

2. The defence cooperation agreements with various countries include the cooperation in the areas of defence equipment, technology and Research and Development (RandD).

Collision of merchant vessel with INS Kora

842. DR. CHANDAN MITRA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a merchant vessel collided sideways with INS Kora on 31 October, 2014 near Visakhapatnam;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons for not maintaining a zone of sanitation around the warship; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to avoid such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) Yes, Sir. INS Kora, on passage from Visakhapatnam to Port Blair scraped Merchant Vessel Madeleine Rickmers at about 0353 hours on 31st October, 2014 approximately 300 nautical miles off the Coast of Visakhapatnam. Minor damage to the ship's side was reported. The ship is presently fully seaworthy.

(b) The Board of Inquiry proceedings to investigate the circumstances leading to the accident is under examination at Naval Headquarters.

(c) Lessons learnt from the reports of Board's of Inquiry (BoI) are implemented appropriately. Corrective steps have been taken by Naval Headquarters with extensive checks on weapon related safety systems and audit of Standard Operating Procedures on all operational naval units. Safety procedures and professional checks are re-emphasized. Incidents Study and Analysis Cells have been instituted at professional schools wherein lessons learnt are incorporated into professional training. Safety Audits of various units are regularly conducted.

Ppp route in defence production

843. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to allow Public Private Partnership (PPP) route in defence production; and