, the legality of ransoms and whether or not a vessel can refuse to transit the Gulf of Aden.

How to make a vessel a more difficult, less attractive target for the pirates? The Standard P&I Club has issued advice to shipowners in its latest Standard Bulletin. Whilst no master can make his ship entirely kidnap-proof, there is much that can be done to reduce the danger. Much of it is about simple practical measures that shipowners can take, including improved communication and awareness. The bulletin stresses the importance of good passage planning and the need for heightened security levels when passing near the country.

Surge in demand for kidnap and ransom insurance: At a recent seminar at Lloyd's Guillaume Bonnisent, K&R underwriter with Lloyd's insurance group Hiscox, says shipowners are also in search of specialist kidnap and ransom cover. "We've had over 50 different broking firms worldwide approach us on behalf of owners and managers seeking protection for vessels," said Mr Bonnisent.

"Without a doubt the surge in piracy activity in the Gulf of Aden has been the



catalyst for this increase.

"Traditional marine cover will meet the cost of the ransom but none of the costs involved in the process. What we've found is the ransom can account for just 25% to 30% of the costs of the incident. Where K&R cover goes above the traditional marine policies is that it will become involved from the moment a vessel is seized. We'll provide a crisis management team and meet the costs of the security team that'll be needed to take the ransom to the Somali pirates."

He added that the security team's fee can be more than the value of the ransom.

At the same seminar Simon Beale of London Stock Exchange-listed specialist insurance and reinsurance underwriting group listed on Amlin Plc advised shipowners to switch piracy from hull cover to war to ensure a greater degree of financial support.

Crew bonuses for transiting Gulf of Aden: Meanwhile the United Kingdom Warlike Operations Area Committee (WOAC) has recommended the payment of bonuses and other benefits to crews on ships operated by Chamber of Shipping members when transiting the Gulf of Aden.

It has been agreed that the following area is regarded as a "high risk" zone: the Gulf of Aden between 45°E and 53°E, being the western and eastern extremities respectively of the Maritime Security Patrol Area, north of a straight line connecting Cape Guardafui and the western tip of the Island of Socotra, all ships transiting the zone should remain within the Maritime Security Patrol Area.

Operators of ships in the "high risk" zone