

**India re-elected as Member of International Maritime Council for two years (2018-19)****India re-elected as Member of International Maritime Council for two years (2018-19)**

India has been re-elected to the Council of the International Maritime Organization [IMO] under Category "B" at the 30th session of the Assembly of the IMO held in London on 01 December, 2017. The IMO Council consists of 40 member countries. In Categories "A" and "B" there are 10 members each and in Category "C" 20 members, who are elected by the IMO Assembly. IMO Council plays a crucial role to play in deciding various important matters within the mandate of the IMO, in relation to the global shipping industry, including its work programme strategy and budget.

Unlike in the past where India was re-elected to the IMO Council un-opposed, this time, for the 10 seats under Category "B" two new entrants, i.e. UAE, a non-member of the IMO Council so far and Australia, presently a member of the IMO Council under Category "C" had filed their nomination and this had necessitated holding of the election. India, however, emerged a winner in the keenly contested election.

The 30th Session of the IMO Assembly is being held at IMO Headquarters London from 27 November to 06 December, 2017. The Assembly session is being attended by a high level Indian delegation led by Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Shri Gopal Krishna, Secretary (Shipping), Shri Amitabh Kumar, Additional Director General of Shipping, Capt. Jayakumar, Deputy Nautical Advisor, Directorate General of Shipping and representative of the Indian Register of Shipping.

India has a large merchant marine fleet of 1359 vessels, both on foreign going and coastal operations, with a combined Gross Tonnage of 12.2 million. Nearly 90% of India's overseas trade by volume is carried through maritime transport. Nearly 92% of these goods are carried through foreign flag vessels. With the Indian economy poised to grow at a faster pace, there exist more opportunities for both the Indian and foreign flag vessels, to carry large volumes of goods, to and from the Indian coasts. India has a strong contingent of more than 145,000 active seafarers who continue to be the preferred choice for specialized vessels.

India has been one of the earliest members of the IMO, having ratified its Convention and joined it as a member-state in the year 1959. India has had the privilege of being elected to and serving the Council of the IMO, ever since it started functioning, and till date, except for two years for the period 1983-1984.

India is a party to 34 IMO Conventions and protocols and is currently in the advanced stage of ratifying Ballast Water Convention and Bunker Convention. India has already deposited with the ILO, instrument of ratification of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (revised), 2003 and Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

India continues to provide services of its expert manpower to the IMO, as and when

required. The IMO's panel of auditors for the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme (VIMSAS) and Goal Based Standards (CBS) has a number of auditors from India. A number of domain experts also participate in the meetings of working groups constituted by IMO Committees.

With re-election in IMO, India will continue to engage with the international maritime community to further her maritime interests and promote the welfare of her citizens.

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