

foreign allowance for India-based officials in Indian Missions and Posts abroad. The Ministry has been in correspondence with the Ministry of Finance to address some technical issues raised by the latter related to annual review of indexation of foreign allowance.

(b) to (d) In view of certain recent developments, the Ministry is considering, in consultation with other relevant departments and Ministries of Government, various options regarding the terms of service of India based domestic assistants of diplomats posted abroad, keeping in view local requirements in different countries as well as international conventions and diplomatic practice.

Indian apprehended by Chinese troops

2370. DR. K. P. RAMALINGAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Chinese troops apprehended five Indian nationals in the Chumar area of Ladakh, well inside the Indian territory and took them to their side of the border in the month of December, 2013;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this was perhaps the first incident of this kind along the Line of Actual Control; and

(c) whether Government had taken up this issue with the Chinese Government, if so, their reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI E. AHAMED):

(a) to (c) There has been no instance of PLA troops apprehending any Indian national well inside Indian territory. Three Indian civilians, who had strayed across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the general area of Chumar, were apprehended by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The PLA intimated our troops about their apprehension on 10 December, 2013. A flag meeting was held on 11 December, 2013 at Spangur, during which the three Indian civilians were returned.

Fishermen arrested by Sri Lanka

2371. SHRI T. M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Sri Lankan Navy arrested 25 fishermen, seized their six trawlers and damaged a boat in the early hours on 21st January, 2014;

(b) whether the Sri Lankan Navy took away the captured fish and the mobile phones of the fishermen, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government has taken up this issue as well during the talks held on 27th January, 2014, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) and (b) As per available information, on 21st January, 2014, 25 Indian fishermen and their six fishing vessels were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy for allegedly fishing in Sri Lankan waters.

(c) As soon as the report of apprehension of Indian fishermen was received, Government, through diplomatic channels, took up the matter with the Sri Lankan authorities. As a result of its efforts, Government secured the release of 25 fishermen and their six fishing vessels on 25th January, 2014. Government attaches the highest importance to the welfare, safety and security of Indian fishermen and continues to remain engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that fishermen on both sides can continue to pursue their livelihood in a safe, secure and sustainable manner.

Bilateral cooperation agreement with Japan

2372. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether bilateral co-operation agreements with Japan in various sectors have been reviewed recently, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the extent to which such bilateral agreements have enhanced the trade between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) and (b) Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe visited India recently from 25-27 January, 2014. In the run up to the visit, Government took stock of all ongoing cooperation mechanisms and projects between the two countries, including existing Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding. Economic cooperation between India and Japan is expanding steadily. India is the largest recipient of Japanese Official Development Assistance, a part of which continues to be used in big infrastructure projects like the Delhi- Mumbai Industrial Corridor and the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.