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**Malaysian maritime labour lured away by oil industry**

MALAYSIA is suffering an acute shortage of skilled maritime labour say members of the shipping community who claim their firms are victims of poaching by the rising oil and gas industry, reports the Malaysia Business Standard.

"Foreign oil companies, such as Shell, are entering the local market in the hope of clinching new projects. Oil companies draw people from local shipyards like MMHE, which can't pay the salaries oil companies can," said Malaysia Marine and Heavy Engineering general manager of marketing Manoel Gomes.

Mr Gomes said his company is losing people fast. "For ship repairs, we need to expand on capability and not just facilities, which is not easy. The oil and gas industry is now booming," he said.

Akademi Laut Malaysia (Alam) CEO M Adthisaya Ganesan blamed the shortage of skilled workers in the industry to the shipping companies' prejudices towards local professionals. "Their excuse is that Malaysians are undisciplined, their productivity is low and they have the wrong attitude to the job," Mr Ganesan said.

Most companies did not want to invest in training, he said, not because of the cost but because they preferred foreigners.

Source: Asian Shipper