



Rikio Kozu, Rengo president



Takumi Nemoto, minister of Health, Labor and Welfare



Yuriko Koike, Tokyo governor

JSU holds 90th May Day rally

Bridge gaps and maintain peace! Create future of solidarity!

The All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) held its milestone 90th May Day central rally in a refreshing spring breeze on April 27 at Yoyogi Park in Tokyo. As many as 37,000 fellows, including members of the Japan Trade Union Confederation (Rengo), gathered on the muddy ground at the park, as it had just stopped raining.

At the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Rikio Kozu (president of Rengo), chairman of the May Day central rally executive committee, gave an address. He said: "In Japan, May Day began 99 years ago. This year, we met for the milestone 90th time, as we had not been able to convene several meetings when suppressed. Today, we are faced with various difficult challenges. With the power of solidarity that we had gained over the 99 years, however, we can overcome any difficulties. To promote decent work, labor-management relations, in other words, labor unions are inevitable. Gender equality is another challenge that we need to address to achieve the well-balanced development of the world. Rengo will take the initiative in tackling these challenges."

As a guest, Mr. Takumi Nemoto, minister of health, labor and welfare, delivered a message. He said: "I pay my respects to the efforts that Rengo makes to help



Some 37,000 people gathered at Yoyogi Park in Tokyo for the May Day central rally.

disaster-stricken areas. There is a mountain of challenges in the health, labor and welfare administration. We will clear them by holding a series of discussions with workers."

Following Mr. Nemoto, Ms. Yuriko Koike, governor of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, spoke on behalf of the TMG, which seconded the May Day central rally. She said: "As the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic games are around the corner, many people have registered for volunteer activities and cooper-

ated with the Medal Project (a project to salvage gold, silver and bronze from electronic devices to produce Olympic and Paralympic medals). I am grateful to those people. Helping women participate more actively in society, the TMG will work to create a Tokyo, where residents, regardless of whether they are men or women, will be able to work while raising their children and/or taking care of their parents and other family members at the same time. In partnership with those of you, we would like to advance TMG poli-

cies.

At the end of the meeting, Ms. Rie Nagashima, a member of the May Day central rally executive committee, proposed a May Day declaration, which was agreed on unanimously and by acclaim. The agreement was followed by the closing remarks of Mr. Hiroomi Shirakawa (acting president of Rengo Tokyo), vice-chairman of the executive committee. Mr. Takahiro Masumoto of Rengo shouted "Gambaro!" (Let's work hard!) three times, leading to the end of the rally.



Above, students are attentive while guests speak, and below, well-wishers give the ship a send-off.

Training ship begins new journey

'Kaiwo Maru' leaves Kobe on long voyage with 95 trainees

A ceremony was held at the Port of Kobe under a cloudless sky on April 26, 2019 to see off the *Kaiwo Maru*, a training vessel belonging to the Japan Agency of Maritime Education and Training for Seafarers, an incorporated administrative agency.

The oceangoing voyage is designed to help students learn meteorological, hydrographic and other phenomena that are peculiar to the Southern Hemisphere by gaining experience on the Australian route, and obtain knowledge on and skills of ship operations that they will need in the future. It will be the first time in 39 years for the sailing ship to

enter Darwin Port in Australia, its destination.

Seen from the looks on their faces, the trainees attending the ceremony all had great expectations of the journey that they

The voyage is designed to help students learn conditions unique to the Southern Hemisphere

were about to embark. They gave salutes while guests spoke messages of encouragement.

Mr. Susumu Toya, master of the *Kaiwo Maru*, delivered a message, saying, "I hope that you will all have grown upon returning from this sailing."

Following Mr. Toya's speech, Marine Mates, city of Kobe tourism ambassadors, presented bouquets of flowers to the captain and the representative of the trainees.

After the send-off ceremony, the students all changed into their work clothes and took up their respective positions.

A brass band from the city of Kobe's fire department gave a performance, while many people waved flags to see the *Kaiwo Maru* off.

The training ship left the Port of Kobe for Australia's Darwin Port—over 3,000 nautical miles away—with 95 trainees, including eight women.

More women seafarers sought for global shipping

Global demand for seafarers continue to surge till 2025, with more women—more Filipinas, specifically—expected to join this male-dominated industry.

So far, of 1.65 million seafarers serving on internationally trading merchant ships, only 2 percent are women. Of the 1 million Filipino seafarers issued with Seafarer's Identification and Record Book in 2018, 10 percent, or 73,027, are women, mostly working on cruise liners.

It's even more challenging for Filipino women who want to be part of a ship's crew, although they are "bolder and highly driven", says Marissa Oca, Founder and President of Gig and the Amazing Sampaguita Foundation, Inc. (GASFI), a non-profit group forging relationships among seafaring and Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) families.

"Seafaring women have a propensity for not backing down from offers for higher positions, unlike men, who may be large in number but do not want to be promoted anymore because they are already satisfied with their salaries," explained the daughter of the late Gregorio S. Oca.

However, "many Filipino women seafarers bear the social cost of their profession. After spending so much time at sea, they feel isolated when they come home. They feel that their families do not know them or they have no friends at all. Some of them find it difficult to keep long-distance relationships."

Next year, the global seafaring industry will need more manpower, close to 100,000 and more by 2025, about 150,000. China, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are the five largest supply countries for all seafarers.

While in the past, women on board cruise ships were confined to the housekeeping and food and beverage departments, more women have reached the ranks of chief engineers or master mariners in the last decade. Women can now fill officer positions.

The country's Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) continues to campaign for women to develop careers at sea and actively promotes equal rights for women in the sector. Earlier this year, it conducted a seminar-workshop on gender and development seeking to improve its related initiatives and policies to make them more gender responsive.

MARINA supports the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #5, which aims to achieve gender equality in the seafaring industry. (Source: *Manila Bulletin* by Emmie V. Abadilla)

Manning costs to increase below inflation

Manning costs have risen moderately over the past 12 months, checked by easing officer supply shortage, and are forecast to rise at a similar pace over the next five years, according to the latest *Manning Annual Review and Forecast* report published by global shipping consultancy Drewry.

Manning costs rose for a second successive year in 2019 but the pace of growth remains moderate and well below the prevailing rate of price inflation. Meanwhile, the shortfall in available officer numbers relative to demand has declined close to equilibrium and is expected to reach a small surplus by 2024, but ratings remain in surplus and are expected to re-

main so.

"While there were some pockets of higher wage increases these were focused on the growing LNG sector, otherwise overall manning costs have remained subdued," said Drewry's senior manning analyst Rhett Harris. "Certain ranks and experience levels continue to be in tighter supply than the manning market as a whole. These tend to be for experienced senior officers and in particular second engineers."

Drewry estimates that aggregate manning costs rose by around 1% in 2019, well below the prevailing rate of price inflation, with both ratings and officer pay rising by the same margin (see graph). This follows a similar rise the previous year and flat lining costs in 2017, as the depressed state of most car-

go markets made wage increases almost unaffordable.

The shortage of officer supply versus demand is narrowing, and lower-than-anticipated fleet growth is at the core of this.

"However, it remains a finely balanced position with the supply side easily tipped if wages for sea service do not remain competitive compared to shore-based work," added Harris. "The big social differences between working at sea and ashore are central to this consideration, as well as the fact that young people are now less willing to make compromises for work than previous generations."

While shipping markets are improving, the commercial environment remains challenging and the economic outlook increasingly

uncertain with plenty of downside risk. Hence, despite planned increases in collectively agreed base pay scales, Drewry expects seafarer wage inflation to remain well below the prevailing rate of consumer price inflation over the next five years. Continued pressure to reduce costs combined with improving officer supply conditions will negate incentives to raise salaries.

"However, there will be some variation between the different sectors. Costs for crewing dry and container vessels will likely rise at a slower pace, but in sectors such as LNG and chemicals where there is competition for scarce officers certified to crew specialist ships higher cost inflation is anticipated," concluded Harris. (Source: *Drewry*)

Ship aims at transatlantic crossing without a crew

Final preparations are underway for a 12-meter-long ship to set sail from Canada and attempt the world's first transatlantic crossing without a crew.

The *USV Maxlimer*, an unmanned surface vessel, is bound for the south coast of England and will conduct deep sea surveys on the way, guided by a skipper in a control station in Britain.

The voyage is expected to take about 35 days.

The ship was built by Sea-Kit International, which develops vessels for the maritime and research industries, for the Shell Ocean

Discovery XPRIZE, a competition to autonomously survey the sea bed.

It can launch and recover autonomous underwater vehicles but has the potential to operate in different roles with different cargo.

"(It is) almost like a utility pickup vehicle of the sea, it's robust, it's adaptable, it's got a huge range," SEA-KIT International Managing Director Ben Simpson said.

The vessel is operated by a hand-held remote control when in harbor and when at sea it can stream live data to the controller via multiple satellite links.

"What is now available through technology is very, very similar to what you have on the bridge of a ship and in many ways, I would argue, even more comprehensive," said James Fanshawe, a director of SEA-KIT.

"The controller here in this station can actually see all the way round on the horizon near real-time and in many ships it's quite difficult to actually even see what's behind you from the bridge of that ship," Fanshawe said.

The company said it sees a future for unmanned vessels as they can remove humans from harm's

way. The team said ships that do not need to accommodate people also have significant economic and environmental benefits.

"You don't need a bridge, you don't need a galley, you don't need water supplies, you don't need air conditioning and suddenly the size of that vessel becomes a fraction of the size of vessels currently being used offshore," Simpson said.

The combination of size and hybrid diesel-electric propulsion cuts fuel use by around 95 percent, the company said. (Source: *Manila Bulletin*)

Global shipping industry facing higher fuel prices

Shipping industry is indeed facing higher fuel prices as it must switch from the use of high sulfur fuels to those below 1 percent in order to meet the new international marine environment policy for fighting pollution by eliminating the use of the biggest marine polluters sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide effective from next year.

This represents a new challenge for ship owners globally in order to figure out how to deal with this new policy. Their current fuels are no longer acceptable and they must reduce the fuels' sulfur level from the current level of 3.5 percent.

Oil industries and companies are all in the same boat. They

must change their refining configuration to produce the kind that meets the new regulations especially the owners and producers of medium heavy crude oils in the Gulf and other parts of the world.

Our refining industry in Kuwait is faced with this problem. We used to supply fuel of higher sulfur content to Ministry of Electricity and Water. For years, the sulfur content of the fuel we supplied was more than 4.5 percent but it reduced recently to nearly 3.5 percent.

However, it must be reduced to less than one percent. Also, we have been producing bunker fuel grades for ship owners from

all over the world. Our Kuwaiti crude has high content of sulfur, and our refineries were originally built to meet the world demand for fuel oils which were used in many industries such as cement, glass, aluminum and marine fuels. However, all industries gradually began switching to gas or diesel, and perhaps electricity as well.

Shipping companies are hoping that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) may extend its deadline, as they will impose hefty prices for the new fuels, be it marine diesel or lower-sulfur fuel oil or gas, provided there is enough gas to meet the shipping industry's global demand.

Of course, any such increase in the fuel prices will affect the end consumers and other services such that everyone will end up paying their share. Now it is the turn of the shipping industry to clean up and preserve our seas and shores.

For years, they were not in line with the international regulations. Next year is not far away. All cars in the world and about 200 of the biggest tankers use fuels with high sulfur content. Reducing the sulphur content in all petroleum products is the first step towards ensuring a cleaner environment and preserving our seas from the biggest polluter. (Source: *MenaFN*)

Seafarers subjected to inhumane treatment on board Blumenthal ship

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) have heard claims that seafarers on board Blumenthal's *Lita* are being forced to collect rainwater with tarpaulins for drinking water after the ship ran out of potable water.

ITF released an appalling photograph on board the Liberian-registered bulk carrier raising fresh

concerns and fears about the welfare of seafarers working on board Blumenthal's global Flag of Convenience (FOC) fleet.

"The fact that seafarers are being forced to collect rainwater in order to survive is an indictment on Blumenthal. Their diet is bread and water, without the water," said ITF maritime coordinator Jacqueline Smith.

"Blumenthal is playing dangerously with the lives of these seafarers aboard the *Lita*, which must be exposed to and condemned by the entire maritime industry," Smith said.

The ITF had alerted the Liberian flag authorities more than a week ago after an initial report that the vessel was running critically low on water.

This revelation is more damning proof of the systemic mistreatment of seafarers across Blumenthal's fleet sparked by the detention of the *Anna-Elisabeth* in Australia and the release of distressing stories of intimidation, threats and abusive conditions on board the German shipping company's global fleet. (Source: *ITF*)

VOICES from SEAFARERS



Capt. Edwin S. Almirez and crew of MV SHIN SUMA

On behalf of my crew, I'd like to express our appreciation to the JSU representatives. With the significant information about the current maritime news, we are pleased to say ... thank you!!!



Capt. Jerome C. Tundag and joining crew of MV HAPPINESS FRONTIER

The JSU staff who visited our ship had given us explanation on our union agreement. We've known the rights and benefits of being a union member. We realized that members' welfare continue to improve with the latest agreement. Thank you JSU!



Capt. Francisco Rutaquio Lareza and crew of MV ASIAN INFINITY

JSU staff ship visitation has served as a bridge for the members' quest for welfare assistance from the union. In appreciation of your support, we will do our best to perform the duties assigned to us.



Capt. Domingo M. Galanido and crew of MV CAPE UNIVERSE

We are very grateful to the JSU staff for visiting our ship in Kawasaki Port. They had taught us how to access the medical facilities provided by their brother unions. We sincerely appreciate the information the JSU staff share.



Capt. Teodoro Reyes Chanluangco and crew of MV AZUL CIELO

Our working and living conditions were checked by the JSU staff while we were in the port of Kawasaki. It is a blessing that there has been an improvement of the seafarers' welfare since the MLC 2006 was adopted in January 2019. Thanks to the information and keep up the good work.



Capt. Artis B. Mesiona and crew of MV JP CARETTA

Our heartfelt appreciation to the JSU staff for visiting us. Your information regarding the new CBA is very important to us. Thank you for the wage increase and the improvement in our welfare benefits.



Capt. Salut Lloyd Compahinay and crew of MV CENTENARIO FORZA

JSU visitation has a great value to the seafarers. Members and non-members alike had learnt of the recent MLC seafarers' welfare improvement. The outcome of the JSU welfare activity has earned our desire to join union.



Capt. Nghiem Xuan Thai and crew of MV LIZSTAR SUCCESS

Being members of the JSU, we expected the JSU staff visitation while our vessel is in Japanese port. Thank you JSU for regularly visiting us and checking our working and living condition.



Capt. Clarence Palma Demaisip and crew of MV QUEEN ASIA

The recent wage increase had brought a lot of changes to the seafarers' well-being. We are very much inspired to work hard in our profession. Thanks to the JSU who worked hard in achieving fair working and living conditions under the new agreement.

Seafarers and hernia: weighing in on common injury

Hernia is considered as one of the common injuries with seafarers as lifting heavy objects is a normal part of daily routine on board the vessel.

A five-year study by Dr. Nico-medes Cruz, a Manila-based surgeon, of the causes of medical repatriation among Filipino seafarers revealed that inguinal hernia ranked fifth as the most common injuries out of the 5,315 seafarers studied.

Hernia occurs when the intestines push through a weak spot or tear in the lower abdominal wall, often in the inguinal canal. The inguinal canal is found in the groin. In men, it's the area where the spermatic

cord passes from the abdomen to the scrotum. This cord holds up the testicles. In women, the inguinal canal contains a ligament that helps hold the uterus in place.

Hernias are caused by a combination of muscle weakness and strain. Depending on its cause, a hernia can develop quickly or over a long period of time.

Serious complications from a hernia can result from the trapping of tissues in the hernia — a process called incarceration. Trapped or incarcerated tissues may have their blood supply cut off, leading to damage or death of the tissue, which could result in a dangerous infection or even death.

The POEA contract governs the compensation and benefits for the

work-related injury or illness that a seafarer on board sea-going vessels may have suffered during the term of his employment contract.

The seafarer is required to prove that: (1) he suffered an injury or illness; (2) he suffered this injury during the term of his employment contract; (3) he complied with the procedures prescribed under Section 20-B; (4) his injury or illness is one of the enumerated occupational disease or that his illness or injury is otherwise work-related; and (5) he complied with the four conditions under the contract.

A seafarer's hernia will be compensable if all of the following conditions are met: (a) the hernia should be of recent origin; (b) its appearance was accompanied by

pain, discoloration and evidence of a tearing of the tissues; and (c) the injury was immediately preceded by undue or severe strain arising out of and in the course of employment; and (d) a protrusion of mass should appear in the area immediately following the alleged strain.

Since one of the requirements for an injury to be compensable is that the seafarer suffered said injury during the effectivity of the POEA contract, it is imperative that his condition or symptoms must be documented while he is on board the vessel. Otherwise, his claim for disability benefits might be denied due to failure to prove that said injury occurred while his contract is still in force.

A hernia may be the cause of

discomfort and pain, with symptoms often becoming worse when standing, straining, or lifting heavy items. Symptoms include a burning or aching sensation at the bulge, pain or discomfort in the groin. Occasionally, there will be pain and swelling around the testicles when the protruding intestine descends into the scrotum accompanied by nausea, vomiting, or fever.

It is not sufficient to simply establish that the seafarer's illness or injury has rendered him permanently or partially disabled; it must also be shown that there is a causal connection between the seafarer's illness or injury and the work for which he had been contracted. (Source: CDN by Atty. Dennis R. Gorecho)

USCG warns of cyber attacks on commercial vessels

The U.S. Coast Guard has issued a Marine Safety Bulletin warning that commercial vessels are being targeted by email phishing and malware intrusion attacks.

Cyber adversaries are attempting to gain sensitive information including the content of an official Notice of Arrival (NOA) using email addresses that pose as an official Port State Control (PSC) authority such as "port@

psc.gov.org."

The Coast Guard has also received reports of malicious software designed to disrupt ship-board computer systems. Vessel masters have diligently reported suspicious activity to the Coast Guard National Response Center (NRC) enabling the Coast Guard and other federal agencies to counter cyber threats across the global maritime network.

As a reminder, says the bulletin, suspicious activity and breaches of security must be reported to the NRC at (800) 424-8802. For cyber attempts/attacks that do not impact the operating condition of the vessel or result in a pollution incident, owners or operators may alternatively report to the 24/7 National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center

(NCCIC) at (888) 282-0870 in accordance with CG-5P Policy Letter 08-16, "Reporting Suspicious Activity and Breaches of Security." When reporting to the NCCIC, it is imperative that the reporting party notify the NCCIC that the vessel is a Coast Guard regulated entity in order to satisfy 33 CFR §101.305 reporting requirements. (Source: USCG)

New guidance for when seafarers are abandoned

The International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) has produced new guidance to assist welfare organisations when they are supporting seafarers who are abandoned or dealing with vessels that have been arrested or detained. The guidance on Arrested and Detained Vessels, and Abandoned Seafarers has been produced by ISWAN in partnership with the ITF, InterManager, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA).

Dave Heindel, chair of the ITF seafarers' section, said that: "It is crucial that assistance is provided as quickly as possible. We hope that this guidance will help concerned parties in providing this assistance as we work towards eliminating the scourge of abandonment."

Arrested and Detained Vessels, and Abandoned Seafarers can be downloaded at: <https://www.seafarerswelfare.org/assets/documents/resources/Arrested-and-Detained-Vessels-and-Abandoned-Seafarers.pdf> (Source: ITF Seafarers)

Wärtsilä offers world's first commercially available auto-docking system

The technology group Wärtsilä has taken a notable step towards realising the full commercial potential of autonomous vessels. Following the latest and most advanced testing of its SmartDock auto-docking system, which included giving industry representatives and customers first-hand experience as passengers onboard the test vessel, the company has secured the first order for the system. This makes SmartDock the world's first commercially available auto-docking solution.

By automating docking procedures, the Wärtsilä SmartDock system mitigates potential human errors resulting from ship officers having to perform these technical maneuvers many times a day. This is especially important on, for example, larger ferries that must enter and leave tight

docking spaces, where significant damage can be caused by forceful collisions with the dock walls. Efficiency and safety is, therefore, considerably increased.

The Captain can select the destination and with a simple click of the "sail" button, the SmartDock system takes over. The ship then leaves the dock, maneuvers out of the harbour, sails to the next port of call, maneuvers into the harbor and docks alongside the quay, all without human intervention.

"The SmartDock solution is the culmination of decades of extensive research and testing by Wärtsilä in automation technology. Our system draws on similar automation and positioning technology used by oil rig support vessels to maintain proximity to the rig in the toughest sea

environments. This gives us absolute confidence in SmartDock's ability to meet the urgent commercial need to provide the safest possible docking for commuter ferries," says Joonas Makkonen, Vice President, Voyage Solutions, Wärtsilä.

There is significant demand from customers: "The SmartDock solution offers improved safety and efficiency for existing vessels," says Jakob Steffensen, Head of innovation and technology, DFDS, a Danish international shipping and logistics company that attended Wärtsilä's demonstration of the product. "More importantly, it represents an important part of the solutions needed to power the next generation of vessels."

The successful sea trials were carried out on board the *Fol-*

gefonn, an 85-meter-long ferry owned by Norwegian operator Norled. The testing also included operating the automatic 180-degree rotational turn of the vessel, as well as Wärtsilä Guidance Marine's CyScan AS with GeoLock technology, a crucial cyber-security enhancing secondary position sensor, which enables the approach to the berth to continue even if the GPS signal is lost.

"We continue to be impressed with the Wärtsilä SmartDock system, which is unique in that it works hand-in-hand with the Captain to ensure the best performance on every docking, every day. It's the perfect collaboration between an experienced crew and technology," says Inge Andre Utåker, Regional director, Norled. (Source: Wärtsilä)

Sailors' Society petition raises awareness about depression, suicide at sea

More than 1,500 people from 75 countries have signed the petition by the maritime charity Sailors' Society's calling on wellness training to be made mandatory for seafarers under the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC).

The charity, which is based in Southampton, UK, started the petition as part of its Not On My

Watch campaign, with the aim of raising awareness about suicide and depression at sea.

Sandra Welch, Sailors' Society's deputy CEO, addressed the International Maritime Organization on April 30 about the campaign and the charity's Wellness at Sea work.

She said, "Not On My Watch

has really struck a chord with seafarers around the world and many have shared their experiences of mental health at sea with us.

"The fact that so many people have signed the petition so far in such a short space of time shows that there is a demand for mandatory wellness training under the MLC."

Reshma, one of the petition's signatories, wrote: "I've already lost two of my friends to suspected suicides that arose most probably because of depression. I'm not willing to lose anymore friends. Mental health has been in the back seat for too long. Enough is enough." (Source: Sailors' Society)

ALL JAPAN SEAMEN'S UNION
15-26, Roppongi 7-Chome,
Minato-Ku, Tokyo 106-0032

Tel.: (03) 5410-8320
Fax: (03) 5410-8336
E-mail: iss@jsu.jp
Internet: <http://www.jsu.or.jp>

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Send inquiries to the attention of
Mr. Hiroyuki Watanabe,
Director, Foreign Trades Dept.