

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1932
ANSWERED ON:19.08.2013
CAPTIVE INDIAN SAILORS
Chacko Shri P.C.

Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has evolved any action plan to secure the release of captive Indian sailors from civil war ravaged in Somalia;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the concrete strategy initiated/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K.VASAN)

(a) to (d): An Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) set up by the Government under the Ministry of Shipping with representatives from all Ministries and Government agencies concerned, to deal with the hostage situation arising out of the hijacking at sea of merchant vessels with Indian crew on board has been regularly reviewing the situation of Indian hostages under captivity of the pirates. Ministry of External Affairs, through its concerned Missions abroad, continuously seeks the help of the concerned foreign Governments to liaise with ship owners to secure early release of Indian hostages held captive by Somalia pirates. Government has also approved the Contingency Plan for dealing with piracy and hijacking of merchant ships and constituted a Committee of Secretaries on Anti-Piracy and hijack at sea (COSAPH) under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary for crisis management and to advise the Government on major policy and strategy decisions. In addition to this, the following steps have been initiated by Ministry of Shipping as part of various preventing/mitigating security measures to secure the release of the Indian hostages from the pirates:

- i) M.S. Notice No.1 of 2011 issued providing for elaborate anti-piracy measures (Best Management Practices), including safe house/citadel.
- ii) Banning of sailing vessels to ply in waters south or west of the line joining Salalah and Male vide DGS M.S. Notice No. 3/2010.
- iii) Naval escort provided by Indian naval ships in the Gulf of Aden since 2008.
- iv) Enhanced vigil by the Indian Navy in the Indian EEZ and westward upto 65 degree east longitude.
- v) Active participation of India in the security meetings of the International Maritime Organization, Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) and other international fora.
- vi) Submission of Document No.27/9/1 at the IMO Assembly meeting held at London on 21-30.11.2011 for flag states to provide information on the welfare of captive crew, efforts for their release and also on continued payment of their wages.