

belonging to minority communities including Hindus, who entered India on valid visas have not gone back to Pakistan on the grounds of religious persecution. Representations have also been received requesting for allowing extension of visas of such Pakistani nationals, and also for permitting them to apply for Long-Term Visa (LTV).

It is the primary responsibility of foreign Governments to discharge their obligations towards all their citizens including those that belong to their minority communities. Though the 'Shimla Agreement' with Pakistan specifically provides for non-interference in each others' internal affairs, nevertheless, based on reports of persecution of minority groups in Pakistan, Government has taken up the matter with the Government of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has stated that it was fully cognizant of the situation and looked after the welfare of all its citizens, particularly the minority community. The Government of Bangladesh has been reiterating its commitment to safeguarding minority rights within the legal framework of Bangladesh's constitution.

Impact of beheading of Indian soldiers by Pakistan on trade

†1129. SHRI TARUN VIJAY:

SHRI RASHEED MASOOD:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the action taken against Pakistan by India on the incident of brutality and beheading of two Indian soldiers by Pakistan; and
- (b) whether as a reaction on this incident, Government would minimize the level of trade and commerce relations with Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) and (b) Government deplored the gravely provocative and repugnant acts of the killing of two Indian soldiers and the barbaric mutilation of their bodies by the Pakistan Army near the Line of Control in the Mendhar sector on January 8, and has called upon the Government of Pakistan to carry out a proper investigation of this unacceptable action and ensure that this does not recur.

It has also been conveyed that Pakistan should not believe that its brazen denial and lack of proper response will be ignored and that bilateral relations could be unaffected or that there will be business as usual.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.