



## Yaizu begins resident tax reduction

*Seafarers on ships outside Japan's EEZ 6 months or more may be eligible*

It has been eight months since Yaizu, Shizuoka Prefecture, a city known for thriving pelagic fishery, implemented a system for reducing the amount of resident tax payments that seafarers shoulder. Now the city has begun accepting applications for the system.

In April 2020, Yaizu City enacted the reduction of the resident tax paid by seafarers who work for a total period of six months or longer on board ships sailing to waters outside Japan's exclusive economic zone. The city thought at that time that it was important to secure crewmembers for local fishing boats and workers for the local fishing business.

Eligibility for the resident tax cut is for seafarers who are on duty on board ships for a total of six months or longer during the year from April 1 to March 31 of the following year. The following is a report on the application for the measure by Mr. Shinji Dobata, a second officer of Ichimaru Co., Ltd.

Mr. Dobata, the second officer of Ichimaru, works on board an oceangoing purse seine fishing boat operated to catch tuna and bonito. On Dec. 22, 2020, he visited Yaizu City's taxation department to complete paperwork for the tax abatement while he was off duty as his vessel had been docked.

Mr. Dobata learned from an article in a JSU newsletter that the reduction of resident tax had been introduced in Yaizu as well. Prior to calling at the city's taxation department, he had Ichimaru help him prepare the docu-



Mr. Shinji Dobata (left) submits an application for the resident tax reduction and Mr. Satoshi Ikemura (right), an official at the taxation department of Yaizu City Hall in charge of resident tax, serves him.

ments he needed to apply for the tax relief (i.e., an application for the resident tax reduction and a boarding certificate).

The second officer, Mr. Dobata submitted the documents to an official in charge at a window of the Yaizu tax department. "As your application documents have no problems, you are eligible for the tax reduction," said the official. "In your case, Mr. Dobata, resident tax is collected in a special way (under which the owner of the ship deducts resident tax from his salary and pays it).

"We will send to your residence a notice of the determination of tax reduction and a notice to your company that shows the reduced amount of resident tax imposed on you," the official added. He easily completed his paperwork in a short period of time.

### About Yaizu City's system for reducing resident tax payment amounts for seafarers

**Eligible parties:** Seafarers with mailing addresses in Yaizu City and work on board deep-sea fishing vessels and others that travel to areas outside Japan's exclusive economic zone (including oceangoing and training ships) for a total of six months (182 days) or longer.

**Commencement day:** The system applies to seafarers who are on duty on and after April 1, 2020. The total length of time for which they are on board ships must be calculated within the year from April 1 to March 31 of the following year.

**Amount of reduction:** The amount of resident tax that seafarers pay is lowered by 50% for the year in which they work on duty at sea for over six months.

**Document to submit:** An application form for the resident tax reduction (details are described in Yaizu City's website).

**How to apply:** In principle, seafarers must complete required formalities at Yaizu City's taxation department by themselves. However, family members and those who are responsible for paying resident tax for seafarers in a special way (i.e. those who pay salaries to them) can submit applications on behalf of seafarers.

### Comments made by Mr. Shinji Dobata after completing formalities

I was able to complete the formalities, because I learned from

a JSU newsletter that Yaizu City had also begun lowering resident tax for seafarers. As I had wanted to complete them during these days off, I had my company prepare the set of documents that I needed to submit to apply for the system (i.e., an application form for the resident tax reduction and a boarding certificate) and went to Yaizu City Hall with them. I had nothing to worry about.

The taxation department, the window at which applications are accepted for the resident tax reduction, was located across a hallway from the one for the mariner's pocket ledger. First, I said at the window that I would like to have a reduction in my resident tax and presented the documents to an official in charge. When I waited for five minutes, an announcement was made at the window. "As your application documents have no problems, you are eligible for the tax reduction," said the official. "In case of you, Mr. Dobata,

am grateful to Yaizu City and the JSU. I hope the union will continue to work on policy matters, enlarging the scale of reductions, encouraging other municipalities to follow suit and so on to secure seafarers successors.

### Comments by Yaizu Mayor Hiromichi Nakano

Yaizu City has three ports—Yaizu, Kogawa and Oigawa. The local fishing business is one of the greatest in Japan in both volume and value of catches. It contributes to the development of Yaizu City together with the relevant marine product processing and manufacturing industries. The Port of Yaizu is also well-known as a base for pelagic fishing.

Needless to say, many Yaizu residents work on vessels operated for such activities. They work very hard in the distant sea to catch the fish that are served on our dining tables. They, however, cannot en-



Yaizu Mayor Hiromichi Nakano (second from right) encourages seafarers at a ceremony for the departure of an oceangoing purse seine fishing boat.

resident tax is collected in a special way (under which the owner of his ship deducts resident tax from his salary and pays it)." "We will send to your residence a notice of the determination of tax reduction and a notice to your company that shows the reduced amount of resident tax imposed on you," the official added. Then, my tax reduction formalities were completed.

As they were completed in such a short period of time, I thought I could complete them when I was at the Port of Yaizu on other occasions, not while I was off duty.

For the system to lower resident tax for seafarers to be launched, I

joy administrative services for residents at all, as they are at sea for a long period of time. As for per-capita resident tax, which we ask residents to shoulder to receive administrative services, as such, we decided to cut in half for those who work in pelagic zones for six months of the year or longer.

I would be very happy if this system would be an encouragement to seafarers and inspire students at Yaizu Fisheries High School and Fisheries Vocational High School—both of which are located in Yaizu City—to go into the fisheries business, making the best of what they learned.



Port of Yaizu

# Freight rates spike as Asian cargo ships jam WC ports

An influx of imports from Asia to the U.S. has created a bottleneck at West Coast ports, with backed up cargo ships contributing to a worldwide shortage of containers and soaring shipping rates.

The volume of containers handled at the California ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which serve as gateways for goods from Asia, grew 45% in February compared with a year earlier, climbing for an eighth consecutive month. In March, container volume at the port of Los Angeles apparently surged by more than 80%.

With the ports overstretched in their processing capacity, dozens

of container ships wait offshore. The two ports handle 40% of U.S. maritime cargo, but have been unable to keep up with the swelling imports as American consumers look to spend their stimulus checks.

Booming consumer spending in the U.S. has prompted freight imports to climb at an unprecedented pace, according to Gene Seroka, the LA port's executive director.

To complicate matters, the spread of COVID-19 among port workers has undercut the capacity to process the cargo. About 800 workers at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, or over 5% of the total staff, were infected with

the virus in February and March, local media have reported.

The traffic jam of container ships along the West Coast is exacerbating a shortage of containers and a corresponding rise in shipping fees.

In late March, for example, the cost to haul cargo from China to the West Coast stood north of \$5,000 per 40-foot container, according to Hong Kong market intelligence firm Freightos.

The asking price soared 250% from a year ago against the backdrop of the container shortage. The cost to ship freight from Europe to the West Coast roughly doubled.

Meanwhile, the backup of ships

in California is affecting corporate earnings. Nike, headquartered in the U.S. state of Oregon, faces shipment delays stretching three weeks or more for its apparel from Asia.

For the third quarter ended February, Nike's global revenue expanded 3% from a year earlier, but its top-line number for North America slid 10% due to disruptions in product supplies.

In China, which implemented measures to manage the coronavirus outbreak sooner than other countries, factory production resumed relatively quickly. During this year's Lunar New Year holiday in February, state directives restricted travel to control

the spread of the virus. Legions of migrant workers decided not to return home to visit, meaning factories that would normally be idled during the holiday stayed up and running.

To combat the current supply-chain challenges, some companies have switched to air transport, which costs eight to 10 times more than marine shipping, said Jon Gold, vice president of supply chain and customs policy at the National Retail Federation, based in Washington.

Gold predicts the extra expenses will be passed on to product prices. If that is the case, consumer spending can be expected to take a hit. (Source: Nikkei)

## No jab-no job threat could provoke next crew crisis

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has warned that lack of access to vaccinations for seafarers is placing shipping in a 'legal minefield', while leaving global supply chains vulnerable.

A legal document due to be circulated to the global shipping community later this week by ICS highlights concerns that vaccinations could soon become a compulsory requirement for work at sea because of reports that some states are insisting all crew be vaccinated as a pre-condition of entering their ports.

However, reports estimate that developing nations will not achieve mass immunisation until 2024, with some 90% of people in 67 low-income countries standing little chance of vaccination in 2021. ICS calculates that 900,000 of the world's seafarers – well over half the global workforce – are from developing nations.

This is creating problems for shipowners, who may be forced to cancel voyages if crewmembers are not vaccinated. They would risk legal, financial and reputational damage by sailing with unvaccinated crews, who could be

denied entry to ports.

Delays into ports caused by unvaccinated crew would open up legal liabilities and costs for owners, which would not be recoverable from charterers. Furthermore, while owners would be able to address the need for seafarer vaccines in new contracts, owners attempting to change existing contracts or asking crew to receive a specific vaccine requested by a port could open themselves up to legal liabilities.

The uncertainty comes at a crucial moment in the ongoing role of shipping in the global supply chain during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The ICS reckons shipping will overtake aviation in the race to deliver vaccines around the world in the second half of 2021, in a distribution drive that is estimated to take four years. Shipping is also a vital method of transportation for accompanying personal protective equipment (PPE), whose estimated total volume will be six to seven times that of the vaccine and refrigeration systems.

Seafarers are among the most internationalised workers in the

world, crossing international borders multiple times during a contracted period, with up to 30 nationalities onboard at any one time. ICS's legal document noted that it is likely that a Covid-19 vaccination will be required by most if not all states and therefore it would reasonably be considered to be a "necessary" vaccination.

ICS secretary-general Guy Platten said: "Shipping companies are in an impossible position. They are stuck between a rock and a hard place, with little or no access to vaccines for their workforce, particularly from developing countries. We're already seeing reports of states requiring proof of Covid-19 vaccination for seafarers. If our workers can't pass through international borders, this will undoubtedly cause delays and disruptions in the supply chain. For a sector expected to help drive the global vaccination effort, this is totally unacceptable."

Bud Darr, executive vice president, maritime policy and government affairs at MSC Group, voiced concern that the lack of vaccinations could become an obstacle to the free movement of

seafarers this year.

"The shipping industry needs to find creative solutions to the problem. In the short term this means getting seafarers vaccinations in their countries where there are established programmes and sufficient supplies of vaccines. In the long term it's about exploring the idea of public-private partnerships. There may even be the opportunity, when the initial surge of need is met for national allocation, for manufacturers to provide vaccinations directly to shipowners to allocate/administer to these key workers," Darr suggested.

The ICS is currently exploring all avenues to find a solution. This includes the implementation of vaccination hubs across key international ports, as suggested by the Cypriot government. If a solution to provide direct access of vaccines to seafarers is not found, shipowners fear a return to the crew change crisis of 2020 that saw 400,000 seafarers stranded onboard ships across the world due to travel restrictions and international lockdowns. (Source: SPLASH)

## ICMM updates guidance on transport of ore, concentrates

The International Council on Mining and Metals has published updated guidance which will support the mining and shipping industries to minimise the risk of accidents in maritime transportation by outlining the techniques required for accurate hazard assessment of ores and concentrates.

The Hazard Assessment of Ores and Concentrates for Marine Transport: Guidance 2021 brings the previous guidance issued in 2014 in line with recent regulatory updates from the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and advancements in knowledge in assessing hazards.

Through ICMM's Mining Principles, members commit to implement effective risk-management strategies and systems based on sound science to ensure products can be used and transported safely. Carrying out an accurate hazard assessment is a critical element of this, and the provisions set out in this guidance, will support members to ship and transport vital ores and concentrates safely.

Sarah Bell, Director of Product Stewardship at ICMM, said: "The safe production and transport of minerals is central to ICMM's commitment to a safe, fair and sustainable mining and metals industry. This is therefore a critical piece of work in helping to support ICMM members and the wider industry as they think about their hazard assessment processes. Regulation in maritime transportation has come on a long way since the guidance was first published, and it is vital to reflect this to reduce the risk of accidents and protect people and planet." (Source: ICMM)

## Concerns in crew change rise over new COVID-variants

Shipping is concerned that the numbers of seafarers being impacted by the crew change crisis are on the rise due to travel restrictions imposed by governments in response to new variants.

The latest collective industry analysis shows that 200,000 seafarers are currently affected by the crew change crisis, a marked reduction from the height of crisis where 400,000 needed to be repatriated.

However, with governments reintroducing stricter border control and travel restrictions due to new COVID-19 variants making it harder for crew to transfer to and from ships.

So far, only 55 countries and two associate members of the IMO have declared seafarers as keyworkers and more work must be done to ensure crew do not once again become collateral damage in the pandemic. In a landmark ruling in December 2020, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) found that governments have failed to protect seafarers' rights as set out in international law under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. The UN agency called on states to recognise seafarers as key workers "without delay".

Concerns about prioritisation for vaccination for seafarers must

also be addressed. Vaccine passports being considered by some States pose a potential barrier to crew change as seafarers from developing nations are unlikely to have an opportunity to receive vaccines until July at the earliest.

"The crew change crisis is not resolved but has reached a situation where it has been more manageable. However, there is great concern over the increased travel restrictions being imposed by governments in response to new variants. Seafarers must be designated as keyworkers. The crisis is still ongoing, and we will not let up our efforts. Governments will not be able to vaccinate

their citizens without the shipping industry or, most importantly, our seafarers," said Guy Platten, Secretary General ICS.

"The stark reality is that only a few handfuls of countries have treated seafarers with the respect they deserve by designating them real key worker status. Unless government's move from the protectionist positions that they've been in for over 12 months now, and allow seafarers genuine free movement and prioritization for vaccinations sadly the situation could easily spiral out of control yet again," said Stephen Cotton, ITF General Secretary. (Source: ITF)

## VOICES from SEAFARERS

**Officers & Crew of MV CETUS LEADER**

We hope and pray this covid-19 would be banished into an end. Our short list of wishes is roaming around safely and not to be infected by any contagious diseases. Greetings to everybody and be always safe.

**Signing Off Crew of MV IGNAZIO**

At the midst of the ongoing pandemic, we had reached the point of signing off. After several months of observing and following strict health protocols of every port, we were allowed and arranged by our company to sign off. Thanks to your hesitations and we wished each in everyone safety.

**Officers & Crew of MV CAPE GREEN**

Surviving the stream of the corona virus requires every man's teamwork and cooperation. Team Cape Green is always on the alert in every port of calls to prevent the spread of the virus. To our valued families and friends, please observe safety precautions at all times.

**Officers & Crew of MV RISING HIMEJI**

Good things happen to a team when every player takes the role in maximizing their strength, talent and skills. Our team, Rising Himeji is always ready to serve you and the whole world. Take care everyone!

**Officers & Crew of MV PRAIRIE**

We urge every seafarer's family to stay safe and healthy as we do the same things possible on board. At this surge of the covid-19, please avoid an enclosed space and maintain your surroundings clean as your extensive safety and hygiene.

**Some Crewmembers of MV GAIA LEADER**

Boosting our immune system with exercise through sport has a great deal in preventing infection from corona virus. It is one of our wish for everybody to be healthy and to stay safe away from the current pandemic.

## Seafarers' vaccinations need to be prioritized, UN says

COVID-19 vaccinations of seafarers must be prioritized amid concerns that lack of inoculation for vessel crews could leave the global supply chains vulnerable, five top UN bodies agree.

The World Health Organization, International Labor Organization, International Maritime Organisation, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) issued a joint statement last week urging all United Nations Member States to prioritize seafarers and aircrew in their national COVID-19 vaccination programs.

The UN bodies' joint statement also recognized the need for an interoperable global system of COVID certificates to allow seafarers to continue to cross borders on a day-to-day basis.

The move comes on the heels of warnings made by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) on vaccinations becoming a compulsory requirement for work at sea with some states insisting all crew be vaccinated as a pre-condition of entering their ports.

However, reports estimate that developing nations will not achieve

mass immunization until 2024, with some 90% of people in 67 low-income countries standing little chance of vaccination in 2021.

Some 900,000 of the world's seafarers, well over half the global workforce, are from developing nations.

ICS said that was creating a "perfect storm" for shipowners, who may be forced to cancel voyages if crew members are not vaccinated.

"Shipowners would risk legal, financial and reputational damage by sailing with unvaccinated crews, who could be denied entry to ports," ICS said.

"Delays into ports caused by unvaccinated crew would open up legal liabilities and costs for owners, which would not be recoverable from charterers."

Furthermore, while owners would be able to address the need for seafarer vaccines in new contracts, owners attempting to change existing contracts or asking crew to receive a specific vaccine requested by a port could open themselves up to legal liabilities.

The uncertainty comes at a crucial moment in the ongoing role of shipping in the global supply chain

during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has already caused a major crisis for seafarers.

As widely reported, over 400,000 seafarers around the world were stuck at sea awaiting repatriations months beyond their contracts amid inability to sign off due to travel restrictions.

This number has declined from around 400,000 in September 2020 to around 200,000 as of March 2021, with a similar number waiting to join ships. However, the crew change crisis is far from over. (Source: *World Maritime News*, by Jasmina Ovcina)

## Surge in zero emission pilots, projects up 38% over 6 mos

The number of zero emission pilots and demonstration projects for the maritime industry now totals 106, up 38% over six months. And according to mapping produced by the Getting to Zero Coalition, there is a marked increase on hydrogen-based fuels in those projects.

Project directors and authors see the uptake of pilot and demonstra-

tion projects as a vital step in pushing forward the transition to zero emission fuels for the maritime industry.

The 106 projects included in the Mapping of Zero Emission Pilots and Demonstration Projects March 2021 study cover the full value chain, focusing on the different elements needed to facilitate shipping's transition to zero

emission fuels, including projects related to ship technologies, fuel production and bunkering/re-charging.

"Overall, the mapping demonstrates that significant work is underway on several different fuels, with no clear preference shown for a single fuel across the mapping," say the authors. However, it is possible to see some trends emerging

with regard to fuel production, small ship technology and large ship technology projects.

The latest mapping report reveals that there has been an increase in large ship projects focusing on ammonia, methanol/ethanol and hydrogen since the previous August 2020 report, with a slight reduction in the share of projects focusing on battery power, biofuels and

wind propulsion.

However, the most significant trend with newer large ship technology projects is the uptake of large ammonia vessels.

There has also been a rise in methanol/ethanol projects, with some large methanol tanker vessels now being built to run on methanol in addition to transporting it. (Source: *Baltic Briefing*)

# Reassessing seafarers' isolation in the era of COVID

Isolation has always been an aspect of life at sea and one of the main arguments for all those refraining from a potential seafaring career. What are the main drivers of this isolation and how has this been redefined in the era of COVID-19?

While there are many great things about a career at sea—good wages, meeting different people, places, and cultures—, one of the not so hot issues is having to cope with spending long periods away from home, family and friends. In the worst of the cases, seafarers, who are away for months, may miss some part of their children growing up.

And although being a seafarer is all about being away from home, there are specific times of the year, which are double harsh to spend away from loved ones, such as the Christmas holidays, New Year's, Thanksgiving or birthdays.

In the meantime, increased workload, fatigue, work stress, as well as lack of interaction and bonding among crew members are all factors which may add to the mental pressure and feeling of loneliness.

## What are the main factors of seafarers' isolation?

- **Poor connectivity:** Poor communication with loved ones was the most regularly seen complaint from seafarers during SAFETY4SEA Crew Wellness Survey, which took place in late 2019, reflecting feedback from over 9,000 crew members worldwide. While everything around us becomes connected and Internet is a crucial part of our everyday lives, it is not a given for crews plying the world seas, due to the low bandwidth which requires more investment in equipment.

- **Lack of teambonding:** The more crew members lack friendship and interaction, the more they feel alone, homesick and depressed, with long-term consequences for emotional well-being. On the one hand, there are concerns that many crew tend to retreat behind closed cabin doors, which results in too little social cohesion onboard. On the other hand, this may occur because they lack opportunities for a fun and engaging social activity they can share with their mates. This is where the responsibility of the shipowner enters the game. Needless to mention, recreational

activities and inadequate social interaction onboard was the second most common area of concern as highlighted by the same SAFETY4SEA survey.

## Seafarers' isolation in the years of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the concepts of socialization and isolation under new perspective for every single one of us. From isolation as a potentially adverse consequence of their job, to isolation as a mandatory requirement, seafarers now have bigger stress to handle, as now their one and only get-out is an efficient Internet connection.

And notwithstanding the fact that about 400,000 crew members remain onboard far more than expected due to pandemic restrictions and have to perform social distancing also with their mates, the issue of isolation has to be in the spotlight of seafarers' mental health examination in the post-COVID-19 era, as only a part of the huge impact of the pandemic on the maritime industry for the foreseeable future.

How can I ease the loneliness onboard?

- **Keep some traditions:** It is not always practical while onboard, but maintaining some of the habits and traditions of your family can provide some level of comfort without realizing it. For example, if you are Filipino and it is Christmas, do not neglect to decorate your parol or make your noise in Media Noche. This is an interesting way of exchanging cultural knowledge with other crew members and get to know each other better.

- **Talk as much as possible to your loved ones:** If you find good connection, do not miss the opportunity to call your friend, husband, wife, parent and kid, or simply send them a message/photo or a video card.

- **Surround yourself with pictures of family and friends:** We may live in the digital era, but printing some photos to decorate the space above your bed will provide you with warmer feelings and bring your loved ones a little bit nearer.

- **Take care of your physical health:** This is a 'passpartout' tip for maintaining some level of wellness while onboard. When we are tired, a small problem feels like the end of the world; this proves the

great impact of body to mind. So take care of yourself! Eat well, sleep in regular hours and keep some basic exercise and the feelings of depression will be softened.

- **Talk to your mates:** When at sea, the people you have around you are your companions; choose some of them to discuss and share your problems with. If you feel lonely, reach out to others, do something together. This can give anyone a sense of time out and can be a good distraction.

A seaman's life is a balance between the shore and the sea. Several gray zones regarding seafarers' wellness are related to their social life, be it the poor communication with their people who stay back due to the nature of their job or the socialization with their mates due to limited opportunities for interaction and quality time onboard.

While it could be suggested that isolation is a price for a sacred function they provide to the world, a heavier investment on internet connection represents a 'quick win' for shipping companies who want to be at the front of their crews' wellness and provide access to the internet as a basic right, rather than a luxury. (Source: SAFETY4SEA)

## Intercargo warns on vaccination 'lottery' facing seafarers

International dry bulk shipping organization Intercargo has lashed out at the vaccination "lottery" facing seafarers, something that could hit the sector hard.

"Once again seafarers are falling victim to the lack of focus and joined up thinking from leaders of governments and the maritime industry, which has become apparent during the current ongoing crew change crisis," Intercargo warned in a release yesterday.

Some port states are insisting seafarers use a particular brand of vaccine

Not only are vaccine passports looking like a necessity for seafarers, even specific brands of doses are being demanded, something Intercargo worries could lead to a breakdown in commodity deliveries around the world if strictly

enforced.

"We are seeing a number of port states suggesting that all crew onboard a vessel must be vaccinated as a pre-condition of entering their ports, and indeed insisting on a particular brand of vaccine. This is of course a very serious problem for the industry as a whole, when we consider the high proportion of seafarers that come from developing countries with no access to any vaccine at all," said Dimitris Fafalios, chairman of Intercargo.

The dry bulk sector is especially at risk from these new restrictions, the Intercargo boss pointed out. Fafalios also heads up his own eponymous shipping company in Greece.

"Bulk carriers on tramp trading call at many more ports than oth-

er shipping sectors and are at the mercy of the nationalised vaccination policy, applying at the port of call," Fafalios said.

Intercargo is calling for a coordinated worldwide vaccination programme for seafarers led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and to make WHO-approved vaccinations available to seafarers in their home country as an urgent priority.

A joint statement signed by the heads of five United Nations bodies last Friday called for seafarers to be prioritised for COVID-19 vaccinations. The World Health Organization, International Labor Organization, International Maritime Organization and other UN bodies are urging all member states to prioritize seafarers and aircrew in their na-

tional COVID-19 vaccination programs.

The UN bodies' joint statement also recognized the need for an interoperable global system of COVID certificates to allow seafarers to continue to cross borders on a day-to-day basis.

Intercargo is participating in a joint industry vaccination taskforce, led by the International Chamber of Shipping, aimed at providing clear solutions and practical guidance in the increasingly complex situation the global rollout of coronavirus vaccinations presents. The group has produced guidance on the legal, liability and insurance issues arising from the vaccination of seafarers and is also working on developing a preliminary list of vaccination hub ports. (Source: SPLASH)

## Record year for bulk ship sales

The ownership of dry bulk ships has changed hands at blistering speed in the first three months of 2021. The course is now set for a record year in the bulk ship sale and purchase market.

A total of 794 ships were bought and sold in 2020, with the smaller sectors of Handysize and Supramax being most popular. Not even three months into 2021, 279 dry bulk ships have been traded, with Panamax bulkers being the most popular single ship size and accounting for 82 of the trades. However, the number of Panamax sales comes second to the number of sales of Handymax, Supramax and Ultramax ships when these are put together. (Source: Peter Sand, BIMCO)

## One year on: Seafarer crisis 'far from over' with too little being done

On the anniversary of the first coronavirus lockdown, global ship management company V.Group is highlighting that too little has been done to end the seafarer crisis.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the global coronavirus outbreak a pandemic and more than 100 countries had imposed a full or partial lockdown by the end of March. Governments across the globe banned crew from coming ashore amid CO-

VID-19 fears.

Despite calls from the shipping industry to designate seafarers as key workers and allow crew changes, a year on, only 57 IMO member and associate member states out of 174 have acted. As a result, there are still more than 400,000 seafarers stranded at sea. Bjoern Spotte, CEO of ship management at V.Group, said:

"As the world prepares to come out of lockdown, seafarers are playing an essential role in transporting vaccines, PPE and medi-

cal supplies. The fact that we are not vaccinating those who are transporting the vaccine is an outrage.

"From the start of the pandemic we have called for seafarers to be given international keyworker status to allow crew changes, but we still have a long way to go. We have a situation where, a year on, less than a third of countries designate our seafarers' keyworkers. Governments must act cohesively to end this stalemate and give seafarers the recognition they

deserve."

V.Group recently joined 750 companies and organisations in signing the Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change which calls for recognition of seafarers as key workers and priority access to Covid-19 vaccines.

V.Group operates out of 60 international offices and employs more than 3,000 people ashore and over 44,000 personnel in marine and offshore roles. (Source: V.Group)

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>

Publisher: Mitsuharu Matsuura

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