

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3337
ANSWERED ON 07.08.2026

PROTECTION OF INDIAN SAILORS

3337. SHRI THIRU THANGA TAMILSELVAN:

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

पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्री

- (a) whether it is true that India is the third largest supplier of sailors to the world after Philippines and China, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether it is true that last year alone around 1125 Indian sailors are reported to have been abandoned and many Indian sailors had been suffering from hunger and starvation for many months, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Union Government has taken any steps to save Indian sailors from abandonment, hunger and starvation in the middle of the ocean and to protect their life and jobs, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

- (a) As per the BIMCO/ICS *Seafarer Workforce Report 2026*, India is ranked as the second largest seafarer-supplying nation globally, with an estimated supply of over 3.11 lakh seafarers (officers and ratings).
- (b) As per the ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers 1,373 Indian seafarers on 172 vessels were reported to be affected in abandonment cases during the year 2025. As on 04.08.2026, issues of 119 vessels with 1010 seafarers have been resolved. In abandonment cases, shipowners are responsible under the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006 to provide food, water, wages, medical care and repatriation. In cases where seafarers face hardship, the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA) closely coordinates with Indian Missions abroad, RPSL agencies, shipowners, P&I Clubs and welfare organizations such as the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) to ensure provision of essential supplies and facilitate repatriation of affected seafarers.
- (c) The Government has taken several measures to prevent seafarer abandonment and protect the welfare of Indian seafarers. These include strengthening the regulatory framework through amendments in the Merchant Shipping Act and issuance of regulatory notices/orders, mandatory verification of vessels prior to

deployment, restriction and blacklisting of non-compliant vessels, enhanced monitoring of Recruitment and Placement Service Licence (RPSL) agencies, regular coordination with Indian Missions abroad for repatriation of stranded seafarers, awareness programmes for seafarers, and strict enforcement action against defaulting RPSLs. Further, welfare support mechanisms have been strengthened through financial assistance schemes for stranded seafarers and their families, besides continuous engagement with international organisations such as IMO, ILO and ITF for timely resolution of abandonment cases.
