

For stronger employee representation

Amendments approved by the Union Cabinet to the Major Port Authorities Bill, 2016 are meant to make employee representation stronger in a labour-heavy work environment. The amendments are based on the recommendations of the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee.

The changes include an increase in labour representatives to be appointed in the Port Authority Board, among the serving employees of the port concerned, from one to two. The members representing the interests of the employees will hold office for three years and not for more than two consecutive terms. The number of independent members in the Port Authority Board will be a minimum of two and a maximum of four.

Every person who was receiving any retirement benefit from the Board of Trustees under the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963 immediately before such date will continue to receive the same benefit from the Board.

The Board of each major port will be entitled to create a specific master plan in respect of any development or infrastructure established, or proposed to be established, within the port limits and the land appurtenant thereto. Such a master plan will be independent of any local or State government regulations of any authority whatsoever.

After commencement of the Act, for private-public partnership projects, the concessionaire shall be free to fix the tariff based on market conditions.

The proposed law highlights that amounts received by or on behalf of the Board under its provisions will be credited to a general account or accounts of the Ports which the Board may from time to time open with any nationalised or scheduled bank, according to the guidelines of the Finance Ministry.

The presiding officer and members of the adjudicatory board have to be appointed by the Centre on the recommendations of the selection committee.

The government will have the power to remove the presiding officer or any member of the adjudicatory board from office in accordance with procedure.

A saving clause has been kept under repeal and saving so that the existing benefit enjoyed by Mumbai and Kolkata Ports in respect of municipal assessment of property under the Bombay Port Trust Act, 1879 and the Calcutta Port Act, 1890 can continue.

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