

(a) whether Government has streamlined registration of fishing vessels to strengthen coastal security;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has also decided to increase the various port's capacities and also to acquire more ships; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Shipping has issued two notifications on June 24, 2009 for streamlining the procedure for registration of the fishing vessels. This will remove the multiplicity of registration regimes for fishing vessels under various Central and State legislations. This will also help in securitizing the country's coastline. Henceforth, registration of all the fishing vessels will be done under the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. One of the notifications issued notifies the revised registration format for the fishing vessels. The second notification notifies a list of 127 registrars in various coastal States of the country. These registrars have to register the fishing vessels as per the laid down procedure. With these two notifications, a new system of registration of the fishing vessels has been put in place in the country.

(c) and (d) The capacity of the 12 Major Ports under the Central Government was 574.77 million MT in 2008-2009. By 2011-12 *i.e.* by the end of the 11th Five Year Plan, the capacity is projected to be increased to 1016.55 million MT. The Shipping Corporation of India has a plan to acquire 62 vessels during the 11th Five Year Plan.

Major ports in India

2724. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of major ports in operation in India;

(b) how many new ports are coming up in view of new investment and industrial activities;

(c) whether some of the major industrial houses have been allowed to develop entire port in Orissa;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether private sector ports specially managed by multinational companies could be security threat for the country?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K.VASAN): (a) There are 12 Major Ports operating in India.

(b) There is no proposal to set up new ports by the Central Government in the context of new investment and industrial activities.

(c) and (d) Central Government has not allowed any major industrial house to develop an entire port in Orissa.

(e) Private sector ports managed by multinational companies in various States fall under the purview of the respective State Governments. State Governments have been advised to ensure that all Security norms are adhered to by these private sector ports.

Soft loan package for shipping industry

2725. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether prompted by shrinking cargo volumes and freight trades and paucity of external commercial borrowings, Indian shipping industries have sought a soft loan package from Governments;

(b) whether the share of Indian carriers in the country's trade cargo has sharply declined from 31.5 percent in 1999-2000 to 13.7 percent in 2005-06;

(c) whether despite introduction of tonnage tax in 2004 Indian companies are subject to other taxes unlike foreign companies that operate under a tax free or low tax regime; and

(d) if so, whether Government would also attempt improving port infrastructure and connectivity as a prerequisite for the revival of shipping industry?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) Shipping is highly capital intensive and depends largely on the debt market to finance its acquisitions. But the current meltdown in the international financial markets has placed the Indian shipping industry in a situation where assets are available to be acquired at reasonable prices, but the availability of money on loan is almost dried up through the normal international commercial bank channels; if any credit is available, it is at a prohibitive cost and stringent terms. On the request of Ministry of Shipping and at the behest of Finance Ministry, Indian Banks' Association had constituted a Working Group to examine the proposed extension of credit facilities to Shipping companies in India for purchase of ships. Indian Banks' Association has recently advised that they have no role to play in the matter and the Shipping Company should take up the matter with the individual banks.

(b) Yes, Sir. The share of Indian earners in carriage of country's overseas seaborne trade which was 31.50% during 1999-2000 declined gradually to a level of 13.7% in 2005-06.

(c) It is fact that despite introduction of Tonnage Tax in 2004-05, Indian Shipping Industry is liable to a variety of taxes and there are still about 12 direct and indirect taxes.

(d) Ministry of Shipping has formulated a National Maritime Development Programme (NMDP). Under the programme, specific projects have been identified to be taken up for implementation upto 2011-12. In the Major Ports, 276 projects covering the entire gamut of activities, namely construction/upgradation of berths, deepening of channels, rail-road connectivity projects, equipment upgradation/modernization schemes and other related schemes for creation of back-up facilities have been identified for inclusion in the programme.