



MEDIA RELEASE

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Technology to Enhance Maritime Safety and Marine Environment Protection

International Safety@Sea Week 2021 features two flagship conferences

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) is organising the 8th run of the International Safety@Sea Week from 30 August to 1 September 2021. Organised annually by MPA for the international maritime community and top practitioners to discuss safety at sea issues and share best practices on maritime safety, the theme for this year's Conference is on "The Human and Technology Crossroads for Maritime Safety".

2. In conjunction with the International Safety@Sea Week, MPA is holding the 12th edition of the International Chemical and Oil Pollution Conference and Exhibition (ICOPCE) on 1 September. The biennial event aims to promote Singapore as a centre of expertise and knowledge in the prevention and response to oil and chemical spills. Themed "Embracing a New Era in Marine Environment Protection", industry professionals from the oil, gas, petrochemical, energy and shipping industries, emergency response companies and the public sector, will share and discuss marine pollution management strategies and how the industry can embrace technology to meet challenges in the new era.

Opening Session for International Safety@Sea Week

3. More than 800 participants from over 60 countries are expected for the International Safety@Sea and ICOPCE conferences over three days. In his opening address for the International Safety@Sea Week today, Mr Chee Hong Tat, Senior Minister of State for Transport, said, "As a major transshipment and bunkering hub port, Singapore takes maritime safety seriously. Ensuring safety of ships and seafarers is paramount to keep global supply lines open and secure. All stakeholders, including governments, industry players and workers, share this responsibility to ensure safety at sea. I would like to thank our maritime community for working tirelessly to keep our workers safe during this COVID-19 pandemic." Please refer to Annex A for Mr Chee's speech.

4. Mr Chee also highlighted the new Maritime Immersive Learning Lab in Singapore Polytechnic as an example of how Singapore is harnessing technology to train seafarers in a safer way but does not compromise the quality of learning. Started by the Centre of Excellence in Maritime Safety and the Singapore Maritime Academy earlier this year, the Lab utilises virtual reality-based training tools and immersive scenarios to equip students to handle emergency scenarios at sea. Over 180 participants from maritime companies have been invited to trial the LNG fire-fighting virtual reality training developed by the Lab.

5. At the Opening Session, keynote speaker for International Safety@Sea, Mr Steen Lund, CEO of RightShip, spoke on "Digital Platforms Deliver Safety, Sustainability and Social Responsibility", followed by a keynote presentation for ICOPCE by Mr Carsten Brix Ostfeldt, INTERTANKO Council Member and Chief Operations Officer of Anglo-Eastern Ship Management Ltd on "A Holistic View on the New Era in Marine Environment Protection".

3rd Community of Practice Forum for Maritime Safety

6. MPA also held the 3rd Community of Practice Forum for Maritime Safety this morning – a biennial closed-door event chaired by Mr Ishak Ismail, Chairman of the National Maritime Safety at Sea Council. Maritime administrations and port authorities from eight countries (China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam) spoke on the topic of "Keeping Maritime Workers Safe Onboard Ships" and exchanged best practices on port safety regulations, safe management measures, and sea crew vaccinations.

International Safety@Sea Awards

7. To recognise the efforts of shipping companies and individuals who have contributed to safety at sea, MPA presented the International Safety@Sea Awards to eight companies to recognise their outstanding contributions to Search and Rescue efforts in 2020. In the Open Category, two companies were presented the awards for their innovative use of technology to enhance safety. Six Letters of Commendation were also presented to companies and individuals for their endeavours on safety at sea. Please refer to Annex B for the list of recipients and details of the awards.

8. For more details of the plenary sessions at International Safety@Sea Week and ICOPCE 2021, visit www.safetyatseaweek.gov.sg. Registration is free for all sessions.

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About the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) was established on 2 February 1996, with the mission to develop Singapore as a premier global hub port and International Maritime Centre (IMC), and to advance and safeguard Singapore's strategic maritime interests. MPA is the driving force behind Singapore's port and maritime development, taking on the roles of Port Authority, Port Regulator, Port Planner, IMC Champion, and National Maritime Representative. MPA partners the industry and other agencies to enhance safety, security and environmental protection in our port waters, facilitate port operations and growth, expand the cluster of maritime ancillary services, and promote maritime R&D and manpower development.

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**OPENING ADDRESS BY MR CHEE HONG TAT
SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
INTERNATIONAL SAFETY AT SEA WEEK 2021,
30 AUG 2021**

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Good afternoon. I am happy to join you to launch the International Safety at Sea Week 2021.

Importance of Safety At Sea

2. The sea connects Singapore to people, places, and possibilities. Singapore has thrived as a maritime nation, with our strategic location and natural harbour. The Straits of Malacca and Singapore are a major artery of world trade, which carries one-third of global container trade and one quarter of global oil trade.
3. As a major international hub port, Singapore takes maritime safety seriously. The number of major safety incidents per 100,000 vessel movements within Singapore territorial waters has fallen over the years, from 1.6 in 2011 to 0 in 2020.
4. However, we must not rest on our laurels and will continue to be prepared and disciplined in protecting the safety of our seafarers, our ships and our sea routes, to ensure that our global supply lines remain open and secure. I would therefore like to address three aspects of maritime safety today:
 - a. First, protecting the physical health and mental wellness of seafarers;
 - b. Next, improving safety on board ships; and
 - c. Finally, combatting piracy and sea robberies.

Protecting our Seafarers

5. Let me start with seafarers. Seafarers are the backbone of the sea transport industry. It is estimated that there are about 1.65 million seafarers worldwide.
6. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in border closures and travel restrictions have made it difficult for sea crew to be replaced. Many have had to work longer hours onboard ships, often beyond their contracts. This is unsustainable, as fatigue and mental health issues can affect the ability of seafarers to operate safely.
7. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Singapore has facilitated international crew change for more than 160,000 ship crew from more than 8,800 ships. More than 99% are foreign seafarers on board ocean-going vessels, regardless of flag.
8. Maritime Singapore, led by the Singapore Shipping Association, has also audited 27 CrewSafe Facilities in upstream countries including the Philippines, Indonesia, India and Malaysia. These facilities adopt a comprehensive and tight isolation regime before sign-on crew arrive in Singapore to embark their vessels.
9. The Port of Singapore will continue to do our part to facilitate crew change under stringent protocols.
10. With the advent of COVID-19 vaccines offering significant protection against the virus, 89% of the 7,500 resident seafarers working in Singapore's port waters have received at least one dose of the vaccine, and 82% have been fully vaccinated.

11. As a global hub port and international maritime centre, Singapore will also support the global vaccination drive for seafarers. This will add an additional layer of protection for them against the virus, and enhance supply chain resilience.
12. As I said in my earlier speech at the International Chamber of Shipping forum, this is the right thing to do, and we will do it right.
13. I am pleased to announce that from 30 Aug 2021, we are starting the SEAVAX programme to facilitate vaccination access for eligible non-resident foreign seafarers who are either working in the Port of Singapore for a prolonged duration, engaged in the supply of essential goods, or engaged in ferrying passengers.
14. They include homeported cruise ship crew, regional ferry crew, crew of vessels under major repair at our shipyards, as well as crew of supply vessels.
15. Such seafarers may interact with our local community in the course of their work, so protecting them through vaccinations is part of our national effort to become a COVID-19 resilient nation.
16. We are also facilitating the efforts of the Singapore Shipping Association, maritime unions, and PSA to allow ocean-going sign-on foreign seafarers to receive vaccinations as part of the established crew sign-on process in Singapore.

17. These seafarers will undergo strict pre-arrival isolation and testing, and strict bubble-wrap protocol when they are in Singapore. We will commence this once the arrangements are ready and the necessary approvals have been obtained.

18. With this initiative, Singapore will join the network of ports around the world that are offering such vaccinations to international seafarers, including in Europe and the USA.

Improving Safety on board Ships

19. Next, improving safety on board ships. We will continue to leverage technology to deal with new challenges on the horizon.

20. One area Maritime Singapore is focusing on is sustainable fuels of the future, such as Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). With the increasing adoption of these fuels, fire safety is a perennial concern. Our seafarers must be equipped to handle emergency scenarios, such as leakages and fires during bunkering operations.

21. The Centre of Excellence in Maritime Safety, together with the Singapore Maritime Academy has started the Maritime Immersive Learning Lab in Singapore Polytechnic.

22. The Lab has Virtual Reality-based tools which provide immersive and realistic shipboard scenarios to complement classroom-based training for trainees.

23. By measuring trainees' reaction times, situational awareness and decision-making, the tool also enables accurate assessment of their competency and can identify specific areas for improvement.

24. This technology allows us to train our seafarers in a safer and smarter way, to be ready for the safety challenges of the future.

25. At the same time, we must also be prepared for major incidents. In global shipping, we have had a few of such incidents recently due to fire, such as *X-Press Pearl* and *MSC Messina*, and grounding, as in the case of *Ever Given*.

26. It is important that stakeholders are well-prepared for such incidents, to enable effective response and recovery operations.

27. In the case of the *X-Press Pearl* incident in May this year, the maritime authorities of Sri Lanka and Singapore, as well as the ship operator, X-Press Feeders, worked closely together to manage the incident.

- a. Thankfully, the swift actions of the Sri Lankan authorities ensured all crew members were safely evacuated.
- b. The authorities also acted quickly to mitigate environmental impact.
- c. Technical experts and oil spill response equipment from Singapore were flown in to complement the efforts and resources at scene.

28. Currently, efforts are underway to remove the wreck and clean up the beaches.

Investigations into the cause of the fire are in progress.

29. We must draw lessons from this incident, and collectively strengthen our response capabilities and take preventive actions to avoid a similar incident from happening in the future.

Combatting Piracy and Sea Robberies

30. Lastly, combatting piracy and sea robberies. This is an age-old threat to safe navigation not just in this part of the world, but all around.

31. The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) is the first regional government-to-government initiative to counter piracy and sea robberies in Asia.

32. The overall piracy and sea robbery situation in Asia has improved since ReCAAP's establishment.

33. From an average of 225 incidents a year in the period prior to ReCAAP's establishment in 2006, the number has fallen to 125 a year between 2007 to 2020.

34. In the first half of 2021, 37 incidents of armed robbery against ships were reported in Asia, a 35% decrease compared to the 57 incidents reported during the same period in 2020.

35. Nonetheless, continued occurrence of incidents on board ships underway in the Singapore Strait remains a concern, with 20 incidents in the first half of this year as compared to 16 in 2020. All these 20 incidents occurred outside of Singapore waters, so they need to be tackled through joint enforcement actions with our neighbours.

36. Singapore remains committed to playing an active part in ReCAAP, to strengthen its role and effectiveness in ensuring safe navigation.

37. This has been a milestone year for ReCAAP. The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre, which Singapore has hosted since its inception, celebrated its 15th anniversary this year.

38. The Centre will continue to encourage all stakeholders to stay vigilant and make timely reports of incidents, and enable coastal States to respond quickly to ensure maritime safety.

39. We are also pleased that Germany has joined ReCAAP this year as the 21st Contracting Party. We look forward to welcoming more partners, such as France and Greece who are working towards joining ReCAAP.

40. This is testament to the Centre's effectiveness, and its importance to combat piracy and sea robberies in the region.

Conclusion

41. As a world-leading port and a member of the global maritime community, maritime safety remains a top priority for Maritime Singapore.

42. Safety is a shared responsibility for all stakeholders, including governments, industry players and workers. Let's continue to encourage collaboration and further strengthen our collective commitment to build a safer maritime industry.

43. I wish you many fruitful discussions over the next few days.

Thank you.

Annex B:**List of International Safety@Sea Awards Recipients**

Outstanding Search and Rescue Operations in 2020	1. Anglo-Eastern Shipmanagement (Singapore) Pte. Ltd.	Ms Melissa Otto, ottom@angloeastern.com
	2. ASP Ships Group (Manager) / Rio Tinto (Owner)	Capt Rob Walker, rwalker@aspships.com / Mr Ryan Lim, ryan.lim@riotinto.com
	3. CMA CGM International Shipping Company Pte. Ltd.	Ms Rachel Wong, SGP.RAWONG@cma-cgm.co
	4. Executive Ship Management Pte. Ltd.	Ms Sara Cherian, cherian.sara@executiveship.com
	5. Tai Chong Cheang Steamship Co., (Shanghai) Ltd.	Capt G.B. Wang, gbwang@tccfleet.com
	6. TATA NYK Shipping Pte. Ltd. (Owner) / Fleet Ship Management Pte. Ltd. (Technical Manager)	Mr Zareer D Antia, antia@tatanykshipping.com / Ms Samantha Beharie, samantha.beharie@fleetship.com
	7. Thome Group	Mr Giesel Salon, giesel.salon@thome.com.sg
	8. Union Marine Management Services Pte. Ltd.^	Capt Anurag Sharma, anuragsharma@unimarships.com
Open Category	9. Singtel Satellite	Ms Catherine Ng, cathng@singtel.com
	10. Teekay Marine (Singapore) Pte. Ltd.	Ms Kristine Aya Ay, Kristine.AyaAy@teekay.com
Letters of Commendation	11. Evergas Ship Management Pte. Ltd.	Mr Rajneesh Rana, rkr@evergas.net
	12. Executive Offshore Pte. Ltd.	Ms Sara Cherian, cherian.sara@executiveship.com
	13. Pacific International Lines (Private) Limited	Ms Norliana Binte Ahmad Efendi, norliana@sgp.pilship.com
	14. Capt Pankoj Aditya	Mr Zachary Mahon, zma@hafniabw.com

	15. Mr Fontelar Arc Bataller	Ms Melissa Otto, ottom@angloeastern.com
	16. Mr Wade Pearce	hello@sgmarineguide.com

Details of the Awards

(1) Outstanding Contribution to Search and Rescue Efforts in 2020

Award Criteria

Successful and high-profile search and rescue operation as required by SOLAS

Chapter V, Regulation 33

- i. Involving an SRS or an SG company
- ii. For vessel in SG maritime search and rescue region/port water

Award Evaluation

Voluntary SAR involving an SRS or an SG company on the high seas must:

- Consider the challenges during SAR operation including inclement weather faced
- Demonstrate substantial diversion or time taken for the SAR

Voluntary SAR involving vessel in SG Maritime SRR / port water must:

- Consider the challenges during SAR operation including inclement weather faced
- Distance to nearest coastline with available assistance

(2) Open Category

Award Criteria

- Innovation in technology/ systems and design/ training demonstrating safety at sea within the maritime industry
- Substantive safety-related contributions recognised by the maritime industry

Award Evaluation

Innovation in technology/systems and design must:

- Be type-approved by IMO and Classification Society
- Be currently in use by major shipping organisations

Innovation in training must:

- Be approved by ISO and/or Classification Society
- Be currently in use by international maritime training institutes