

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2191
ANSWERED ON 10/12/2021

SHORTAGE OF CONTAINERS AT PORTS

2191. SHRI JAYADEV GALLA:
SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY:
SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB:
SHRIMATI SARMISTHA SETHI:
SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

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

पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्री

- (a) the details of containers available and required for shipping of cargo at ports in the country, port and classification-wise;
- (b) whether the shortage of containers for exports at Indian and international ports and disruption/delay in supply chain and shipping of cargo has been reported in the country, if so, the details thereof along with its adverse impact on International trade/economy of the country and revenue loss to exporters and exchequer due to it;
- (c) the measures taken/being taken to address the shortage of containers at ports;
- (d) whether there exists a mandatory policy for returning the container to the exporting country from the country of import, if so, the details thereof along with the number of containers returned, country-wise; and
- (e) if not, whether the Government proposes to introduce such a policy, if so, the details and the timeline of implementation thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Since, the containers availability is ever changing in view of cargo exports and imports and also it takes unprecedented turnaround time in other countries due to congestion at Ports, maintenance of record for the availability of containers is not feasible. However, the data on containers handled (loading/unloading) at Major Ports from April 2021 to October, 2021 is enclosed at **Annexure**.

(b) Yes. The main reason for the current global shipping crisis is the raging pandemic resulting in the congestion at the ports. The unbalanced recovery of the economy between importing and exporting countries, post COVID-19, also played a role in the crisis. The crisis began in late 2020 due to a sharp mismatch in import and export volumes, leading to shortage of containers available for exports, at ports across India. The situation worsened as economies in the region and beyond began opening up at the same time after lockdowns. By April 2021, the container crisis subdued a bit, but by July 2021 the shortage was back at a time when export volumes were more than ever before as industry was clearing inventory and growth of global demand.

However, the growth in export volumes in 2021 has been quite robust as compared to the year 2019 and even more so when compared with the year 2020.

(c) Major Ports are encouraging lines to arrange a direct call of mother vessels for transshipment services to avoid additional time and cost incurred due to congestion at foreign ports. Major Ports also extended incentives in port charges for additional transshipment volume.

Fiscal incentives have been provided by Port Authorities i.e. volume link discounts on port charges, increasing free storage period and concessional storage charges.

Due to regular interactions with all the stakeholders by the Port Chairmen, more number of empty containers (TEUs) have been imported as compared to export resulting in availability of additional TEUs for EXIM trade at 12 major Ports.

(d) & (e) There is no mandate under Customs Law and regulations for returning the container to the exporting country from the country of import.