

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2131
ANSWERED ON 10/12/2021

SHORTAGE OF CONTAINERS AT EASTERN PORTS

2131. SHRI RAVNEET SINGH BITTU:
SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR (ALIAS) VIJAY VASANTH:

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

पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्री

- (a) whether the eastern ports are grappling with container shortages forcing exporters to move to Western Indian Ports with spike in freight during post Covid re-opening;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps to resolve this issue of shortage of containers on the East Indian Ports;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the time by which the problem of container shortages in these ports is likely to be resolved in future?

ANSWER

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

(a&b) Yes Sir, during the various meetings held by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Directorate General of Shipping, Mumbai since December, 2020 with the trade bodies, shortage of reefer container at Visakhapatnam and Kolkata ports was reported.

(c&d) Yes Sir, steps are taken to resolve the issue:

- i) A Task Force has been constituted by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary (PSW) comprising representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Railways, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) and stake-holders like the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)

to monitor evolving situation of shortage of containers and regular follow up on the initiatives to augment the availability of containers. Meetings are held by the Task Force at regular intervals.

- ii) As per the advice of the Directorate General of Shipping, FIEO has set up a portal to bring on-board EXIM traders and Shipping lines on a common platform where the exporters could place their requirements well in advance and shipping lines can also place the schedule for availability of containers. The portal is functional and many Exporters and Service providers have registered themselves on the portal.
- iii) Regular interaction with the Shipping Lines and their Association has resulted in increasing the availability of the number of empty imported (TEUs) containers. So far 1.67 million TEUs have been repositioned by shipping lines. New Services to West Africa, USA, Europe and Far East has been started by Shipping Lines further increasing containers supply and availability of space on ships. The Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) has also diverted one 4500 TEUs container ship 'SCI Chennai' engaged in Coastal trade to EXIM trade from 03.10.2021.
- iv) Exporters were advised to explore the possibilities of converting their containerizing cargo to bulk/break bulk cargo. FIEO and Indian National Shipowners' Association (INSA) are coordinating in this regard.
- v) CONCOR has announced a volume-based rebate scheme of upto 100% on rail tariff w.e.f. 01.09.2021 for movement of empty containers from Ports to Hinterland for its further utilization in exports.

(e): During the last meeting, the Shipping companies & Association have informed that the situation is to improve from mid of 2022.
