

Speech Title: "Solidarity at Sea: Securing the Future of India's Maritime Workforce"

Speaker: Chairperson, National Shipping Board (NSB)

Event: Inaugural, MILAAP – ITF Seafarers Expo 2026

Venue: Princess Dock, Mumbai Port Trust

Date: 29 January 2026

Time: Approx. 3 Minutes

"Friends, colleagues, and the backbone of global trade—our seafarers.

A very good morning to you all. It is an honour to be here at the historic Princess Dock to inaugurate the MILAAP – ITF Seafarers Expo 2026.

I must congratulate the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), along with our dedicated Indian unions—NUSI, MUI, and FSUI—for bringing this world-class, Philippines-style, expo to Mumbai. This is not just an exhibition; it is a celebration of our maritime strength and a reaffirmation of our commitment to the welfare of our seafarers."

"India is a proud supplier of highly qualified seafarers to the global shipping industry. But a seafarer's life is not easy. It requires immense sacrifice, courage, and dedication.

This Expo is a long-awaited homecoming for that dedication. Over the next three days, I encourage every seafarer and family member present to engage with the experts here. Learn about your rights, understand crew contracts, and explore the new career pathways available to you.

The presence of the Directorate General of Shipping here, with dedicated stalls on the SWFS and SPFO initiatives, underscores that you are not alone. The government is committed to ensuring a safe, fair, and rewarding environment for all."

"We live in a time of rapid transformation—technological advancements, decarbonization, and changing geopolitical dynamics are reshaping shipping. While these bring opportunities, they also bring challenges.

I am aware that issues regarding, fair pay, and timely repatriation continue to concern our, seafarers. As the Chairperson of the National Shipping Board, I want

to reiterate that the government is taking strict, proactive measures to curb unfair practices.

The recent initiatives to blacklist vessels violating the rights of Indian seafarers demonstrate our zero-tolerance policy toward the abuse of our people.

This Expo, with its theme of 'Milaap'—unity—is the perfect platform to bridge the gap between seafarers, shipowners, and the administration to create a 'just transition'—one where you are supported in retraining and upskilling for the green future of shipping."

"To all the seafarers and families, this event is for you. Take advantage of it. Enjoy the, networking, and the cultural celebrations.

The National Shipping Board will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that Indian seafarers are respected, protected, and empowered.

With these words, I wish the MILAAP ITF Seafarers Expo 2026 tremendous success.

Jai Hind. Jai Maritime India."