

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:499

ANSWERED ON:07.09.2011

SOMALIAN PIRATES

Azad Shri Kirti (Jha);Gandhi Shri Feroze Varun

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Somalian pirates have been a constant threat to all the ships passing through Indian and Maldives Sea;
- (b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to ensure the security of Indian ships as well as the ships of friendly countries;
- (c) whether India's discussions with Somalia and other African countries and also the declaration adopted at the second India-Africa Forum Summit, 2011 have produced any positive results in the matter; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.499 REGARDING "SOMALIAN PIRATES" FOR ANSWER ON 07.09.2011

(a) & (b) Piracy off the coast of Somalia has grown steadily over the years and has now become a serious concern.

To protect Indian-flagged ships and Indian citizens employed in sea-faring duties, Indian Navy has been conducting anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden since October 2008. Till date, a total of 27 Indian Naval ships have been deployed in the Gulf of Aden which have escorted more than 1736 ships including 207 Indian flagged ships and 1524 foreign flagged ships from 50 different countries. During this period, Indian Naval ships have also prevented 32 piracy attempts on merchant vessels.

The presence of international naval forces in the Gulf of Aden has resulted in pirates operating further and further off the Somali coast and shifting to new areas. In order to counter this, the Indian Navy and Coast Guard have stepped up their vigil against pirates. The Indian Coast Guard is carrying out regular surveillance by deploying Indian Coast Guard ships and aircraft to create deterrence as well as build confidence in the minds of merchant men.

With the increase in incidence of piracy in the Indian Ocean, Government of India has, at the request of the Governments of Seychelles, Mauritius and Maldives, deployed Indian Naval ships in their respective EEZs for anti-piracy patrols.

(c) & (d) Upon receipt of information about hijacking of ships in the Gulf of Aden/off the coast of Somalia, involving Indian nationals on board the Ministry of External Affairs seeks assistance of the Somali Government through the Somali Embassy in New Delhi in securing release of Indian nationals on board the hijacked vessels. It also takes up the piracy issue during all high level interactions with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia. The Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia, during his visit to India in April, 2011, pledged full support of Somalia and the TFG in extending assistance to India to fight the menace of piracy. However, it may be mentioned that owing to the fact that Somalia is presently in a state of civil unrest and instability, its ability to deal with the problem of piracy is limited. Keeping this in view, India shall be providing assistance to Somalia in its capacity building, which, inter alia, would enable it in combating piracy more effectively. India is contributing US \$ 2 million towards augmentation of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and additional bilateral assistance is under consideration.

As regards engagement with African countries on piracy, the Addis Ababa Declaration adopted on 25-05-2011 at the Second India-Africa Forum Summit, 2011, mentioned, inter alia, the following:

"We further stress the importance of addressing the threat posed by piracy off the Coast of Somalia and suffering caused by taking of hostages, and call on all States to cooperate in combating and eradicating the menace of piracy. In this context, Africa welcomes India's support to efforts to safeguard shipping in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean from piracy"

Action will emanate from the Framework for Enhanced Cooperation by the formulation of a mutually acceptable Joint Action Plan.