

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1034
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2005
MISSING SAILORS OF INDIAN MERCHANT NAVY
Jha Shri Raghunath

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Indian Merchant Navy sailors have gone missing in the sea;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the number of sailors are still missing;
- (c) whether any investigation was carried out to ascertain the reasons of their missing;
- (d) if so, the details of the findings thereof; and
- (e) the measures taken for the protection of sailors at sea?

Answer

MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) & (b) Yes, Sir. In the recent past a number of Indian merchant navy sailors on board foreign flag ships have gone missing. The details are at Annexure-I

(c) & (d) All the incidents in the recent past have been reported from foreign flag ships in foreign waters. As such, Indian Maritime Administration, as per Indian law and as per Article 1 of International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 1974 of International Maritime Organisation (IMO), has no jurisdiction for investigation in such matters. The IMO contracting countries are obliged to carry out investigations in incidents involving the casualty on their flag vessel. In all the cases mentioned at Annexure-I Indian Maritime Administration has requested for enquiry by the Flag states/consulates concerned. Except for Jupiter-6, response have been received from flag state and various other authorities including Indian Consulates and Coastal States. The details of findings are at Annexure-II

(e) While no ready made measures could be prescribed for the protection of Indian Sailors on foreign flag ships in foreign territorial waters, the Director General of Shipping is consulting the manning agents, shipping lines and other stakeholders for preparing a strategy for ensuring welfare of Indian seafarers on board foreign flag ships..

ANNEXURE-I

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) & (b) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NUMBER 1034

DETAILS OF CASUALTIES ON FOREIGN FLAG SHIPS LEADING TO MISSING OF INDIAN MERCHANT NAVY SAILORS

(i) Jupiter 6, Flag St. Vincent in Grenadines

This vessel was towing m.v. Pointing (unmanned) from West Coast of Africa and bound for Alang, India. There is no contact with the vessel after 5th September 2005. The vessel is missing from position 35.52.06 S 023. 25.9 E along with 10 Indians and 3 Ukrainians. Pelmar Shipping & Engineering Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai is the manning agent of Jupitor 6. The vessel's owners are Jupiter Ship Management Inc. Majuro, Marshall Islands. The names and rank of Indian citizens are as below:

1. Mr. Raj Kumar
2. Mr. Ibrahim Edurunanuagothi
3. Mr. Hassan Faikage
4. Mr. Subhash Das
5. Mr. Surjit Singh
6. Mr. Sunil Kumar Sharma
7. Mr. Jose Mathew Kattampally
8. Mr. Hussain Houdathagthi
9. Mr. Ali Kolugedru
10. Mr. Pravin Pandey

(ii) Spar Cetus, Flag NIS Norway:

Chief Officer, Gautam Mallick had reportedly fallen over board from vessel's poop while checking after draft on 09-10-2005 when the vessel was along side berth in Port Klaipeda, Lithuania. His body was subsequently found. The Indian manning agent is Ebony Ship Management Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai.

(iii) MSC Carmen, Flag Panama:

Shri Hasan Zaheer, Marine Engineer has reportedly jumped over board when the vessel was enroute to Mombassa on 12 October 2005. Flag State has conducted a fact-finding inquiry. Indian manning agent is MSC Ship Management (India) Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai.

(iv) North Challenge, Flag Panama:

Shri Mitesh Kumar, 3rd Officer was found missing from above vessel when the vessel was enroute from Al Salvador on 14-10-05. Indian manning agent is Executive Ship Management Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai.

ANNEXURE-II

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (c) & (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NUMBER 1034

THE DETAILS OF FINDINGS ARE INDICATED BELOW:

(a) Jupiter 6

We have not received any information on the conduct of investigation by the flag administration even though the Administration has requested the Flag State to forward the report on this incident. In the meantime various enquires have been made by us on the actions taken by manning agents, Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Cape Town. So far no conclusions could be arrived at as to the cause of disappearance of the vessel along with crew-members.

(b) Spar Cetus:

A report of investigation from flag state is awaited. Next of kin, i.e. Mrs. Preeti Sekhri and her husband visited Klaipeda. They along with First Secretary, Consulate Embassy of India, Warsaw met authorities, i.e.

(i) Deputy Chief of Vite Cordon, Coast Guard District, State Border Guard Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs

(ii) Deputy Harbour Master, Head of Port Control and Rescue Service, Klaipeda,

(iii) Chief Prosecutor, Klaipeda &

(iv) Seaport Police Department, Klaipeda. A report from First Secretary (Consulate), Embassy of India, Warsaw mentions details on actions taken by these authorities but no foul play has been suspected.

(c) MSC Carmen

At the request of the Maritime Administration Assistant High Commissioner, Indian High Commission at Mombassa, Kenya had visited the office of MSC Ship Management at Mombassa on 14th October 2005 where Captain of Ship, Chief Engineer and other crew -members were summoned. Subsequently he met 8 crew- members individually on 15th November 2005. The fact-finding report could not conclude reasons for jumping over board. Flag state has also carried out inquiry into this incident. Next of kin has been advised to lodge a FIR with police authorities to determine the any foul play.

(d) M. T. North Challenge:

At the request of the Government, Indian Consul visited the vessel on 20th September 2005 and took statements of crew- members. Although in his report he has mentioned that no foul play is immediately suspected, a detailed interrogation of those saw him last on the ship will only help in bringing out the truth. Accordingly the Shipping Master, Mumbai has been instructed to inquire further into this incident. Next of kin have been advised to lodge FIR with Police to determine any foul play.