



Concerned members hold a copy of the July 1, 2005 issue of JSU Maritime Journal (Vol. 2 No. 4), in which the article titled “Retirement Pay: This is the Process” was featured on the front page.

# Retirement Pay Plan revisited

*What you get depends on JSU agreement covering your vessels*

Since the publication of an article in the July 1, 2005 (Vol. 2 No. 4) edition of JSU Maritime Journal on the Retirement Pay Plan (RPP), there have been a lot of misinterpretations and views from JSU's Non-Domiciled Special Members, particularly among the Filipino seafarer members, on how to avail this RPP. The verbal exchange of incorrect information about the RPP over the ships' VHF and at seamen's meeting places on world-wide trade routes had changed its true meaning and purpose, as far as the opinion of most members is considered.

Some of the JSU Special Members who had read this previous issue had concluded and thought that the JSU Membership Fee (or Union Dues) of US\$40 is refundable as Retirement Pay. As we all know, being a JSU Non-domicile Special Member, one has an ob-

ligation to pay US\$40 as union dues, which are allocated to the operational expenses of the union. In transparency, every amount is spent wisely by the Union to make sure the members can receive the necessary benefits and welfares they need. For each and everyone's concern and information, this amount is not refundable as Retirement Pay of any kind.

Retirement pay depends on the type of JSU Agreements that cov-

er the vessels on which you served. The amount of US\$80 for every officer and US\$50 for every rating that were deducted monthly goes to the Provident Fund or Retirement Pay Plan. Those vessels covered by the IBF JSU/AMOSUP-IMMAJ CBA and JSU/AMOSUP Advanced CBA with Japanese Flag, members' retirement should be based to the JSU-AMOSUP Provident Fund. Any member who ought to retire may

apply to the AMOSUP for the Provident Fund and no other retirement benefit is available from the JSU. If the vessels were covered by the JSU/PSU Advanced CA for Japanese Flag, the US\$50 allotted for retirement pay is already included in your monthly wages and no other retirement pay will be received from the JSU. If the vessels were covered by the IBF JSU/PSU-IMMAJ CA and/or IBF JSU-IMMAJ CA,

members are entitled to the JSU Retirement Pay Plan (RPP). In applying for the retirement pay, members' application should be sent to the JSU Office in Tokyo, Japan through postal mail. Filipinos who are applying for their retirement pay can get an application at the Philippine Seafarers' Union (PSU) offices in the Philippines or by email from the JSU office in Tokyo. Email address: [retirement\\_pay\\_plan@jsu.jp](mailto:retirement_pay_plan@jsu.jp)

An RPP member can receive retirement pay when they reach the age of 50 after retiring from sea service permanently or if the member is no longer able to work as a seafarer because of injury, illness or death.

Again, JSU-AMOSUP members are not included in the RPP.

For more information about the Retirement Pay Plan, please email to [retirement\\_pay\\_plan@jsu.jp](mailto:retirement_pay_plan@jsu.jp) with your inquiries.

JSU NON-DOMICILED SPECIAL MEMBER'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM			
Item No.	Kinds of Ship Agreements	Kinds of RP	Where to Apply
1	IBF JSU/AMOSUP IMMAJ CBA	Provident Fund	AMOSUP office (Manila)
2	IBF JSU/PSU IMMAJ CA	Retirement Pay Plan	PSU office (Q.C., Phils)/JSU office (Tokyo)
3	IBF JSU IMMAJ CA	Retirement Pay Plan	JSU office (Tokyo)
4	JSU/AMOSUP Advanced CBA (Japanese Flag)	Provident Fund	AMOSUP office (Manila)
5	JSU/PSU Advanced CA (Japanese Flag)	Retirement Pay Plan	No need to apply; paid monthly on board
6	JSU Advanced CA (Japanese Flag)	Retirement Pay Plan	No need to apply; paid monthly on board

The much vaunted new anti-piracy code of conduct for West and central Africa, which was supposedly going to facilitate an armed response to local piracy has some fairly fundamental flaws according to experts.

The code, adopted at a ministerial meeting in Cotonou, Benin, was developed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with input from the IMO and is expected to be signed at a meeting of West African heads

of state in May.

However, there are concerns that it will fail to deliver on its promises as it does not have an enforcement mechanism, and so armed forces will not be obliged to abide by it.

The new code is very similar to the IMO's Djibouti code of conduct, and it enshrines certain key principles which have helped to

tackle Somali based piracy, such as information sharing, processes for the arrest and prosecution of people who commit illegal acts and caring for and treating victims of piracy.

According to sources, the key flaw is the fact that the code assumes that it is private maritime security companies (PMSC) deliv-

ering armed anti-piracy services in West Africa. However, only national armed forces are permitted to carry arms inside their own territorial waters and, in the case of Nigeria, the economic exclusion zone.

Any PMSC working in the Gulf of Guinea now must co-operate with local security forces if it wishes to offer an armed services, which

could become a sticking point as there are concerns about the quality and standards of some of these.

On one hand it seems that local governments recognise the need to boost security, but then – with cases such as the Myre Seadiver detention – they clamp down against them. It seems that very contradictory messages are emerging, and when security is undermined by uncertainty it is usually the bad guys who are the winners. (Source: *Shiptalk*)

## West Africa code lacks bite

# New international welfare and assistance body formed

It's farewell to the ICSW and ISAN and welcome to ISWAN. On April 1, 2013 the International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare (ICSW) & the International Seafarers' Assistance Network (ISAN) formally merged to become the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN).

ISWAN emerges as the outcome of two years' of collaboration between the two organisations, its members and funders. The new organisation will harness the strength of both organisations to provide a stronger, more unified and cohesive voice to speak

up on the international stage whenever seafarers' welfare is tabled. ICSW brings to ISWAN the benefits of its membership structure involving employers, unions, and welfare providers while ISAN contributes its first-hand experience of day to day problems faced by seafarers.

ISWAN will provide direct welfare services to seafarers. The 24 hour multilingual helpline, SeafarerHelp, runs every day of the year and is free for seafarers to call from anywhere in the world. In 2012 SeafarerHelp helped over 4000 seafarers and their families. ISWAN also administers an emergency wel-

fare fund for seafarers in dire need, produces health information for seafarers, and provides information to seafarers on the 450 seafarer centres all over the world.

ISWAN will promote the welfare of seafarers worldwide. It will work in support of organisations and bodies that provide direct welfare services to seafarers. ISWAN will facilitate the maintenance and establishment of welfare facilities and services in ports and on ships. ISWAN will also bring together and support its members to share learning and experiences to improve seafarers' welfare. In particular, ISWAN will work for the

implementation of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006 in partnership with companies, unions, governments, welfare organisations (secular and faith based), and ports for the benefit of seafarers' welfare.

Roger Harris, Executive Director of ISWAN said, 'The new organisation will be able to serve both seafarers and welfare organisations a lot more effectively. ISWAN brings together practical experience of dealing with seafarers' welfare problems and the strategic issues of developing and sustaining welfare services, facilities, and structures. We aim to grown

our influence by recruiting more members from the industry, particularly from shipping companies and ports.'

ISWAN is holding a reception to officially launch the organisation on 17 April in London. The guests of honour at the reception will be Ms Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, Director of the International Labour Standards Department of the International Labour Organisation, and Mr Jim Fitzpatrick MP, ex-UK Minister for Shipping.

The main ISWAN website is at [www.seafarerswelfare.org](http://www.seafarerswelfare.org) (Source: *Shiptalk*)

## Ship detentions could increase

When MLC enters into force there are many who expect a spike in vessel inspections, and a likely rise in detentions.

A recent conference on maritime safety in India, part of the Indian Ocean MoU, raised about the potential for an upsurge in detentions. It was felt that as shipping costs rise and freight rates drop, the shipping recession will affect ISM compliance. This, it was feared, could have a major effect on safety, detentions and ultimately seafarer abandonment.

At the ISM Annual Review Workshop a number of DPAs (Designated Person Ashore) claimed the ISM code needs to be revamped and a safety culture in-built into shipping. Some would argue that this already exists in the Code, and also in the sanctions for those who ignore them, but the concerns that cost cutting may impact safety appears to have some resonance.

Sadly despite the ISM Code and in spite of the moves towards MLC, shipping still has a dark underbelly. Trades exist which still put the lives of seafarers at risk and endanger the environment. One such example is Indonesia's thriving trade with China.

Since late 2010 five ships loaded with Indonesian minerals have sunk when bound for China, with huge loss of life. Little has been done to break the deadly trend. Indeed, plenty of interests have an incentive to hush it up.

Certificates, port State controls and "Super Conventions" will only take us so far – while corrupt and morally spent vessel and cargo owners are still intent on allowing lethal trade to continue the good within the industry will suffer for the crimes of the bad.

Alas that is the tragedy which has haunted shipping since long before Samuel Plimsoll and his lines, Lloyd's coffee shop and its lists, and the Titanic effect, sadly despite so much good intention elsewhere, in the shadows people will continue to make their riches on the back of the death or misery of others. MLC is another vital step on the path which was forged by SOLAS, but will it be enough to forge lasting change? (Source: *Shiptalk*)

## IMO, IPIECA launch effort to improve oil spill response

IMO and IPIECA, the global oil and gas industry association for environmental and social issues, have jointly launched a new Global Initiative (GI) program aimed at improving the oil spill preparedness and response capabilities in south east Asia, at a regional workshop that took place from March 20-21, 2013 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The workshop and launch event was attended by more than 70 high-level representatives from government and the maritime, oil and gas industry from countries across the south east Asia region.

The Statement of Intent on Establishing the GI-SEA Programme on Oil Spill Preparedness and Response was signed by Mr. Jose Matheickal, Marine Environment Division, IMO and Mr. Brian Sullivan, Executive Director, IPIECA, and witnessed by Captain Yan Risuandi, Director for Marine Safety and Acting Director for Sea and Coastguard of the Directorate General of Sea Transportation, Ministry of Transport, Indonesia, representing the host government for the GI-SEA workshop.

IMO and IPIECA have, for a

number of years, been working with their international and regional partners to establish this new regional program, which demonstrates a major commitment from both government and industry to improve oil spill preparedness and response in the region. This new joint-initiative will build collaboration and create a forum for joint action, focusing on practical activities such as training, workshops and joint exercises in the field of oil spill preparedness and response. More importantly GI-SEA will also support the objectives of the ASEAN

Oil Spill Response Action Plan (ASEAN-OSRAP) being developed by the ASEAN members with the support of the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Program (ITCP).

The GI South East Asia programme was initiated to address an increased level of oil spill risk due to higher levels of shipping traffic, and increased exploration and production activities across the region. A full-time Project Manager based in Singapore, employed by IPIECA, will oversee the GI-SEA program activities. (Source: *IMO*)

## Piracy survivor group backs new film about hijacking

The ITF Seafarers Trust and the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Program (MPHRP) hosted a packed press screening of the film "A Hijacking", which they describe as possibly "the first genuinely realistic portrayal of the sheer horror and brutality inflicted on the victims of pirate attacks".

The film, directed by Danish Director Tobias Lindholm, opens in UK cinemas on May 10 but was to be screened for the mari-

time industry on April 22 in London. It was shot on a ship that had previously been hijacked by pirates and with expert help from those with knowledge of the realities of such attacks. The press screening, on March 26, was attended by senior personnel from the EU Naval Force (EU Navfor), among others.

MPHRP chair Peter Swift, commented: "Despite the world's reliance on goods shipped by sea,

the plight of seafarers running the daily risk of pirate attack and capture is not widely recognised. We hope that A Hijacking will help the public understand the horror that seafarers face."

Roy Paul of the Seafarers Trust and MPHRP project manager added: "This powerful film is a stark wake up call. It shows the horrific ordeal hijacked seafarers experience, where malnutrition, extreme deprivation and regular

brutality are the norm. Several seafarers have been killed or used as human shields."

Somali pirates currently hold 78 seafarers hostage. They use torture, the threat of death against hostages and tactics such as phoning the victims' families and making them listen to their loved ones being tortured as tools to extract massive ransoms. The average length of captivity is now over 17 months. (ITF Seafarers)

## Seafarers' group says MLC fails to deal with abandonment issues

According to a leading seafarers' organization, the much vaunted Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) fails to address the issue of abandoned seafarers – and there are calls for a legal solution to be found that gives crew direct access to compensation.

Seafarers' Rights International executive director Deidre Fitzpatrick has warned of a reality gap, as the issue of abandonment, while pivotal to the whole seafarer care issue, is not due to be discussed until the first meeting of the IMO after the convention comes into force on August 20, 2013.

Seafarer abandonment is another of the dark secrets which dog shipping, crew can all too often be left stranded in faraway ports when owners decide to stop providing cash and/or support to the vessel. The seafarers need to get home but are often trapped without money, food, visas and hope.

According to Fitzpatrick, "The very fact that it happens at all is something we need to address."

So MLC will be rolled out with a massive and obvious gap, one unlikely to be filled before the first half of 2014. Even when the IMO does get around to discussing the issue, the fact that 10 years of previous meetings have failed to find a legal solution to abandonment does not necessarily augur well.

The pressure is very much on to find a solution, and the IMO meeting is the "big opportunity" to find the elusive fix. If this passes without resolution, Fitzpatrick would be surprised if the subject comes on the agenda again for some time.

Currently there is little recourse, short of arresting the ship, to recover seafarers' unpaid wages. Where the vessel has no value, then the crew really are in trouble

– and this is where so many are left to fall on humanitarian welfare for assistance.

Without a formalised, accepted form of insurance for seafarers in place, then there can be no financial security. However, a range of obstacles have complicated the problem – one major problem is the dearth of accurate statistics to show how many seafarers are abandoned each year.

The ILO has a database that should record abandonment cases but according to Ms Fitzpatrick this relies on people reporting incidents – and that can be sporadic and inconsistent. There is a culture of under reporting, or non-reporting of incidents.

The MLC includes a clause that states that the seafarer is entitled to repatriation but the clause means nothing when a seafarer finds herself or himself abandoned. Rights are one thing, but

actually exercising them is another.

Which is why compulsory insurance could be the answer – but it throws up a massive dilemma. If it is left to the shipowner there could be a problem, as they are the entity which causes abandonment in the first place.

There is a gap with innocent seafarers trapped in the middle. It becomes a struggle as good shipowners don't abandon their crews so do not engage on the issue, while bad shipowners don't care anyway. The answer has long been to find a way of convincing the good to help find a solution caused by the bad, but which affects the innocent.

Given the current financial circumstance, abandonment is likely to increase and industry should not allow this gap to exist where seafarers can be stranded for months on end. (Source: *Shiptalk*)

VOICES *from* SEAFARERS

**Capt. Generoso T. Gepullano, C/E Edpan M. Tomas and Crew of M/V AZUL HORIZONTE**

We appreciate the JSU staff for visiting our ship and discussing union activities to all non-domiciled special members. Thanks for taking care of us and hope that the JSU will continue protecting the rights and welfare of its members. Mabuhay!



**Capt. Wenceslao P. Albano and Crew of M/V JP MAGENTA**

The introduction of the free e-mail access on board had contributed a lot to seafarers' welfare. Daily communication with every family is no longer difficult even when we are at sea. Through the visiting JSU staff, we highly recommend and suggest an upgrade of the system into internet broadband, as these could likely widen the scope of its purpose.



**Capt. Francisco D. Timbre and Crew of M/V KORYU**

Visiting staff discussed our rights and benefits as members of this union. With their explanation, we learned the different types of JSU agreements and understood how to claim our retirement pay as members of the JSU/AMOSUP Advanced CBA for Japanese Flag. Thanks for supporting us and for the souvenirs.



**Capt. Celso P. Manapis and Crew of M/V ROYAL ACCORD**

ILO Maritime Labor Convention (MLC, 2006) will soon rise for implementation in August, we kindly request and ask favor of the JSU to support the training courses pertaining to the seafarer's bill of rights. In a sense, we can stand proud of our union.



**Capt. Pontino I. Manlooyo and Crew of M/V EISHUN**

We support the JSU's regular ship visitation while our ship's berthed in ports of Japan. Hope that this union will continue improving the welfare benefits of its members and to negotiate for the implementation of broadband internet connection on board.



**C/O Bonifacio D. Carcedo and Crew of M/V PROCYON**

The ship visitation by JSU staff provided us with extensive knowledge about our benefits as members of the union. They reminded us of the welfare services provided by our local union (the AMOSUP) with regards to the medical plan and the provident fund. In connection with these, we suggest our provident fund contributions be arranged in a manner that could be withdrawn at any local AMOSUP branch once everyone reaches the retirement age.



**Capt. Fortunato M. Mingote and Crew of M/V COPIHUE**

On behalf of my officers and crew, I thank the JSU representative for visiting us while our vessel was berthed at the port of Hakata, Japan. JSU staff discussed briefly the articles of CBA and explained our rights and benefits as members. More power to all staff of the JSU and God bless.



**C/E Sentot Baruno, M. Mar. E and Indonesian Crew of M/V WHITE CAMERON**

As seafarer members of this union, we strongly support JSU activities and policies for all non-domiciled special members. Thanks for taking care of all mem-

bers of this union. We are looking forward to seeing the JSU staff again and to have a friendly conversation with us. Terimakasih!



**Capt. Edgardo M. Mata and Crew of M/V BRILLIANT SUNRISE**

The JSU staff's regular ship visitation helped us increase our knowledge concerning the rights and benefits as members of this union. We also applaud the JSU's effort for bringing us updated news and the latest information regarding the shipping industry.



**Capt. Agustin M. Magno and Crew of M/V JP CORAL**

On behalf of the crew, I would like to thank the JSU's ship visitation and bringing us souvenirs and disseminating updated news on board. The JSU staff discussed the articles of JSU/AMOSUP Advanced CBA for Japanese Flag and answered all our queries regarding the Provident Fund.



**C/O Anecito M. Canales and Crew of M/V VEGA**

JSU's regular ship visitation while our vessel is berthed in ports of Japan is so important to us. JSU staff answered all our queries regarding the CBA and they also spread informative news concerning the maritime industry. More power to this union.



**Officers and Crew of M/V PAN PAC SPIRIT**

Being a non-domiciled special member of the JSU and the PSU, health is important to us to continuously render our service to the company and to the union. Our local union should improve its medical services. Thus far, we required medical facilities comparably with hospital standards to attend to our medical needs.

# Supreme court upholds ruling on shore-leave death

The Standard P&I Club has issued Web alert regarding Supreme Court ruling on death during shore leave.

A Filipino crewman was discovered to have drowned after answering a call of nature by a river while he was on shore leave.

The crewman's widow filed a claim for death compensation, arguing that her husband had died during the course of his employment. The Labor Arbiter awarded death benefits to the crewman's widow under the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration standard employ-

ment contract (POEA SEC) and this decision was affirmed by the NLRC. The Court of Appeals reversed the decision and the claimant appealed to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court held that the claimant was not entitled to death benefits. The POEA SEC

relevantly provides that in order for disability or death to be compensable, it must:

1. Be work-related; and
2. Arise during the term of a crewman's employment contract.

The Supreme Court ruled that although the crewman's employment with the respondent con-

tinued while the crewman was on shore leave, his death was not work-related and, therefore, was not compensable. At the time of his death, the crewman was in no different a position to any other person who might have suffered the same mishap. (Source: *The Standard P&I Club*)

## Social media access said needed to help recruitment

Seafarers must have access to social media for shipowners to recruit and retain crew, Fairplay was told.

"We're encouraging the shipowners and flag states provide access to social media such as Facebook and Twitter, Seafarers International Union Secretary

Treasurer David Heindel told Fairplay yesterday at the sidelines of the Connecticut Maritime Association conference.

It's the predominate way that most young people communicate, Heindel noted, "so how are you going to recruit someone you don't allow to keep in touch with

their family and friends?"

Peter Hinchcliffe, secretary-general of the International Chamber of Shipping, said his shipowner members would like to provide internet access for every seafarer.

"But the fact is, there isn't the bandwidth available" unless an

owner is willing to pay a premium, he said. "It's an aspiration I hope we get to one day, but it's ineffective from a cost point of view at the moment."

Hinchcliffe said that will change when the price for access goes down as satellites coverage goes up. (Source: *Fairplay*)

## New apps to aid seafarers

The ITF is launching a series of free apps for seafarers.

The Look up a Ship app will enable seafarers and charterers to look at basic information about the vessel they are sailing on, intend to sail on or are considering chartering. It will show the ship name, International Maritime Organization (IMO) number, where it is flagged, and whether or not it has an ITF agreement, and the status of any agreement. It will also show the latest crew list summary and ITF Inspection details.

This new app comes just months before the enforcement of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC)—the "seafarers' bill of rights"—in August, and will help seafarers and charterers support and build on the MLC's fair employment provisions.

A second app, Look up an Inspector, helps seafarers find a trade union and their nearest ITF inspector. It will tell seafarers where they can obtain assistance from an ITF inspector or union, and details of their telephone, fax and email contacts, as well as the ITF-sponsored 24-hour SeafarerHelp helpline.

The ITF Seafarers' Trust is also offering an app on Shore Leave to put seafarers in touch with the nearest seafarers' center or mission.

The new apps can be found for the following platforms:

iPhone applications: Look up an Inspector; Look up a Ship

Android versions: Look up an Inspector; Look up a Ship

Shore Leave (iphone and ipad): Look up Shore Leave App for iphone and ipad; Shore Leave (Android); Look up Shore Leave App for Android;

Shore Leave (Blackberry): Look up Shore Leave App for Blackberry. (Source: *ITF Seafarers*)

## Report highlights rise of maritime crime in SE Asia

U.K. maritime intelligence provider Dryad Maritime are to release a specialist report, "Special Advisory Southeast Asia: Disorganized theft to organized crime," which will focus on the rise of targeted hijackings in Southeast Asia.

The advisory to be released on March 18, 2013 provides an overview of the security situation and the increased threat from maritime crime in the region. Risk analysis of these incidents has shown that the hijack of merchant vessels does not follow the same pattern as seen in the Horn of Africa where vessels and crew are taken to be ransomed back to their original owners. In South East Asia, hijackings are a more sophisticated business led by intel-

ligence where vessels are targeted for their cargo or for the hull, to prearranged customers.

Providing detailed insight into the evolving trend of marine piracy to target commercial vessels, the special advisory is valuable reading for shipowners, managers and charterers operating in maritime high risk areas spanning the Singapore Straits, the South China Sea and the Indonesian archipelago. The report offers the reader a thorough and in-depth insight into how and why the trend is emerging for the sophisticated boarding and hijacking of product tankers and fuel barges. 2012 saw an 8.5% increase in maritime crime throughout Southeast Asia which now stands at 44% of all

maritime based criminal activity reported worldwide.

Karen Jacques, Chief Operating Officer, Dryad Maritime, "Our South East Asia special advisory is specifically designed to forewarn and equip maritime operators with the latest intelligence on the region which will allow them to plan their transits and assess risk accurately. Our analysts have collated intelligence from a wide range of sources to produce this unique and essential report into the growth of maritime crime in the region. It highlights emerging areas of risk which cannot be treated with complacency and also provides clear advice that will enable Masters and crew to implement new procedures that will

help to significantly reduce risk."

"The continued concentration of media attention and resources on areas such as the Gulf of Guinea is still important however it must not mask the essential need for the early identification of evolving threats in other areas. This advisory allows seafarers to make decisions based on accurate intelligence and therefore take preventative measures as necessary."

The report compiled by using intelligence analysis to identify risk reduction will be available to download on March 18, 2013 free of charge via Dryad Maritime's website: [www.dryadmaritime.com](http://www.dryadmaritime.com). (Source: *MarineLink.com*)

## Armed robbery HK raising age limit of harbor pilots to 68 still a threat

Armed robbery at sea, as well as piracy, continue to be threats to seafarers around the world.

Latest figures collected by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) worldwide piracy reporting centre show that Somali pirates still hold captive about seven vessels and 113 hostages. Hostages continue to include seven Indian seafarers from the *Asphalt Venture*, still held captive despite the payment of a ransom almost two years ago.

In one of the latest incidents, robbers boarded a bulk carrier anchored at Taboneo, Indonesia on March 4 and escaped with ship's stores.

In another incident, robbers boarded a chemical tanker anchored at Dumai, Indonesia on February 27, stole engine spares and escaped.

All attacks and suspicious sightings should be reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Center, Tel: +603 2031 0014 (24 hours), Email: [imbkl@icc-ccs.org](mailto:imbkl@icc-ccs.org) (Source: *ITF Seafarers*)

Hong Kong is raising the age limit to 68 for harbor pilots of large vessels.

Licenses for such pilots have up to now been cut off at age 65, HK's Transport & Housing Bureau said, although such pilots can still guide shorter vessel.

The government has been pushing for improved safety standards since a vessel collision in the harbour killed 38 people

in October 2012. So to be extended to 68, such pilots will need to pass examinations for physical and mental fitness and eyesight, the bureau said.

The change would constitute better use of Class I pilots' valuable expertise in piloting large vessels and in training junior pilots, the bureau explained.

Also, pilotage for vessels of

1,000-3,000 gt will no longer be compulsory, the bureau added, because of improved technologies to track vessels' speed and routing; pilots will still be required for all vessels visiting HK that exceed 3,000 gt.

The Pilotage (Amendment) Bill 2013 will be gazetted on 8 March and brought to the Legislative Council on March 20. (Source: *Fairplay*)

## S'pore sounds safety warning after collisions

Singapore recently issued a "safe navigation" warning to ships calling there after a series of collisions.

The Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore said in a circular that masters and watchkeeping officers are reminded to "fully comply" with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 to ensure safety of navigation.

Further, the authority is reminding masters and watchkeeping officers "of the importance of keeping proper lookouts

and proceeding at safe speeds when navigating.

"They are also reminded to conduct master/pilot exchange of information and passage plan for the safe conduct of vessel movement," it added.

The circular follows a spate of casualties in Singapore Strait in March. The offshore supply tug *Highland Guide* had collided with the 158,795-dwt crude tanker *Maran Plato*, with no injuries reported.

Also, a harbor craft collided

with the containership *Bosun* on March 13, with one mariner killed; on March 9, coaster *Budi Jasa 18* collided with the 196-gt passenger ferry *Sea Hawk*, leaving one mariner still listed missing and eight passengers injured; finally, on March 2, the Marshall Islands-registered bulk carrier *Beks Halil* collided with Vietnamese-registered cargo vessel *Thuan My* about 3.4 km (1.8 nm) south of Sisters Islands, with no injuries reported. (Source: *Fairplay*)

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