

MUI's Thakur gets Panama circular revoked in the interest of Sikh seafarers



Mr Amar Singh Thakur

The Adhoc General Secretary of The Maritime Union of India (MUI), Mr Amar Singh Thakur, was recently approached by Capt Didar Singh Baweja of Mitsui OSK Lines for assistance to revoke a circular issued by the Panama Maritime Authority.

As per the circular issued on December 21, 2015, the Panama Maritime Authority had made it compulsory for Sikh seafarers to submit a photograph without turban or any kind of headgear while applying for, or getting an endorsement for, a Certificate of Competency (COC).

Mr Amar Singh Thakur and NUSI General Secretary-cum-Treasurer, Mr Abdulgani Serang therefore met senior officials of the Panama Consulate to discuss the matter.

"As removing a turban hurts the religious sentiments of a Sikh gentleman, it was necessary to communicate an immediate need to revoke such a circular. We were successful in convincing the Panama Consulate officials, and a revised circular was issued on May 9, 2016," advised Mr Thakur.

The revised circular by the Panama Maritime Authority now allows photographs of seafarers wearing turbans, headgear, etc., if these are worn on religious grounds.

Established in the year 1939, MUI is the largest union representing Indian Merchant Navy officers in the country. It has continued to cater to the welfare needs of its



Mr Abdulgani Serang



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TO: Merchant Marine Privative Consulates, Authorized Offices, Inspectorates and Regional Documentation Offices of the Panama Maritime Authority.

FROM: Magdalena Carrera, PhD
General Director

SUBJECT: Turban Wearing

DATE: May 9th of 2016



The purpose of this circular is to communicate all involved, who apply or approve Certificates of Competency or Endorsements applications, that the Panama Maritime Authority will exceptionally allow to those who wear them daily on religion grounds, the wearing of turbans, caps or hats which cover the hair or hairline.

It to be appropriate point that the photograph, held for the issuance of the respective document, must show a visible face; and, it must not be shaded by the head covering garment.

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members since its inception.

MUI protects the rights of maritime professionals, and also educates its members about their rights, no matter where they be.