सत्यमेव जयते

नाविक कल्याण एवं जागरूकता अभियान

EVENT REPORT

Seafarer Welfare and Awareness Campaign

Friday,
23 October 2026

BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Tithal Beach, Valsad, Gujarat

DIGNITARIES

Chief Guest

Shri Sushil Khopde, IPS
Additional Director General of Maritime Administration

Guest of Honour

Capt. Nitin Mukesh
Dy Nautical Adviser cum Senior DDG (Tech.), Commissioner, SPFO, Member Secretary, SWFS

Guest of Honour

Shri Satish D. Kamath
Principal Officer, MMD, Kandla

Contents

1. Executive Summary 4

2. Background and Objectives 5

3. Dignitaries and Participants 6

3.1 Chief Guest 6

3.2 Guests of Honour 6

3.3 Other participating officials and representatives 6

4. Inaugural Session and Opening Proceedings 8

4.1 Vande Mataram and NUSI Anthem 8

4.2 Lighting of the Lamp and Saraswati Vandana 9

4.3 Cultural Programme 9

4.4 Felicitation of Dignitaries 10

5. Addresses by Dignitaries and Representatives 11

5.1 Welcome Address by Shri Santosh Kumar Singh 11

5.2 Address by Shri Satish D. Kamath 12

5.3 Address by Shri Sunil Nair, NUSI 13

5.4 Recorded Message from Shri Sushil Mansingh Khopde, IPS 14

6. Session on RPSL Grievance Redressal and Latest Developments in the Crew Branch 14

6.2 Seafarer Tracking and Casualty Monitoring 15

6.3 Improvements to RPSL Processes 15

6.4 Employment Verification and Prevention of Recruitment Fraud 16

6.5 Overall Significance of the Session 16

7. Presentation by SPFO on Provident Fund Facilities and Withdrawal Procedures 17

7.1 Provident Fund Withdrawal Facilities 17

7.2 Documentation and Common Errors in Applications 18

7.3 Timely Processing of Claims 19

7.4 Importance of Nomination and Provident Fund Records 19

7.5 Proposed Digital Improvements 19

7.6 Direct Assistance from SPFO 20

8. Presentation by SWFS on Welfare Schemes and Benefits 20

8.1 Overview of SWFS Welfare Schemes 20

8.2 Survivor's Benefit Scheme 22

8.3 Invalidity Benefit Scheme 22

8.4 Maternity Benefit Scheme 23

8.5 Old Age Benefit Scheme 23
8.6 Family Benefit Scheme 23
8.7 Death on Board Benefit Scheme 24
8.8 Ex-Gratia Support Benefit Scheme 24
8.9 Award to Meritorious Child of Seafarers 25
8.10 Medical and Term Insurance Premium Assistance Scheme 25
8.11 Medical Support Scheme for Critical or Terminal Illness 25
8.12 Indian Certificate of Competency Recognition and Career Progression Scheme 26
8.13 Financial Assistance for Death or Permanent Disability in Warlike or High-Risk Areas 26
8.14 Educational Support Scheme for Children of Deceased Seafarers 26
8.15 Support for Seafarer Clubs and Port Welfare Infrastructure 27
8.16 Welfare Counselling and Emotional Support 27
8.17 PRANAAM Assistance Facility 27
8.18 Overall Significance of the SWFS Presentation 28
9. Presentation on Career Progression from Ratings to Officer-Level Positions 28
9.1 Deck Department Progression 29
9.2 Engine Department Progression 29
9.3 Electrical Rating and Electro-Technical Officer Pathways 29
9.4 Dual Certification and Alternative Routes 29
9.5 Examination Requirements and Official Circulars 30
9.6 Guidance to Ratings and Families 30
10. Interactive Question-and-Answer Session 30
10.1 Career Progression for Seafarers Holding an Open CDC 30
10.2 Pending Welfare Assistance and Widow-Related Claims 31
10.3 Old-Age Assistance for Seafarers Aged 75 Years 31
10.4 Compensation and Education Support for a Bereaved Family 31
10.5 Importance of Direct Interaction 32
11. Grievance Desk and On-Site Assistance 33
13. Conclusion 34
14. Way Forward 35

1. Executive Summary

The नाविक कल्याण एवं जागरूकता अभियान (Seafarer Welfare and Awareness Campaign) was organised on 23 October 2026 at BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Tithal Beach, Valsad, Gujarat. The programme was conducted by the Seamen's Provident Fund Organisation (SPFO) and the Seafarers' Welfare Fund Society (SWFS), facilitated by the National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI).

The campaign was organised to create awareness among Indian seafarers and their families regarding provident fund facilities, welfare schemes, financial assistance, career progression opportunities, employment-related protections and grievance redressal mechanisms. It brought representatives of maritime administration and welfare organisations directly into contact with the seafaring community, providing participants with an opportunity to understand the benefits available to them and seek guidance on individual concerns.

The programme included formal addresses by maritime administration officials and NUSI representatives, a session on Recruitment and Placement Service Licence (RPSL) grievance redressal and developments in the Crew Branch, a presentation on SPFO provident fund facilities, a detailed explanation of SWFS welfare schemes, and a presentation on career progression from ratings to officer-level positions.

The session on Crew Branch developments highlighted digital initiatives relating to grievance registration, employment verification, recruitment documentation and seafarer tracking. The SPFO presentation explained the procedures and conditions governing provident fund withdrawals, the importance of nomination and contribution records, and plans to improve digital access to account services.

The SWFS presentation covered assistance available to eligible seafarers and their families in cases involving death, disability, maternity, education, retirement, medical emergencies and other difficult circumstances. It also highlighted education-related assistance for children of deceased seafarers, welfare infrastructure and counselling support for affected families.

A significant component of the programme was the interactive session during which seafarers and family members raised questions concerning career advancement, pending welfare claims, old-age benefits and compensation following the death of a seafarer. The officials provided clarifications and guided participants towards the relevant channels for further examination of their cases.

The programme concluded with a reminder to participants to make use of the grievance assistance facility and approach the concerned representatives for clarification on SPFO and SWFS benefits. Overall, the campaign reinforced the importance of awareness, accessible welfare services, transparent administration and continued engagement with India's seafaring community.

2. Background and Objectives

Indian seafarers play an important role in supporting the country's maritime sector, international trade and shipping operations. Their professional responsibilities frequently require them to remain away from their families for extended periods and work under demanding conditions. They may also face risks associated with accidents, serious illness, loss of life, employment-related disputes and other unforeseen circumstances at sea.

These circumstances can have significant financial and emotional consequences for seafarers and their families. Welfare schemes, provident fund facilities and grievance redressal mechanisms provide important avenues of support, but their effectiveness also depends on the extent to which beneficiaries understand the provisions, eligibility conditions and procedures involved.

During the Valsad programme, the addresses highlighted that many seafarers and their families may become aware of a particular welfare benefit only when a difficult situation arises. In such circumstances, a lack of information about the applicable scheme, the required documentation or the appropriate authority can complicate the process of seeking assistance.

The नाविक कल्याण एवं जागरूकता अभियान was organised to address this information gap by bringing SPFO, SWFS and maritime administration representatives closer to seafarers and their families.

The principal objectives of the campaign were:

1. **Awareness of welfare schemes:** To familiarise seafarers and their families with the assistance and welfare benefits administered by SWFS, including support relating to family welfare, medical needs, education, retirement and emergencies.
2. **Provident fund awareness:** To explain SPFO facilities, withdrawal procedures, contribution records, nomination requirements and the importance of maintaining accurate account information.
3. **Grievance redressal:** To inform seafarers about the available grievance mechanisms and provide an opportunity to raise concerns directly with the officials responsible for the relevant services.
4. **Digital service awareness:** To familiarise participants with digital facilities relating to grievance registration, employment verification, recruitment documentation and seafarer tracking.
5. **Career progression:** To explain recognised routes through which eligible ratings can pursue further certification and progress towards officer-level positions.
6. **Direct engagement with beneficiaries:** To facilitate interaction between seafarers, family members, maritime authorities and welfare organisations, enabling participants to seek guidance on specific cases.
7. **Institutional coordination:** To strengthen coordination among DGMA, SPFO, SWFS, NUSI and other stakeholders in communicating available benefits and addressing concerns within the maritime community.

3. Dignitaries and Participants

The event brought together seafarers, their family members, representatives of maritime organisations and officials associated with maritime administration, provident fund services and welfare delivery.

The programme referred to participation from Valsad and neighbouring coastal areas, including seafarers travelling from locations extending from Surat towards Umargam. During the addresses, participation exceeding 1,000 seafarers and family members was also referred to, reflecting substantial interest from the local maritime community.

3.1 Chief Guest

- **Shri Sushil Mansingh Khopde,** IPS, Additional Director General of Maritime Administration. Shri Khopde was the Chief Guest in the event programme. As he was unable to attend personally, although his message was conveyed to the seafarers through a recorded address.

3.2 Guests of Honour

- **Capt. Nitin Mukesh**, Deputy Nautical Advisor-cum-Senior Deputy Director General of Shipping (Technical), Commissioner, Seamen's Provident Fund Organisation (SPFO), and Member Secretary, Seafarers' Welfare Fund Society (SWFS).
- **Shri Satish D. Kamath**, Principal Officer, Mercantile Marine Department (MMD), Kandla.

3.3 Other participating officials and representatives

The event programme and transcripts identified the participation of the following officials and representatives:

- **Capt. Bipin Kumar**, Nautical Surveyor-cum-DDG (Tech.)/DDG, CREW (PROCESSES).
- **Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan**, Engineer and Ship Surveyor-cum-Deputy Director General of Maritime Administration (Tech.).
- **Shri Santosh Kumar Singh**, Assistant Director General of Maritime Administration.
- **Major Anutosh Singh**, Assistant Director General of Maritime Administration.
- **Shri Sunil Nair**, NUSI representative who delivered the address on behalf of the organisation.
- **Shri Mitesh Kumar Prabhakar**, Chief Executive, Gujarat NUSI.
- **Shri Suresh Solanki**, NUSI representative involved in organising and facilitating the programme.



Representatives of both SPFO and SWFS were also present to explain the applicable benefits, respond to questions and assist participants with their individual queries.

The addresses acknowledged and expressed their sincere appreciation for the guidance and leadership of **Shri Shyam Jagannathan**, IAS, Director General of Maritime Administration, whose continued support and encouragement have been instrumental in advancing initiatives focused on seafarer welfare, awareness, and overall well-being. It was emphasised that the welfare, dignity, and social security of seafarers remain causes particularly close to his heart, reflecting his commitment to ensuring that seafarers and their families receive the recognition, assistance, and support they deserve. His vision and guidance continue to inspire concerted efforts towards strengthening welfare mechanisms, enhancing awareness of available schemes and services, and ensuring that the benefits of various initiatives reach seafarers across the maritime sector.



4. Inaugural Session and Opening Proceedings

The programme commenced with delegate registration and a welcome reception, followed by the formal opening proceedings. The master of ceremonies welcomed the attendees and requested seafarers and their family members to take their seats before the programme began.

4.1 Vande Mataram and NUSI Anthem

The opening proceedings included the singing of Vande Mataram, followed by the NUSI anthem. Participants were invited to stand during the proceedings.

The inclusion of the NUSI anthem highlighted the role of seafarer representation and collective participation in advancing the interests and welfare of the maritime community. The opening proceedings established an atmosphere of unity and respect before the formal addresses and technical sessions.





4.2 Lighting of the Lamp and Saraswati Vandana

The dignitaries were invited to the stage for the ceremonial lighting of the lamp and Saraswati Vandana. This marked the formal commencement of the campaign and was attended by the invited officials and representatives.

The ceremony symbolised the beginning of the programme's awareness and information-sharing activities, with a focus on making welfare schemes and institutional support more accessible to seafarers.



4.3 Cultural Programme

A cultural performance by Team Yogesh followed the inaugural ceremony. The performance featured patriotic themes and presentations inspired by the valour and historical legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the Maratha tradition.

Through music, narration and dramatic elements, the presentation celebrated courage, sacrifice and national pride. The performance was acknowledged by the master of ceremonies and received appreciation from the gathering.

The cultural programme formed an important part of the opening proceedings, bringing together participants before the substantive sessions on welfare, provident fund facilities and career development.



4.4 Felicitation of Dignitaries

The invited dignitaries and representatives were felicitated with bouquets and shawls. The felicitation acknowledged their participation and the institutional support extended towards organising the campaign.



The opening proceedings concluded with the transition to the formal addresses, beginning with the welcome address by Shri Santosh Kumar Singh.

5. Addresses by Dignitaries and Representatives

5.1 Welcome Address by Shri Santosh Kumar Singh

Shri Santosh Kumar Singh, Assistant Director General of Maritime Administration, delivered the welcome address and introduced the objectives of the campaign.



Shri Santosh Kumar Singh welcomed the dignitaries, seafarers, their family members and representatives of the maritime community. He acknowledged the support of SPFO, SWFS and NUSI in facilitating the programme and creating an opportunity for direct engagement between the welfare organisations and their beneficiaries.

Shri Santosh Kumar Singh highlighted the importance of the maritime sector to India's economic development and international trade. He observed that seafarers work under demanding conditions and frequently remain away from their families for extended periods. Their contribution to global commerce, he emphasised, deserved recognition along with continued attention to their welfare, safety, dignity and financial security.

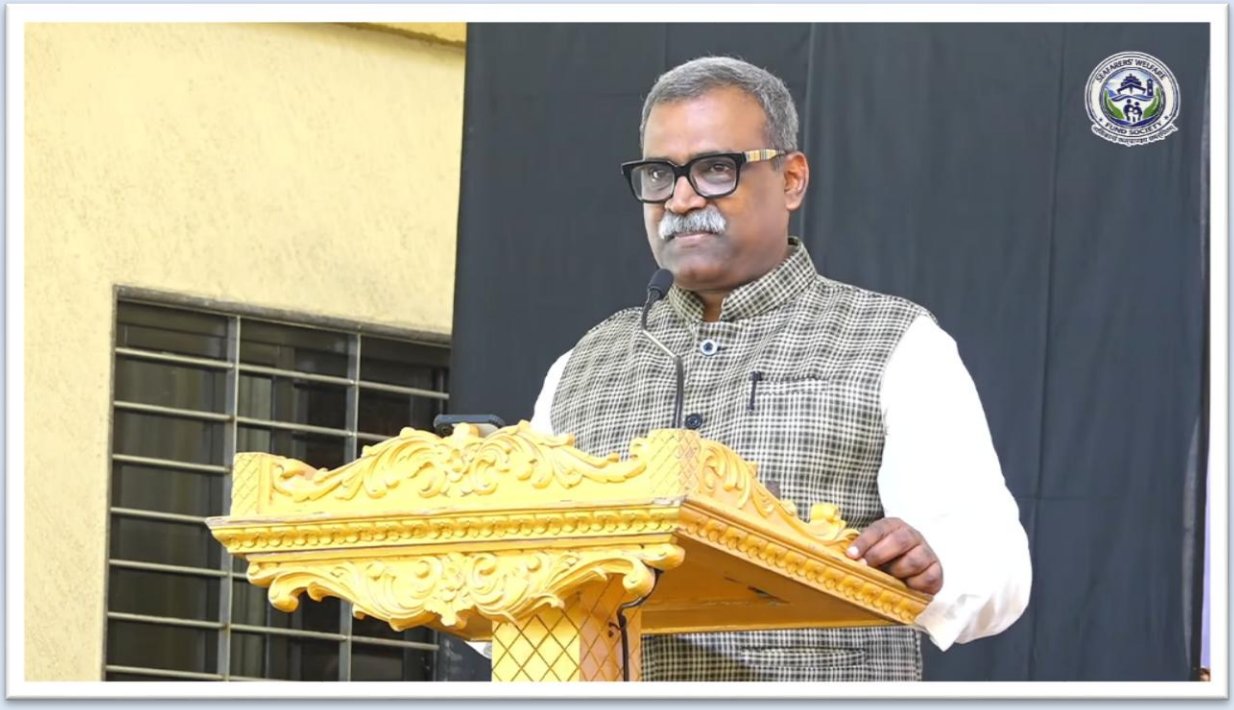
Shri Santosh Kumar Singh explained that welfare schemes can achieve their intended purpose only when beneficiaries know that they exist, understand the eligibility requirements and are aware of the procedures for accessing assistance. He therefore highlighted the importance of awareness initiatives that communicate the available facilities directly to seafarers and their families.

Shri Santosh Kumar Singh further stressed the importance of direct interaction with officials, particularly on matters relating to grievance redressal and developments in the Crew Branch. The dedicated sessions on welfare schemes and provident fund facilities were presented as opportunities for participants to obtain current information, clarify doubts and seek guidance on individual matters.

Shri Santosh Kumar Singh encouraged the gathering to participate actively, ask questions without hesitation and make full use of the assistance facilities arranged during the event. He expressed the hope that the programme would improve awareness and strengthen confidence in the welfare mechanisms established for the maritime community.

5.2 Address by Shri Satish D. Kamath

Shri Satish D. Kamath, Principal Officer, MMD Kandla, addressed the gathering and spoke about the practical difficulties faced by seafarers and their families.



Shri Kamath highlighted that many hardships experienced by seafarers remain unseen because their professional duties are carried out at sea, away from public view. Accidents, injuries, loss of life and other difficult circumstances can affect seafarers and their dependants without receiving wider recognition.

Shri Kamath referred to the serious losses suffered by members of the maritime community during recent hostilities in the Gulf and Strait of Hormuz region. The opening proceedings included a two-minute silence in memory of seafarers reported to have lost their lives during the conflict.

Shri Kamath acknowledged the role of NUSI in representing seafarers' concerns and communicating their issues to the concerned authorities. He highlighted the importance of local representation and direct communication in bringing the problems faced by seafarers to the attention of the institutions responsible for addressing them.

Shri Kamath also discussed the changing technological landscape of the maritime industry. He noted that changes in ship design, machinery and fuel systems, including the adoption of alternative fuels such as methanol and LNG, would require seafarers to remain adaptable and acquire appropriate skills.

Shri Kamath appreciated the awareness campaign for enabling seafarers to raise their concerns directly with SPFO and SWFS representatives. He encouraged participants to make use of the opportunity to understand their entitlements and communicate difficulties that might otherwise remain unreported.

5.3 Address by Shri Sunil Nair, NUSI

Shri Sunil Nair, Assistant General Secretary, NUSI delivered the address on behalf of the National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI). He welcomed the dignitaries and participants and highlighted the importance of cooperation between maritime authorities, welfare organisations and seafarer representatives.



Shri Sunil Nair acknowledged the officials who had travelled to Valsad and the participation of seafarers and their families. He described the programme as an important opportunity to bring information on welfare assistance and provident fund facilities closer to beneficiaries.

Shri Sunil Nair emphasised that many seafarers and family members may remain unaware of the benefits available to them until a situation arises in which financial or other assistance is required. He therefore stressed the importance of communicating the available benefits before the need arises, enabling seafarers and their families to understand the applicable procedures and prepare the required documentation.

Shri Sunil Nair also highlighted the role of seafarer representatives in communicating local concerns to the relevant authorities. He encouraged participants to raise their issues and use the programme to obtain clarification directly from the officials present.

Shri Sunil Nair's address reinforced the importance of continued coordination between NUSI, maritime administration and welfare institutions to support seafarers throughout their professional lives.

5.4 Recorded Message from Shri Sushil Mansingh Khopde, IPS

A recorded message from **Shri Sushil Mansingh Khopde, IPS**, **Additional Director General of Maritime Administration**, was conveyed during the programme, as he was unable to attend personally.

Shri Khopde expressed his greetings and conveyed his good wishes to the participants attending the नाविक कल्याण एवं जागरूकता अभियान at Valsad. In his message, he acknowledged the significance of the initiative and the opportunity it provided to seafarers and their families to learn about the welfare facilities available to them.

Shri Khopde extended his best wishes for the success of the programme and for the continued efforts of the concerned organisations in promoting seafarer welfare and awareness.



6. Session on RPSL Grievance Redressal and Latest Developments in the Crew Branch

The first technical session focused on grievance redressal, Recruitment and Placement Service Licence (RPSL) processes and recent developments in the Crew Branch. **Capt. Bipin Kumar, Nautical Surveyor-cum-DDG (Tech)**, **DDG, CREW (PROCESSES)**, led the session.

Capt. Bipin Kumar explained the digital initiatives being undertaken to improve the delivery of seafarer-related services, strengthen transparency in recruitment and employment documentation, and make grievance redressal more accessible.

6.1 e-NAVIK Grievance Redressal Mechanism

Capt. Bipin Kumar discussed the 24-hour grievance redressal module available through the e-NAVIK portal. He explained that the facility was intended to provide seafarers with an accessible and transparent mechanism for registering complaints and following up on their concerns.

Capt. Bipin Kumar stated that the grievance module had been launched on 15 May 2026. He cited approximately 11,000 grievances received since its launch and referred to a reported resolution rate of around 82%. These figures were presented during the event and reflect the status described at the time of the presentation.

Capt. Bipin Kumar highlighted the importance of recording grievances through an established mechanism so that complaints could be tracked and referred to the appropriate authority for examination. The presentation also discussed the availability of different communication channels to support seafarers who may have difficulty registering a grievance independently.

Capt. Bipin Kumar explained that improved digital access was intended to reduce barriers to lodging complaints, strengthen administrative accountability and enable concerns to be examined in a more systematic manner.

6.2 Seafarer Tracking and Casualty Monitoring

Capt. Bipin Kumar also explained the development of digital facilities for seafarer tracking and casualty monitoring.

Capt. Bipin Kumar referred to a seafarer tracking initiative launched on 15 August 2026 and highlighted its role in improving access to information about seafarers and the vessels on which they are serving. The presentation described the availability of relevant information in real time as particularly useful during emergencies and other situations requiring timely intervention.

Capt. Bipin Kumar explained that digital access to seafarer and vessel information could assist the authorities in responding to incidents and identifying the appropriate channels for communication and support.

The presentation also referred to work involving vessel-tracking integration, intended to improve visibility of vessel movements and provide relevant information during crisis situations.

6.3 Improvements to RPSL Processes

Capt. Bipin Kumar described improvements in the RPSL module, including simplified workflows, enhanced dashboards, online processing and real-time notifications.

Capt. Bipin Kumar explained that the digitalisation of recruitment and placement processes was intended to improve the handling of documentation and make information more accessible to seafarers. The presentation highlighted the use of digital employment agreements, allowing seafarers to review employment terms and conditions before providing consent.

Capt. Bipin Kumar explained that retaining a secure digital copy of the employment agreement would provide a useful record of the terms accepted by the seafarer. The session emphasised

the importance of reviewing the agreement carefully before accepting it and ensuring that the relevant information was properly recorded.

6.4 Employment Verification and Prevention of Recruitment Fraud

Capt. Bipin Kumar also discussed the job-authentication facility intended to help seafarers verify the authenticity of employment offers and agreements. Capt. Bipin Kumar highlighted the risks associated with fraudulent intermediaries who promise employment aboard a vessel in exchange for money. He encouraged seafarers to exercise caution when approached with employment offers and to verify the authenticity of documents through the prescribed facility.

The process described during the presentation involved submitting relevant employment documentation for verification by the concerned company. This was intended to help identify fraudulent offers and allow appropriate action to be considered where the authenticity of an agreement could not be established. The session emphasised that seafarers should avoid making payments to unverified intermediaries and should use the available verification mechanisms before accepting an employment offer.

6.5 Overall Significance of the Session

Capt. Bipin Kumar's presentation highlighted the role of digital governance in improving recruitment transparency, grievance redressal and access to information. The initiatives discussed were intended to improve traceability, assist seafarers in protecting their employment-related interests and strengthen the administration's ability to respond to complaints and emergencies.

The session also reinforced the importance of ensuring that seafarers understand and use the available facilities, rather than relying solely on informal communication when seeking assistance.



7. Presentation by SPFO on Provident Fund Facilities and Withdrawal Procedures

The second technical session focused on the facilities provided by the Seamen's Provident Fund Organisation (SPFO). **Capt. Nitin Mukesh**, **Nautical Advisor-cum-Sr DDG (CREW WELFARE)**, **Directorate General of Maritime Administration** and **Commissioner**, **SPFO**, and **Member Secretary**, **SWFS**, addressed the gathering and explained the importance of provident fund savings in supporting the financial security of seafarers and their families.



Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained the available withdrawal facilities, the documentation required for different types of applications and the importance of maintaining accurate provident fund records. The presentation aimed to make seafarers more familiar with their entitlements and reduce avoidable delays caused by incomplete or incorrect applications.

7.1 Provident Fund Withdrawal Facilities

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that eligible seafarers could access their provident fund contributions for specified purposes, subject to the applicable conditions under the governing provisions.

The presentation covered withdrawals relating to unemployment, medical needs, purchase or construction of a house, house renovation, marriage, education and final settlement following retirement or medical unfitness.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that the amount available for withdrawal and the qualifying requirements depend on the purpose for which the application is made. Participants were therefore advised to check the applicable eligibility conditions before submitting their applications.

The withdrawal facilities discussed during the presentation included the following:

- Unemployment: Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that a seafarer who had completed five years of provident fund membership and remained unemployed for more than six months could withdraw 10% of the provident fund contribution, subject to the applicable conditions.
- Medical requirements: Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that eligible seafarers could withdraw up to 25% of their contributions for qualifying medical needs involving themselves or family members. The presentation stated that this facility could be used once in two years.
- Purchase of a house or flat: Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that an eligible seafarer could withdraw up to 75% of the provident fund contribution towards the purchase of a house or flat, subject to the applicable membership and documentation requirements.
- Purchase of a plot: Capt. Nitin Mukesh discussed the withdrawal facility for eligible purchase of land or a plot, including the requirement to submit the appropriate registered sale agreement and supporting documents.
- House renovation or repair: Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that an eligible seafarer could withdraw up to 25% of the contribution towards qualifying house renovation or repair expenses, subject to the relevant conditions.
- Marriage and education: Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained the availability of withdrawal facilities for eligible marriage-related and children's education expenses. The presentation referred to withdrawals of up to 50% of the contribution, subject to the applicable conditions and frequency limits.
- Final withdrawal: Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that final settlement could be sought following retirement or medical unfitness, subject to the required CDC cancellation and other prescribed documentation.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh emphasised that these facilities were governed by the applicable provisions and that applications should be prepared carefully to avoid rejection.

7.2 Documentation and Common Errors in Applications

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted that applications were sometimes delayed or rejected because of missing documents, incorrect bank details or the submission of documents that did not correspond to the purpose of the withdrawal.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that applicants seeking withdrawals for house or plot purchase should submit the correct purchase or registered sale agreement, as applicable. Applications for medical purposes required the relevant medical documentation, while other categories required supporting records corresponding to the purpose of the withdrawal.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh also highlighted the importance of bank details matching the applicant or otherwise satisfying the prescribed requirements. Incorrect bank information could prevent payment from being processed because the organisation needed to establish that the bank account belonged to the eligible claimant.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh stated that the documentation requirements had been streamlined and that applications could be submitted through available channels, including email, in accordance with the prevailing process. He encouraged seafarers to refer to the prescribed document checklist rather than submit incomplete or unrelated records.

7.3 Timely Processing of Claims

Capt. Nitin Mukesh emphasised the importance of processing cases requiring urgent financial assistance, particularly cases involving the death of a seafarer, medical needs, daughters' marriage and education expenses.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that the organisation aimed to release eligible payments promptly when the required documentation was complete. He stated that his team was processing such cases within approximately ten days and encouraged participants to ensure that their applications contained the required records.

The presentation also referred to the applicable citizen charter timeline for withdrawal applications. Capt. Nitin Mukesh stated that the prescribed processing period could extend to 15 days, and explained that seafarers could raise a grievance through e-NAVIK if an eligible application remained unresolved beyond the stipulated period.

7.4 Importance of Nomination and Provident Fund Records

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the importance of maintaining accurate provident fund records and valid nomination details. Nomination information was described as particularly important in ensuring that the appropriate beneficiary could be identified when a settlement or claim became necessary.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged seafarers to verify their account information and ensure that their families were aware of the relevant documentation and procedures.

The presentation also discussed plans to improve access to provident fund records through digital services. The proposed system was intended to allow seafarers to access account information, check relevant records and submit applications online.

7.5 Proposed Digital Improvements

Capt. Nitin Mukesh referred to the planned introduction of an ERP-based system to improve the efficiency of provident fund services. The presentation described the proposed digital system as a means of enabling online access to account information and applications, reducing dependence on physical documentation and making the process more transparent.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh also discussed the possibility of introducing alerts to notify seafarers when employer contributions were not reflected in their accounts. This was intended to improve transparency and enable seafarers to follow up promptly where a contribution discrepancy arose.

7.6 Direct Assistance from SPFO

Capt. Nitin Mukesh invited participants to approach the SPFO representatives present at the programme for clarification on their accounts, contributions, withdrawals and nominations.

The availability of the SPFO team was emphasised as an opportunity for beneficiaries to seek assistance with their documentation and individual issues. Capt. Nitin Mukesh reiterated that maintaining accurate information and following the prescribed procedures were essential to ensuring that eligible withdrawals and settlements were processed correctly.

8. Presentation by SWFS on Welfare Schemes and Benefits

The third technical session focused on welfare schemes administered by the Seafarers' Welfare Fund Society (SWFS).

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that SWFS provides welfare and financial assistance to eligible Indian seafarers and their families. He highlighted the importance of making beneficiaries aware of the schemes available throughout a seafarer's career and beyond retirement, including assistance in circumstances involving death, illness, disability, education, abandonment and other hardships.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that the welfare framework included 13 schemes covering six broad areas: family support, medical and insurance support, education, retirement, emergency assistance and recreation or welfare infrastructure.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh emphasised that the schemes were intended to support eligible seafarers and their families at different stages of life. He encouraged participants to understand their eligibility, maintain the necessary documentation and seek clarification from SWFS representatives where required.

The following scheme details are based on the attached SWFS scheme overview. The applicable dates, eligibility conditions and claim requirements set out in the approved scheme documents should govern individual applications.

8.1 Overview of SWFS Welfare Schemes

S. No.	Welfare scheme	Assistance and key provisions
1	Survivor's Benefit Scheme (SBS)	Financial assistance of ₹6,00,000 for eligible deaths occurring on or after 27 January 2026. The scheme provides for claims by the nominee registered for the last voyage, subject to the applicable employment and documentation requirements.
2	Invalidity Benefit Scheme (IBS)	Financial assistance of ₹6,00,000 for qualifying cases of permanent disability involving loss of limbs, and eligible permanent unfitness arising from accidental injury, subject to the scheme's conditions.

3	Maternity Benefit Scheme (MBS)	Financial assistance of ₹50,000 per eligible delivery for Indian women seafarers with qualifying sea service, for deliveries occurring on or after 27 January 2026, up to a maximum of two deliveries.
4	Old Age Benefit Scheme (OABS)	Assistance of ₹50,000 for eligible seafarers attaining 65 years of age on or after 1 January 2019, and ₹1,00,000 for eligible seafarers attaining 75 years of age on or after 1 January 2026, subject to the prescribed conditions.
5	Family Benefit Scheme (FBS)	Education-related assistance, including ₹1,00,000 upon qualifying completion of DGS-approved pre-sea training and acquisition of an eligible CDC, and ₹50,000 upon qualifying completion of a two-year full-time postgraduate degree or diploma in a non-maritime subject.
6	Death on Board Benefit Scheme (DBBS)	Ex-gratia assistance for eligible cases involving death or presumed death on board. The amount is ₹2,00,000 under the earlier provision and ₹6,00,000 for qualifying deaths occurring on or after 24 March 2026.
7	Ex-Gratia Support Benefit Scheme (ESBS)	Monthly support for eligible cases involving abandoned or stranded seafarers. The assistance for qualifying cases involving families of seafarers abandoned or stranded on or after 1 January 2026 is ₹20,000 per month, subject to the scheme's limits and conditions.
8	Award to Meritorious Child of Seafarers (AMCS)	A cash award of ₹25,000 for an eligible child who secures first rank in a full-time degree or postgraduate degree in a non-maritime subject at an Indian university.
9	Medical and Term Insurance Premium Assistance Scheme (MTIPS)	Reimbursement of 50% of qualifying insurance premiums, up to ₹5,000 in total, comprising up to ₹3,000 for medical insurance, ₹1,000 for critical illness insurance and ₹1,000 for term insurance, subject to eligibility and application requirements.
10	Medical Support Scheme for Critical/Terminal Illness (MSS)	One-time financial assistance of ₹2,00,000 for eligible Indian CDC holders diagnosed with a recognised critical or terminal illness, supported by the prescribed medical certification.
11	Indian Certificate of Competency Recognition and Career Progression Scheme	One-time financial assistance of ₹2,00,000 for eligible rating seafarers who obtain their first Indian Certificate of Competency (CoC) and become officers.
12	Financial Assistance for Death or Permanent Disability in Warlike/High-Risk Areas	One-time financial assistance of ₹10,00,000 for eligible cases involving death or permanent disability of Indian CDC holders in designated warlike or high-risk areas, subject to the scheme's prescribed conditions.
13	Educational Support Scheme for Children of Deceased Seafarers (ESS)	Annual education assistance of up to ₹25,000 per eligible child, on a reimbursement basis for qualifying

		educational expenditure, for children studying in Classes I to XII, subject to the scheme's conditions.

The scheme overview identifies the above benefits and associated eligibility requirements.

8.2 Survivor’s Benefit Scheme

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained the importance of the Survivor’s Benefit Scheme in supporting the family of an eligible Indian seafarer who dies during the off-article period.

The attached scheme overview specifies financial assistance of ₹6,00,000 for qualifying deaths occurring on or after 27 January 2026. Earlier benefit amounts were ₹4,00,000 for deaths on or after 29 April 2024 and ₹2,00,000 for deaths on or after 16 March 2016.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the importance of nomination and timely application. Under the scheme, the nominee registered for the last voyage is the relevant beneficiary, subject to the prescribed requirements. The seafarer's last engagement must have been through an Indian shipping company or an RPSL-registered company.

For deaths occurring on or after 27 January 2026, the off-article period covered under the scheme is 36 months, compared with the earlier provision of 24 months introduced from 29 April 2024. Claims must be submitted within three years from the date of death. The scheme overview also describes the importance of providing the relevant bank, nomination and supporting legal documentation.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged seafarers and family members to maintain accurate nomination information and understand the process before the need to submit a claim arises.

8.3 Invalidity Benefit Scheme

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that the Invalidity Benefit Scheme provides financial assistance to eligible seafarers who become permanently unfit for sea service because of an accidental injury, subject to the prescribed conditions.

The attached scheme overview specifies assistance of ₹6,00,000 for qualifying permanent disability cases involving loss of limbs from 29 April 2024 onwards. It also provides for qualifying cases of permanent unfitness caused by accidental injury, including the applicable off-article provisions for injuries incurred on or after 27 January 2026.

The presentation highlighted the importance of obtaining the required medical certification from a DGS-approved medical practitioner and submitting the prescribed supporting documents. Claims must be filed within three years of the date of the certificate issued by the DGS-approved medical practitioner.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged eligible seafarers to maintain the relevant medical reports and documentation, and to contact SWFS representatives if they required assistance understanding the procedure.

8.4 Maternity Benefit Scheme

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained the availability of maternity assistance for eligible Indian women seafarers.

The attached scheme overview specifies a benefit of ₹50,000 per qualifying delivery for deliveries occurring on or after 27 January 2026, increased from the earlier amount of ₹25,000 per delivery. The benefit is available for a maximum of two deliveries.

Eligibility requires the woman seafarer to have qualifying sea service through an Indian shipping company or an RPSL-registered company. The claim must be submitted within two years of the delivery date.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh emphasised the importance of communicating this information to women seafarers so that eligible beneficiaries do not miss out on support because of lack of awareness or late submission of applications.

8.5 Old Age Benefit Scheme

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained the Old Age Benefit Scheme and the financial assistance available to eligible seafarers on reaching the prescribed ages.

Under the attached scheme overview, eligible Indian CDC holders who attain 65 years of age on or after 1 January 2019 may receive ₹50,000, subject to the prescribed requirements. These include the relevant CDC cancellation and application within 12 months of attaining the qualifying age. The scheme also specifies a minimum of six months' sea service after the age of 50 through an Indian shipping company or an RPSL-registered company.

For eligible seafarers attaining 75 years of age on or after 1 January 2026, the scheme provides assistance of ₹1,00,000. Applications must be submitted within 12 months of attaining the age of 75, subject to the applicable provisions.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh acknowledged that cut-off dates and eligibility conditions had created concerns among some seafarers, particularly those who had reached the qualifying age before the effective date specified under the revised provision. He indicated that the concerns were being examined and that possible relaxation would be considered through the appropriate process.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged participants approaching or exceeding the qualifying ages to contact the concerned representatives and have their eligibility and application status checked.

8.6 Family Benefit Scheme

Capt. Nitin Mukesh discussed the Family Benefit Scheme, which includes education-related assistance for eligible seafarers and their families.

The attached scheme overview specifies one-time assistance of ₹1,00,000 upon qualifying completion of pre-sea training at a DGS-approved institute and acquisition of an eligible CDC on or after 27 January 2026.

It also provides assistance of ₹50,000 upon qualifying completion of a two-year full-time postgraduate degree or diploma in a non-maritime subject from an Indian university or an institution recognised under the applicable provisions.

The scheme requires a minimum of six months' sea service after 1 April 2014. Applications are to be submitted within 12 months of completion of the qualifying course or the relevant certificate, as applicable.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the importance of understanding education-related assistance available through SWFS, particularly when planning the training and further education of seafarers and their families.

8.7 Death on Board Benefit Scheme

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained the Death on Board Benefit Scheme, which provides ex-gratia assistance to the eligible nominee in cases involving death or presumed death on board a vessel.

The attached scheme overview states that the scheme became effective on 12 March 2025 and covered eligible deaths or presumed deaths on board occurring on or after 12 March 2023. The benefit was initially specified as ₹2,00,000, with the amount amended to ₹6,00,000 for qualifying deaths occurring on or after 24 March 2026.

The scheme applies to eligible Indian CDC holders whose employment was through an Indian shipping company or an RPSL-registered company. The application must be submitted within three months of the date of death or reported missing, subject to the prescribed conditions.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh emphasised the importance of keeping nomination details updated and ensuring that family members know which authority to contact in the event of an onboard casualty.

8.8 Ex-Gratia Support Benefit Scheme

Capt. Nitin Mukesh discussed the Ex-Gratia Support Benefit Scheme, which provides additional financial assistance in qualifying hardship situations involving seafarers who have been abandoned or stranded.

The attached scheme overview specifies a monthly assistance provision and notes that the benefit for qualifying cases involving families of seafarers abandoned or stranded on or after 1 January 2026 has been amended to ₹20,000 per month.

The benefit is payable to the eligible nominee, subject to the prescribed maximum duration and conditions. The scheme overview states that assistance becomes payable after two months of a seafarer being stranded, based on local confirmation, and that an application must be submitted within two months of the date of stranding or abandonment.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the importance of awareness of this provision, given the financial difficulties that may arise when a seafarer is stranded or abandoned and the family requires continuing support.

8.9 Award to Meritorious Child of Seafarers

Capt. Nitin Mukesh discussed the Award to Meritorious Child of Seafarers, intended to encourage academic achievement among the children of eligible Indian seafarers.

The attached scheme overview specifies a cash award of ₹25,000 for an eligible child who secures first rank in a full-time degree or postgraduate degree in a non-maritime subject from an Indian university. The scheme became effective on 12 March 2025, with the application to be submitted within two months of the university's confirmation.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged seafarers and families to familiarise themselves with the eligibility requirements and apply where the qualifying conditions are met.

8.10 Medical and Term Insurance Premium Assistance Scheme

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the Medical and Term Insurance Premium Assistance Scheme, which provides reimbursement of a portion of qualifying insurance premiums to eligible Indian CDC holders.

The scheme provides reimbursement of 50% of qualifying premiums, up to a maximum of ₹5,000 in total. The component-wise limits specified in the scheme overview are:

- Medical insurance: up to ₹3,000.
- Critical illness insurance: up to ₹1,000.
- Term insurance: up to ₹1,000.

The scheme requires eligible Indian CDC holders to meet the applicable sea-service criteria. The application must be made at least 60 days before the insurance policy lapses, as specified in the scheme overview.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged participants to retain the relevant policy documents and premium payment receipts and to check their eligibility before the policy deadline.

8.11 Medical Support Scheme for Critical or Terminal Illness

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained the availability of one-time financial assistance for eligible Indian CDC holders diagnosed with a recognised critical or terminal illness.

The attached scheme overview specifies one-time assistance of ₹2,00,000, supported by a medical certificate issued by a government or recognised hospital. An application must be submitted within six months of the date of the medical certificate.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the importance of knowing about this assistance before a medical emergency arises. The presentation also referred to the need for appropriate medical documentation and the value of contacting the SWFS team for guidance on the application process.

8.12 Indian Certificate of Competency Recognition and Career Progression Scheme

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that SWFS provides one-time financial assistance of ₹2,00,000 to eligible rating seafarers who obtain their first Indian Certificate of Competency (CoC) and progress to officer-level positions.

The scheme is intended to encourage professional advancement and support eligible seafarers who undertake the examinations and processes required to obtain the relevant Indian CoC.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged ratings to understand the applicable certification pathways and ensure that they retained the relevant CoC documentation when applying for the benefit.

8.13 Financial Assistance for Death or Permanent Disability in Warlike or High-Risk Areas

Capt. Nitin Mukesh discussed the financial assistance provision for eligible cases involving death or permanent disability suffered by Indian seafarers in designated warlike or high-risk areas.

The attached scheme overview specifies one-time assistance of ₹10,00,000, effective from 23 March 2026, for eligible Indian CDC holders, subject to the prescribed conditions.

The scheme lists the following applicable areas:

- Persian/Arabian Gulf.
- Gulf of Oman.
- Indian Ocean.
- Gulf of Aden.
- Southern Red Sea.

Applications must be received within three months of the date of death or the date on which the seafarer is reported missing, subject to the scheme requirements.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the importance of ensuring that families are aware of this assistance and understand the process for seeking support in eligible cases involving death or permanent disability in these high-risk areas.

8.14 Educational Support Scheme for Children of Deceased Seafarers

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the Educational Support Scheme for Children of Deceased Seafarers, which provides annual assistance towards the education of eligible children.

The attached scheme overview specifies assistance of up to ₹25,000 per eligible child per academic year, on a reimbursement basis for actual eligible educational expenditure. The scheme covers eligible children studying in Classes I to XII, subject to its prescribed conditions.

The scheme is available for a maximum of two children per deceased seafarer. The deceased seafarer must have held a valid Indian CDC and have been employed on an Indian-flag vessel or through an RPSL-registered company. The application is to be submitted by the surviving parent or legal guardian, together with the prescribed documents and valid fee receipts.

The scheme became effective from 1 April 2026, with eligible educational expenditure incurred on or after that date considered for reimbursement. Annual assistance is subject to satisfactory academic progress and continued fulfilment of the eligibility conditions.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the importance of supporting the education of children whose families may face financial difficulties after the death of a seafarer. The discussion drew attention to the need for eligible families to be aware of the scheme and the documentation required to access the assistance.

8.15 Support for Seafarer Clubs and Port Welfare Infrastructure

Capt. Nitin Mukesh discussed SWFS support for seafarer clubs, welfare centres and port-related welfare infrastructure.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that seafarers may require suitable facilities during shore leave, particularly after long periods aboard vessels. Welfare clubs and related facilities can provide opportunities to rest, communicate with family members and access basic recreational and support services while ashore.

The presentation referred to assistance for seafarer welfare facilities at various locations across India and highlighted the continuing effort to improve the facilities available to seafarers at ports.

8.16 Welfare Counselling and Emotional Support

Capt. Nitin Mukesh highlighted the difficulties faced by families following the death of a seafarer or during other distressing circumstances.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that welfare counselling and emotional support mechanisms had been introduced to help families communicate their concerns and receive appropriate assistance. Welfare counsellors were described as being available to provide emotional and grief-related support to seafarers' families, including next of kin where required.

The presentation highlighted that welfare support should extend beyond financial assistance to include sensitive communication and support for families dealing with loss or uncertainty.

8.17 PRANAAM Assistance Facility

Capt. Nitin Mukesh also referred to the PRANAAM assistance facility at Mumbai airport. The presentation described the facility as providing support to seafarers in relation to travel and employment-related documentation before international departure.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained the importance of verifying relevant documents and reducing problems arising from fraudulent or incorrectly used employment documentation. The facility

was discussed as a preventive support mechanism intended to assist seafarers before they encounter difficulties during immigration processes.

8.18 Overall Significance of the SWFS Presentation

Capt. Nitin Mukesh's presentation provided an overview of the breadth of the welfare framework administered by SWFS. It highlighted that the organisation's role extends across family support, medical assistance, education, retirement, emergencies and welfare infrastructure.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged seafarers and their families to familiarise themselves with the schemes, maintain valid documentation and seek guidance from SWFS representatives when required. The presentation reinforced that awareness of eligibility and application procedures is essential to ensuring that available assistance reaches the intended beneficiaries.

9. Presentation on Career Progression from Ratings to Officer-Level Positions

The programme included a dedicated presentation on career advancement opportunities for ratings seeking progression to officer-level positions. **Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan, Engineer and Ship Surveyor-cum-Deputy Director General of Maritime Administration (Tech.)**, led the session.



Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan explained the available professional development pathways for seafarers and highlighted the requirements relating to academic qualifications, sea service, training, examinations and competency certification.

Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan emphasised that ratings should understand the available progression routes and consider the opportunities for further certification rather than remaining unaware of the routes through which they may advance professionally.

9.1 Deck Department Progression

Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan explained the progression pathways available to deck ratings seeking to move towards officer-level certification.

The presentation covered recognised routes involving the prescribed academic qualifications, GP Rating training, required sea service and relevant watchkeeping experience. Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan explained that eligible candidates could progress through the applicable NCV and foreign-going certification pathways, subject to fulfilling the requirements of the relevant route.

The presentation highlighted the importance of maintaining accurate sea-service records, completing the required training and examinations, and planning career development with a clear understanding of the applicable certification process.

9.2 Engine Department Progression

Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan explained the progression routes available to engine ratings seeking advancement towards engineering officer positions.

The presentation covered the importance of the prescribed educational qualifications, including relevant academic and technical qualifications, and the need to complete the required sea service and training.

Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan explained that eligible engine ratings could pursue recognised certification pathways towards higher engineering responsibilities, subject to the applicable requirements.

9.3 Electrical Rating and Electro-Technical Officer Pathways

Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan also discussed progression routes involving electrical ratings and Electro-Technical Officer (ETO) certification.

The presentation described the role of relevant electrical training, bridging courses, sea service and examinations in progressing through the available pathway. Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan highlighted that electrical ratings could explore opportunities for further certification in accordance with the applicable requirements.

The session underscored the importance of understanding emerging professional opportunities within the maritime sector and maintaining the qualifications necessary to pursue them.

9.4 Dual Certification and Alternative Routes

Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan discussed dual-certification pathways involving deck and engine competencies. He explained that eligible seafarers could explore routes to gain competencies across both areas, subject to the prescribed sea-service, training and certification requirements.

The presentation highlighted that such pathways could provide flexibility to seafarers seeking to broaden their professional opportunities and move between suitable roles where permitted under the relevant rules.

9.5 Examination Requirements and Official Circulars

Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan emphasised that career progression requires careful planning and compliance with the applicable certification requirements.

Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan encouraged seafarers to maintain their records, assess their eligibility and consult their employers and senior officers for guidance on the courses and examinations required for the relevant route.

The presentation referred to applicable DG Shipping notices and circulars covering different progression pathways. The relevant official documents were highlighted as the source for detailed information on eligibility, sea service, training and examinations.

Participants were encouraged to consult the applicable official requirements before applying for a particular pathway rather than relying solely on a brief description of the options discussed during the session.

9.6 Guidance to Ratings and Families

Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan encouraged ratings to plan their career progression proactively and make use of recognised certification pathways. He emphasised that seafarers should assess the route best suited to their qualifications, experience and professional interests, and seek advice where required.

The session was particularly relevant to younger seafarers and families interested in understanding the longer-term opportunities available to ratings. It reinforced the value of career guidance and access to clear information about the requirements for advancement.

10. Interactive Question-and-Answer Session

An interactive question-and-answer session was conducted following the technical presentations. The session provided seafarers and their family members with an opportunity to raise concerns directly with the concerned officials from the Crew Branch, SPFO and SWFS.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh, Capt. Bipin Kumar and Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan were invited to participate in the discussion. The session was intended to help participants understand the applicable provisions, clarify doubts and receive guidance on individual matters.

10.1 Career Progression for Seafarers Holding an Open CDC

A participant asked whether seafarers who had entered through an Open CDC route could progress to officer or engineering positions.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh and the officials participating in the interaction explained that career progression depended on the applicable eligibility requirements, qualifying sea service,

training and certification route. The participant was advised to examine the requirements applicable to the particular pathway and select the appropriate route based on his qualifications and experience.

The discussion highlighted the importance of providing clear information to seafarers who wish to improve their qualifications and advance professionally.

10.2 Pending Welfare Assistance and Widow-Related Claims

A woman participant raised concerns about financial assistance she stated had not been received following the death of her husband, who had worked in the shipping industry.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained that the issue required examination of the application and the particular scheme under which the claim had been submitted. The participant was directed to contact the relevant representative so that the details of the earlier application could be checked.

The discussion also distinguished existing old-age assistance under SWFS from a proposed annuity or pension-related arrangement being discussed in relation to SPFO. Capt. Nitin Mukesh clarified during the interaction that the proposed annuity arrangement had not yet been implemented at the time of the event.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged the participant to provide the relevant details for further checking and clarification through the concerned office.

The exchange highlighted the importance of helping bereaved families understand the benefits available to them, including the distinction between existing schemes and proposals that remain under consideration.

10.3 Old-Age Assistance for Seafarers Aged 75 Years

A participant sought clarification regarding the old-age benefit available to eligible seafarers on reaching 75 years of age, particularly the applicability of the benefit in cases affected by the prescribed effective date.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh explained the applicable benefit of ₹1,00,000 for eligible seafarers reaching 75 years of age on or after 1 January 2026, subject to the prescribed conditions and application requirements.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh acknowledged that the effective-date provisions had created difficulties for certain cases and indicated that the concerns were being examined through the appropriate process. He stated that possible relaxation was being considered, without indicating that such relaxation had already been approved.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged participants to approach the officials present to discuss their individual eligibility and seek clarification on their applications.

10.4 Compensation and Education Support for a Bereaved Family

A woman participant described the difficulties she had faced following the death of her husband in 2022. She stated that her husband had been medically fit before joining the vessel and subsequently developed a serious illness. She explained that financial assistance had been provided towards his treatment, but that the family had been unable to secure the compensation or further assistance they sought. The participant stated that she had three children and was facing difficulties in meeting household and education expenses. She requested assistance from the authorities and explained that her efforts to obtain support through the company had not resulted in a satisfactory resolution.

Capt. Bipin Kumar and the officials participating in the interaction advised the participant to register a complaint through the e-NAVIK Grievance Portal and submit the relevant supporting documentation. The officials indicated that the case could be examined individually through the grievance mechanism.

The interaction demonstrated the practical importance of accessible grievance redressal channels in cases where seafarers' families face unresolved employment-related and compensation issues.It also highlighted the need to provide clear guidance to families who may be unfamiliar with the procedures for seeking assistance following the death or serious illness of a seafarer.

10.5 Importance of Direct Interaction

The interactive session demonstrated the value of bringing the responsible officials into direct contact with seafarers and their families. The questions raised during the session reflected the range of circumstances in which beneficiaries may require further clarification, including career advancement, pending welfare claims, retirement assistance and compensation-related concerns.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh, Capt. Bipin Kumar and Shri Mugilrajan Devarajan encouraged participants to approach the relevant representatives for further assistance and use the prescribed channels for matters requiring individual examination.



11. Grievance Desk and On-Site Assistance

The programme included a dedicated grievance desk for SPFO and SWFS, as reflected in the Minute-by-Minute programme.

The grievance desk was scheduled to remain operational from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Participants were informed that representatives would be available to answer queries and assist with matters relating to provident fund records, nomination details, scheme eligibility, applications and pending claims.

Capt. Nitin Mukesh encouraged seafarers and family members to approach the concerned representatives for guidance on their individual circumstances. The officials emphasised the importance of providing the necessary information and documents so that the relevant matter could be examined through the appropriate institutional channel.

The grievance desk provided an opportunity for participants to move beyond general awareness and seek assistance with specific cases. This was particularly relevant to beneficiaries requiring clarification on applications, eligibility conditions or unresolved issues.

The programme also highlighted the importance of ensuring that seafarers and their families know where to direct their queries after the event, particularly when additional examination or supporting documentation is required.



12. Closing Proceedings

The recorded proceedings concluded with further announcements and arrangements for the participants.

The National Anthem was sung before the closing announcements and lunch arrangements. Participants were thanked for attending the programme and contributing to its success.

The organisers reminded participants that the grievance desk would remain open until 5:00 PM for queries relating to SPFO and SWFS. They encouraged seafarers and their families to make use of the facility and approach the concerned representatives for assistance with individual questions or applications.

The closing remarks reiterated that the primary purpose of the campaign was to ensure that seafarers and their families were aware of the available welfare facilities and understood the channels through which they could seek assistance.

The programme concluded with appreciation for the participating seafarers, their families, the officials and the organising institutions. The event reinforced the importance of sustained engagement between maritime administration, welfare organisations and the seafaring community.

13. Conclusion

The *नाविक कल्याण एवं जागरूकता अभियान*, held at Valsad on 23 October 2026, was one of the many initiatives undertaken by DGMA to strengthen its connection with Indian seafarers and their families. At its heart, the campaign carried a simple but important message: **the welfare of a seafarer matters, and so does the well-being of the family waiting for them at home.**

Seafarers spend long periods away from their loved ones, working in challenging conditions and shouldering responsibilities that are often unseen. Their contribution to the maritime sector deserves not only recognition but also care, security and meaningful support when they or their families need it most. The programme brought this commitment to life through discussions on SWFS welfare schemes, SPFO provident fund facilities, digital grievance redressal, employment protection and career progression.

The interactions with seafarers and their families were particularly meaningful. The concerns raised regarding pending claims, old-age assistance and compensation served as a reminder that behind every application is a person, a family and, at times, a difficult personal circumstance. These concerns reinforced the importance of listening with empathy, providing clear guidance and ensuring that eligible beneficiaries know where to turn for help.

The campaign also highlighted that welfare is not limited to financial assistance. It includes protecting a seafarer's dignity, helping families navigate difficult times, supporting children's education, enabling professional growth and ensuring that no eligible beneficiary misses out simply because they lack information.

Through continued collaboration among DGMA, SPFO, SWFS, NUSI and other stakeholders, the aim must remain to make welfare support more accessible, responsive and meaningful to the people it is intended to serve. The Valsad campaign was an important step in this direction and a reminder that **caring for seafarers means caring for their families, recognising their sacrifices and standing beside them when support is needed most.**

The spirit of the campaign should continue beyond the event itself, through sustained outreach, timely follow-up and a shared commitment to ensuring that every seafarer and family is aware of the support available to them. Ultimately, the true measure of such initiatives lies not only

in the awareness they create, but in the reassurance they provide and the lives they are able to support.

14. Way Forward

- **Continued Outreach:** Conduct similar awareness programmes in other seafarer-populated regions, including guidance on rating-to-officer career progression.
- **Grievance Resolution:** Follow up on grievances and pending cases raised by seafarers and their families during the campaign.
- **Welfare Awareness:** Disseminate information on SPFO and SWFS schemes, eligibility criteria, benefits and application procedures.
- **Digital Services:** Promote the use of e-NAVIK, employment verification facilities and digital provident fund services.