

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1816
ANSWERED ON 14/12/2021

BAN ON INDIAN SEAFARERS

1816. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it has come to the notice of the Ministry that China has imposed unofficial ban on Indian seafarers and prohibited entry/berth of ships with Indian seafarers;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the All India Seafarer and General Worker Union has written a letter to Minister and also to Directorate General of Shipping;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that due to above decision by China, nearly 20,000 Indian seafarers are going to lose their job; and
- (d) if so, details thereof and steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government through diplomatic and political channels to address this issue?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
(SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL)

(a) Government had taken note of a few media reports which had appeared earlier in the year on the subject. Government had therefore taken up the matter with the Chinese side. Government emphasized to the Chinese side that any restriction selectively targeting sailors from India is unacceptable. The Chinese side had conveyed that it had not imposed any ban and that such reports were not accurate. Spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry during Daily Press Briefing on 27 July 2021 stated that, "After consulting relevant Departments, China has never imposed the so-called unofficial ban. The relevant reports by Indian media are not accurate.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions were imposed and ships were kept waiting at anchorages and it also prevented crew changes.

As per the information received in the Directorate General of Shipping, one Indian vessel M.V Jag Anand (IMO No.9463308) owned by M/s Great Eastern Shipping Company had arrived at the Port of Jingtang, North China on 13.06.2020 for discharging of Coal which she had loaded in Australia. The vessel had 23 Indian Crew on board. The vessel was stranded on account of difficulties faced by them regarding Crew Change at Chinese Ports as the Chinese Port Authorities have banned the entries of Foreigners w.e.f. 28.03.2020 and

suspended all visa and residence permits with a view to control the spread of Covid-19. The vessel was waiting at the port of Jintang, China till first week of January 2021.

Information was also received for one foreign flag vessel M.V. Anastasia (IMO No. 962590) with 16 Indian seafarers onboard stranded at Caofeidian Anchorage, China since 3rd August, 2020.

(b) No Sir, in this regard, no such representation from All India Seafarer & General Worker Union has been received in this Ministry (or) in the Directorate General of Shipping.

(c) No sir. There has been no impact on the job of Indian Seafarers except for in the cruise shipping which ceased operations due to Covid pandemic.

(d) Considering the potential humanitarian crisis on board these vessels, it was decided to provide all assistance to the owners/managers of the vessel to effect crew change and repatriate the crew. The matter was accordingly taken up with –

- i. the Ministry of External Affairs, South West Division, New Delhi;
- ii. the Embassy of India, Beijing, China;
- iii. the Maritime Safety Administration of People Republic of China; and
- iv. the Secretary General, International Maritime Organization (IMO), London.

Due to the sustained efforts of the Government of India, MV JAG ANAND was allowed to sail to Japan. The Vessel disembarked crew on 18.01.2021 at Chiba, Japan. Similarly the matter regarding the Crew change of vessel MV ANASTASIA was also resolved on 10th February, 2021, as the vessel MV ANASTASIA was diverted from Caofeidian Anchorage, China to Iwakuni Anchorage, Japan.
