

India Launches World's First Ever Facial Bio-Metric Data Based Seafarer Identity Document

Shri Mansukh Mandaviya says this will provide ease of getting jobs to the growing number of Indian Seafarers

New Delhi: 28.08-2019: India has become the first country in the world to issue **Biometric Seafarer Identity Document (BSID)**, capturing the facial bio-metric data of seafarers. Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, MoS (I/C) Shipping and Chemical & Fertilizers launched the project in New Delhi today. He also handed over the new BSID cards to five Indian seafarers.

The new facial biometric technology is a marked improvement over the two finger or iris based bio-metric data, with modern security features. It will make the identification of the SID holder more reliable and efficient, while protecting their dignity and privacy. India had made a presentation on this technology at ILO .

Speaking on the occasion Shri Mandaviya said that the country is moving ahead rapidly under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The shipping sector is seeing major developments in the areas of coastal shipping, inland waterways and other maritime activities. This is leading to generation of employment in the sector, which is evident in the growing number of Indian seafarers in the international shipping industry. The total number of Indian seafarers who were employed on Indian or foreign flag vessels increased from 154349 in 2017 to 208799 this year, showing an unprecedented increase of 35%.

Shri Mandaviya said that today's development is very significant against the backdrop of the increase in seafaring activities . The new document will give a foolproof identification to our seafarers which will facilitate their movement, provide ease of getting jobs and help in identifying them from any location in the world.

The new card is in confirmation of the Convention No. 185 of the International Labour Organisation on BSID. India ratified the Convention in October 2015.

The BSID introduces modern security features. It will have a biometric chip embedded in it. The security of the BSID card is ensured at various levels and through different methods. At the time of data capturing the live face is cross matched through passport photo using a face matching software. The card has two optical security features- Micro prints/micro texts and Unique Guilloche pattern. A software has been developed for capturing the facial biometrics and its authentication through the public key infrastructure.

A record of each SID issued will be maintained in a national database and its related information will be internationally accessible.

In India the BSID project has been taken up in collaboration with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Mumbai. The Government notified the Merchant Shipping (Seafarers Bio-metric Identification Document) Rules in 2016. The issuance of SID involves the collection of biometric and demographic details of the seafarers, their verification and then issuance of the card to them.

Nine data collection centers have been setup at Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Noida, Goa, New Mangalore, Kochi, Vizag & Kandla for issue of BSID. Every Indian seafarer who possesses a valid Continuous Discharge Certificate issued by the Govt. of India will be eligible for issue of a BSID. The total number of existing Indian seafarers who will be required to be issued BSIDs is around 3,50,000 . All the existing seafarers will be given BSID within the next 2 years. After this, it is estimated that around 15000 new seafarers will be issued BSIDs annually .