

Security Agency and Navy had recently captured six mercantile ships on their way to India;

(b) if so, what are the reasons thereof;

(c) whether any protest has been lodged with Pakistan in this regard; and

(d) what efforts have so far been made for their release?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. However, according to information available with Government, only three Indian sailing vessels have been captured by the Pakistan authorities during January 1988.

(b) No reasons have been given by the Government of Pakistan.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Government have urged the Government of Pakistan to release the vessels and their crew. The latter has agreed to consider the matter.

Special courts with women judges

*148. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government have received any representation from any Women's Organisation in regard to the setting up of special courts with women judges to deal with atrocities on women and dowry deaths; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Soft line of credit to Burma by India

*149. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

SHRI DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to extend a soft line of credit to Burma for facilitating project exports and boosting two-way trade; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(b) what has been the mutual import and export position of the two countries in the last three years and what are the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. During PM's visit to Burma on the 15th and 16th of December, 1987, an offer of a grant of Rs. 100 million was made for the establishment of an Industrial project in Burma with Indian knowhow and equipment.

(b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House. (See below).

Two way trade is presently at a low level because of the absence of regular shipping, stoppage of rice imports, shortage of foreign exchange with Burma and inadequate communications facilities.