

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2719
ANSWERED ON 11.08.2026

SAFETY OF SEAFARERS

2719. SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI:

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

- (a) whether the West Asia conflict caused a major maritime security challenge involving merchant vessel incidents;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including number of crew members affected and Indian seafarers died;
- (c) the details of repatriation of Indian maritime workers from the Gulf Region;
- (d) the steps taken to deal with unprecedented level of maritime distress management and necessary support to the affected families; and
- (e) the steps proposed to be taken to deal with future incidents involving merchant shipping, seafarer welfare and maritime trade?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e) The ongoing conflict in West Asia has posed maritime security challenges to merchant shipping. The Government is coordinating with shipowners, Recruitment and Placement Service Licence (RPSL) agencies, Indian Missions abroad and other concerned authorities to facilitate assistance and, wherever required, safe repatriation of affected Indian seafarers. A dedicated 24×7 DG Communication Centre under the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA) and a Welfare Counsellor provide assistance and coordination to affected seafarers and their families. DGMA has handled more than 16,650 phone calls and 41,580 emails from seafarers, their families and maritime stakeholders seeking information and assistance, and has facilitated the safe repatriation of more than 4,076 stranded Indian seafarers across the Gulf region to date. Further, 62 vessels have safely transited through the Strait of Hormuz (SoH), carrying cargo bound for India. 10 casualties have been reported due to the ongoing conflict and one-time ex-gratia assistance of ₹10 lakh has already been provided to the Next of Kin (NoK) of deceased seafarers under the Special High-Risk Area Scheme. The details of steps/ measures taken by the Government are placed at **Annexure**.

Advisories to Ensure the Safety and Security of Indian Seafarers:

Following advisories operate alongside the standing maritime security architecture established under DGS Circular No. 08 of 2024 dated 10.04.2024 and are supported by a 24-hour Control Room, continuous real-time monitoring through the DG Communication Centre under DGMA, and the issue of a Situation Report every 24 hours.

- i. DGS Circular No. 01 of 2026 dated 14.01.2026 – issued pursuant to the advisory of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Embassy of India, Tehran, advising all Recruitment and Placement Services Licence (RPSL) companies and shipping companies not to deploy Indian seafarers to Iran until further orders, and advising vessels calling at Iranian ports or transiting the Strait of Hormuz to exercise utmost caution.
- ii. DGS Circular No. 08 of 2026 dated 28.02.2026 – mandating comprehensive ship-shore security drills covering loitering munitions, unmanned surface vessels and similar threats, testing of the Ship Security Alert System prior to transit, voyage-specific risk assessment by owners, operators and charterers, full implementation of Ship Security Plans, and immediate reporting of any suspicious activity, interception, electronic interference or GNSS disruption to the DG Communication Centre.
- iii. DGS Circular No. 09 of 2026 dated 28.02.2026 – Urgent Advisory to Indian Seafarers and Shipping Stakeholders in view of Escalating Situation in Iran, requiring Indian seafarers in Iran to remain vigilant, register with the Embassy of India, coordinate for safe departure where feasible, and directing stakeholders to immediately provide details of Indian seafarers in affected areas.
- iv. DGS Circular No. 21 of 2026 dated 07.04.2026 - issued a safety advisory for Indian seafarers ashore in Iran and onboard vessels operating in or around Iranian waters, directing them to remain vigilant, restrict unnecessary movement, follow advisories issued by the Embassy of India in Tehran, maintain contact with company representatives, and utilize DGS emergency support channels for assistance as required.
- v. DGS Circular No. 31 of 2026 dated 13.06.2026 – Precautionary Measures for Indian Seafarers in view of the Heightened Security Situation in the Gulf Region, reiterating heightened security vigilance, directing shipping companies and RPSL companies to restrict deployment of Indian seafarers to conflict areas until further orders (except emergency crew changes with consent), monitoring and reporting requirements, and dissemination of verified security information.
- vi. DGS Circular No. 33 of 2026 dated 26.06.2026 – issued upon improvement in the situation, superseding the earlier restriction and permitting normal operations subject to caution and applicable coastal-State security protocols, and providing for a coordinated evacuation mechanism involving the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), the MICA Centre and coastal States.

- vii. DGS Circular No. 47 of 2026 dated 15.07.2026 – issued upon renewed escalation, advising ship owners, ship managers and RPSL companies, it mandates that ship owners and RPSL companies obtain explicit individual consent from Indian seafarers before they transit the Strait of Hormuz. The directive also requires enhanced real-time monitoring of vessel positions by the DGComm Centre and the completion of voyage-specific security risk assessments.

Details of real-time reporting, tracking and monitoring mechanism for vessels and seafarers operating in the said region:

- i. The eNavik Portal, operationalised on 01.07.2026, provides an integrated digital platform with dedicated 24x7 Marine Casualty Reporting, Crisis Management and Seafarer Grievance Redressal modules, enabling digital reporting of marine casualties, security incidents and distress situations, automated routing of incident reports to the concerned authorities, and real-time tracking of response measures and case progression.
- ii. An online Ship Reporting Form, has been instituted under DGS Circular No. 08 of 2024, through this all vessels transiting the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and adjacent waters submit their details, thereby maintaining a comprehensive and up-to-date vessel database which facilitates tracking and coordination and enables a swift response by the Indian Navy in the event of an incident.
- iii. DGS Circular No. 08 of 2026, requires the Company Security Officer to furnish to the DG Communication Centre the full particulars of the vessel together with the crew list.
- iv. Continuous real-time monitoring is undertaken through the DG Communication Centre, which is manned round the clock, in close coordination with the Indian Navy, the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) and other competent authorities.
- v. A Situation Report is compiled and issued every 24 hours, which records, inter alia, the vessel-wise position and the number of Indian seafarers onboard each vessel in the region.

The measures taken to ensure the communication, evacuation and repatriation of Indian seafarers operating in the region are as follows:

- i. **Communication:** A dedicated 24-hour Control Room and the DG Communication Centre (MMDAC) function round the clock. A defined incident-communication protocol requires contact with the nearest Indian Naval or coalition warship on VHF

Channel 16 and immediate intimation to the DG Communication Centre, the IFC-IOR and the UKMTO. Navigational warnings and maritime security advisories are disseminated to stakeholders on a continuing basis.

- ii. ***Assistance to NoK:*** Close and continuing contact is maintained with the families of seafarers, and dedicated welfare counsellor access has been provided wherever required. In cases of fatality, immediate financial support is facilitated, including release of Rs. 10,00,000 (Rupees Ten Lakh) through the Seafarers Welfare Fund Society.
