

# 8th International Seafarers' Day Spotlights On Seafarers' Wellbeing



**D**espite torrential rain the 8<sup>th</sup> Seafarers' Day was celebrated with verve and vitality to discuss the wellbeing of the seafarers. The function held at Swatantrya Veer Savarkar Auditorium, Dadar Mumbai, on 25<sup>th</sup> June was organized by National Maritime Day Celebrations (Central) Committee, under the aegis of Director General of Shipping, Dr Malini Shankar, IAS & Ms HK Joshi, Director, Finance, SCI.

2017 and 2018 have seen strong momentum in the industry to address seafarer's wellbeing, particularly their mental health.

To give further exposure to this important issue, the choice for the 2018 Day of the Seafarer theme was "seafarers' wellbeing".

By addressing the issue of seafarers' wellbeing and particularly mental health, this campaign informed them of specific strategies to tackle stress and other issues affecting their mental conditions, while, at the same time, making the tools available more widely known.

According to International Maritime Organisation (IMO),

the time had come to focus on the seafarers' health and social issues and to spotlight on tackling their mental problems due to stress and other factors. IMO has created an online survey to collect seafarers' feedback.

As in previous years, the IMO campaign centred on social media, with two hashtags, #SupportSeafarersWellbeing and #GoodDayatSea, through which the IMO wants to demonstrate how much seafarers matter.

The Mumbai celebrations informed the seafarers about specific strategies to tackle stress and other issues affecting their mental conditions, and make the tools available more widely known.



A session of Yoga by the bay and Heartfulness meditation was also organised as a part of the day's celebration.

leave, wages, abandonment, mental health, no criminalization, repatriation, etc.

Mr Ravindra Kumar, Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation was the Chief Guest while Dr. Harish Shetty, Psychiatrist was the Guest of Honour.

Several seafarers shared their experiences at sea. Ms Aruna Palival, Mr. Virendra Singh Rathod



Mr Ravindra Kumar, who was an ex-seafarer, advised the seafarers to "Take pride of your profession. You are serving the nation. Only by shifting your focus from the problems and issues and concentrating towards instilling a sense of pride can you see broader channel of opportunities."



and Mr.Kunal Prajapati shared their views about the industry and said that merchant navy too involved workplace stresses. Being away from home for long duration was a woe that one tried to overcome with with small and unique pleasures on board.

expertise on 'How to manage mental wellbeing and live stress-free life'. He addressed the seafarers as 'mental health soldiers' and stressed on their concerns of being away from family. He suggested the DGS to have a mental health policy for the leadership position and to make the 'Master' and the 'Chief Engineer' of the ship as 'Father Figure', to whom the seafarers can approach in cases of mental ill health.

Dr Harish Shetty, a Mumbai-based psychiatrist. who has been dealing with seafarers for a long time, shared his knowledge and

The celebration started with a video message of Kitack Lim, General Secretary, IMO, who stated that this year's theme focused on promoting good initiatives. Stakeholders had also developed material to ensure higher standards of welfare and to highlight what they were doing to improve the conditions of the seafarers. These related to seafarers' wellbeing like shore

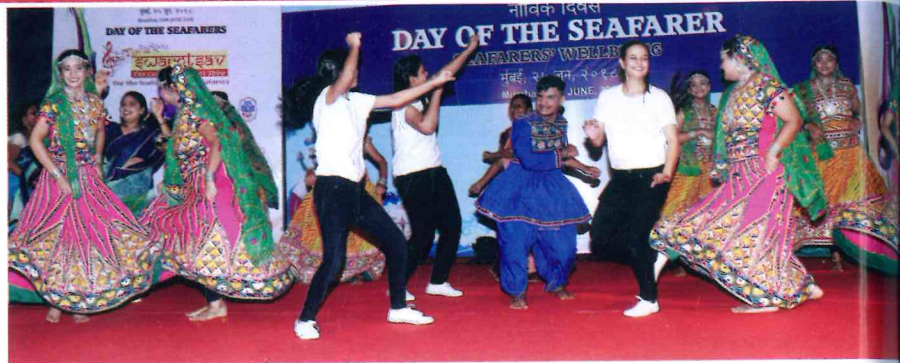
by seafarers from all over the world to international seaborne trade, the world economy and civil society as a whole.

The resolution “encourages Governments, shipping organizations, companies, shipowners and all other parties concerned to duly and appropriately promote the Day of the Seafarer and take action to

Dr Malini Shankar, DGS, disclosed that the Directorate General of Shipping was in talks with the law agencies to work on a plan for rendering legal assistance to the seafarers in case of crisis.

The programme culminated with ‘Swarotsav’ – a cultural and talent show for the seafarers, by the seafarers.

Day of the Seafarers was established in a resolution



adopted by the 2010 Diplomatic Conference in Manila to adopt the revised STCW Convention. Its stated purpose is to recognize the unique contribution made

celebrate it meaningfully”.

Day of the Seafarer is recognized by the United Nations as an observance day. MD

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