

Guiding Spirit to Shipping Industry

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Visakhapatnam will witness one of the biggest Maritime.....



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CBI files case against shipping company for cheating.....



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Govt focused on addressing container shortage.....



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Commerce Ministry has commenced a probe.....

## Strange Tales of the Sea- By Capt. Shiv Halbe, CEO-MASSA



Capt Shiv Halbe; CEO MASSA

Many of us have grown up when Melders told us tales, usually tales which had a message- truthfulness, character building or social responsibility etc. However, we used to look forward to exciting tales- pure fiction, too! One such compendium of stories was Sinbad the Sailor! Invariably Sinbad would be shipwrecked and drift onto a mysterious shore or island and what followed would be pure adventure- demons and treasures et al! After all this, Sinbad would safely make his way back home with the treasures, till the next adventure!

With passing time (and age), when the time came to choose a career, seafaring, though largely unknown, was still considered an 'option' amongst others and it was not unusual to see officer cadets, deck and engine, to have preferred 'sea' as a choice over other known careers. Among the most common, would be son following in the footsteps of the father- carrying on the tradition. Recently, I was at a public lecture in a reputed local college, and was introduced to one of the officials- a retired Lt.General. When I introduced myself as a seafarer, he, rather regally, said that during his time, the choice was between joining

NDA or Dufferin! I swelled up with pride. However, my ego was quickly deflated when he asked if we are able to attract the same calibre today?

**This is where the problem begins. Only about 2 million seafarers are on board on any given day, manning ships which move the world trade. The society at large is unaware of this scenario.** We then make matters worse by claiming that this is the 'silent' workforce which keeps the wheels of global trade moving- essential goods to luxury items! In effect, it seems that we take pride in the fact the trade and the seafarers are unseen, and therefore, unheard. So, the only time that the general public hears about the profession is when there is a catastrophe, which more often than not leads to intense agony in some form- environmental damage, loss of life, piracy etc, to name a few. It was only during the Ever Given episode, in Suez canal, that the world woke up to the impact a single ship can have on the logistical chain. Fortunately, there was no environmental damage or loss of life and hence, the pundits could actually address the questions that arose, instead of the usual mass hysteria. However, the trade as a whole, failed to capitalise on the event by way of media management and once the event was over, the world moved on.....

Recently, on 31st January 2021, the International Labour Organisation published its Annual Report on Application of International Labour Standards 2021. The report is, as expected, very comprehensive, going into more than 800 pages and covers the gamut of ILO conventions. **The section detailing woes of the seafarers will make one cringe- there is nothing but abject failure of all parties- nothing short of human right violations.** When the states, under the garb of protecting its own, subject the seafarers to untold miseries, its probably, nothing short of state sponsored terrorism. Despite

such damning findings and comments, the world at large remains largely unmoved- those who made life difficult for seafarers, continue to do so with impunity. No wonder that in the recently conducted survey by Indian national Shipowners Association, a staggering 62% respondents did not want their ward to take up a job on board ship!

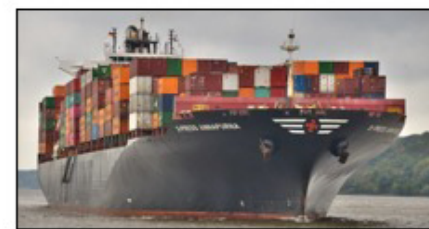
The Directorate General of Shipping has published Maritime Vision 2030 with the active participation of the

industry. It envisages growth of Indian seafarers by 100% in 5 years. To achieve this, a strategy needs to be put in place with the participation of stakeholders across all verticals. The major thrust will need to be placed on: how to attract youngsters to this career. The findings of the INSA survey (referred above) will be an invaluable input to such an effort.

Till then- enjoy the tales of Sindbad.....

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