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THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2014

The Hon'ble members of Rajya Sabha have passed the The Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill, 2013 on 1st December, 2014. The said bill was later passed by the Hon'ble members of Lok Sabha on 2nd December, 2014. These amendments have been made in order to bring existing Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 in conformity with the International Labour Organization's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

Some of the key highlights of this amendment bill are herein below:-

1. These amendments have been made in order to bring existing Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 in conformity with the International Labour Organization's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.
2. Requirement of International Anti-Fouling Certificate from the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) to undertake an international voyage with gross tonnage of 400 or above. Similarly, in cases of ships carrying below 400 gross tonnage and not engaged in international voyage an Indian Anti-Fouling System Certificate is required;
3. Requirement of an Anti-Fouling System Certificate for foreign ships in India and for Indian Ships in foreign countries by appropriate authority;
4. DGS or any person authorized by him has been empowered to (i) inspect ships for ensuring that provisions are properly complied with, (ii) take brief sampling of the ship's anti-fouling system and (iii) verify any record that the ships are required to maintain on-board;

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5. Prohibition of engagement of minors in night works;
6. It mandates the requirement of sufficient food and water on the ship as per the provisions of the convention;
7. It requires that every foreign-going ship should have a medical officer on-board if it is carrying more than the prescribed number of persons. In cases where it is carrying less than prescribed number of persons, it should have medical facilities on-board, as per the Convention;
8. Every ship with gross tonnage of 500 or above and voyaging internationally or operating in another country requires a Maritime Labour Certificate and a Declaration of maritime Labour Compliance.

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