

(e) if so, the nature thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):

(a) No. Only 18 of the approximately 1500 enrolled Indian students at the Tri-Valley University were radio-tagged by US authorities on 19 January 2011 following closure of Tri-Valley University in California for alleged fraudulent practices. As on 2nd March 2011, radio-tags from 13 students have been removed and others are under review.

(b) and (c) Our Mission and Posts in the United States are regularly meeting students and providing appropriate guidance and advisories. A free legal-aid camp for affected students was organized by the Consulate General of India in San Francisco. Some of the affected students have engaged attorneys to represent their case, including for removal of radio-tags.

(d) and (e) Investigations by US authorities into the case of alleged fraudulent practices by Tri-Valley University management and students are ongoing. The students have not been charged for illegal immigration, but for possible violation of visa conditions, including those related to class attendance, residence and work.

Fisherman in jails of Sri Lanka

1593. SHRI N. K. SINGH: Will the Minister EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian fishermen that were detained by the Sri Lankan Navy in the last one year;

(b) whether these fishermen have been released by the Sri Lankan Government;

(c) the reasons for execution of two Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy in January 2011; and

(d) whether the issue has been taken up by Government with the Sri Lanka Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):

(a) and (b) In 2010, 34 Indian fishermen were apprehended by Sri Lankan Navy and subsequently released. In 2011, in two separate incidents both in February, 136 Indian fishermen were apprehended by Sri Lanka and subsequently released. As of now there are no verified Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan jails.

(c) and (d) On 12th January, 2011, an Indian fishing trawler is reported to have been fired at allegedly by the Sri Lankan Navy resulting in an Indian fisherman Mr. Veerapandian being killed. The Indian trawler was on the Sri Lankan side of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). A second incident took place on 22-23 January, 2011 where one Indian fisherman Mr. Jayakumar died in the waters between India and Sri Lanka allegedly by strangulation by Sri Lankan Navy personnel. The Sri Lankan Government have denied any involvement of their Navy in either of these incidents.

As soon as the news of the death of our fishermen in January, 2011 was received, Government had immediately taken up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka both in New Delhi and Colombo and expressed our deep concern at these incidents. We emphasized that resort to firing or use of force in such situation had no justification whatsoever. To underline the seriousness with which Government viewed these developments, Foreign Secretary visited Sri Lanka from January 30-31, 2011 to convey Government of India's strong concern over the killing of our fishermen. She also called on H.E. President Mahinda Rajapaksa of Sri Lanka. During his meeting on 7th February 2011 with Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister Prof. Peiris in Thimphu, EAM took up the issue of these two deaths strongly and conveyed our deep concern on the violence against our fishermen.

During the visit of Foreign Secretary to Sri Lanka in January, 2011 a Joint Statement was issued where both sides agreed that the use of force cannot be justified under any circumstances. The Sri Lankan Government reiterated their commitment to ascertaining the facts behind the incidents. Both sides agreed that the October 2008 Understanding on Fishing Arrangements had led to a decrease in incidents and that there was need to discuss further arrangements so as to strengthen the safety and security of the fishermen. It was decided that the next meeting of the Joint Working Group on Fishing would be convened at an early date and contacts between the fishermen associations of both countries encouraged.

Fishermen killed by neighbouring countries

1594. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Indian fishermen detained and killed during the last three years by the neighbouring countries;
- (b) whether Government has raised this matter before the respective countries;