

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:480
ANSWERED ON:26.11.2012
WELFARE SCHEMES FOR SEAFARERS
Rathwa Shri Ramsinhbhai Patalbhai

Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to strengthen the welfare schemes for seafarers in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has made consultations with various stakeholders before finalization of such welfare schemes;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the time by which the Government proposes to finalize such welfare schemes for seafarers in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN)

(a) to (e): Yes, Madam. The Monthly Ex-gratia Monetary Assistance (MEMA) Scheme is in operation since 01.04.1978. Indian seamen registered in the foreign going sector (Indian on foreign flag) are eligible for this scheme after retirement on superannuation/on attaining the age of 50 years or on being permanently disabled and unable to pursue the seafaring profession. The widows/minor children of Indian seafarers are also eligible to receive financial assistance under the scheme for a maximum period of 12 years from the date of the death of the eligible seaman. The amount payable under the scheme at present is Rs.200/- per month and remittances thereto are being made on a half yearly basis directly to the bank account(s) of the eligible recipient(s). The following measures have been initiated to augment the fund and to strengthen the scheme at the earliest:-

- (i) Mobilizing collection of all arrears due for payment from the shipping companies.
- (ii) Stepping up of the current collection of prescribed dues.
- (iii) The statutory levy fee fixed in 2004 already stands revised from August, 2011 from Rs. 250/- to Rs.500/- per Indian seaman per year.
- (iv) Widening the base of the levy fee structure to include Indian seafarers on (Indian/foreign flag) foreign going ships beyond those who are registered.
- (v) Exploring the possibility of increasing the standing corpus of the Scheme through the route of the Registered Placement Service License holders (RPSL).

The subject has been discussed with the concerned stakeholders in the meeting of the National Welfare Board for Seafarers (NWBS) held in 2010 and of the Committee of Management of the Seafarers' Welfare Fund Society (SWFS) held on 8th November, 2012.