

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SHIPPING
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2999
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11TH JULY, 2019

WELFARE OF SEAFARERS

2999. DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR:
SHRI RAJA AMARESHWARA NAIK:
SHRI VINOD KUMAR SONKAR:
SHRI KHAGEN MURMU:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

पोत परिवहन मंत्री

- (a) whether the Government has any mechanism to safeguard the interest of Indian crew members aboard in foreign vessels specially in exigencies like pirate hijacking or fatal accidents and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether implementation of Indian Maritime Act by the Government has been inadequate in such cases and if so, the details thereof along with the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether retired seafarers went on hunger strike over the discontinuance of the monthly ex-gratia allowance and if so, the details thereof along with the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (d) whether the Seafarer Welfare Fund Society has been set up for Welfare of Indian seafarers and their families;
- (e) if so, the details of objectives, functions and achievements thereof along with welfare schemes implemented by it and the funds released thereunder so far; and
- (f) the further steps being taken by the Government for the welfare of seafarers and to resolve their grievance in the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR SHIPPING
(SHRI MANSUKH MANDAVIYA)

- (a) Yes Sir, Ministry of Shipping in consultation with Ministry of Defence have prepared a Contingency Plan for this and have also documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to safeguard the interest of Indian crew members onboard India vessels, Foreign vessels as well as Indian Sailing vessels (Dhow).

In addition, following are some of the important steps which have been initiated to deal with exigencies like pirate hijacking and fatal accidents:

- i) Guidelines for anti-piracy measures have been implemented on Indian Ships. These guidelines provide for elaborate anti piracy measures.
- ii) A Maritime Security Advisory has been implemented for restriction in engaging Indian seafarers on vessels trading solely in Gulf of Guinea.
- iii) Naval escorts are provided by Indian naval ships in the Gulf of Aden, since 2008. The DG Shipping, Govt. of India is coordinating this with the Indian Navy vis-à-vis Indian and Foreign flag merchant ships.
- iv) Circulars are issued from time to time, laying down actions to be taken by Indian Merchant Ships, Shipping companies & other stake-holders to deal with piracy & armed robbery incidents.
- v) The DG Shipping, Govt. of India has approved a piracy awareness module/training program to sensitize seafarers about piracy & armed robbery at sea.
- vi) The Directorate General of Shipping has documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to deal with fatal accidents of Indian Crew members aboard in foreign vessels.
- vii) In case of fatal accident of an Indian crew member, onboard a foreign flagship, the Directorate General of Shipping as Indian Maritime Administration requests the Flag Administration to carry out investigation, as per the provision of the IMO Code of Conduct of Causality Investigation.

(b) Not applicable Sir, as no such Act exists.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Yes Sir.

(e) The objectives as laid down in the memorandum of Association of the Seafarer Welfare Fund Society (SWFS) are as below:

- i) To provide and maintain a fund by the name of the Seafarers' Welfare Fund;

- ii) To provide welfare facilities in general to seamen at ports in India and to seamen engaged as per provisions of section 101 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 while at ports abroad;
- iii) To invest in any security or keep in deposit with any bank and otherwise deal with any moneys of the Society in such manner as may, from time to time, be prescribed by the Central Government.
- iv) The SWFS has implemented the following five Welfare schemes for the benefit of all the Indian seafarers and their families:
 - a) Survival Benefit Scheme
 - b) Invalidity Benefit Scheme
 - c) Maternity Benefit Scheme for Female Seafarers,
 - d) The Old Age Benefit Welfare Scheme
 - e) Family Benefit Welfare Scheme

The details of funds released to seafarers so far (year-wise) is as below:

2014-15	:	Rs. 59,905,416/-
2015-16	:	Rs. 53,195,875/-
2016-17	:	Rs. 69,386,431/-
2017-18	:	Rs. 65,688,546/-

(f) The Government of India's notification relating to mandatory deposit of welfare fund contributions by the Indian Shipping Companies and Recruitment and Placement Services License (RPSL) companies for compliance of regulation 4.5 of ILO-MLC, 2006, became effective from 1.4.2014 onwards. SWFS started receiving the welfare fund contribution from those companies w.e.f. 1.4.2014.

The Government has also formulated a grievance redressal mechanism. A feedback portal is available on the official website of Directorate General of Shipping and the CPGRAM PG Portal. These portals are monitored by designated officers of DG(S) and its allied officers.
