ITEF LAUNCHES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR SEAFARERS, CALLS FOR STRONGER MLC ENFORCEMENT AND VESSEL INSPECTIONS ACROSS INDIAN PORTS

National-level maritime federation brings trade unions and welfare organisations together to advance fair wages, seafarers' rights, workplace safety and international labour standards



ITEF Delegation Meets Shri Shyam Jagannathan, IAS, Director General of Maritime Administration, Government of India, to Discuss Seafarers' Rights, Welfare, Safety and Collective Bargaining Initiatives

The International Transport Employees Federation (ITEF) has launched a comprehensive Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Framework for seafarers, incorporating relevant provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006), and proposing the International Labour Organization (ILO)-recommended minimum wage scale as a benchmark for seafarers' remuneration. The initiative marks a significant step towards strengthening collective representation, promoting fair employment conditions and advancing internationally recognised labour and welfare standards across the maritime industry.

The launch forms part of ITEF's broader mission to establish a stronger, coordinated national platform for seafarers' trade unions, maritime welfare organisations and transport workers' representatives in India. The Federation seeks to address longstanding challenges confronting seafarers, including wage disputes, employment exploitation, onboard harassment, inadequate working and living conditions, unsafe vessels and gaps in welfare protection.

As part of its efforts to address critical issues affecting the maritime workforce, an ITEF delegation met senior officials of the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA), Government of India, including Shri Shyam Jagannathan, IAS, Director General of Maritime Administration; Shri Killi Mohana Rao, Chief Surveyor-cum-Additional Director General (In-Charge); and Capt. S. I. Abul Kalam Azad, Nautical Adviser-cum-Additional Director General (Nautical). The delegation submitted representations and held detailed discussions on the welfare and safety of Indian seafarers serving onboard vessels in Indian waters and across international shipping routes. Key concerns included onboard harassment, unpaid wages, unsafe working conditions, substandard vessels, MLC 2006 violations and the need for stronger regulatory enforcement.

The delegation also brought to the attention of the Nautical Adviser and PSC Chief Surveyor, DGMA, Government of India that seafarers unions and welfare organisations are receiving numerous complaints from seafarers and their dependants concerning employment-related exploitation, delayed payment of wages, poor onboard conditions and other welfare violations. Serious concern was expressed over substandard vessels continuing to visit Indian ports and enter Indian waters, potentially endangering the lives of seafarers and the safety of maritime operations.

In view of these concerns, the delegation strongly urged the DGMA authorities to increase and strengthen Port State Control (PSC) inspections at all Indian ports, including unannounced inspections. It emphasised that inspections should not be limited to the technical condition of vessels but should also give due importance to crew welfare, working and living conditions, safety equipment, seaworthiness and compliance with MLC 2006. The delegation called for appropriate action against established violations.

ITEF Pledges Collective Bargaining with Shipping Companies

Shri Amar Singh Thakur, General Secretary of the All India Seafarers and General Workers Union, and Shri Jagan Mohan Naidu, General Secretary of the Republican Maritime Union, stated that ITEF is committed to strengthening the collective bargaining rights of seafarers and advancing employment conditions in line with recognised international maritime labour standards. They said the Federation intends to engage directly with shipowners, ship managers and shipping companies to facilitate negotiations and the conclusion of Collective Bargaining Agreements through its affiliated and member seafarers' trade unions. Shri. Sanjay V Pawar National President of the Rashtriys Shramik Sanghatana emphasised that collective bargaining must serve as an effective mechanism for securing fair remuneration, timely payment of wages, improved employment conditions, occupational safety, decent working and living standards, and comprehensive welfare protection for seafarers.



ITEF Delegation Meets Capt. S. I. Abul Kalam Azad, Nautical Adviser-cum-Additional Director General (Nautical), Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA), Government of India, to Discuss Seafarers' Rights, Welfare, Vessel Safety and Strengthening Maritime Regulatory Standards.

Stronger Port State Control Inspections Urged Across India's Major and Minor Ports to Protect Seafarers' Welfare, Ensure Vessel Safety and Prevent Maritime Accidents

During the meeting with the maritime administration, **Dr. N. Reuben Paul Chairman of the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (India) urged Shri Killi Mohana Rao, Chief Surveyor-cum-Additional Director General, and Capt. S. I. Abul Kalam Azad, Nautical Adviser-cum-Additional Director General (Nautical), to strengthen Port State Control (PSC) inspections across all major and minor ports in India.**

He emphasised the need for more effective vessel inspections to ensure that shipping companies maintain appropriate standards of vessel seaworthiness, operational safety and compliance with international maritime regulations. He further stressed that inspections should give due importance to seafarers' working and living conditions, onboard safety arrangements and compliance with the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006).

ITEF called for stronger regulatory oversight and appropriate enforcement action against vessels found to have deficiencies or violations, emphasising that vessel safety and seafarers' welfare must be treated as complementary priorities in maritime operations.

Dr. Babu Mailan stated that the ITEF Charitable Trust has also been established as the welfare arm of the Federation, with a mandate to strengthen humanitarian assistance and welfare support for seafarers and their families.

Advancing a Stronger International Framework for Seafarers' Rights

Dr. N. Reuben Paul reaffirmed that ITEF is committed to constructive engagement with maritime administrations, shipowners, ship managers, trade unions and international maritime organisations to advance seafarers' rights, welfare and safety.

Through collective action, institutional cooperation and international engagement, ITEF aims to strengthen the voice of seafarers and contribute to a safer, fairer and more accountable global maritime industry.