

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4940

ANSWERED ON:23.04.2015

AMENDMENT OF ACT

Chavan Shri Ashok Shankarrao; Gupta Shri Sudheer; Kirtikar Shri Gajanan Chandrakant; Singh Shri Kunwar Haribansh

Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to amend Merchant Shipping Act, 1958;
- (b) if so, whether the Government has sought comments from the stakeholders in this regard;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the response thereto;
- (d) the time by which it is likely to be amended; and
- (e) the steps taken to provide unbreakable security at all ports of the country and to protect Indian merchant vessels from the sea pirates?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI PON. RADHAKRISHNAN)

(a)to(c):The Merchant Shipping Act 1958 is amended from time to time, in the light of experience gained in its implementation and to give effect to the provisions of various international Conventions/Protocols, as and when India becomes a party to such Conventions/Protocols. The process for stake holder consultation has been completed for amendments to the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 for giving effect to the Convention for the Control & Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 and the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage of 2001, the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, 2007 and the International Convention on Salvage, 1989.

(d)Since the Bill is to be passed to amend the Act, in the Parliament, no likely date can be visioned by the Ministry.

(e)All the major ports are compliant with the provisions of International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code which is the international standard for port security. The steps taken by the Government to provide security at major ports include:

- (i) Deployment of CISF in all the major ports
- (ii) issuance of biometric I-cards
- (iii) Acquisition of speed boats and patrolling boats
- (iv) Installation of CCTVs
- (v) Installation of VTMS

The Government has approved the Contingency Plan for dealing with piracy and hijacking of merchant ships and constituted a Committee of Secretaries on Anti-Piracy and Hijacking 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 Government as part of various preventive/mitigating security measures to deal with sea-piracy:

- i. Guidelines for anti-piracy measures to be implemented on Indian Ships through issue of Merchant Shipping Notice No.1 of 2011 dated 14.1.2011. The guidelines provide for elaborate anti-piracy measures (Best Management Practices), including safe house/citadel for vessels.
- ii. Banning of sailing vessels to ply in waters south or west of the line joining Salalah and Male through Merchant Shipping Notice No. 3/2010 dated 31.3.2010.
- 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 Exclusive Economic Zone (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.