



‘A Smooth Sea Never Made a Skilled Sailor’: Why Young Indians Continue to Choose Life at Sea

As conflict rattles global shipping routes and uncertainties cloud the horizon, a new generation of Indians is still choosing the sea. On this International Day of the Seafarer, Goan sailors tell us why the risks of being far out at sea never stopped them and what it truly costs to carry the world's trade on your shoulders.

The ocean does not promise safety. It promises adventure, challenge and a life lived beyond the ordinary.

Every year on June 25, on the occasion of the International Day of the Seafarer, the world pauses to acknowledge the unsung efforts of those brave men and women, who live a life at sea, ensuring that global trade is kept alive and kicking.

This year's theme, ‘Carrying World Trade. Carrying the Risks,’ hints at challenge, depth and the kind of growth that only comes from navigating the unknown. And yet, year after year, young men and women from Goa and across India are choosing to answer its call, even as headlines about global shipping conflicts and maritime uncertainties dominate the news.



Risk was never a reason to step back. Pranav Chavhan, a student at Verna-based Kamaxi Maritime Academy (KMA) says, “a smooth sea never made a skilled sailor,” indicating how the rough tides make the toughest seamen who face regular challenges with resilience and push the boundaries of professionalism.



This spirit is precisely what KMA has built its foundation on, standing as a testament to how maritime education in India is evolving. The principal Manoj Kumar Pandey sums it up, "We have incorporated additional training material emphasising the need for a resilient and balanced approach to any emergency that the ship and its crew may face." Support extends beyond the classroom to their families who are stationed onshore too.



According to academy alumnus Glanal Saldanha, seafarer training taught him to "think clearly under pressure, make sound decisions and work effectively as part of a multicultural team." He emphasises how safety, leadership and emergency preparedness have been invaluable in building confidence during difficult situations. The lessons learned during the training, guide and help him and many other sailors, face challenges with professionalism and determination.



Another alumna, Madhuri Kaithawas, who continued to serve her crew with professionalism even through the loss of her mother, credits the sea for teaching

her resilience she never knew she had. To the young women who stand at the crossroads of ambition and doubt, she has a clear message: "I would encourage them to pursue it with confidence. Success at sea depends on your skills, dedication, professionalism, and willingness to learn, not your gender." It is a reminder that the maritime world has room for anyone willing to show up, put in the work, and weather the storm.

The International Day of the Seafarer is more than a calendar date. It is a reminder that 90 per cent of global trade moves by sea, carried on the shoulders of men and women who chose courage over comfort. And as long as the world needs the ocean, there will always be those who choose to face every wave, every storm, and every risk because that is what seafarers do.
