

(b) the steps that have been taken by Government to combat piracy in the Indian Ocean?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) A total of 15 attacks by pirates on Indian ships have taken place during the last three years. However, none of these ships were hijacked.

(b) The Government has taken the following measures to combat piracy:

- (i) An Inter-Ministerial Group of Officers has been set up to deal with hostage situation arising out of the hijacking of merchant vessels with Indian crew on board.
- (ii) A Notice has been issued by the Directorate General of Shipping detailing elaborate anti-piracy measures (Best Management Practices) including safe house/citadel.
- (iii) Sailing vessels banned to ply in waters south or west of line joining Salalah and Male.
- (iv) Naval escort provided by Indian Naval Ships in Gulf of Aden.
- (v) Enhanced vigil by Indian Navy in Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and westward up to 65 degree east longitude.
- (vi) Guidelines for deployment of armed guards on Indian merchant ships issued.
- (vii) The Directorate General of Shipping under Ministry of Shipping has issued a notice on 7.3.2012 for the safe navigation of merchant ships on Indian coast and advising all merchant vessels to take note of dense fishing traffic on the Indian coast. Merchant Ships have been advised to navigate with extreme caution when approaching upto 50 nautical miles from the Indian coast. Indian Coast Guard has also issued a warning on 23.2.2012 in which all vessels have been warned that fishing is carried out upto 50 nautical miles from the coast and vessels should not mistake fishing boats as skiffs and Piracy Armed Groups (PAGs).

Fast development of Ports

3831. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to fast-develop Indian ports with a view to improve the functioning thereof;

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has appointed a committee for the purpose to make recommendations in this direction;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the details of major obstacles coming in the way of such ports to exploit business potential; and
- (f) the status of completion of minor ports on the East Coast in the Odisha region?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) and (b) As per the provisions made in the Maritime Agenda, 2010-2020 a number of ambitious projects have been formulated for the major as well as non-major ports with a view to create capacity of more than 3 billion MT to meet the projected traffic requirement of around 2.5 billion MT. The proposals include creation of new berths, mechanisation of port handling plants, procurement of new equipment and increasing the draft levels at ports.

- (c) No such committee has been appointed.
- (d) and (e) Does not arise.
- (f) As per Indian Ports Act, 1908, the development of non-major ports (minor ports) in Odisha come within the purview of Government of Odisha.

Increase in the Inland Water Transport

3832. SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has taken steps to increase Inland Water Transport (IWT);
- (b) how much IWT does India account for in comparison to other countries;
- (c) whether the Ministry has identified areas for further development of IWT; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The Central Government has taken various steps to increase Inland Water Transport (IWT) including development of National Waterways and providing the required inland water transport infrastructure.