

Synergy Onyx safety seminar brings MOL, seafarers and shore teams together in Pune

■ BSN Network / Mumbai

Focused one-day programme examines operational incidents, fuel management, machinery reliability, bridge discipline and the behaviours that underpin safe vessel operations



Synergy Marine Group brought together seafarers, representatives from Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL) and its shore-based operational teams for the Synergy Onyx Crew Safety Seminar at the Sheraton Grand in Pune on 24 July 2026.

The seminar was attended by 30 shipboard personnel, two owner representatives and 20 shore colleagues from Synergy's Marine, Technical, HSQE and Crewing functions.

Designed as a focused operational engagement, the programme provided sufficient time for participants to examine case studies, question established practices and discuss how lessons from incidents can be translated into safer decisions onboard.

Opening the seminar, Ajay Kumar Chaudhry, Co-CEO – Ship Management at Synergy Marine Group, reflected on the relationship between MOL and Synergy, which began in 2013.

"This trust took thirteen years to build. It can be tested in a single watch," he told participants.

Chaudhry connected MOL's BLUE ACTION 2035 ambitions and its focus on preventing serious marine incidents, pollution, fatalities and cargo damage with the decisions taken onboard every day.

He emphasised that maintenance standards, accurate reporting and sound professional judgement must be accompanied by a willingness to stop and seek guidance whenever uncertainty arises.

"The calls that concern me are the calls that never come," he said. "A concern raised early is one we solve together."

MOL shares operational lessons

Capt. Devender Joshi, General Manager at MOL, presented the owner's perspective through case studies based on incidents and operational experience from across MOL's wider fleet.

His session examined how relatively small deviations can develop into larger safety, regulatory or commercial consequences when they are not identified and addressed early.

Capt. Joshi reiterated the Master's overriding responsibility for the safety of the vessel. This includes exercising independent professional judgement and intervening when navigational circumstances require it, including where the Master considers that following a pilot's advice may place the vessel at risk.

He also stressed the importance of accurate and timely statements of fact being communicated directly to the owner following an incident or operational irregularity.

Thorough vessel inspections were another central theme. Familiarity with a vessel or routine operation, he observed, should never be allowed to weaken professional scrutiny or create assumptions about the condition of equipment and systems.

The discussion also examined the regulatory and commercial consequences that can arise from discrepancies in fuel management, documentation and onboard practices.

Focus on fuel handling and machinery condition

Uday Kumar, Deputy General Manager at MOL, led a technical session on VLSFO and LSMGO handling, vibration

monitoring and the operational requirements associated with container ship charter operations.

The fuel-management discussion covered storage, treatment, compatibility, changeover practices and the operational controls required when handling different fuel grades.

Participants considered the importance of planning fuel changeovers carefully, maintaining the correct temperatures and purification arrangements, and monitoring machinery performance before, during and after a changeover.

Kumar also highlighted vibration monitoring as an important element of machinery-condition assessment. Changes in vibration patterns can provide an early indication of developing defects, allowing shipboard and shore teams to investigate before equipment reliability is compromised or a failure occurs.

The MOL sessions repeatedly returned to three fundamentals: know the vessel, maintain accurate records and do not allow familiarity to weaken scrutiny.

From compliance to behaviour-led performance
Maneesh Pradhan, Managing Director and Global Head of Crewing

at Synergy Marine Group, addressed the behavioural and organisational factors behind operational excellence.

He called for a shift from compliance-driven execution to behaviour-driven performance, from reactive maintenance to preventive and predictive thinking, and from over-reliance on individual officers to system-led reliability.

Pradhan framed sustained operational performance around four principles: competence, culture, cause and consistency.

Competence, he said, must extend beyond certification and technical knowledge to the confidence and judgement required to act correctly under pressure.

Culture is demonstrated not through statements made ashore, but through the decisions people take onboard when supervision is absent and operational demands increase.

Cause gives individuals and teams a clear understanding of why a task matters, while consistency ensures that standards are maintained across vessels, contracts and crew rotations.

The discussion also examined the risks created when undesirable behaviours are tolerated or allowed to become normal practice.

Case studies connect ship and shore

The wider programme covered environmental vigilance, monetary claims, bunkering, fuel treatment, bridge discipline, anchoring, voyage data recorder findings, auxiliary-engine issues, emergency equipment, near-miss reporting and enclosed-space entry procedures.

Synergy's Marine, Technical and HSQE teams used incident investigations and operational findings to facilitate discussions with the participating seafarers.

A corrective-action workshop enabled ship and shore colleagues to work through the causes of operational deficiencies and consider whether proposed actions addressed only the immediate event or the underlying behavioural and systemic factors.

The seminar concluded with an extended open discussion and feedback session, allowing participants to raise operational concerns and identify areas where procedures, training or shore support could be strengthened.

The focused regional format was intended to support direct engagement between the owner, seafarers and the teams responsible for providing shore-based operational support.

Rather than treating the programme only as a series of presentations, the sessions were structured around case studies, questions and practical discussion.

The underlying message throughout the day was that seminars do not improve safety on their own. Their value depends on whether participants examine decisions honestly, raise concerns early and apply the learning consistently when they return to their vessels.

As Chaudhry observed, trust may be built over many years, but it is protected through the individual decisions, reports and watches that make up everyday vessel operations.