



JSU meets with South Korean counterparts

Separate meetings with FKSU, KSSU address inspection campaign co-op and training programs, respectively

On May 12, the 12th JSU-FKSU Summit Meeting and JSU-KSSU staff meeting convened on Cheju Island, South Korea.

The All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) was represented by a delegation of five, led by President Yoji Fujisawa. The Federation of Korean Seafarers' Unions (FKSU) and the Korean Special Seafarers' Unions (KSSU) comprised of a party of 11, which included FKSU President Bang Dong-Sig.

During the JSU-FKSU Summit Meeting, information was exchanged regarding the enhancement of cooperation among seamen's unions in Asia and vessels to be inspected when the FOC and POC campaigns are carried out.

Discussions were also held on a wide variety of subjects, including measures to support to new education and training programs for Asian seafarers and measures to

prevent mackerel pike (saury) fishing by Taiwanese fishermen.

JSU to also indirectly support new seamen facility plan at Busan port

During the JSU-KSSU staff meeting, it was confirmed that Japan and South Korea would continue to help each other in the FOC and POC campaigns, and that

the Maru-ship Agreement, applied to two cruise ships operating between Hakata and Busan, would be revised partially.

It was also agreed that the JSU would indirectly support the plan for developing a new seamen facility at the Port of Busan and invite six KSSU trainees to promote interchange between the two countries, hopefully in autumn of this year.

Among the FOC ships

operated by Kotoku Kaiun Co. Ltd. and other Japanese companies, there are large numbers of chemical tankers and containerships that do not cater to Japan.

Thus, when these vessels call South Korean ports, the country should require them to comply with the ITF Agreement, the JSU suggested.

FKSU and KSSU presidents, both of whom had just assumed their respective posts, attended the meetings for the first time.

JSU staff join May Day rally in Tokyo

The Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO) convened its 79th May Day general assembly at Yoyogi Park in Tokyo at 11:00 a.m. on April 26.

Some 45,000 individuals attended the assembly, with guests including Health, Labor, and Welfare Minister Yoichi Masuzoe and President Ichiro Ozawa of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).

A party of 77, including members of the Central Executive Board Committee, other executives, and their family members, represented the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU).

The assembly started with the RENGO choir singing May Day songs, followed by an opening declaration.

It was this year's main slogan that all workers should cooperate with each other in working on peace, human rights, labor, the environment, and coexistence for a better world, while the sub slogan was to bridge the widening socio-economic gap in society.

"During the spring wage negotiations, many small and midsize enterprise workers and partners won wage hikes, as they had not increased for a year," Rengo President Tsuyoshi Takagi said.

"The target of improving consumer spending, however, was not achieved."

Expressing strong concern over the widening of the socio-economic gap in society, "the largest challenge to overcome to correct this is the issue of irregular employment," he said. Takagi called on the attendees to help assist in this area.

He also commented also on the current Diet structure – that is, the ruling camp maintaining a majority in the House of Representatives while the opposition camp prevails in the House of Councilors.

RENGO was against the decision made by the lower house regarding gasoline bills, temporary tax rates, and on a special law for road construction, he added.

Regarding the medical system for



JSU staff joined the May Day rally together with other unions affiliated with RENGO (Japanese Trade Union Confederation) at Yoyogi Park in Tokyo on April 26.

elderly citizens of 75 years old or higher, he suggested that it be revised drastically, and even called for its abolition.

During the meeting, RENGO, NGOs, and NPOs adopted a joint message, claiming that they would work hand in hand to realize a society in which members could maximize their abilities.

A May Day declaration was also adopted, consisting of several key points: the hope of transferring power when the next lower house general election is held; realizing an everlasting world peace; rescuing victims from human-rights violations; and bridging the socio-economic gap in society.

After a special resolution was made to call for the abolition of the resur-

rected gasoline and other temporary tax rates, the medical system for elderly citizens of 75 years old and higher, as well as resolutions to be made on the pension record issue, the meeting was concluded with all participants indicating that they would do their best to help one another.

In the afternoon, RENGO held an event for the first time for workers of irregular employment at the Yoyogi Park's open-air stage.

Proclaiming that companies should not simply employ workers for the short-term and dispose them when contracts expire, Takagi had a talk session with writer Karin Amamiya and others, while the Newspaper, a group of comedians, performed to liven up the event.

IGA concludes ITF-JSU agreement

**Welcome,
IGA crewmembers!**

My cellular phone rang in the early morning of April 5, 2008 Japan time, as Stephen, a friend of mine, called from Long Beach, Calif.

"I am onboard IGA now," he said. "Wages are so low that they are even below ITF standards; please tell the Japanese shipowners that we are staging a protest."

The call woke me up, but as it was 4 a.m. on a Saturday, there was no way that I could contact anyone.

"You can take your time contacting [the company]," he continued. "In the meantime, we will be actively protesting."

Later in the morning, I was able to talk to the company in question, but it said that it had not yet decided to comply with the ITF agreement, and that more time was necessary.

I told the company that I would not mind waiting, but that I did not like to waste time.

Six hours later, during which I had countless cups of coffee, a decision had still not been made.

When it was close to early evening, the company agreed to sign the ITF-JSU agreement and pay wages according to the agreement retroactively from when crewmembers began to work onboard the vessels.

Although it was already

IGA, See Page 4

Foreign crewmen jumping ship off Japan

Thirteen foreign crewmen of Japanese coastal tuna boats have run away over the past six months, bringing the total number of missing foreign fishermen to 127 since 2003, according to transport ministry officials.

The 13 crewmen are Indonesians who came to Japan under the "Maru Ship" system, which was introduced in 2003 to allow foreigners to

work aboard Japanese fishing boats. It was done to cover the acute shortage of labor in the nation's fishing industry and to enhance its competitiveness.

The Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Ministry has found that the 13 crewmen ran away from ports at Shiogama in Miyagi Prefecture, Nachikatsuura in Wakayama Prefecture and

Choshi in Chiba Prefecture between late October and April, according to the officials.

Most of the 127 are believed to have come to Japan to secure other jobs by taking advantage of the easy procedures to work on boats under the system. Some were found doing agricultural work in Ibaraki and other prefectures.

Since a series of cases involving missing foreign

fishermen was made public in October, a national association of coastal bonito and tuna fishing operators has taken steps to prevent further incidents, including stepping up foot patrols at ports. However, their efforts have proved ineffective, partly because of brokers who arrange jobs for illegal workers. *(Source: Japan Times-Kyodo)*

Benefits for victims of illegal recruitment

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)'s Rosalinda Baldoz is encouraging the victims of illegal recruitment to make use of the POEA's incentive program in filing cases against their recruiters. She has observed that most illegal recruitment cases do not prosper in courts due to desistance of the complainants.

Baldoz said many illegal recruitment cases are dismissed due to complainants' disinterest to pursue the case or their inability to pay the required docket fees. Most often, after filing the cases, victims will not continue with court proceedings, accepting measly sums of settlement money instead.

The POEA's incentive program hopes to perk complainants' interest in illegal recruitment cases by providing assistance to victims and witnesses through the payment of docket fees and other court-related expenses. As a bonus, victims and witnesses utilizing the program shall be given priority for overseas employment at no cost, Baldoz said.

"It is very disappointing to see illegal recruitment cases we have helped build up being dismissed and archived because the complainants lost interest or accepted settlement money to drop the case," said Baldoz.

She cited a case filed in Manila which was already in the pre-trial stage when one of the accused offered the complainant PHP70,000 as settlement money. *(Source: POEA)*

India implements unsafe manning regulation

India's shipping regulator has temporarily relaxed the staffing, or so-called manning requirements, for bulk carriers from four officers to three in an attempt to help the industry tackle a shortage of officers.

The relaxation in manning requirements will apply to the so-called deck-side of Indian registered bulk carriers and not to the engineering side.

The country has around 1,000 officers less than necessary, according to industry estimates.

The new rules will be tried out for six months.

The move by the Directorate General of Shipping, or DGS, will apply to the so-called deck-side (or management function) of Indian registered bulk carriers, with a cargo carrying capacity of less than 30,000 tons. Under the new manning requirements, such ships will now have one master, one chief officer and a second officer. The requirement for a third officer has been scrapped. On the engineering side, the existing manning requirements of four officers will continue.

Apart from helping them tackle a shortage of officers, the move will also help shipping companies save around \$5,000 a month in terms of the salary paid to an officer.

And because shipping firms that operate more than one ship need to keep a certain number of reserve officers on their rolls (this number, too, comes down proportionately), they can look forward to more savings.

DGS has said the reduction is applicable for both the domestic and international movements of dry bulk carriers. "The rate of accidents and general efficiency of adherence to nautical and safety certification requirements will be studied during this period to decide if the dispensation should be extended or made into a national regulation and revised safe manning documents should be issued, or should be withdrawn," DGS said in its order.

Manning group calls for MTC abolition

Maritime Training Council under fire for creating confusion

The Maritime Training Council (MTC) has gotten its hands full after several former captains and an association of manning agencies expressed support on the Department of Transportation and Communications plans of either paring down or abolishing the Maritime Training Council's control over seafarer handling.

In a letter sent to President Arroyo, the group, led by the Philippine Maritime Institute Alumni Association and the Conference of Maritime Manning Agencies, stated that the MTC should only coordinate policies among its members. It said, "This proposal will avoid confusion in seafarer certification process and provide a netter system of accountability."

The group added, "We are concerned that MTC and its sub-office, the National

Assessment Center, complicate the certification process of our ship officers and deprive them of hassle-free employment," they said. "We find MTC as the central generator of confusing directives that led to overlapping, if not encroaching, of functions among council members."

The group cited the Maritime Industry Authority as the proper office to perform the central authority in certification. The MTC was created on May 1, 1984 by the order of former president Ferdinand E. Marcos and was mainly concerned with implementing the International Maritime Organization's Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers.

The Labor Secretary as chairman and the heads of the Commission also leads on Higher Education,

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, OWWA, Marina, Professional Regulation Commission, Philippine Coast Guard, and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Late last February, DOTC Undersecretary Maria Elena H. Bautista proposed before the Department of Labor and Employment the abolishment of the MTC, which mainly accredits hundreds of training centers for seafarers in the Philippines. She added that it should be Marina acting as the central maritime administrator.

However, the DOLE has rejected the DOTC initiatives stating that the Labor department is recognized globally as the lead agency in regulating the placements of all overseas Filipino workers including seafarers. *(Source: Balitang Marino)*

Top RP maritime school chooses quality over quantity

Ten years after its founding, the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) has maintained its mission and vision of accepting only top quality students for enrollment in the country's premiere maritime school after passing a tough entrance examination. "We cannot exchange quality for quantity," said MAAP chairman Eduardo Ma. R. Santos, a retired vice admiral and flag officer in command of the Philippine Navy.

Enrolling at MAAP for a five-year course either as a deck officer or marine engineer is difficult because the maritime school only accepts 200 new students a year from among the thousands of students who take the tough entrance test. Santos cited as example in 2001 wherein a total of 4,591 students applied for MAAP admission but only 173 were selected for training.

"Our principals (international shipping lines) need

54 more students, but we told them that we can only accept 200 students," Santos said.

For school year 2008-2009, MAAP plans to increase the number of applicants to 10,000 by adding more testing centers all over the country but they will still select

stick to its principle of producing only topnotch graduates.

He said it is not a practical decision to increase the number of students as they only have sufficient facilities and instructors for 200 candidates.

Santos said they would

In 2001...of a total of 4,591 students [who] applied for MAAP admission, only 173 were selected for training.

only 200 students for training. The entrance examination is so tough that it is practically a survival of the fittest.

When asked if they are planning to increase the number of cadets to be accepted due to the rising demand of international maritime companies for qualified deck officers and marine engineers, Santos insisted that MAAP would

never sacrifice quality in the training of maritime cadets because MAAP prides itself as "the leading institution of excellence in maritime education and training in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond." MAAP is also committed "for the development of competent seafarers who shall possess the character, knowledge, and skills necessary for the successful pursuit of a maritime career," he

added.

He pointed out that it would be much better for MAAP to produce few but top caliber graduates than a training center that produces more but fails to meet international maritime standards.

The MAAP chair added that the 200 who managed to pass are the "best and the brightest out of the thousands who applied."

MAAP is one of the maritime institutions that house their students in dormitories at their sprawling 18-hectare complex in Mariveles, Bataan some 150 kilometers north of Manila.

The Associated Marine Officers and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMO-SUP), which has a 75,000 membership, operate it. Students accepted for MAAP training have only two weeks vacation a year because of their lengthy and rigorous training. *(Source: Balitang Marino)*

Beware of pain relievers: NSAID complications

By William Mambalo
JSU ISS

Almost everyone is familiar with pain relief formulas. Known as “Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs” (NSAIDs), a few commonly known names include Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin as well as prescription products like Celebrex, Vioxx, Daypro and more.

Here's something you might not know about common pain relief...

Thousands of people are hospitalized annually for non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)-related gastrointestinal (GI) complications and also thousands of NSAID-related deaths occur each year among arthritis patients alone. The figures of all NSAID users would be overwhelming, yet

the scope of this problem is generally under-appreciated.

These toxic effects remain mainly a “silent epidemic,” with many physicians and most patients unaware of the magnitude of the problem.

It is important to note that most people have no warning signs that these drugs are causing internal damage before they end up in the hospital in serious condition.

A Related Story: On May 15, 2008, the three International Service Staff from JSU Kanto Regional Branch visited the PCC vessel Grand Race berthed in Daikoku, Yokohama Port.

An expected routine meeting with the crew turned out to be an emergency action for support to a Filipino Chief Cook needing immediate medical assistance.

Walking with a cane and discharging bloody stool, the Chief Cook was being sent to the hospital by the Captain just to have a (doctor's) second opinion since a doctor already checked him when the vessel was in Toyohashi Port.

Allegedly, the Korean captain didn't want the Chief Cook repatriated, as the vessel was about to leave in a few hours.

With the coordination of the JSU ISS, the ship's company was contacted and requested to provide the Chief Cook necessary medical attention. Immediately, Chief Cook Carlos V. Golfo was admitted to the Yokohama Fureai Hospital due to abdominal bleeding.

Upon knowledge of his internal bleeding, the doctor in Fureai Hospital had subjected him to a series

of medical check-ups, such as colonoscopy, to view the entire inner lining of his intestine.

After determining that he was in serious condition, the doctor confined him and administered blood transfusion (800cc) as his blood platelet count was very low.

At the time of writing, Chief Cook's discharge of bloody stool had lightly subsided.

According to the doctor, he needs to stay at the hospital for one or two weeks more until his full recovery from the abdominal problem.

What caused the Chief Cook's bloody stool? Since he was feeling severe pain on his right leg, maybe due to arthritis, he took pain relievers without a doctor's prescription or guidance, leading him to suffer abdominal bleeding.

VOICES from SEAFARERS



Crewmembers of **M/V MOL PARTNER**

We wish that the free e-mail access as provided by the JSU/AMOSUP CBA be implemented as soon as possible for us to enjoy. We thank the JSU for the upgrade in our wages and working conditions, the reading materials and the souvenirs we received.



Crewmembers of **M/V CAPE AZALEA**

We thank the JSU for the regular visitation by the Union Officers and the updates we get. We are looking forward to their next visit.



For every crewmember, the hardship and boredom can be relieved by someone who visits them onboard and I am thanking the JSU Union Officers and JSU ISS staff for their effort of regular visitation to their members whenever a ship docks here in Japan.

Providing useful information and the latest updates on our JSU agreement, checking our living and working condition aboard is an important task that the Union Officers give us. Again, may I say many thanks and good luck, you are serving us as our protector.

CAPT. Efren P. Cagatin
Master of **M/V SHIN HEIRYU**



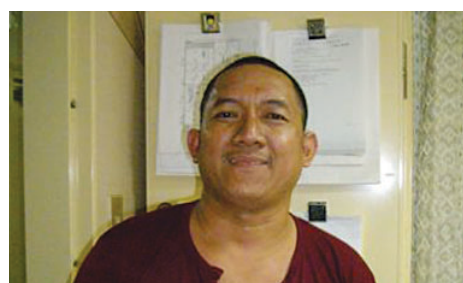
Crewmembers of **M/V MIYABI**

As all of us have a hard time going out to shore, we welcome the visitation by JSU staff who inform us of our rights and benefits under the JSU agreement.

I thank the JSU for its effort in recovering my back wages from my previous vessel.

I also thank the JSU Filipino staff for a job well done.

Oiler Gliny Flares
M/V ESPERANZA II



JOKE CORNER

Pray For Life

With the storm raging, the captain realized his ship was sinking fast.

He called out, “Does anyone here know how to pray?”

One of the crewmembers stepped forward. “Yes, Captain, I pray a lot.”

“Good,” said the captain. “You pray while the rest of us get out on life jackets. We’re one short.”

Submitted by: ISS John Canto

Custody Fight

A seaman and his wife were getting a divorce at a local court, but the custody of their children posed a problem.

The mother jumped to her feet and protested to the judge that since she had brought the children into this world, she should retain custody of them.

The seaman also wanted custody of his children, so the judge asked for his side of the story.

After a long moment of silence, the seaman rose from his chair and replied: “Your honor, when I put a dollar into a vending machine, and a Pepsi comes out, does the Pepsi belong to me or to the machine?”

Don't laugh...he won!

Submitted by: Hero

I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a whole lot more as they get older; then it dawned on me—they're cramming for their final exam.

— George Carlin —
1937-
American Comedian

Letter from JSU Headquarters

We are very grateful to you non-domiciled special members, for continuing to operate ships safely around the clock.

Today, we would like to inform you about the JSU non-domiciled membership fees, as we receive many inquiries about them.

The fees are paid – in accordance with the JSU constitutions and those for non-domiciled members – by non-Japanese seamen without resident status in Japan who work onboard commercial vessels to which the following agreements are applied: the IBF JSU/AMOSUP-IMMAJ CBA, IBF JSU/PSU-IMMAJ CA, IBF JSU-IMMAJ CA, ITF-JSU/AMOSUP CBA, ITF-JSU CA, JSU/AMOSUP CBA for Japanese Flag, JSU/PSU CA for Japanese Flag, JSU CA for Japanese Flag, and JSU CA for near sea.

The fees are used to carry out various activities to protect the rights and employment of non-domiciled members and to improve labor conditions.

Articles written in labor agreements are not binding unless negotiation with the JSU has taken place.

Only when the JSU negotiates and conclude contracts with oceangoing shipping service providers, will they become legally effective, having conditions on the following items applied to you, such as wages, fixed overtime payments, guaranteed overtime payments, retirement pay plans, and provident funds.

We need to promote activities jointly with the ITF, including FOC and POC campaigns, which are conducted to apply the ITF Agreement to more ships. And to this end, much more work and time needs to be spent.

The non-domiciled membership fees, which we collect from you, are used to financially support union activities.

Thus, please understand that the fees will not be refunded when you retire.

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Director, Foreign Trades Dept.

Security advice for the frontline: back to basics

With the five-year span of the first International Ship Security Certificates (ISSC) now reaching an end, and with the prospect of re-validation looming, the pressure to apply the basics of maritime security has never been more pressing.

Sadly it seems many ships are still failing to properly implement the most fundamental requirement of maritime security – that of effectively policing access to the vessel. In fact according to The United States Coastguard (USCG), 33 percent of security deficiencies have been related directly to vessel access, and they have stressed that, “Access control is the cornerstone of a security regime and the most sensitive part of any security arrangement is the facility-to-ship interface.”

The message remains clear then, that all access to vessels must be controlled, monitored and supervised, and it is vitally important that personnel know how to control access, when to act, who to allow onboard and who to deny, all while keeping adequate and proper records.

In order to assist these efforts and to give clear and simple advice to seafarers with security duties, Shiptalk has begun a series of Security Guides with the first entitled, “Shipboard Access Control.”

According to Shiptalk managing director, Capt. Thomas Brown, “the fact that ships are still being detained for not applying the very basics of maritime security is hugely concerning, especially given that deficiencies could see many ISSC’s not being

revalidated. As such it appears that the basics of security need to be stressed to all personnel, and that is exactly what this new guide delivers.”

The aim of the guide is to really help crews to achieve more, and to allow them to feel confident to act, to understand their role and the huge importance it carries, all written in basic terms that can easily be understood even if English is their second language.

The guidance within “Shipboard Access Control” is based on the requirements of the ISPS Code, and also best industry practice – it provides background guidance to work in tandem with the Ship Security Plan (SSP) for each vessel, while encouraging personnel to ask questions and to engage in discus-

sions on how gangway and access control is managed.

As we know, the gangway watch is the most visible part of any security regime – it is also where mistakes are made.

Controlling access is not simply about being the first line of defense it is also the first aspect of security to be assessed by port and Flag State, and by law enforcement agencies – so it is important we get it right, and “Shipboard Access Control” can help seafarers do just that.

“Shipboard Access Control” by Steven Jones (ISBN 978-0-9556513-3-5) is available from Shiptalk priced £10 for single copies (with bulk and fleet discounts available), email: enquiries@shiptalk.com or visit www.shiptalk.com for more details.

U.S. proposes tighter crew identification requirements

The U.S. Coast Guard proposes to require crewmembers on foreign commercial vessels en route to U.S. ports or alongside, to carry and present on demand acceptable identification when in U.S. navigable waters. The proposed requirements also cover crewmembers on U.S. commercial vessels arriving from a foreign port or place.

Acceptable identification means a passport; a U.S. Permanent Resident Card; a U.S. merchant mariner’s docu-

ment; a U.S. Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC); or a Seafarer’s Identification Document (SID) issued in accordance with International Labor Organization (ILO) Seafarers’ Identification Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (ILO 185).

Crew may secure the identification with the master, so long as it can be presented on demand. The vessel operator would be required to ensure that crew are in compliance.

Violations may subject the mariner and the vessel operator to civil penalties. In addition, control measures may be taken against the vessel.

Such requirements, if implemented, would apply even if the crewmember never departs the vessel while it is in the U.S. If the crewmember intends to go ashore in the U.S., all of the current immigration requirements (particularly the U.S. visa requirement) will apply. (Source: Shiptalk)

CBP directive calls for immediate departure of off-signing crew

The Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are taking an interest in respect of those involved in crew changes who do not join their ship immediately on entering the U.S., or who are not repatriated immediately on signing off.

It has long been expected by the CBP that departing crew will leave the U.S. on the next available flight but members should understand

that the CBP’s current directive is that off-signing crew must depart the country the same day they are signed off the ship.

Crew that do not depart/arrive the same day they leave/join the ship will subject owners/crew managers with a fine of US\$3,300 per crewmember.

In the interest of safety and crew welfare, some operators

are understood to have a policy of giving officers a night’s rest in a hotel after flying before joining their ships. Such policies and actions will now result in fines being imposed. In cases where the arrival date of a ship is not certain, members will find this regulation particularly unfair as it is normal practice to get crew to their joining ports in good time in order

not to miss the ship.

Members should not expect the authorities to be lenient on this matter as it has been noticed that the number of fines issued nationwide by the CBP has increased. It has also been noticed that the CBP are now issuing fines for infractions that would have previously warranted no more than a warning.

IGA, From Page 1

late in the evening in the United States, people were ecstatic over the decision.

The gap of some US\$40,000 was paid in Hawaii.

IGA welcomed in Japan

On April 15, IGA arrived at the Port of Yokohama from Hawaii.

From the JSU, ITF Coordinator Shoji Yamashita and Eduardo Galang welcomed IGA crewmembers. When they met the ship’s South Korean master, however, he exploded in anger, claiming that JSU did not do anything for his crew.

Now that the owner of IGA



The crewmembers of IGA listen to Shoji Yamashita, ITF coordinator, explaining their backwages and their new agreement under the JSU.

has concluded the ITF-JSU agreement, the master was

told that wages would increase, that welfare would improve,

and that crewmembers would be able to begin using an e-mail service, while efforts would be made to improve the quality of foodstuffs.

When Yamashita and Galang entered the crew’s salon to give briefings, the crewmen were very happy, expecting that IGA would enter a new stage as a result of the conclusion of the agreement.

In Japan, the JSU and the ITF work together, having had 90 percent of Japanese shipowners conclude the ITF-JSU agreement.

When Yamashita and Galang said that they were grateful and respectful to crewmembers for understanding ITF-JSU-AMOSUP, the crew burst into applause.