

Dear All Seafarers

Subject : Crew changes at Overseas Ports - Seafarers not observing rules to prevent spread of Corona Virus.

During these very challenging times, when the prime importance now is to ensure sign-on and sign-off (crew changes) of Indian Seafarers with the minimum of difficulties and formalities, it is expected that Seafarers understand the seriousness of the scenario.

Due to very hard work and consistent efforts, through co-operation of our Government and all stakeholders of Indian Shipping industry, certain overseas ports have permitted crew changes. We can say that they are our only life line as of today, even though the challenge of overseas air travel exists.

Hong Kong is one such port, which is being utilized by our shipping companies for crew changes.

It is to be appreciated that Hong Kong and such countries have extended their co-operation

Hongkong Ship owners Association has approached Shipping Associations in India, with an extremely serious complaint, specifically related to Seafarers who are present in Hongkong as part of crew change. It has been observed by them that these seafarers have not been observing caution and are displaying irresponsible and dangerous social behavior which can easily promote spread of the Corona virus infection. They have received numerous complaints from hotel staff, ship agents and reports have appeared in the local media related to this.

Such behavior includes Seafarers not wearing masks, smoking inside and outside the hotels without masks and noncompliance of even basic rules such as social distancing, to ensure safety of self, their colleagues and citizens of Hong Kong. Seafarers need to realize that such countries need to safeguard their citizens too, and prevent spread of the pandemic on their territory.

Social behavior and co-operation of Seafarers is closely observed in all such countries. We all have to take this issue very seriously and understand that Hong Kong is an extremely important port for us to facilitate crew changes. In fact, all Seafarers need to follow all rules at ALL such ports around the world which permit crew changes.

Therefore, The Maritime Union of India and Indian shipping industry, would like to appeal to our Seafarers Brothers and Sisters, that all rules are strictly followed at all ports / hotels / airports. Our most important aim is to facilitate safe voyage to reach home / join ship.

It is in our interest that we realize the value and importance of such ports and we all CANNOT afford to compel authorities of such countries to stop permitting crew changes.

I am sure this message will be taken seriously by all and we look forward to your active co-operation, and ensure safe crew changes in these challenging times.

Best Regards

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