

Let this year be good

End of another year . Last year , did not carry any good news for the Indian seafarers' . In the year 2010 the shipowners made an anti seamen' s welfare agreement with their dependent unions. According to the appeal made by Forward Seamen' s Union of India, the Mumbai High Court formed a Tribunal to make a total enquiry . Last Year that Tribunal has been formed, but the shipowners and their dependent unions went to the Supreme Court. As a result, the seafarers' have got to wait. Manning are also being reduced in vessels. In this matter no conclusion is reached as yet.

In the last year , it was published that seafarer 's Gratuity Money was transferred to an unknown trust, which is very much worrying. The General Secretary of FSUI Sadhan Kanjilal had informed the D.G.Shipping through a letter giving details of the incident and demanded immediate settlement. Till date no information has been received regarding the steps taken. How the hard earned money of the seafarers, instead of being deposited in the Seamen' s Welfare Fund was deposited in an upstart trust, the secret is revealed. The money transferred belongs to the offshore vessel workers. It was made public that alongwith some government employees and manning agents, some self announced leaders are involved in this. FSUI is demanding immediate revelation of the trust and example like punishment to the guilty . Few years back Provident Fund money was defalcated. The Gratuity Money transfer is a mentionable scandal.

During the end of the past year , it was revealed that the ship administrators are not paying proper wages to the seafarers and are trying to snatch their opportunities and advantages. Side by side they are involving themselves in corruptions of lacs and lacs of rupees in the name of touring expenses. Regarding this, we had published news in details in this magazine.

In vessels the seafarers' are being pressurized for work. Irregularities are increasing. Side by side, many kinds of outrage, sexual torture are also exposed. Deck Cadet Umashankar Mahato was a sacrifice of this injustice. He jumped into the sea, unable to bear the insults of the Chief Of ficer . His body was not found. To the Indian seamen this incident is as well as painful and shareful.

Politically, last year did not go well. One after another corruption of the UPA government in the centre was exposed. Minister 's and Of ficials' are involved in these corruptions. Terrorists attacks have increased. Many people were killed. In W est Bengal, the ruling party' s glimpse of tyranny has core into the open. A flow of false promises are going on. Instead of meeting the minimum requirements of the public, everyday books are being published in the name of development. The people of W est Bengal are spending their days under a ghostly ruling system.

Through this darkness the Sunrise of 2014 took place. Like the countrymen, the seafarers' are also hoping for a bright new year which shall bring them good news. W e also hope for the same. All the seafarers, their families and others related, wish you all a very happy and prosperous new year ❖

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Cargo-Handling is not seamen's job



Cargo-handling by seamen is increasing in ships. This job is very risky. It is unlawful to execute these types of job by unskilled workers. Responsibility of doing these works lies on skilled and experienced dockers. For cargo-handling the seafarers' are tempted by offering extra money. The officers are also offered fat allowances so that, they get these jobs done by the seamen. Before entering port the seafarers' are asked to loosen the ropes for tying cargoes. The reason is to unload the cargo quickly at port. How much

risky the job is, the related authority do not keep in mind.

Why cargo handling is risky for the seafarers?

The answer is, without proper training it is a matter of risk for all seamen. These jobs are for dockers and not seamen. For doing these jobs working hours increases and no resting time is found. This results to fatigue. You may not know that, the shipowners are earning lots of money by paying less to the seamen for these jobs. The dockers respects the skills of the seafarers' but in return says that, dealing with cargo should be left for the experienced.

Then why the seamen are asked to do cargo related jobs?

Cargo related jobs done by seamen are increasing largely in the shipping industry. The extent of irregular and liberal attitude in the shipping industry is a part of it. With the consent of the owners the seafarers' are forced to do the cargo-handling. The government of the country supports this unlawful job. The shipowners wants to cut down expenses. They want to curtail seamen and dockers. They want jobs done cheaply. For this the hard earned rights of the seafarers and dockers after long and painful struggle, are being diminished. They are trying to dismiss the trained, experienced and enlisted dockers. In some ports temporary, inexperienced and of the record labourers are being recruited for cargo-handling in ships.

IIF in a report said, the shipowners wants to weaken the programme of the Dock Labour Trade Union. Actually they want to demolish the union. Because they know that united dockers are very strong. At different times they apply their strength. They are very firm in favour of their rights. They support seafarers' and other labourers struggle. In reality, to show sympathy of the dockers, the seamen should refuse cargo-handling. For achieving developed working conditions and environment, the seafarers' refusal is necessary. It should be remembered that dock labourers are natural friends of the seafarers!

Why cargo handling is harmful for seamen ?

Cargo-handling is not seafarers job. Because they are not trained for it. So it can endanger their life. An

incident is known to everybody. January 2007, a Filipino seaman was crushed under an eight ton container and was killed. The incident happened on a Antigua and Barbuda flagged vessel. The ship was anchored in Rotterdam Port in the Netherlands. When the seafarers were busy cargo-handling the sorrowful incident happened. Unable to handle the cargo properly, leads to such incident in sea.

Secondly, for cargo-handling much time and labour is wasted. For this they suffer from extra mental pressure. They are fatigued. As it is, working for long hours, tight schedule of ship movements, going from one port to another makes them depressed. On top of this if, cargo-handling is added, the life of the seafarers' are endangered. Now a days proper resting time in port are unavailable. Maybe, a seaman after reaching a port wants to contact and enquire about his family, but can not do because, the ship leaves that port. The seaman is disappointed. Depression eats up. Sometime accident occurs. In mid sea or in port, seamen are victims of such accidents.

So, if a seafarer is asked for cargo-handling by his higher officials, what shall he do? If asked to touch the cargo, the answer is no, sorry, this is not my job. Immediately contact your union, the Forward Seamen's Union of India, or contact IIF Inspector nearby. Can talk to local seafarers union. Contact directly with IIF - +44 20 7403 2733. ❖

Rejected ship and abandoned seamen



"In modern times it is difficult to admit that for days after days seafarers' shall remain abandoned in foreign port. They will not get food or water. Not get money to go back home, or their hard earned money". This was written by Rear Admiral Charles Michel. He was the Chief of the U.S. Coast Guard office of "Maritime and International Law". In

2009 he had published this in a journal after scrutiny. The other writer along with Charles Michel was Amber Ward. He was the staff Attorney of Operation Law Group in the same office. They also wrote, "Abandoned seafarers are often victims of cruel, inhuman, insulting behaviors and the worst is when they find that their lives are in danger due to scarcity of food."

This is said because, world wide in various ports the seafarers are disembarked or left abandoned along with the ship, which has become a problem. Abandoned life becomes unbearable for the seamen. The International

Labour Organisation has made an informal diary regarding rejected and abandoned ships and seafarers after gathering informations. It is seen that from 2001 to 2010, 136 vessels and 1,612 seamen were abandoned. Only in 2009 during the bad times of world economy 57 vessels were rejected and 647 seamen suffered losses. Sometimes seamen were disembarked before announcing the ship rejected. Most of the times they were left out far away from their home or country. To return home penny less, they have to undergo lot of sufferings.

Abandon or reject is actually what?

There are various causes to reject a ship. Most of the times the shipowners after economic calculations takes the decision. Unable to meet the debts and to avoid arrest, they announce the vessel rejected or abandoned. Sometimes when sailing becomes unworthy, the Control Inspector of the port stops the vessel which is then announced rejected. World economy is also responsible for this sometimes.

When a seaman is left stranded in a foreign port, he is disappointed and starts doing hateful deeds. Removes generator oil or food or water. His phone calls are not answered by the shipowners. Most of the time the shipowners stay in the back ground. Sometimes they are threatened or given false promises which are never met. These increases the seafarers' mental agony. When they do not get their wages and cannot get back home, their family suffers too. For survival they beg.

National Co-ordinator for International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) in Spain, Jose Manuel Ortega said, "For days we are seeing this. But no steps has been taken to stop it." He questioned, "How can a shipowner keep his seamen stranded and go away?"

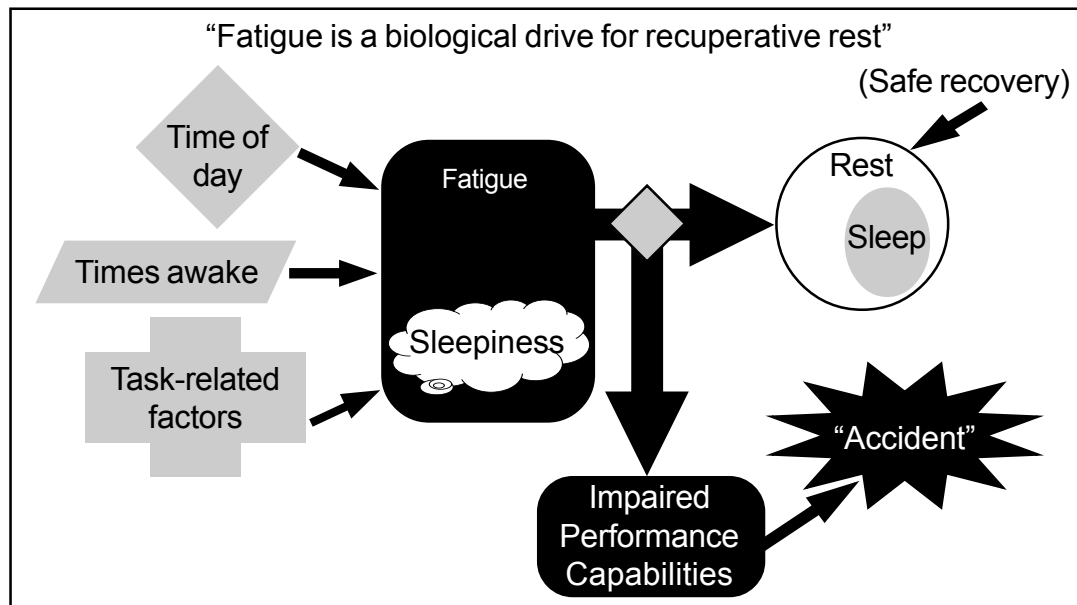
To save and help the seafarers in certain situations, works have started at international level. But the process is very slow. ILO in 2006, during Maritime Labour Convention took up long standing plans to develop environmental atmosphere of work for the seamen. But what are they doing to stop rejection of vessels and abandoning of seafarers'? Actually in the convention, to solve the problem rectification is brought on. The target is to form a financial security network for the abandoned seamen. But till proper international solutions are received, abandoning seafarers' shall continue. Their principal rights shall be violated and their family life shall be painful and destroyed. ❖

Com. Samar Mukherjee about trade union

The late communist leader Samar Mukherjee, wrote under the heading **Trade Union** regarding the role of mass organization that, a large part of the labour class of our country are under the influence of bourgeois. Trade union movement even led by CITU could not come out of the weaknesses of the principles of economics. Though consciousness has comparatively gone higher than before. Presently, it is the job of the party and CITU leadership to unite the labour class and grow political consciousness among them for making them soldiers to fight for democracy and socialism. This is not easy at all. For this the CITU leadership should be strengthened as a political organization.

(Sramik Andolan/Nov. 2013)

Due to lack of rest and sleep seamen are suffering from fatigue



In the last issue we wrote that every person needs rest and sleep, similarly every seafarers also need sleep. Lack of sleep and rest leads to inevitable fatigue. Psychologists claim that, works are harmed due to lack of sleep and rest. Generally excessive work load, even turn by turn duty or shifting duty results to fatigue. This influence falls on health, food, age and other matters. How can you understand that a seaman is suffering from fatigue? The signs are given below:-

Physical Signs:-

1. Inability to stay awake (eg. head nodding)
2. Difficulty with hand-eye coordination.
3. Speech difficulty (eg. slurred)
4. Heaviness in arms and legs or sluggish feeling.
5. Decreased ability to lift, push or pull.
6. Dropping objects.
7. Non-specific physical discomfort.
8. Headaches.
9. Giddiness.
10. Heart palpitations.
11. Rapid breathing.
12. Loss of appetite.
13. Insomnia.
14. Sweating fits.
15. Leg pains / cramps.
16. Digestion problems.

Mental Signs:-

1. Poor judgement of distance, speed, time.
2. Inaccurate interpretation of a situation, (eg. failing to anticipate danger).

Emotional Signs:-

1. Risk taking.
2. Intolerance and anti social behavior .
3. Needless worry .
4. Reduced motivation to work well.
5. Mood changes (eg. irritability, tiredness, depression)

Presently what is happening to a seaman on board?

The answer is, the environment of modern ships are, excessive work and excessive stress. Presently changing patterns of trade and employment, results to increased time spent onboard for the seafarers'. Seamen are unable to go home for six months to one year . Moreover they are called back before the leave ends. Again, to increase safety legal strictness is increasing. Inspections are done frequently in ships. Seafarers' are being pressurized with more responsibilities without giving more time as if, low class humour are being done with the seamen. After 11th September 2001, security is increased in the port area of United States of America due to the terrorist attack. Even security officers in ships are given new roles. Though no company has created such posts in ships. For few years the seafarers' have found themselves caught in a pincer of the commercial pressure to work faster, harder and better. Even then, days after days number of seamen are being reduced in vessels. For this pressure, resting time for seamen have become less, for days they have to work without sleep. Due to this they are victims of fatigue. In this respect, the Managing Director of Hong Kong Shipowners Association said, "The problem is some vessels do not have adequate number of workers." A scrutiny by ITF reveals that, maximum number of seafarers told that, they have to work for 12 hours or more. Even 15 hours at a stretch. Working hours in many ships have become 80 hours per week. Due to this health problems are being noticed. Life security is disturbed. Fatigue takes over. Sometimes, events of suicide are also happening. So, if the seafarers' do not get deserving rest and sleep, unrest may occur in ships, problems will be created, events of suicide will increase. Seafarers' should be aware of this now. ❖

Seafarers' overseas legal help

At different times, seafarers' become victims of civil or criminal offences. For few years, many think that civil offences are increasing in the shipping industry . Sometimes in ships the life of a seafarer becomes restless after being accused for such offence. Seafarers' have to go from one port to another . Different countries have different laws. Due to this the seafarers' become victims, unaware. Because they do not know law nor they are told about it.

For few years, international, national and regional existing laws are announced to be unlawful. The seamen are not aware of this and so they confront disaster . Environmental, especially due to oil pollution in sea, they are often victimized.

In the whole world, 15 lacks of seafarers' everyday in 1,00,000 ships, transports 90% of the world trade. Most of their life time they spend onboard. They are attached with the most risky profession of the world. These mobile seafarers' are mostly a prey for insults, extortions, ill behavior and injustice. Onboard they face various accidents. Situation is such that, a seafarer 's, recruitment or detainment is affected.

Seafarers' Right International (SRI) is the first to raise the subject of seafarers' lawful security .They have created "Fact Files" to inform seafarer 's about various aspects of their rights and how to deal with legal situations they may face in the course of their employment.

The first "Fact File" is actually "Using Lawyers' designed to provide practical guidance to a seafarer .This organization has come forward to provide legal advice. ❖

Be careful regarding receiving foreign money

All on a sudden your mobile phone or an SMS informs you that, you have won a lottery. Your name is selected in the international lottery system and now you are a owner of lacs of rupees. The amount is told in dollars. You are happy with joy. You response to your mobile message. You are told to pay few thousands of rupees as processing fees. In the desire of getting lacs of rupees you deposit the money in the told bank account. After this you asked to pay fees for tax-deduction. You also pay this. Then you wait for the dollars to be deposited in your account. You wait for days. You do not get the lottery amount. When you contact your bank, the bank officer says, your money has gone down the water. A group of cheats have swindled out your few thousands of rupees

World wide trap has been set up by foreign swindler, They inform you through SMS or Computer E-mail that you have won lacs of rupees in lottery. You are informed that money will be received in dollars. These cheats also gives proposal for jobs abroad, foreign scholarship for students, studies in world famous universities, foreign visa etc. Proposal or news are send in letter head. Documents in bank letter head or circular is also shown. Those are signatred by high officials of Reserve Bank. Even their phone number or E-mail ID is also attached. These are given to gain confidence of the person to be cheated. But these are all false.

If you fall in this trap then you have to loose few thousands of rupees. You will be unable to understand. As soon as you deposit money in that given account, the money is withdrawn. More money is wanted. Your greed goes up. After depositing that wanted amount, you will find that the whole money has vanished. Even the bank account is no more existing.

Reserve Bank has announced through a circular to be careful from this cheating. Many times it is proclaimed that a big foreign donor has deposited money in RBI account. Deposition of the demanded money shall fetch you that amount. RBI shall pay you or your organization. This is also false. RBI claimed that, for disbursement of money RBI do not keep any account of a person / company / trustee / organization. Apart from this RBI do not allow any official to disburse money.

So, be careful, specially those who work in ships, because they are not aware of the forgery of lands. If some messages of this kind comes, do not answer. Delete the message. Destroy the E-mail. Please remember that if any resident of India is caught for these types of money collection or sending money to foreign countries or its process, then that resident shall be charged for violation of Foreign Money Exchange Act 1999 and punished. For this, heavy amount may be fined and even can be jailed.

So be careful from falling into swindlers trap.

World Aids Day 2013 observed

To make the world habitable for healthy people and for awareness and to fight against the deadly disease HIV/AIDS, the World Health Organisation 'WHO' took the initiative to observe the World Aids Day on the 1st Day of December from 1988. In the year 1995 the United Nations acknowledged the day as "World Aids Day". This year the principle theme of the day was "Getting to Zero". Different organizations of every country in the world observe the World Aids Day on the 1st day of December. In the same way the International Transport Worker's Federation 'ITF' observes the day by taking up various programmes of work. With the support of Forward Seamen's Union of India, the largest union



of the seafarers', the "World Aids Day 2013" was observed at Ranaghat in Nadia district. HIV/AIDS Educator Liton Saha had setup a camp at the crossing of Mission Gate and National Highway and conducted anti AIDS campaign on the 1st and 2nd day of December '13. In these 2 days 700 transport workers received HIV/AIDS awareness. Amongst them 404 truck drivers and workers enlisted their names. Presence of common people was eye-catching. They took books, leaflets and IEC materials regarding HIV/AIDS. Answers were given to many questions done by many people. By



applying public address system, common people and transport workers mainly truck drivers received awareness regarding HIV/AIDS. In this programme Liton Saha was helped by the Ranaghat Network for Peoples Living with HIV/AIDS Society. Many took the society card for future contact.

On the second day, the 2nd day of December, a procession was brought out with 50 members and leaflets cards and condoms were distributed from the camp. Films were projected through video. The main reason to do the programme in the mission gate is that, ample number of trucks comes and goes. As a result target group is available. Help of common people is also available, said Liton Saha. ❖

