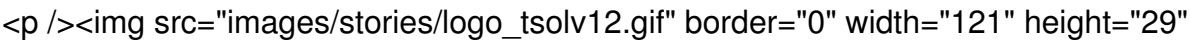


## Stranded seamen seek minister's aid to return home

Written by

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 PETALING JAYA: The 15 foreign seamen who were stranded in the MV Banga Biraj for over a year before being rescued on June 3 off Northport are seeking the Human Resources Minister's help to expedite their travel home. The crewmen, who are staying at the human trafficking victims' safe house in Tanjung Keling, Malacca, are worried that their departure to Dhaka would take several months because foreigners in similar situations have been stranded in the safe house for over 10 months. Captain A.K.M. Alamgir said although they were happy to be on land, they were worried about their fate because the legal process might take months. He said they were keen to return, even if their outstanding wages for nine months were not paid by ship owner HRC Shipping in Bangladesh as they wanted to be reunited with their families. The 13 Bangladeshis and two Indonesians were plucked from the vessel anchored in Port Klang by Bukit Aman Anti-Trafficking In Persons Unit on June 3 to allow investigations. The move came following complaints of alleged inhuman treatment. Sukaham commissioner James Nayagam, who held a meeting with the crewmen in Malacca yesterday, said he would be urging the ministry to speed up investigations and free the men. He said he would also seek an appointment with minister Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam to discuss the matter.