



**15 August 2020**

Dear Readers,

**Happy Independence Day**

It was on August 15, 1947, when India gained freedom from the British Rule and decided to be an **independent** democracy. So, India completes 73 years of **Independence** on this Saturday, but it will be the **74<sup>th</sup> Independence Day**, on 15 August 2020. This wonderful day always brings me nostalgic memories of the celebrations on board the ship during my seafaring days panned over 18 years at Sea. This day starts rather early on board with crew busy tying up semaphore flags on a long rope, flung all across from mast to mast and making it look so colourful. Special flag hoisting ceremony on the poop deck will be next with rendition of National Anthem. Cooks on board prepare special meals the whole day including special Indian sweets. Invariably there will be few ladies on board sailing as supernumerary, they will dress up in their best costumes and hit the galley early giving helping hand to the chefs with a lady touch. I remember my wife was always extra happy on such occasions and along with other few ladies will plan celebration programs few days in advance. Heart rendering patriotic songs will be played on the Ship's Public Address System the whole day and clearly audible all over the length and breadth of the ship on all decks. Everybody is in good mood this day and feels one with the nation. Grand party in the evening in Recreation room is icing on the cake and its loads of fun with games, singing of songs and enjoying the multi cuisine.



Indian seafarers on global merchant fleet are competent in the highest traditions of the Sea. Active Indian seafarers, employed aboard Indian or foreign flagged ships, has grown by about 45 percent in the last three years and is well above 250,000 including women seafarers. Indian Navy is second to none and besides the primary duty of guarding the country and reconnaissance missions, has won laurels by rendering assistance to merchant ships from pirate attacks, evacuating the citizens from various countries in crisis situations.

My Salutes to our Indian Navy and Indian Merchant Navy seafarers on 74<sup>th</sup> Independence Day.

Yours truly,

Capt. Vikas Vij (MD)