

(a) the progress so far made towards the release of fishermen and fishing boats from the custody of Pakistan Marine Security Agency (PMSA), State-wise including Gujarat; and

(b) the outcome of the Judicial Committee set up to ensure the expeditious release of fishermen and fishing boats?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) According to available information, 593 Indian fishermen and 426 Indian boats are in Pakistani custody. 277 Indian fishermen were given consular access on 11-12 June 2009, bringing the number of fishermen granted consular access to 553. Pakistan had last released 99 Indian fishermen on 26 November 2008. Efforts are being made to secure release of the remaining Indian fishermen and their boats.

(b) The decision to form an India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners was taken during EAM's visit to Pakistan in January 2007, and the first meeting of the Committee was held on 26 February 2008. The Committee made recommendations to the two Governments, which *inter alia*, included immediate release of and consular access to fishermen, and exchange of a consolidated list of nationals in each other's jails. The Committee visited jails in Pakistan in June 2008 and jails in India in August 2008. It also held its meetings during these visits. In its last meeting held in India in August 2008, the Committee again recommended, *inter alia*, immediate release and repatriation of all prisoners to their respective countries who had completed their sentences and whose nationality has been confirmed. Pakistan released 34 Indian fishermen in August 2008, and another 99 fishermen in November 2008. India had released 14 Pakistani fishermen in its jails in May 2008 in pursuance of the Committee's recommendations.

Hambantota Port of Sri Lanka

2350. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

SHRI O.T. LEPCHA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka is being developed with Chinese collaboration;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the choice of developing this port was first given to India; and

(d) if so, the reasons for refusing to develop the Port which is of significant strategic importance?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) It is reported that Phase I of the project of Hambantota Port was launched in April 2008 with Chinese assistance and with the involvement of Chinese Contractors. The approximate cost of Phase I is reportedly US\$360 million.

(c) It is our understanding that the Government of Shri Lanka planned to develop Hambantota Port with Chinese assistance.

(d) Does not arise.

Visit of Hillary Clinton

2351. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

SHRI GOVINDRAO WAMANRAO ADIK:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her visit to this region called upon India to resolve all outstanding difference with Pakistan bilaterally for the benefit of regional trade;

(b) if so, the support offered by the U.S. to help resolve these differences;

(c) the issues and differences if any identified for such resolution; and the Pakistan Government's response to Ms. Clinton's suggestion;

(d) whether the U.S. at the same time cleared a \$ 680 billion defence aid to Pakistan; and

(e) Government's response to Ms. Clinton's suggestion and the U.S. President approval of defence aid to Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) to (c) During the visit of US Secretary of State Ms. Hillary Clinton to Pakistan, in October 2009, she expressed the hope that at some point in the future, the United States would like to see India and Pakistan resolve their outstanding differences. She stated, "I believe that if there were peace between Pakistan and India and the outstanding issues were resolved, Pakistan would take off like a rocket in terms of economic development."

Government is not aware of any formal Pakistani response to this suggestion of the US Secretary of State.

Government has always advocated the resolution of outstanding issues with Pakistan through bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan.

(d) No.

(e) Government has consistently drawn the attention of the United States and other countries to the need for proper benchmarks and accountability to prevent the diversion of assistance provided to Pakistan for use in its military build up against India. Government has also stressed the need for constant vigilance as also close monitoring of such assistance being provided.

Indians in various countries

2352. SHRI SHYAMAL CHAKRABORTY:

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Indians and People of Indian origins who are living in various countries, country-wise;