

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1277
ANSWERED ON 10.02.2026

POLICY CHANGES TO EXPAND INDIGENOUS FLEET

1277. SMT. SUNETRA AJIT PAWAR:

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

- (a) whether more than 85 per cent of India's trade is dependent on foreign shipping;
- (b) if so, the policy changes being made to reduce this dependence and expand the indigenous fleet for economic and energy security;
- (c) the financial incentives and tax reforms adopted to attract private investment in domestic shipbuilding and financing under the 'Maritime India Vision'; and
- (d) the steps being taken to enhance maritime awareness and safety of Indian ships at chokepoints?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir, a significant share of India's trade depends on foreign shipping. To reduce this dependence and expand the indigenous fleet, the Government has introduced several reforms: -

- i. The Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 has been enacted to modernise the legal framework, improve ease of doing business, and encourage Indian flagging of ships. Indian-flagged vessels are promoted through the Right of First Refusal (RoFR), simplified ship registration, and other regulatory reforms.
- ii. Shipping vessels, of more than a certain size, have been classified as infrastructure assets to enable easier access to finance.
- iii. Further, initiatives such as the Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Scheme, Ship Breaking Credit Note, Shipbuilding Development Scheme and the Maritime Development Fund support the long-term financing needs of the shipbuilding sector.

(d) The steps taken to enhance maritime awareness and safety of Indian ships at chokepoints includes round-the-clock monitoring through Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Centre (MMDAC), real-time incident tracking and close coordination with the Indian Navy and other agencies. Periodic Maritime Security Advisories are issued to Indian-flagged vessels, prescribing risk-mitigation measures and compliance with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs). Regular meetings are held with Indian shipowners, shipmasters, port authorities, the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, and other security agencies to enhance preparedness and response mechanisms.
