

(b) In the Port Sector, upgradation of infrastructure has been taken up through construction of new berths/terminals and through mechanisation of existing berths. In the year 2013-14, Government of India, through the Major Ports, has awarded 27 projects as on 17.02.2014 consisting of capacity augmentation of 155.57 Metric Million Ton Per Annum (MMTPA) at an estimated cost of Rs. 12,243.93 Crore. In the state of Gujarat, Kandla Port Trust has awarded 3 projects of capacity 18.39 MMTPA at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,033.25 Crore.

In order to make the shipping industry more competitive, Government had introduced tonnage tax regime for shipping sector in 2004. The Indian shipping industry has been provided cargo support through right of first refusal and policy of FOB import is being followed for government owned/controlled cargoes. Further, chartering of vessels for movement of cargo on private account is regulated through the Director General of Shipping taking into consideration the availability of Indian flag vessels. These measures are being continued to support and augment the Indian shipping tonnage.

(c) and (d) No proposal has been finalised to allow local shipping industry to raise foreign currency loans or bonds through any identified financial institution with a view to boosting the shipping industry. The Indian shipping industry is operated/managed by entrepreneurs from public and private sectors. The acquisition of ships and raising of loan in private sector is solely a commercial decision taken independently by the entrepreneurs.

Discontent among shipping companies

†2908. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA : Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government is aware of the corrupt officers in the Ministry;

(b) whether there is also discontent among shipping companies operational in private and public sector and the targets set for shipping sector are not being achieved, if so, the details thereof; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether any action has been taken by the Government in this regard, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN) : (a) to (c) The Government, through the Central Vigilance Commission, looks after matters of such allegations. Further, neither any specific discontent among shipping companies has been reported to the Ministry nor specific targets were set for shipping sector in the matter.

People drowned in Andman and Nicobar Islands

2909. SHRI ANIL DESAI : Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that recently 21 people drowned in Andaman and Nicobar Islands due to boat capsized in the sea as there was no sufficient life jackets and it was overloaded;

(b) if so, the safety regulations that are in place during water journeys in all over the country;

(c) the number of people killed in various parts of the country during last two years due to negligence on the part of boat operators; and

(d) the action that Government is taking to save lives of hapless passengers during such water journeys ?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN) : (a) As per the information provided by the Andaman and Nicobar Administration, a private tourist boat namely "MV Aqua Marine", registered under the Inland Vessels Act (I.V. Act) 1917, was carrying 48 passengers and 2 crew members on board when it sank near Port Blair on 26.01.2014. In all 22 persons died while 26 passengers and 2 crew members were rescued. The life jackets were available on board, the passengers were, however, not aware of their use.

(b) For Seagoing vessels, registered under Merchant Shipping Act (M.S. Act), the safety regulation of M.S. Act and Rules made there under, are applicable. For inland vessels, the requirements under I.V. Act and Rules made thereunder, are