

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:677
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2012
ARMED GUARDS FOR MERCHANT SHIPS
Swamygowda Shri N Cheluvarya Swamy

Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government does not provide armed guards for merchant ships;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to protect the Indian merchant ships from the pirates?

Answer

MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN)

(a) & (b): Guidelines have been issued for deployment of armed security guards on board Indian flag Merchant Ships. The Indian ship owners are, accordingly, free to deploy armed security guards.

(c): Naval escort is provided to the ships in the Gulf of Aden. Besides, there are naval ships of different countries patrolling in the piracy affected area, which coordinate with each other through various multi-national and bilateral initiatives so as to combat the menace of piracy. The Indian Navy is providing enhanced vigil in the Indian EEZ and westward upto 65 degree east longitude.

In addition, the following steps have also been taken in this regard:-

Banning of sailing vessels to ply in waters south or west of the line joining Salalah and Male.

Active participation of India in the International Maritime Organization, Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) and other international fora.

Constitution of an inter-ministerial group of officers to deal with any hostage situation arising out of hijacking at sea of merchant vessels with Indian crew on board.