

Speech for Additional Director General of Shipping

NMDC – Day of the Seafarer 2026

Theme: “Carrying World Trade, Carrying the Risks”

Opening

Distinguished dignitaries, members of the maritime fraternity, NMDC team and dear seafarers,

It is indeed a privilege to be part of the **Day of the Seafarer 2026**, being organised under the aegis of the National Maritime Day Celebrations Committee.

This occasion is not merely ceremonial, it is an opportunity to **recognise contribution, reflect on responsibilities, and renew our commitment** to the seafarers who sustain global trade.

1. The Central Role of Seafarers

If shipping is the backbone of global trade, **seafarers are its driving force.**

Every cargo movement, every supply chain, and every international trade link ultimately depend on the commitment and professionalism of seafarers.

The theme for this year – **“Carrying World Trade, Carrying the Risks”** – reminds us of a simple but important truth:

- Seafarers enable economic growth
- But they operate in conditions that are often uncertain and demanding

Context:

Recent developments in global shipping routes, whether disruptions due to geopolitical tensions or extreme weather events or due to Pandemic have shown that even in challenging circumstances, seafarers continue to ensure the continuity of trade.

Therefore, this day is not only about appreciation, but also about understanding the **responsibilities we carry towards them.**

2. Maritime Sector and India’s Growth Story

India’s growth as a major global economy is closely linked with the strength of its maritime sector.

In simple terms:

- Maritime trade connects India to global markets
- It supports industry, exports, and economic resilience

Indian seafarers have established a strong reputation globally, and their contribution continues to grow steadily.

This growth is being supported by a combination of **policy, training, and institutional initiatives**.

From the Directorate's perspective, this includes:

- Strengthening **maritime training systems and certification frameworks**
- Expanding **training opportunities and capacity creation**
- Building a **future-ready and globally competitive workforce**

These efforts are contributing to a **steady expansion of India's seafarer base and employability**.

Conclusion & Transition:

However, growth must go hand in hand with addressing the **risks and challenges of the profession**.

3. Understanding the Risks and Challenges

Seafaring is a profession that demands both **technical capability and personal resilience**.

Seafarers operate in environments that involve:

- Long periods away from families
- Physically and mentally demanding conditions
- Exposure to operational and environmental risks

The theme rightly highlights that alongside enabling trade, seafarers **carry significant risks**.

To address these challenges, the Directorate has focused on building **responsive and support-oriented systems**, such as:

- Strengthening **crisis response mechanisms for seafarers through Crisis response module, which is under e-NAVIK platform**.
- Establishing **24x7 grievance redressal systems, which is currently live**.
- Improving **coordination for repatriation and emergency response**.

These initiatives aim to ensure that **support reaches seafarers when it is needed the most.**

Conclusion & Transition:

At the same time, addressing risks also requires a strong focus on **welfare and well-being.**

4. Seafarer Welfare and Well-being

A strong maritime sector must be built on **well-supported and confident seafarers.**

The approach today goes beyond compliance; it focuses on **holistic well-being.**

Key initiatives in this direction by directorate include:

- **Sagar Mein Yog** which promotes physical and mental well-being of seafarers
- **Sagar Mein Samman**, a step towards advancing inclusion and participation, particularly of women in maritime
- Strengthening **welfare frameworks and financial support mechanisms through SWFS, and SPFO**

These initiatives are helping create a system where seafarers:

- Feel **supported and secure**
- Have access to **health and wellness support**
- Are part of a more **inclusive maritime ecosystem**

Conclusion & Transition:

Along with welfare, there is also a need to improve **ease of access and service delivery systems.**

5. Digital Transformation and Service Delivery

Modern maritime governance must be **accessible, transparent, and efficient.**

The Directorate has taken several steps towards **digital transformation**, including:

- Development of integrated platforms such as **e-Samudra and e-Navik**
- Digitisation of seafarer services and regulatory processes
- Real-time systems for **tracking, reporting, and grievance handling**

The impact of these initiatives is:

- Reduced delays
- Greater transparency

- Improved access to services for seafarers across the world

Conclusion & Transition:

However, seafarer welfare and efficiency cannot be achieved in isolation – it requires coordinated effort across the ecosystem.

6. Strengthening the Maritime Ecosystem

Maritime progress depends on how well **institutions, industry, and stakeholders work together.**

The Directorate has focused on:

- Strengthening **stakeholder engagement platforms and consultations with industry including RPSL agencies, MTIs and Shipping Companies.**
- Promoting **compliance and accountability in recruitment and crewing systems, by conducting RPSL Symposium across nation.**
- Supporting **international cooperation and global maritime engagement, by participating in IMO assemblies**

Initiatives such as:

- Engagement forums with stakeholders
- Strengthening regulation of recruitment agencies
- Active participation in international maritime platforms

are helping in building a **more reliable and globally aligned maritime ecosystem.**

Conclusion & Transition:

All these efforts contribute to a larger vision.

6. Way Forward – Strengthening the Maritime Workforce

As India moves forward in its journey towards becoming a **global maritime hub**, the need is to build a **strong, skilled, and supported seafarer workforce.**

Key priorities ahead:

- Safety and welfare of seafarers
- Skill development and employment growth
- Inclusion and diversity in the workforce
- Technology-driven governance and systems

In short, the strength of our maritime sector will depend on the strength of our seafarers.

Closing

Colleagues,

The Day of the Seafarer is a reminder that behind every economic achievement in maritime trade, there are individuals who make it possible.

Let us collectively reaffirm our commitment:

- To **protect their safety**
- To **support their well-being**
- And to **enable their growth in a changing maritime environment**

On behalf of the Directorate General of Shipping, I extend my sincere appreciation to all seafarers for their service and dedication.

I wish all seafarers a very meaningful and proud Day of the Seafarer.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.