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Recruitment positives hide real concerns, warns seafarer report

THE GROWTH IN supply of industry certified ship officers over the past 15 years has been encouraging but has consistently failed to match the growth in demand.

While this doesn't necessarily mean that vessels in the world merchant fleet are running short of officers, it indicates a "pattern of shortage" that might require a higher level of officer rotation to fill berths on ships as needed, according to the Seafarer Workforce Report, 2021, which was released today.

A report by BIMCO and the International Chamber of Shipping provides a regular snapshot of the seafarer landscape.

It attempts to estimate the balance between the global supply of qualified and competent seafarers available and the industry's demand for officers and ratings.

The 2021 report seeks also to understand the profile of the workforce by requesting data on nationality, rank/role, age profiles, and gender, and estimates how an expansion of the world fleet will impact the demand for seafarers.

The global supply of seafarers in 2021 is estimated at 1.9m, of which 858,000 are officers. That represents an 11% hike in the number of Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) certified officers since the last report in 2015, and an 18.5% increase in ratings.

Looking five years ahead, using a basic forecast of world fleet growth of 1.25%, the report forecasts demand for officers in 2026 of 947,000 — requiring an average annual percentage increase of 2%, and a demand for ratings of 1.1m — an average annual increase of 0.6%.

As part of the exercise, company experts were asked to provide views on how the seafarer workforce has evolved since 2015, together with the critical issues affecting the workforce including patterns in world trade, seafarer-berth ratio, size of the world merchant fleet, and changes in operational crewing levels.

Among the key findings were that a little under half (44%) of the global seafarer workforce came from five countries — the Philippines, Russian Federation, Indonesia, China, and India. Ukraine was added to the list when STCW certification was specified.

Analysis of demographic data shows an ageing workforce. One respondent observed: "We are seeing that experienced officers are getting older, while 'backfill' is not enough to cover up for the attrition."

The largest proportion of officers aged between 21 and 30 are Indian, and the largest proportion between 31 and 40 are Chinese. Most Filipino officers are aged over 41, while almost one quarter of Russian officers are over 50 years of age.

The demographic profile for STCW certified ratings shows that while 75% of Indian ratings are aged between 21 and 40, significant proportions of Ukrainian, Chinese, and Filipino ratings fall within the 51-60 age bracket.

Data for management level officers (master, chief officer, chief engineer, 2nd engineer), operational level officers, and support level ratings shows ages have all increased since 2015. Management level officers are concentrated between 41-50 years, while operational level officers tend to be in their 20s and 30s.

There has been a significant increase in the number of STCW certified female seafarers, from 16,500 in 2015 to 24,000 in 2021, split between 7,289 officers and 16,770 ratings. Female ratings are predominantly working on cruiseships and passenger ferries.

However, while the growing number of seafarers is heartening, respondents from shipowners and operators, and from ship and crew managers raised concerns. When recruiting STCW certified seafarers, companies reported the highest levels of difficulty in recruiting engineering officers and electro-technical officers. It is relatively easier to recruit ratings to work on the deck and in the engine room.

Respondents said there was still a problem with a shortage of officers with technical experience, especially at management level. In the tanker and offshore sectors in particular, there is a shortage of management level deck officers.

The greatest hurdle in recruiting the right candidate was lack of experience working on specific ship types, followed closely by competency in ship handling and technical knowledge. The report suggested that this could be associated with the difficulties of meeting high commercial standards and charterparty requirements "as well as increasing technological specialisation of vessels".

Regarding officer recruitment and turnover over the past six years, respondents said that on average almost two-thirds (64%) of the officers working within their company have been recruited in the past five years. Officer turnover, at 6.2% in 2021, was a slight decrease from the 8.6% reported in 2015.

"Regular monitoring of factors impacting seafarer retention is crucial when accounting for the supply-demand balance," the report recommended. Factors such as contract length, wellbeing policies, and security concerns may affect seafarer retention and possible recruitment of new seafarers.

Nevertheless, the recruitment picture is positive, with companies reporting higher numbers of officers recruited than leaving.

In conclusion, using the likely newbuilding ship orderbook with the likely ship recycling rate, plus an estimate of average operational crewing levels and seafarer-berth ratios, the report forecasts an shortfall of 17,900 officers in 2026 and 6,866 ratings, to be filled by an increase in recruitment.

"Looking back at the historical trends of increase in supply, it is a manageable task to keep the supply and demand in balance if the current trends in training and recruitment growth are maintained," the report says.

WHAT TO WATCH:

Union demands release of Wakashio crew

THE International Transport Workers' Federation is calling for the immediate release and repatriation of the crew who were on board the Japanese bulker *Wakashio* (IMO: 9337119) when it ran aground in a coral reef off Mauritius a year ago.

The crew have been held by Mauritian authorities since the incident, which caused widespread environmental damage to the island that relies on tourism and fishing.

The ITF said it, and affiliated seafarer unions, have "deep concerns" about the treatment of the crew, who have effectively been detained without charge.

"The ITF supports thorough, independent investigations of the factors relating to any maritime incident, including those that may have affected the grounding of *Wakashio*," said ITF seafarers' section chair David Heindel.

"In this instance, we are concerned about the lack of appropriate legal proceedings taking place. While, in a particular context, criminal charges against seafarers may be justified, it is important that people have access to justice and are treated fairly... We believe the treatment experienced by the crew of *Wakashio* violates their human rights."

The Panama-flagged 203,130 dwt vessel deviated from its planned course for wi-fi signal, according to preliminary findings by the flag state. It was also using an incorrect electronic navigation chart.

The final report is being held up as the Mauritian authorities have not allowed access to the voyage data recorder, nor to official ship documents.

The vessel, owned by Nagashiki Shipping and chartered by Mitsui OSK Lines, ran into the coral reef on July 25 last year. Almost three weeks later it broke in two, spilling 1,000 tonnes of fuel oil into the pristine waters around the island.

While the forward section was scuttled a month after the incident, the aft was only recently dismantled by a Chinese salvage firm.

Following the grounding, captain Sunil Kumar Nandeshwar and chief officer Tilakaratna Subodha were arrested by Mauritian authorities. On August 18, they were charged with endangering safe navigation.

The pair have been detained in prison since their arrest and have been denied bail.

Most of the remainder of the crew have been detained under "house arrest" and kept in a local hotel, on the grounds that they may be required to appear as witnesses in a trial that has yet to commence, the ITF said.

In a letter to Mauritius president Prithvirajsing Roopun, the ITF asked for an "expeditious conclusion" of the saga faced by the crew, some of whom have not seen their families for more than two years, given they had been on board the vessel for 12 months or more, exceeding the Maritime Labour Convention rules.

Transnet declares force majeure as cyber attack effects unresolved

TRANSNET, South Africa's ports authority, has had to declare force majeure following a cyber attack.

The force majeure was said to have been declared at some Durban, Port Elizabeth, Ngqura, and Cape Town terminals.

According to one ship agent, Transnet confirmed it was a cyber attack and has been using private emails to communicate with operators. Several attempts to re-establish its IT network have so far failed.

Transnet is now aiming to be up and running by the end of this week, the ship agent said, adding that manual operations were ongoing, although slow.

While the cargo-handling operations were being "badly affected" by the attack on July 22, reefers were being prioritised given that the citrus fruit export season was in full swing, generating much-needed revenue for the economy.

Delays can be expected as dozens of vessels head to the four ports in the coming week, Lloyd's List Intelligence data shows.

Maersk said that while Transnet's system continues to be disabled, progress has been made with limited restoration of NAVIS (the terminal operating system) in Durban, which is "a positive development".

"Operationally, some limited landside activities have resumed and, on the waterside, manual operations are underway, which are encouraging developments," it added.

At Durban's pier 1 and pier 2 container terminals, the stack register team is walking around and creating an inventory of all container positions to be updated into NAVIS.

"At this time exports are being accepted for refrigerated cargo only," the largest container line said in an update. "This process is fully currently manual."

Maersk said it did not currently have clarity on when acceptance for dry goods will resume, nor when rail stacks will re-open.

"We continue to actively engage with Transnet to support the recovery process, co-ordinating with the continuity plans being put in place," it said.

ANALYSIS:

Refinery dislocation to drive product tanker demand growth, says Ardmore

ARDMORE Shipping Corp cited refinery dislocation, low fleet growth and a return to pre-pandemic oil demand for a return to "healthy spot market" rates by the end of the year for its fleet of 27 product and chemical tankers.

The Nasdaq-listed shipowner kicked off what will be another painful earnings season for tanker operators.

It reported a second-quarter net loss of $8.1m, even as average time-charter earnings gained for a third consecutive period.

Medium range tankers that comprised 21 ships in the fleet were currently earning $10,000 per day over the third quarter, the company's chief executive said on an investor call on July 27.

That was lower than the average of $11,650 per day seen for the three-month period ending June 30 because of the "seasonally slower" summer season.

The second-quarter rate was $475 higher than the first three months of 2021, and nearly $3,000 above final quarter of 2020.

"While the market has been quite weak, it's felt quite normal in terms of the type and the amount of trading activity," said chief executive Anthony Gurnee.

Additional demand for refined products would be some 3m-4m barrels per day higher and once added to this base demand in the final half of the year, "you should have a very healthy spot MR market again", he added.

The company estimated that by November additional demand for aviation, road and other fuels would be 2.8m bpd above the second quarter level, and reach 3.6m bpd by December.

Ardmore had 80% of its fleet operating in the spot market, with 55% deployed east of the Suez Canal and the rest in the west. Three quarters of its revenue was derived from carrying refined products, and the remainder chemicals.

Chief financial officer Paul Tivan highlighted accelerating tonne-mile demand as a result of refinery dislocation as the main driver for improving rates for product tankers.

He defined refinery dislocation as the shutdown of locally oriented refineries in developed areas which are subsequently supplied by products shipped by sea.

Refinery closure have been hastened by a pandemic-related downturn in oil demand, and would support MR tonne-mile demand growth of 2.3% every year until 2030, the company estimated in its presentation.

Mr Tivan cited the closure of Australia's 146,000 bpd Kwinana refinery in April for adding an additional 10 MR tanker shipments each month that was responsible for 0.5% addition to global tonne-mile demand.

Tonne-mile demand measures cargo carried by volume travelled and is used as a proxy for vessel demand.

Some 4.5m bpd of refinery capacity has closed since the beginning of 2020, a company presentation showed, while new refineries totalling an additional 9.2m bpd would be opening between 2021 and 2025.

This included Saudi Arabia's 400,000 bpd Jazan refinery, and Kuwait's 615,000 bpd al-Zour facility, which is expected to launch later this year.

"Refinery dislocation developments are providing a significant boost to our market, which will become more evident in the coming months as oil consumption returns to more normalised levels," said Mr Tivan.

Each 100,000 bpd refinery shift equated to demand for an additional 10 MR vessels and 0.5% growth in tonne-mile demand, according to Ardmore Shipping's presentation. A low orderbook and higher scrapping levels would also keep fleet growth in check, the company said.

The shipowner reported revenue of $47.3m, which was $20.6m, or 30%, below the same period of 2020, when rates were particularly strong.

MARKETS:

Europe's box hubs back to pre-pandemic volumes

BOX volumes at northern Europe's two leading container hubs have returned to pre-pandemic levels, despite the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the supply chain and severe congestion.

Rotterdam handled 7.6m teu in the first six months of the year, up by 8.7% on the same period a year earlier when the first stages of the pandemic and lockdowns in Europe saw a 7% decline.

But volumes have now recovered to stand 1% above where they were in the first six months of 2019.

Belgian rival Antwerp fared better during the early days of the pandemic, gaining a small 0.4% rise in volumes in the first six months of 2020.

A further 5.1% increase this year has taken its total first half of the year throughput to 6.2m teu, closing the gap on Rotterdam.

But while box volumes have recovered for Rotterdam, the total tonnage handled by the port was down from 2019, despite strong increases in iron ore and coal handling during the first half of this year.

"It is encouraging to see that the total throughput volume is increasing quarter on quarter," said Port of Rotterdam Authority chief executive Allard Castelein. "However, this does not mean that the port of Rotterdam has already made up entirely for last year's coronavirus dip."

The rise in demand for containerised goods, combined with the disruptions in the supply chain from events such as the Suez Canal blockage and the coronavirus outbreak in Shenzen had led to delays in box freight, but Rotterdam said the handling of containers flows was "quite smooth".

There was also an increase in ro-ro traffic following a decline in the early months of 2021 at the end of the Brexit transition period.

"The fact that Brexit has not caused any major problems in logistics in Rotterdam demonstrates the quality of the Portbase systems and indicates that those systems deliver good support for both the transport sector and the government," the port said. "It also makes it clear how important is digitalisation."

Antwerp also said it had recovered from the initial shocks of Brexit.

"The UK is the third-largest maritime trading partner for the port of Antwerp," it said. "The start of Brexit at the beginning of this year created major challenges due to increased administrative complexities and more controls, which resulted in congestion, longer transit times and higher costs. As a result, the flow of goods between the EU and the UK is decreasing."

But the port had put efforts into expanding shortsea services between Antwerp and the UK and Ireland to achieve a modal shift from ferries to containers.

Irish importers and exporters were increasingly abandoning the land bridge over the UK and are instead opting for a direct maritime connection, keeping cargo within the EU and avoiding UK customs formalities.

"We knew that Brexit would have major consequences for the transport of goods between Europe and the UK," said Antwerp chief executive Jacques Vandermeiren. "By preparing ourselves well and focusing on shortsea connections and lo-lo cargo, we can convert the challenges into opportunities."

Rotterdam also remained positive about the outlook for port.

"The economy is picking up, as is world trade," it said. "These are positive drivers of further recovery in the throughput volume in the port of Rotterdam."

But it warned of "challenges and uncertainties", particularly regarding the progress of the pandemic. "On balance, we expect throughput volume growth to continue in the second half of 2021."

Beazley interims confirm hardening marine rates

BEAZLEY has seemingly confirmed widespread reports of a double-digit hardening in hull and machinery rates in the first half of 2021, with interim results pointing to an increase of around 10%.

The prominent re/insurer Beazley also saw higher turnover in its marine division in the period under consideration, generating a divisional operating profit of $43.1m, up from $8.1m last time round.

Marine's combined ratio was slashed from a break-even 98% to a healthily profitable 76%.

Gross written premiums for marine came in at $194.1m, up from $176.3m at the halfway stage of 2020.

Beazley chief executive Adrian Cox described the performance as "a strong start to the year, benefiting from solid rate increases averaging 10%".

Indeed, with the upturn visible in some shipping segments, marine is now seen as an opportunity, and significant capital will be deployed to support it.

"While growth and rate [sic] were most favourable in hull, cargo and aviation, it is pleasing to see all areas gained ground. Our overall claims experience was benign in the first half of the year", he added.

The last two years have seen the hull market slowly harden after decades of losses, with the Lloyd's market Decile 10 crackdown on underperformers one of the obvious catalysts.

However, another more recent driver has been steel prices, which have doubled over the past 12 months. As a result, repair yards are asking for more money to do the jobs insurers pay them to do when vessels sustain hull damage.

APMT offers alternative to west coast rail congestion

MAERSK'S APM Terminals unit is targeting the disruption occurring on US west coast rail services to encourage shippers to look for alternative routes into US Midwest markets through its Mobile, Alabama facility.

A shortage of rail chassis and congestion at rail terminals in Chicago has seen Union Pacific and BNSF reduce rail freight services out of the US west coast.

Cargo from Long Beach and Los Angeles is being delayed for as long as 12 days waiting for rail services, increasing congestion at the ports.

There has been a sharp increase in the number of vessels waiting at anchor.

The Marine Exchange of Southern California said 30 boxships were awaiting berths at the end of last week.

Mobile, on the US Gulf coast, faces few of these problems.

"We're trying to help alleviate Midwest supply chain pressures for customers," APMT Mobile managing director Brian Harrold said in a statement. "Ocean carriers are looking for more

gateway options into the Midwest market. We've got berth space available and 35 moves per hour per crane berth productivity.

"Our rail product is a consistent performer that can handle much more volume."

Mobile offers daily departures from five Class 1 railroads that connect into the US heartland, including a 2.5-day doublestack Canadian National Railway service to Chicago.

APMT's facilities at Mobile have been expanding. Last year it completed an extension programme and can now handle 14,000 teu vessels that have transited the Panama Canal.

While its volumes remain small — it handled just 419,000 teu in 2019 — it has ambitions to reach 1.5m teu. It currently has five Asia-US services calling at the port.

Previous periods of congestion on the US west coast have benefitted alternative gateways to the US hinterland, particularly through east coast terminals.

With those also facing increasing congestion, smaller US Gulf ports will be hoping their time has come.

IN OTHER NEWS

Competition watchdog appeals Newcastle box terminal ruling
AUSTRALIA's competition watchdog has appealed the Federal Court's ruling in a complicated dispute concerning the building of a container terminal at the coal port of Newcastle.

In June the court threw out the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's 2018 case against NSW Ports, the consortium that operates Sydney's port Botany and port Kembla, finding that provisions in a 2013 privatisation deal that forced Newcastle to compensate NSW Ports if it handled more than 30,000 teu a year were not anti-competitive.

On Tuesday ACCC chair Rod Sims said the deeds would effectively hinder or prevent the development of a competing box terminal at Newcastle for 50 years.

MAN Energy confirms engine for Maersk's CO2-neutral methanol feedership
MAN ENERGY Solutions will build the engine for Maersk's first CO2-neutral, methanol-powered feedership.

The German engineering company announced that it will provide the engine for the 2,100 teu vessel that will be delivered in 2023 and will be the first ship to run on CO2-neutral methanol.

Earlier this month, Maersk revealed the ship, which it has made the face of its 2050 full-decarbonisation ambition, will be built at the Hyundai Mipo Dockyards in South Korea.

MSC joins feasibility study for hydrogen-powered cruiseship
MSC's cruise unit is joining a study on developing a hydrogen-powered cruiseship.

The study to assess the feasibility of designing and building zero-emissions vessel will also involve Italian shipyard Fincantieri and energy infrastructure company Snam.

Fincantieri said the partners will "determine the conditions for the design and construction of what would become the world's first oceangoing hydrogen-powered cruiseship".

Bullying hotline for seafarers sees surge in calls
THE impact of the pandemic on the mental health of seafarers has been shown by a surge in the number of calls to an industry welfare organisation.

A phone line operated by Mental Health Support Solutions saw a large increase in calls from seafarers between April and June.

"During this quarter of the year, the number of high-risk cases rose by 60% compared with the previous quarter [January to March 2021]," the group's quarterly report said. "This confirms that the impact of the pandemic on mental health is increasing. We are not at the peak of the mental issues arising as a result."

China port calls slump as typhoon takes its toll
PORT calls at Shanghai and Yangshan were at just 10% of their usual numbers as the Chinese hubs prepared for the direct hit from typhoon In-fa.

Figures from Lloyd's List Intelligence's vessel tracking service indicate that just 41 container-related vessels called at Shanghai and Yangshan in week 30, down from 436 the previous week.

The figures record port calls by containerships, general cargo vessels with container capacity, con-ro vessels and container barges.

Grindrod Shipping takes full control of IVS Bulk venture

GRINDROD Shipping, a Singapore-based owner of smaller-sized bulk carriers, has agreed to buy out its IVS Bulk joint venture partner Bain Capital.

The $46.3m deal to acquire the 31.14% stake from the private equity firm, which is subject to customary closing conditions, is expected to finalise no later than the end of September, Grindrod said.

The total purchase price comprises $37.2m for Bain's ordinary equity shares and $9.1m for its preference shares.

MOL to develop deck cranes as sails

MITSUI OSK Lines, the Japanese shipping conglomerate, said it has entered a joint venture with Oshima Shipbuilding and Iknow Machinery to develop the technology to use deck cranes as sails.

The Iknow Delta Sail Crane is a sail that can be mounted on a ship's cargo handling cranes and similar equipment to boost propulsion.

The research project aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vessels while they are underway by unfurling a sail which has been added to ship equipment such as triangular parts of existing cargo handling cranes, to use offshore winds to provide additional propulsion.

PSA sells 20% stake in Thai terminal operator

PSA Southeast Asia has agreed to sell as much as 20% of Eastern Sea Laem Chabang Terminal Co.

Thailand-listed JWD InfoLogistics said its purchase of a stake in the container terminal operator, known as Esco, from the PSA International unit was a "significant investment".

It said the transaction will take place in two stages and is expected to be completed before the end of the year.

Classified notices follow

PAKISTAN NATIONAL SHIPPING CORPORATION

(Statutory Corporation, Established under the ordinance, XX of 1979)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
HIRING OF A CONSULTANT FOR AFRAMAX NEWBUILDING PROJECT

Tender No. PRCD/SB/2021/085

1. Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) invites proposals from Consulting firm (who have experience of Ship building and Classification Societies that are a member of International Association of Classification Societies IACS) to be appointed as PNSC's consultant for Aframax new building project.

2. Method of selection will be **Least Cost Selection Method** under Regulation 3C of the Procurement of Consultancy Services Regulations, 2010 of the PPRA. Interested firms should have atleast 10 years' experience and requisite knowledge for undertaking such assignment.

3. This RFP document is available at the address stated below from Monday to Friday during office hours 09:30 am to 04:30 pm till **30th August, 2021** and may be obtained free of cost on any working day OR can be downloaded from PNSC website www.pnsc.com.pk , this advertisement is also available on PPRA website at www.ppra.org.pk

4. Proposals should be sent by e-mail to the address: new.build@pnsc.com.pk , title of tender is **"HIRING OF A CONSULTANT FOR AFRAMAX NEWBUILDING PROJECT"** latest by (1100 PST/0600 GMT) **31st August, 2021**. Bids will be opened on the same day at (1130 PST/0630 GMT) in the presence of bidders, who wish to attend.

5. Moreover Pre-bid meeting shall be held on **10th August, 2021** (1500 PST/1000 GMT) at Board Room, 14th Floor, PNSC Building. However, International bidders can join through video-link for which they will have to send an email at sandp@pnsc.com.pk 2 (two) days prior to Pre-bid conference for coordination.

6. PNSC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals as per Public Procurement Rules-2004. Further information can be obtained from following:

MR. ALI IMAM QADRI, General Manager (Procurement)
Procurement Department, First Floor, PNSC Building, M.T Khan Road,
Karachi. Pakistan.
P: +922199203980 to 99 (extension: 390, 353)
E: ali.qadri@pnsc.com.pk
W: www.pnsc.com.pk

NOTICE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

ADMIRALTY COURT (QBD)

Claim no: AD-2021-000041

Any loss, damage and delay caused to any property or to any infringement of any rights as a result of the grounding of the M/V "EVER GIVEN" along the Suez Canal, Egypt on 23 March 2021

Notice is hereby given to:

All persons claiming and / or being entitled to make claims by reason of or resulting from or in connection with any loss, damage and delay caused to any property or any infringement of any rights as a result of the grounding of the M/V "EVER GIVEN" along the Suez Canal, Egypt on 23 March 2021.

A general limitation decree was made on 13 July 2021 in an Admiralty Action in the High Court of Justice of England and Wales, no: AD-2021-000041, on the application of Luster Maritime S.A and Higaki Sangyo Kaisha Limited (the "Claimants") limiting the Claimants' liability for claims of a type which fall within the 1976 Convention on Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims to 81,563,858 Special Drawing Rights.

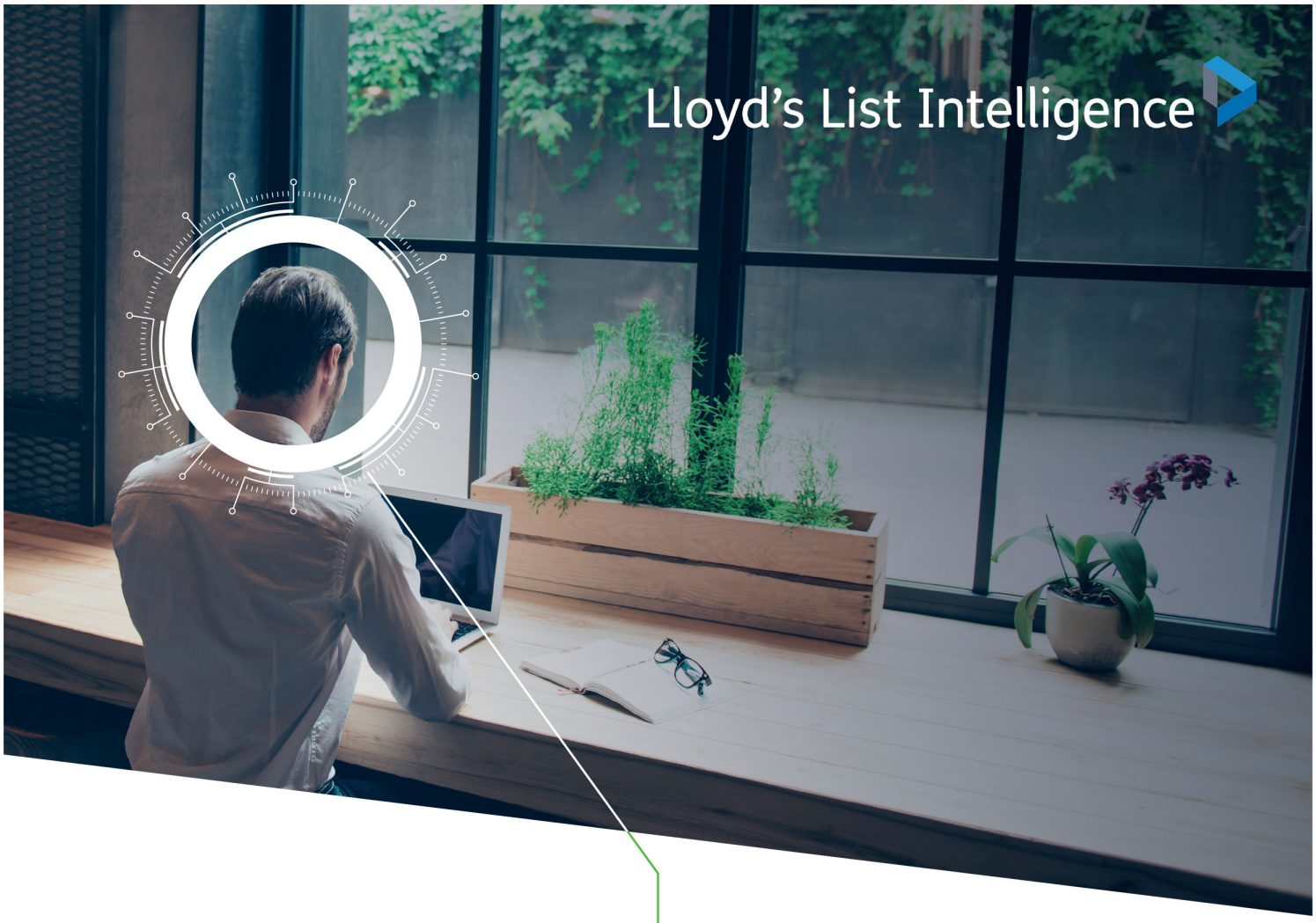
Any application to set aside the said decree must be made on or before 20 September 2021.

The Claimants have constituted a Limitation Fund by paying into the High Court of Justice of England and Wales the amount of £84,005,005.12 by way of a letter of undertaking from the U.K. Mutual Steam Ship Assurance Association Ltd.

Any claims of a type which fall within the 1976 Convention on Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims must be made in this Admiralty Action on or before 20 September 2021.

All applications and claims are to be filed with the Admiralty and Commercial Registry and Listing Offices, 7 Rolls Building, Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1NL, United Kingdom and copies sent to Claimants' solicitors referred to below.

The Claimants, Luster Maritime S.A and Higaki Sangyo Kaisha Limited, are represented by Holman Fenwick Willan LLP of Friary Court, 65 Crutched Friars, London EC3N 2AE, United Kingdom; tel: +44 (0)20 7246 8000, ref: CIW/JBK/43673-5



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