

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to join you today as we inaugurate the **PRANAAM – Seafarers Assistance & Facilitation Counter** at Mumbai International Airport, Terminal 2. This initiative marks an important step in strengthening India's commitment to the welfare and dignity of our seafarers and our nation's ambassadors across global waters.

T2 handles one of the highest volumes of Indian crew travelling abroad, particularly those joining UK-bound vessels. For many seafarers, the most challenging part of their journey begins not at sea, but right here at the airport, **facing document checks, visa scrutiny, airline protocols, and time-critical schedules**. Even small discrepancies often lead to offloading, delays, or escalation to security agencies, causing immense stress to individuals and disruption to shipping operations.

The **PRANAAM Counter** has been created precisely to address these challenges. It serves as a **pre-immigration verification and facilitation point**, ensuring that seafarers' documents such as Form-I, passports, visas, joining letters, CoCs and CoPs are checked thoroughly before they reach airline or immigration counters. This reduces avoidable legal issues, prevents last-minute offloading, and supports airport and national security protocols.

Equipped with trained personnel, real-time verification systems, and a structured escalation matrix, **the counter will significantly ease the travel experience for both experienced and first-time seafarers**. It will also **enhance airport efficiency** and **uphold India's reputation** as a responsible maritime nation.

This initiative is the result of close collaboration between **DGS, SWFS, UK HOIO (UK Home Office International Operations), MUI, NUSI, and Adani Airport**, reflecting our shared commitment to safeguarding the welfare of every Indian seafarer.

To our seafarers: as you carry India's image across oceans, it is our duty to ensure your journey from home soil is smooth, secure, and dignified. The PRANAAM Counter is a tribute to your service and a step forward in strengthening our maritime welfare ecosystem.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.