

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3048
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.03.2018

TRACING OF MISSING INDIANS ONBOARD AN OIL TANKER

3048. SHRI MAJEED MEMON:
SHRI A.K. SELVARAJ:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that 22 Indians onboard an oil tanker is missing in the piracy-plagued waters of West Africa;
- (b) if so, whether Government has tried to establish positive communication through diplomatic channels;
- (c) the steps taken by Government in this regard;
- (d) whether a ship had been missing off the coast of Benin in January and was later confirmed to have been hijacked and a crew of 22, most of whom were Indians, were released after a ransom was paid; and
- (e) if so, whether Government is looking into the present case also in the same angle?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI M.J. AKBAR)

(a) to (e) The High Commission of India, Abuja received information about a merchant vessel M.T. Marine Express (IMO 9403322), missing off the coast of Benin on 01 February 2018. Ministry of External Affairs and DG Shipping, in collaboration with the navies of Nigeria, Benin and Ghana, initiated the search operation. The proactive approach of our Mission and relentless pressure of all sides ensured that the vessel was released on 06 February 2018 with both the vessel and crew safe and sound without any physical and material damage. All the 22 Indian crew members have since returned to India.
