



Guiding Spirit to Shipping Industry

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New Type of Offshore Wind Vessel Unveiled



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Hindalco opens its warehouse in Nagpur at Logistics

“A PINT OF BEER PLEASE! MAKE IT TWO” - by Capt Shiv Halbe



Capt Shiv Halbe

In the days gone by, a seafarer was portrayed as a happy-go-lucky character, who had money falling out of his pockets, and a charming career that was chosen over others. Over the past 40 years, the systemic dismantling of this dream seems to have been supervised and no effort has been spared to enforce changes that ensure that the seafaring profession should not be happy. So it seems from an event that happened 44 years ago.

There was once a man named Joe Hazelwood. An ordinary fellow, who led an extraordinary life- that of a seafarer. For his sins, for a living, he commanded a large ship engaged in ferrying crude oil from a production site in Alaska to mainland USA, for delivery to refineries, which in turn ‘cracked’ the crude oil into various distillates, many of which, such as petrol, are used daily by ordinary citizens. One can say, that he was part of a ‘lifeline’ business.

One fateful evening, whilst his ship was loading in Alaska, our Joe decided to stretch his legs ashore,

prior to the ship sailing out and had a couple of beers at a local bar. So far, so good.

Joe then went back on board, completed the pre-departure formalities and the ship sailed without incident. However, during the outbound passage through Prince William Sound, he left the con of the ship to a certified junior officer whilst navigating in a rather ‘narrow’ patch, resulting in the ship running aground and causing an oil spill, the kind of which the world had probably not seen.

What followed afterward was absolute mayhem in the media. The press went after poor Joe, as if he were going out of fashion, not only questioning his competency but also labeling him an ‘alcoholic’. Not many will care to remember that he was cleared of charges of being drunk during the subsequent trial.

Soon thereafter, the powers that be decided that having alcohol on board ‘tankers’ was too dangerous as any incident could lead to serious repercussions, especially if the ship was trading to US ports. Around the same time, the SIRE inspection regime was taking shape. Suddenly, operators had to announce their ‘alcohol policies’, the sharper they were, the better, as there were ‘brownie points’ given to the operator for ‘best industry practice’.

So, the axe fell first on Captain Morgan and his cousin, Jonny Walker, with low-alcohol beer being the only ‘indulgence’ available, that too in limited quantities. Then some gunslinger decided that why limit the restrictions to US ports?

So, the ‘no alcohol’ policy was extended to the rest of the world. Then another gunslinger thought, why restrict only on tankers? Other ships also pose an equal risk! So, before the sailor could say ‘Jack Robinson’ the booze was not part of the ship's bond store anymore. It's now been a few decades since the alcohol ban has been imposed on ships and statistics show that

accidents have declined. But isn't this an oxymoron? Its like saying the wear and tear on my car has reduced since I started using my friends' car!

Then came the fateful day now known as 9/11. Some maniacs decided to take matters in their own hands and wake up a sleeping giant. The result? ISPS was unleashed on the merchant ships. Seafarers who were traipsing the world with gay abandon hitherto, suddenly

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“A PINT OF BEER PLEASE! MAKE From Page : 1

were looked at as ‘undesirable aliens’, ‘security risks’ and their movements curtailed.

The COVID pandemic further curtailed the movements of seafarers due to various restrictions imposed, but the world was far too engrossed in itself to care for the poor seafarer or his plight.

Of further and bigger concern, is that in many cases, the restrictions continue to remain in force despite life having returned to normal beyond the dock wall.

No one denying that alcohol can impair judgment, but so does some ‘over-the-counter medication’. No one denying that in this changing world of shifting alliances and revised geopolitical order, security threats need to be

identified and mitigated, but does it have to be that the poor seafarer has to be at the bottom of the food chain? The SID convention came into force, allegedly to make the movement of seafarers easier (or seamless). Other than one more document that needs to be tended to, it has done precious little.

Drugs are a menace to society. Some of the so-called ‘advanced’ countries have found a novel way to deal with the ‘drug’ problem. They have ‘legalized’ the sale, of course with some conditions.

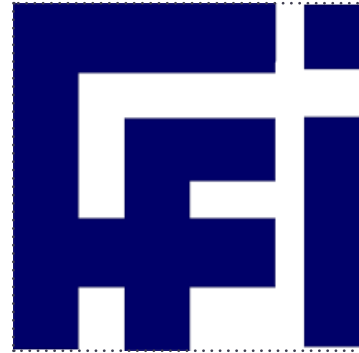
Why can't the powers that be come out with a novel idea, borrowing from the ‘drug industry’. If misuse of drugs is being controlled by legalizing them, then abuse of alcohol be controlled by

‘legalizing’ the use on board. Just as ships are rewarded for meeting targets of ‘accident-free days’, so should they be rewarded for ‘alcohol abuse’ free days. If the ship's staff can manage that responsibly, good luck to them. If they can't get shore leave, at least they can socialize over an aperitif at the end of a hard day's work!

Its time the world decides that they have had enough sport with the poor seafarer and that he should be treated like a responsible professional and an adult. If a land lubber can have a pint or two at the end of his days work, who are we to deny that to a professional? Enough of kind words, time to put the beer where the bond is!

EXIM NEWS

FFFAI makes representation to the Member Customs, CBIC



FFFAI Chairman Mr. Shankar Shinde felicitated Mr. Surjit Bhujabal, Member (Customs), CBIC, during their recent visit to North Block, New Delhi to make a representation to improve the speed for customs clearance in order to enhance the TRS and EODB performance.

The Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India (FFFAI) team was headed by Mr. Shankar Shinde along with the Chairman-Elect Mr. Dushyant Mulani; Vice Chairmen Mr. Amit Kamat, Mr. Rajesh Verma, Hon. Secretary Mr. Vinod Sharma, Hon. Treasurer Mr. Sudhir Agarwal, and Advisor Mr. S Ramakrishna.

The representation made to the Member (Customs), CBIC was pertaining to issues faced by EXIM Trade in Faceless Assessment, to bring specific timelines of 24 hours for Ocean cargo

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