

India Highlights Maritime Safety and Gender Inclusivity at the 134th Session of IMO Council

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The Indian delegation, led by Shri T.K. Ramachandran, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India, is participating in the 134th session of the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London.

On the opening day of the session, India delivered a strong and principled statement addressing recent maritime incidents involving foreign-flagged container vessels operating in Indian waters. These incidents, caused by undeclared hazardous cargoes and structural and stability issues, have raised serious safety concerns.

India urged the IMO to undertake a comprehensive investigation and global review of all such incidents involving container ships. Citing the proactive role of the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard in ensuring safety of life at sea, India called for urgent enhancements in the safety framework for container shipping. The Indian statement underscored the need to reinforce international protocols related to packaging, declaration, stowage, and monitoring of lithium-ion batteries and IMDG cargo.

India proposed the establishment of IMO-led investigations into such incidents to help build global best practices, improve standardisation, and strengthen operational norms that ensure the safety and security of container ship operations across the world.

During the deliberations, India also actively participated in the agenda on gender equality, aligning with the IMO's Gender Inclusion Strategy. The Indian delegation highlighted the national initiative *Sagar Mein Samman* (Honour at Sea), launched on 25 November 2024 by the Directorate General of Shipping. This landmark programme aims to foster a safe, respectful, and inclusive maritime ecosystem, empowering women from seafaring to leadership roles, in alignment with India's Vision@2047 and IMO's strategic objectives.

India proudly shared the remarkable achievement of a **650% increase in the number of Indian women seafarers**, showcasing the country's commitment to creating equal opportunities in the maritime sector.

The Indian delegation reaffirmed its continued support to IMO's efforts towards maritime safety, environmental protection, and inclusive development of the global maritime community.



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