

## Cruise ship crew member dies of meningitis in Italy

ROME, ITALY: An Indonesian cruise ship crew member died of meningitis on Tuesday, nine days after being hospitalised with three colleagues in the western Italian port city of Livorno, health sources said.

Ermandiasa I Gede, 32, died despite intensive attempts to save him since he was hospitalised on 7 October.

His employer, the Swiss-based MSC Cruises, released a statement expressing its sadness at the news of his death, while praising the efforts of the Italian hospital staff.

According to the company, a 47-year-old Italian cook from the ship was still on life support but his condition had "improved markedly" in recent days.

A 26-year-old Brazilian crew member and a 32-year-old Filipino had recovered, the MSC statement added.

The MSC Orchestra cruise ship had been sailing in the Mediterranean between Italy, France and Spain when it docked at Livorno in Tuscany and the four crew members were hospitalised with symptoms of meningococcal meningitis, which attacks the brain and spinal cord and is contagious in cases of close and prolonged contact.

Antibiotics were distributed to the 3,000 passengers and other crew members as a precautionary measure.

On Sunday the cruise liner was given the all clear by health authorities after no one else aboard showed symptoms after a week.

Source: *AFP* via I-NET Bridge