

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5355
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2012
ACCIDENTS AND KILLING OF FISHERMEN
Kurup Shri N.Peethambara

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the London based Joint War Committee has declared the Arabian Sea close to India as a war zone;
- (b) if so, whether such a decision has resulted in travel of foreign ships close to Indian territory resulting in accidents and killing of poor fishermen of our country; and
- (c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to protect the lives of our fishermen in the Arabian Sea?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) Yes. Joint War Committee (JWC) in December 2010, extended the eastern limit of High Risk Area (HRA) from 65° east to 78° East (excluding the territorial waters).

This has caused congestion of the Indian waters in the west coast of India since the ships tend to chart their course closer to the west coast of India as against their regular easterly/westerly courses across the Arabian Sea.

The increased number of merchant ships transiting close to Indian coast is not connected directly with accidents and killing of poor fishermen of our country, but rather due to poor application of Rules of the Road, as well as non-adherence of the best Management Practices and IMO guidelines by some merchant ships.

(c) The Director General Shipping issues Warnings on the subject from time to time. The Indian Navy has issued NAVAREA Warnings (available to the entire merchant shipping world) highlighting the details of fishing activities along the Indian coast up to 50 nautical miles from shore. The purpose of these communications is to sensitize all concerned about the environment prevalent in the area of transit and necessary measures to be undertaken to avoid accidents/incidents.

As an interim measure, Directorate General of Shipping has issued a Merchant Shipping (M.S.) Notice 7 of 2012 for the safe navigation of merchant ships on Indian coast and advising all merchant vessels to take note of dense fishing traffic on Indian coast, the possibility that they may be approached by these boats for safeguarding their nets/lines and that these fishing boats should not be mistaken for pirate skiffs. Merchant shipping has been advised to navigate with extreme caution when approaching upto 50 NM from the Indian coast.