

**CHAPTER 242**

**CHANK FISHERIES**

*Acts*  
Nos. 8 of 1953,  
22 of 1955.

AN ACT TO MAKE PROVISION FOR REGULATING THE TAKING OF CHANKS, BECHE-DE-MER, CORAL, AND SHELLS, FOR REGULATING CHANK FISHERIES AND THE EXPORTATION OF CHANKS, AND OTHER MATTERS INCIDENTAL TO OR CONNECTED WITH THE MATTERS AFORESAID.

[Sections 5, 6, 10, 11, and 17—14th March, 1953.]\*

Short title.      **1.** This Act may be cited as the Chank Fishery Act.      **3.** (1) No person shall carry out any diving operations for the purpose of taking chanks unless he is the holder of a diving licence issued under this Act and for the time being in force.      Licensing of divers.

TAKING OF CHANKS

Registration of vessels.      **2.** (1) No vessel shall be used or employed in or for the purpose of taking chanks or of any operations for taking chanks, unless it is registered under this Act and the registration card issued in respect thereof is carried in the vessel at the time when it is so used or employed.

(2) No person shall use or employ any other person for the purpose of carrying out diving operations for taking chanks unless that other person is the holder of a diving licence issued under this Act and for the time being in force.

(2) The authority empowered under this Act to register vessels which are to be used or employed for the purpose of taking chanks or of any operations for taking chanks may refuse to register any vessel or cancel the registration of any vessel if he has reasonable cause to believe that such vessel is to be so used or employed, or is being so used or employed, by or on behalf of any person—

(3) The authority empowered under this Act to issue diving licences may refuse such licence to any applicant therefor, or may cancel the licence of any hold; thereof, if such authority has reasonable cause to believe that the applicant or holder, as the case may be—

(a) who is neither a citizen of Sri Lanka nor the holder of a valid residence permit; or

(a) is neither a citizen of Sri Lanka nor the holder of a valid residence permit; or

(b) who has been convicted of any offence by reason of his having acted in contravention of any of the provisions of this Act or any regulation made thereunder relating to the taking of chanks.

(b) has been convicted of any offence by reason of his having acted in contravention of any of the provisions of this Act or any regulation made thereunder relating to the taking of chanks.

The decision of such authority to refuse or cancel such licence may be the subject of an appeal to a District Court.

The decision of such authority to refuse or cancel such registration may be the subject of an appeal to a District Court.

**4.** No person shall use any dredge or other apparatus of a like nature for the purpose of taking chanks.      Prohibition of the use of dredges.

\* Other sections not in operation on 31st December, 1980.

Chank fishing regulations.

**5.** Regulations may be made providing for-

- (a) the registration of vessels used for the purpose of taking chanks, the fees payable for such registration, the period for which such registration shall be effective and the renewal of such registration;
- (b) the time and manner of the making of applications for diving licences;
- (c) the issue and form of such licences, the fees payable therefor, and the duration and renewal of such licences;
- (d) the declaration of close seasons for the taking of chanks in specified areas and the prohibition of the taking of chanks during the close seasons;
- (e) the regulation, supervision and control of operations for the taking of chanks, including the prohibition of the taking of chanks beyond a specified depth or in specified areas; and
- (f) generally in respect of matters connected with or incidental to the matters mentioned in the preceding paragraphs of this section.

Chank fishery camps.

**6.** (1) The Minister may, with the concurrence of the Minister in charge of the subject of Health, from time to time by Order published in the Gazette—

- (a) declare any place specified in the Order to be a chank fishery camp, during such period or periods as may be so specified for the purpose of any chank fishery specified therein;
- (b) prescribe the duration of the period of such fishery, and
- (c) appoint any person, by name or by office, to be the superintendent of such camp.

(2) The Minister may make rules—

- (a) for the preservation of order in any chank fishery camp;
- (b) for the prevention of accidents, fire and disease in any such camp ;
- (c) for the regulation of the water supply and sanitation in any such camp; and
- (d) for any other matter which he may deem necessary for the proper administration, regulation and control of any such camp.

(3) Every rule made by the Minister shall be published in the Gazette and shall come into operation upon the date of such publication or upon such later date as may be specified in the rule.

(4) Every rule made by the Minister shall, as soon as convenient after its publication in the Gazette, be brought before Parliament for approval.

Every rule which is not so approved shall be deemed to be rescinded as from the date of such disapproval, but without prejudice to anything previously done thereunder.

Every rule so approved shall be as valid and effectual as though it were herein enacted.

(5) Any person who acts in contravention of any provision of any rule made under this section shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction after summary trial before a Magistrate to a fine not exceeding one hundred rupees.

**EXPORTATION OF CHANKS AND ROYALTY**

**7.** (1) No person shall export any chanks from Sri Lanka—

- (a) except under the authority of an export licence issued in that behalf by the Controller of Exports on the recommendation of the Director or an officer authorized by the Director in that behalf; or

Control of exportation of chanks.

(b) except from any port declared by the Minister by Order published in the Gazette to be a port from which chanks may be exported.

(2) The Minister may by Order published in the Gazette declare that the provisions of paragraph (b) of subsection (1) shall not apply during the period for which the Order is in force.

Royalty on chanks.

**8.** (1) There shall be levied and paid on all chanks entered for exportation from Sri Lanka a royalty at such rates as the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister in charge of the subject of Finance, may from time to time appoint by Order published in the Gazette.

(2) Every such Order shall as soon as convenient be laid before Parliament, and may at any of the next following eight meetings be rescinded by resolution of Parliament, but without prejudice to anything previously done thereunder.

Every such Order which is not so rescinded shall be as valid and effectual as though it were herein enacted.

Application of Customs Ordinance.

**9.** The provisions of sections 7 and 8 shall be read and construed as one with the Customs Ordinance.

**BECHE-DE-MER. CORAL AND SHELLS**

Regulations as to beche-de-mer, coral and shells.

**10.** Regulations may be made for the prohibition or the regulation, supervision and control, of the export and taking of beche-de-mer, coral or shells, whether generally or in any specified area.

**SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS**

Making of regulations.

**11.** (1) The Minister may make regulations for or in respect of all matters for which regulations are required or authorized to be made by any of the preceding provisions of this Act and generally for the purpose of carrying out or giving effect to the principles of this Act.

(2) Every regulation made by the Minister shall be published in the Gazette and shall come into operation upon the date of such publication or upon such later date as may be specified in the regulation.

(3) Every regulation made by the Minister shall, as soon as convenient after its publication in the Gazette, be brought before Parliament for approval.

Every regulation which is not so approved shall be deemed to be rescinded as from the date of such disapproval, but without prejudice to anything previously done thereunder.

Every regulation so approved shall be as valid and effectual as though it were herein enacted.

Offences and penalties.

**12.** (1) Any person who acts in contravention of any provision of this Act or any regulation made thereunder shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction after summary trial before a Magistrate to imprisonment of either description for a period not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding five hundred rupees or to both such imprisonment and fine.

(2) Where any vessel is used or employed in contravention of section 2 of this Act or of any regulation made thereunder, the person for the time being in charge of the vessel shall be guilty of an offence punishable under subsection (1) of this section; and the owner of the vessel shall also be guilty of the like offence unless he proves to the satisfaction of the court that the offence was committed without his consent and that he had taken all reasonable steps to prevent such contravention.

Seizure and forfeiture.

**13.** (1) Any chank, beche-de-mer, coral or shell taken, or any dredge or vessel used or employed, in contravention of any provision of this Act or of any regulation made thereunder, may be seized by any fisheries inspector, or by any police officer or officer of customs, or by any grama seva niladhari, or by any person appointed for that purpose in writing by the Government Agent of the administrative district in which such seizure is made, and when seized shall be conveyed to the customs office nearest to the place of seizure ; and anything so seized—

(a) shall be returned to the person from whose possession it was seized forthwith upon the expiration of fourteen days after the seizure, unless a prosecution for the alleged contravention is instituted before the end of that period ; or

(b) shall be returned to that person forthwith after the final determination of the prosecution unless it is duly declared to be forfeited to the State under subsection (2).

(2) Any court convicting any person of any offence under this Act may make order declaring that any chank, beche-de-mer, coral, shell, dredge or vessel used in or in connexion with the commission of the offence shall be forfeited to the State ; and anything so ordered to be forfeited may be sold or otherwise disposed of in such manner as the court may direct.

Informer's share.

**14.** A court imposing a fine under this Act may award to the informer a share not exceeding a moiety of so much of the fine as is actually recovered and realized.

Offences to be cognizable offences.

**15.** All offences under this Act shall be cognizable offences for the purposes of the application of the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act, notwithstanding anything contained in the First Schedule of that Act.

interpretation.

**16.** In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

" chanks " includes both live and dead chanks;

"citizen of Sri Lanka" means a person who is a citizen of Sri Lanka under any law for the time being in force in that behalf;

\*" coastal waters " means the part of the sea within a distance of three nautical miles from any point on

the coast of Sri Lanka measured from the low-water mark of ordinary spring tides;

" Director" means the Director of Fisheries appointed under any law for the time being in force relating to fisheries;

" fisheries inspector" means any person appointed an inspector of fisheries under any law for the time being in force relating to fisheries and includes a person so appointed a sub-inspector of fisheries;

" immature chank " means any chank of a size capable of being passed through a metal ring two and three-eighth inches in diameter;

" take ", with its grammatical variations and cognate expressions, when used with reference to chanks, includes the fishing for or diving for or collection of chanks;

" valid residence permit" means a temporary or permanent residence permit issued under the Immigrants and Emigrants Act and for the time being in force ; and

" vessel " includes boats, canoes, rafts and craft of every description.

**17.** The provisions of this Act, Other than the provisions of this section and of sections 5, 6, 10 and 11, shall not come into force until such date as the Minister may appoint by Order published in the Gazette.

Date of coming into force of Act.

\* See also section 11 of the Maritime Zones Law.