

Trade imbalance between India and China

947. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that trade between India and China will reach more than 20 billion dollars during the current financial year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) what is trade deficit between India and China and also with other countries; and
- (d) how this trade gap will be filled and what steps have been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The trade between India and China has already crossed US \$ 20 billion in the year 2007-08. During 2007-08 the trade between India and China was of the volume of US \$ 37.9 billion.

(c) The trade deficit between India and China during the year 2007-08 was US \$ 16.27 billion. During 2007-08 the trade deficit with South Korea was US \$ 3.1 billion and with Japan US \$ 2.4 billion.

(d) The trade gap can be filled by increasing our exports to these countries. During the Prime Minister's visit to China in January 2008 the Commerce and Industry Minister raised the issue of growing trade deficit with his Chinese counterpart. In order to bridge the trade deficit from 2007 onwards China is organising South Asian Commodity fair every year. India Trade Promotion Organisation along with Export Promotion Councils is participating in these fairs. The only way to bridge the trade gap with the rest of world, including China is to make exports more competitive. Appreciation of currency, reduction of interest rates and increase in infrastructure spending are some of the steps taken to improve the competitiveness of Indian exports.

Abduction of Indian fishermen by Srilankan Navy

948. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian Coast Guard has taken enough steps to protect the Indian fishermen from abduction and harassment by Srilankan navy;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for continued abduction of Indian fishermen particularly from the State of Tamil Nadu despite the presence of Indian Coast Guard in Bay of Bengal; and
- (c) the number of Indian fishermen abducted by Srilankan navy during the last one year and the steps taken to secure their release by Government and the number of fishermen released so far?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Besides, continuous surveillance and patrolling by the Indian Coast Guard/Indian Navy Ships along the coast in this area fishermen are advised by Coast Guard ships on patrol through community Interaction programmes not to cross the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) into Sri Lankan Waters. However, there are few instances of fishing boats crossing the IMBL for lucrative fish catch.

(c) A total number of 1452 fishermen were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy since January, 2008. All the fishermen have been released after intervention by India's High Commission in Colombo with Sri Lankan Authorities.

Shortage of manpower in armed forces

†949. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacant posts of officers and soldiers in air force, navy and army at present;

(b) the reasons therefore;

(c) the number of military officers who have been taken voluntary retirement during the last five years; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to meet the shortage of officers and soldiers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY) : (a) to (d) The information about service-wise shortage of officers and soldiers can not be disclosed in the interest of national security.

Some of the major reasons for shortage of officers and soldiers are pay scales being on the lower side in comparison with the counterparts in the private sector; conditions of service being far more difficult as compared to other Government Organizations; terms and conditions of service not being commensurate with pay, status and cadre inability; disrupted family life and education of children along with shortage of accommodation.

The force-wise details of officers who have taken voluntary retirement during the last five year are as under:-

Year	Army	Navy	Air Force
2004	290	115	244
2005	365	168	175
2006	464	178	87
2007	608	209	112
2008	579	172	113

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.