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MONTHLY REPORT
SEAFARERS INSIGHTS
JANUARY 2021



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CREW CHANGE DONE BY J M Baxi & Co. FROM MARCH 2020 TILL 15th JANUARY 2021

Ports	SIGN ON	SIGN OFF
Jamnagar (Vadinar / Bhavnagar / Sikka / Okha etc.)	305	574
Kandla	125	110
Mundra	161	143
Hazira	145	156
Dahej / Bharuch	140	139
Pipavav	3	3
Mumbai	1252	6926
JNPT	216	226
Ratnagiri	6	8
Mormugao	253	1986
Karwar	27	21
Mangalore	386	383
Kochi	1438	1387
Tuticorin	55	55
Karaikal	0	0
Port Blair	26	10
Chennai	164	150
Krishnapatnam	74	69
Kakinada	53	27
Visakhapatnam (covering Gangavaram)	119	119
Paradip	372	364
Dhamra	71	82
Kolkata	1	1
Haldia	166	180
Total	5162	12695

INDIA YET TO DESIGNATE SEAFARERS AS 'KEY WORKERS'

India, one of the top five suppliers of crew to the global shipping industry, is yet to designate its seafarers as “key workers”

A key worker designation for seafarers is essential to exempt these professionals from specific COVID-related travel restrictions, allowing them to travel between their country of residence and ships, and to be repatriated at the end of their contracts.

“This is critical to resolve the crew change crisis, which currently leaves hundreds of thousands of seafarers trapped at sea or stuck at home and unable to join ships. It could even play a key role in granting them priority access to safe (Covid) vaccination,” according to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the UN agency tasked with regulating global shipping.

Adopting Resolutions

IMO, the United Nations General Assembly and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have adopted resolutions urging governments to designate seafarers as key workers. Forty-five IMO Member States and one Associate Member have designated seafarers as key workers, which the IMO said is a key step in resolving the ongoing crew change crisis. The IMO Member States that have designated seafarers as key workers are Bangladesh, Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, UAE, UK and the US, among others.

'Matter of urgency'

In a letter issued on December 14, IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim has called on Member States “that have not yet done so to take action as a matter of urgency”. The Indian government has framed standard operating procedure/protocol for sign-on and sign-off of Indian and foreign seafarers at Indian ports. Currently, hundreds of thousands of seafarers are stranded on board ships, having seen their contracts extended beyond the maximum duration of service periods accepted under international treaties - less than 12 months - and a similar number of seafarers are waiting to join ships, according to the IMO.

Source: the Hindu business line

WAGES OF INDIAN SEAFARERS REVISED UPWARDS BY UP TO 40 PC

Wages of Indian seafarers have been revised upwards by up to 40 per cent retrospectively from January this year, following signing of a pact between the Indian National Shipowners' Association (INSA) and seafarers bodies NUSI and FSUI, a release said.

Wages of Indian seafarers have been revised upwards by up to 40 per cent retrospectively from January this year, following signing of a pact between the Indian National Shipowners' Association (INSA) and seafarers bodies NUSI and FSUI, a release said. The wage agreement signed on December 7 under the aegis of the 47th National Maritime Board (India) will remain in effect till December 31, 2023, and will benefit over 50,000 ratings and petty officers serving on Indian ships of foreign-going, home trade, offshore vessels and harbour tugs, it said. For the first time, a new agreement has been reached for seamen's at harbour tugs as well as part of the 47th National Maritime Board (India), according to the release. The National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) and the Forward Seafarers Union of India (FSUI) are the two representative bodies of the seafarers in the country, while INSA has 36 members on its platform. Under the revised wage agreement, foreign-going ratings and petty officers will get 40 per cent and 30 per cent hike, respectively, in their wages, while home trade ratings and petty officers' wages have been increased by 20 per cent, the release said. Similarly, offshore ratings and petty officers' basis wages have been revised by more than 10 per cent and seven per cent, respectively, it said. Also, seafarers working exclusive on harbour tugs will get a 10 per cent increase in the overall salary for the period of January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2022, the release said. It added that there will be a further cumulative increase of five per cent for them for the January 1-December 31, 2023, period, it added. The agreement protects the employee rights of Indian seafarers working in various capacities for Indian shipowners, said the release. Apart from salaries, the death compensation amounts and the amount of disability compensation for seafarers on ships-carrying radioactive material has also been increased significantly, stated the release. The latest agreement also favours terms of re-employment, skill enhancement, reducing discrimination, increasing mental health awareness, and creating robust grievance procedures for mariners, it said. This agreement is valid for a period of four years, starting from January 1, 2020, it said.

Source: Zeebiz

CREW SIGN OFF FROM SHIPS ARRIVING FROM UK TO UNDERGO COVID RT-PCR TESTING

COVID test to be conducted as per the standard operating procedure for controlled crew change

The Directorate General of Shipping (D G Shipping) has included vessels arriving from ports in the United Kingdom in the extra Covid testing rules stipulated for crew signing off from ships arriving from ports of infected countries within the 14-days mandatory quarantine period. On December 17, the D G Shipping lifted the 14-days mandatory quarantine period stipulated for ships arriving from ports of Covid-19 infected countries after maritime trade complained that this was delaying the berthing of vessels with a cascading effect on the container logistics chain. While removing the 14-days quarantine rule, the D G Shipping, however, stipulated additional Covid testing requirements for crew disembarking from vessels arriving at Indian ports from ports of Covid infected countries before the quarantine period. Accordingly, shipping companies or their agents had to make arrangements for RT-PCR testing of all such crew disembarking from such vessels in coordination with concerned port and health authorities. Besides, such crew member shall test negative by RT-PCR for Covid-19 before disembarking from the ship. The new requirements had led to concerns among the shipping community that it would raise the cost of undertaking crew change at Indian ports as the testing was to be done on the vessel itself. It is now clarified that the requirements of RT-PCR test in DGS order is only in respect of vessels calling from ports in China, the D G Shipping said in an order issued on December 24. "It is also clarified that RT-PCR test would be conducted as per the standard operating procedure (SOP) for controlled crew change issued by the Directorate after disembarkation and not onboard the vessels," the order said. The above instructions will also be applicable for vessels calling from ports of United Kingdom within a period of 14 days in view of the threat posed by new variant virus reported in that country, the DG Shipping added.

Source: The Hindu Business Line

SEAFARERS ON INDIAN, FOREIGN SHIPS TO GET PF, GRATUITY AND PENSION BENEFITS

SPFO to submit to govt modalities of the plan that will benefit 4-lakh seamen

Some four lakh Indian seafarers of all ranks working on board Indian and foreign flagged ships moved a step closer to getting provident fund, gratuity and pension benefits after their long-pending demand was accorded “in-principle” approval. The Board of Trustees of the Seamens’ Provident Fund Organisation (SPFO), headed by Amitabh Kumar, Director-General of Shipping, backed the demand at a meeting. “An in-principle decision has been taken by the SPFO Board of Trustees to extend these benefits to all seafarers working on Indian and foreign flagged ships,” Amitabh Kumar, who chaired the meeting, told BusinessLine. “With the in-principle approval, the SPFO will now work out the modalities, take approval from the Board of Trustees and make a recommendation to the government. The final decision to amend the Seamens’ Provident Fund Act, 1966 to extend these benefits will rest with the government,” Kumar added.

Wage agreement

While the provident fund for seafarers employed on Indian flag ships is covered by the statute, gratuity and pension benefits are still a bilateral arrangement between the National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) and the shipowners as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement or wage agreement for seafarers. “For nearly two decades, NUSI has been demanding the benefits of provident fund, gratuity and pension should become a statute for all ranks of seafarers- officers, petty officers, ratings, others serving on both Indian and foreign flag ships,” said Abdulgani Serang, general secretary-cum treasurer of NUSI, which represents general purpose staff employed on ships. Serang represents NUSI on the board of trustees of SPFO.

Petition to PM

Last year, more than 25,000 seafarers petitioned the Prime Minister during the COVID-19 pandemic to secure these benefits. “Seafarers and their families are happy at this development which will take care of them when they are not working on ships,” Serang said. Seafarers working on Indian flag ships were getting provident fund benefits as per the Seamens’ Provident Fund Act, 1966 enacted exclusively for them. But, Indian crew working on foreign flag ships were excluded from the ambit of the Act and denied provident fund, gratuity and pension benefits, Serang added.

Source: The Hindu Business Line

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Research Cell,

J. M. Baxi & Co., Godrej Coliseum, Office No. 801, 8th floor, "C" wing, Behind Everard Nagar,
Off. Somaiya Road, Sion. Mumbai - 400022 INDIA

Contact Details:

Tel: 022 61077100 Ext 161/145, Mob: 091-7506004224 / 7045659111

E-mail: jmbreports@jmbaxi.com, Website: www.jmbaxi.com

