

(d) whether it is also a fact that Sarabjit is an innocent person and he has been labelled as terrorist and the court awarded him capital punishment for nominal crime;

(e) whether Government has talked to the Government of Pakistan for the release of Sarabjit Singh; and

(f) if so, the assurance given by Government of Pakistan in this regard?

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

(a) According to available reports, Shri Sarabjit Singh is in Pakistani Jail since 30.08.1990.

(b) The Anti-Terrorism Court, Lahore awarded him capital punishment on 03.10.1991. The Supreme Court of Pakistan upheld the sentence on 18.08.2005.

(c) A mercy petition to the President of Pakistan, filed in 2008, was dismissed on 19.02.2008. According to Shri Sarabjit Singh's lawyer, Shri Sarabjit Singh *alias* Manjit Singh had filed a fresh mercy petition before the President of Pakistan on 19.02.2010. Another mercy petition was also filed by his lawyer before the President of Pakistan on 18.06.2010. According to the lawyer, the decision of the President of Pakistan on both of these petitions is still pending.

(d) According to Shri Sarabjit Singh and his lawyer, in a case of mistaken identity, Shri Sarabjit Singh was reportedly convicted for the crimes committed by one Manjit Singh.

(e) and (f) Government has consistently urged the Government of Pakistan to take a sympathetic and humanitarian view in this case. Prime Minister was assured by President Musharraf during their meeting in New York in 2005 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly that he would look at the question of clemency to Sarabjit Singh in a humanitarian way.

SAARC summit in Maldives

1137. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Seventeenth SAARC summit was held in Maldives;

(b) if so, the details of the resolutions passed at the summit;

(c) whether it is a fact that South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) is yet to be implemented fully; and

(d) by when, differences would be ironed out and SAFTA implemented fully?

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

(a) The 17th SAARC Summit was held in Addu City, in the South of Maldives, on 10-11 November, 2011.

(b) The Heads of State and Government of SAARC adopted the Addu Declaration entitled 'Building Bridges' at the Summit.

(c) The South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) is currently being implemented. The Agreement was signed on January 6, 2004, at the Twelfth SAARC Summit in Islamabad, Pakistan. The Agreement entered into force on January 1, 2006, and the Trade Liberalization Programme commenced from July 1, 2006.

SAARC countries are moving ahead to implement their respective commitments under the SAFTA in a time-bound manner, in accordance with a specified implementation schedule for planned tariff liberalization.

(d) Under SAFTA, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are required to reduce their tariffs to 5% by 2013, and the other Member States (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal) are required to do so by 2016.

Adverse comment by an Australian Radio for India

†1138. DR. YOGENDRA P. TRIVEDI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a presenter of an Australian Radio's programme had said that India is a filthy place and river Ganga is a junkyard;

(b) whether Government of India protested on this matter and talked with Australian Government not to repeat such comments;

(c) if so, the date on which India protested on this matter and the Australian Government's response thereon; and

(d) the complete details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.