

Appointment of stevedores

1339. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) the process and criteria for selection and appointment of stevedores in various ports across the country;
- (b) whether Government is aware of the violations of various sections of the Major Port Trust Act, 1963 by port authorities while fixing cargo handlers;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the nature of the licences issued to the cargo handling agents;
- (e) whether fees charged by the stevedores are not approved by Government and they do not share revenues with the landlord port; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the punitive action to be taken against the erring officials and the handlers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI KRISHAN PAL) : (a) The Major Ports appoint Stevedores in accordance with the Stevedoring Regulations which include provision for licensing stevedores. Stevedoring Licenses are issued by the Ports in case the firm fulfills the criteria, namely a Company registered under the Companies Act or a partnership firm or any other legal entity. Stevedores so licensed are required to deposit security of a least ₹ 5 lakhs, undertake to provide minimum equipment/gear (either owned or hired), undertake to employ at least 4 supervisory personnel with minimum of two years of cargo handling/stowage experience, and pay the fee issue/renewal of the license, which may be revised from time to time. The license is valid for a period of three years and the same is strictly renewed on the basis of achieving minimum guaranteed throughput/prescribed performance parameters as fixed by the Port. Generally, there is no limit prescribed in Stevedoring Regulations for issue of number of stevedoring licenses in a Major Port to encourage the competition.

(b) to (f) The importer or exporter or registered steam agents can engage Cargo Handling Agents (CHA) for handling Cargo on shore where Port does not undertake the job of Cargo Handling. The functions and the activities undertaken by such CHAs varies depending on the requirements of the respective clients *viz.* stevedoring activities (discharging or loading) at the vessels, clearance of the cargo from the port to the required destination prescribed by the client *i.e.* by road, rail or other modes of transport. Normally the Ports issue the following licenses to the contractors/agents who undertake shore handling activities on behalf of Importers/Exporters:-

- (i) Stevedoring License
- (ii) Clearing/Forwarding License
- (iii) Handling Agency License

The licenses issued to cargo handling agents are generally in nature of permits. The Major Ports have two types of berths, one which is operated by the Port itself and the other, which is operated by the PPP operators. The revenue generated in the two models *i.e.* PPP berths and Port's own berths are totally different. In case of PPP berths, the Port gets a revenue share on cargo handling charges and rentals for the land licensed out. In case of Port's own berths, the Port receives wharfage, berth hire charges from the vessels and charges from licensed stevedores and cargo handling agents for the resources used such as cranes, equipment, manpower etc. All these charges are as per the Schedule of Rates, which is fixed by Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP).

Representations have been received that a mechanism to collect Revenue Share / Royalty from Stevedores/ CHAs should be devised by the Major Ports and the charges collected by the Stevedores/ CHAs from their clients should be regulated by TAMP. The Ministry of Shipping had constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Development Adviser (Ports) in June, 2013 to examine the existing Stevedoring Policy and make suitable recommendations to strengthen the policy framework and make it more effective and purposeful. The Committee has submitted its Report. A Committee under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Indian Ports Association and with four other Port Trust Chairmen as members has studied the recommendations of the Development Advisor (Ports) Committee and also the representations received on collection of Royalty/Revenue Share. The Committee has submitted its Report recently.

Status of inland waterways in Assam

1340. SHRI SANTIUSE KUJUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) the present status of the inland waterways in Assam;
- (b) whether the channel depth required for shipping in Brahmaputra throughout the year is maintained;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken to maintain the minimum channel depth of river Brahmaputra for shipping?