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துறைமுகங்கள் மற்றும் கப்பல்துறை அமைச்சு  
MINISTRY OF PORTS & SHIPPING

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திகதி  
Date } 02.12.2020

Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Secretary-General, International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)

ITF President, International Transport Federation (ITF)

Dear Sir,

**CREW CHANGES OF INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS OFF SRI LANKA**

1. Hon Minister of Ports and Shipping has instructed me to response to appeals by the IMO, ICS, ITF and many other bodies, Sri Lanka has opened up for crew changes of international seafarers through an Offshore Floating Hub (aka a Flotilla) positioned off the Port of Galle operated by a **Public-Private-Partnership (PPP)** – (Rakna Arakshaka Lanka Ltd. and Avant Garde Maritime Services (Pvt) Ltd).
2. We have realised the dire straits faced by seafarers unable to sign off, hopelessness of relief crew seeking employment, and the resultant grave predicament of ship owners, technical managers, charterers, and crewing agents, prompting the UN decision to designate seafarers as “key Workers” providing essential service.
3. Arrival and departure of seafarers at the Flotilla could be by commercial or charter flights. The Indians from Cochin, Mumbai, Chennai, Madras could arrive to Mattala International Airport by Charter Flights. European and other nationalities would be through Maie International Airport since it is open for any flight to land (commercial or charter flights). We have arranged flight from Male to Mattala International Airport and vis vasa for seafarers to join the respective ship, from Mattala to Galle Port by road and from there by boats to floating platform and to respective ship. Also an agent form our end would be stationed at Male to coordinate all movements of seafarers.

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4. The PPP has recognised the industry-developed protocols under IMO guidance setting out general measures and procedures designed to ensure that ship crew changes and travel take place safely during the Covid-19 pandemic, as discussed at 102<sup>nd</sup> sessions of Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 102), and has pledged to conform to international and local safety protocols. We are aware that IMO efforts are only as good as effectiveness of member states in implementation of guidance into practice.
5. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of the crew change operation is attached for information and dissemination as required.
6. PPP has been instructed to independently inform flag states and other stakeholders.
7. For further details about the operation and any clarification, please contact the under mentioned of the PPP;

a) Name: Capt. Sanjaya Dahanayake SLN (Rtd)  
Mob No: +94 777 308948  
Email: [dahanayake.s@avantmaritime.com](mailto:dahanayake.s@avantmaritime.com)

b) Name: Nissanka Senadhipathi  
Mob No: + 94 77 731 6995  
Email: [yapas@slt.net.lk](mailto:yapas@slt.net.lk)

8. We presume the IMO will include relevant details in its data dissemination platform; Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS), for the benefit of the overall industry.

Thank you.  
Yours Sincerely,

**Secretary,**  
**Ministry of Ports & Shipping, Sri Lanka**

**Attachment:**  
Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Copies:

1. Secretary to the President
2. Secretary to the Prime Minister
3. Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. Secretary, Ministry of Defence
5. Chairman, Sri Lanka Ports Authority
6. Director General of Merchant Shipping
7. Sri Lanka Office of ITF
8. Public Private Partnership





# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP) CREW CHANGES OF INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS OFF SRI LANKA

## 1. CONCEPT

- 1.1 The basic concept of the model is to carry out crew changes of international seafarers in a sustainable manner taking advantage of the strategically important geographical location of Sri Lanka straddling a major shipping lane, and is based on having a passenger ship as an Offshore Transit Hub (OTH) as a Flotel (floating hotel) positioned just off the Port of Galle, Sri Lanka.
- 1.2 International seafarers are required to arrive in Sri Lanka through Mattala International Airport in Sri Lanka through chartered flights.
- 1.3 Since chartered flights require minimum number of passengers and that Republic of Maldives permit seafarers to arrive in Maldives by commercial passenger flights, seafarers could alternatively arrive at Male International Airport as convenient in passenger flights in fewer numbers and onwards to Mattala International Airport in a chartered flight from Maldives as arranged by Sri Lanka.
- 1.4 Seafarers aspiring to make use of the facility are required to have a negative PCR report on a test carried out within 72 hours of departure from last airport/seaport.

## 2. SIGNING ON OPTIONS

### 2.1 OPTION 1 - Through Mattala International Airport, Sri Lanka in chartered flights

- (a) Seafarers will be met by designated agent.
- (b) Carry out immigration formalities for Sri Lanka.
- (c) Directly transferred to Port of Galle in disinfected vehicles (60-minute journey).
- (d) Carry out emigration formalities at Port of Galle.
- (e) Transferred from the Port of Galle to OTH by crew boat.
- (f) Remain in the OTH until arrival of respective parent ship.
- (g) Transferred to respective parent ship by dedicated crew boat.

**2.2 OPTION 2 - Through Male International Airport, Maldives in passenger flights and transferred to OTH through Mattala International Airport**

- (a) Seafarers will be met by designated agent.
- (b) Carry out immigration formalities for Maldives.
- (c) Proceed to designated hotel in Male.
- (d) Remain in hotel until chartered transit flight to Sri Lanka.
- (e) Proceed to Male International airport.
- (f) Carry out emigration formalities.
- (g) Transferred to Mattala International Airport by chartered flight.
- (h) Met by designated agent at Mattala International airport.
- (i) Carry out immigration formalities for Sri Lanka.
- (j) Transferred from the Port of Galle to OTH by crew boat.
- (k) Remain in the OTH until arrival of respective parent ship.
- (l) Transferred to respective parent ship by dedicated crew boat.

**3. SIGNING OFF**

a). For those who are joining through commercial flights from Maldives, the PCR test will be carried out in Male if required, depending on seafarers destination.

b). No requirement of PCR test for seafarers who travel to India.

**4. GENERAL**

Rates of different all-inclusive packages will be indicated directly to crew managers/agents.