

Presently 89 vessels are being operated by DSS in the following four sectors of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands:

- (i) **Mainland-Island Sector:** To provide services between Port Blair and Kolkata/Chennai/Vizag,
- (ii) **Inter-Island Sector:** To provide services between Port Blair and the southern group of Islands,
- (iii) **Foreshore Sector:** To provide services between Port Blair and nearby islands,
- (iv) **Harbour Ferry Sector:** To provide services within the sheltered water and narrow creeks by ferry vessels.

CISF Personnel on Merchant Vessels

1856. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Indian ship owners' Association have been requesting for security for Merchant Vessels which are often under attack of pirates;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has decided to deploy CISF personnel on the Merchant ships; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In order to prevent attack by the pirates in the Gulf of Aden, the ship owners have requested for deployment of armed personnel in the ships. Accordingly, the Government has issued guidelines for deployment of armed private security guards on board Indian Flag Merchant Ships on 29.08.2011.

(c) and (d) Steps have been taken for working out the modalities for the deployment of CISF personnel on the Indian Merchant ships, if they so desire.

Private sector assistance for development of ports

†1857. SHRI DHIRAJ PRASAD SAHU: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is making any plan for developing ports in coastal areas of the country;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.