The 'Merchant Shipping Bill, 2025

The Parliament of India passed the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2025, in August 2025. It received approval from the Lok Sabha on August 6 and the Rajya Sabha on August 11. The new legislation aims to modernize India's maritime laws by replacing the outdated Merchant Shipping Act of 1958.

Key aspects of the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2025

- **Modernisation:** The bill modernizes India's maritime framework to align it with international standards and conventions, replacing the Merchant Shipping Act of 1958.
- **International Compliance:** It aims to bring India's laws in line with international best practices and conventions, particularly those of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).
- **Improved Governance:** The new legislation promotes efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the maritime sector.
- **Enhanced Safety and Security:** It includes provisions for improving emergency response and investigating marine casualties.
- **Environmental Protection:** The bill addresses environmental concerns by incorporating measures to prevent marine pollution.
- **Seafarer Welfare:** A significant focus of the new law is on improving the welfare and safety of seafarers.
- **Economic Benefits:** By making maritime laws more modern and predictable, the bill intends to increase India's "bankability" as a maritime jurisdiction and attract investment.

Replace Old Laws: The act repeals the old Merchant Shipping Act of 1958 and the Coasting Vessels Act of 1838.

Practice Questions:

1. With respect to the environmental and safety provisions of the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2025, consider the following statements:

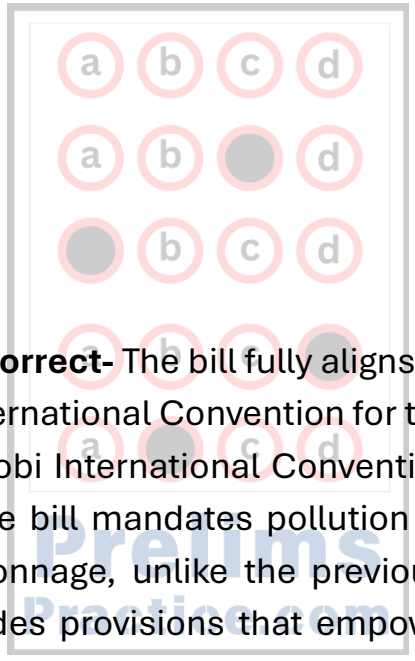
I. The bill incorporates India's obligations under several International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions, such as MARPOL and the Wreck Removal Convention

II. It mandates pollution prevention certification only for large oil tankers and cargo vessels

III. The bill empowers the central government to detain "stateless vessels" found in Indian waters

How many of the above statements are correct?

a) Only one
b) Only two
c) All three
d) None



Answer: b

Explanation: Statement I is correct- The bill fully aligns Indian maritime laws with IMO conventions, including the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks. **Statement II is incorrect-** The bill mandates pollution prevention certification for all vessels, regardless of their tonnage, unlike the previous 1958 Act. **Statement III is correct-** The legislation includes provisions that empower the central government to detain vessels without nationality in Indian coastal waters, thereby bolstering maritime security.

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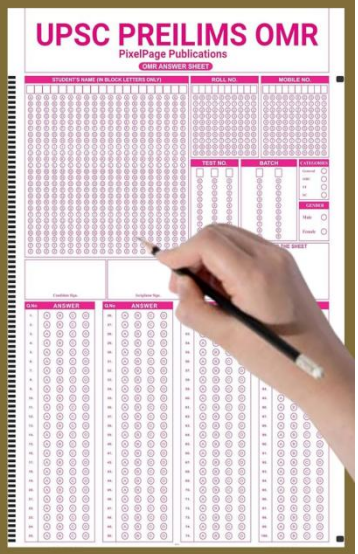

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