

(b) the reasons for not releasing Indian prisoners even after serving their terms in Pak jails;

(c) whether Government has taken up the matter with Pakistani Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and response of Pakistani Government thereto, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED) : (a) to (d) As per available information there is one civil prisoner and 98 fishermen in Pakistani jails who have completed their sentences but are still in custody.

Government regularly takes up with the Pakistan authorities the issue of the early release and repatriation of such prisoners as well as providing regular consular access to them. Government of India also, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of all such Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails. The India-Pakistan Judicial Committee consisting of retired judges from both countries visits jails in both countries to ensure humane treatment and expeditious release of prisoners, including fishermen, who have completed their prison term. Due to Government's persistent efforts, 38 civil prisoners and 390 fishermen were released by Pakistan in 2013.

Trilateral cooperation on maritime security

2838. SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government held discussion with Sri Lanka recently about the trilateral cooperation on maritime security between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether the discussion was also held on various development partnership projects being undertaken by India and prospects for enhanced economic cooperation between the two countries, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED) : (a) India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have been engaged in

trilateral discussions on maritime security. In this context, the 2nd NSA-Level Meeting on Trilateral Cooperation on Maritime Security between India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives were held in Colombo on 8th July, 2013.

(b) External Affairs Minister met the External Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka during the latter's visit to India on 29th January, 2014 and discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations including development projects being undertaken by India and economic cooperation. Government has implemented and continues to implement a wide range of developmental projects for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka, including creation of infrastructure facilities in the areas of housing, education, health, livelihood restoration, economic revival, rehabilitation of harbour and restoration of railway lines.

Visit of PM of Japan

2839. SHRI TARUN VIJAY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the main concerns of India in the area of the maritime security and in what manner the regional security issues would be addressed with the cooperation with Japan in the wake of Japan's PM Shinjio Abe's recent India visit; and

(b) whether Government is planning more steps in the region of maritime security cooperation with East Asian countries too, if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED) : (a) India has, on several occasions, reiterated its position that it supports the freedom of navigation in international waters, the right of passage and unimpeded commerce in accordance with accepted principles of international law, and peaceful settlement of maritime disputes. These principles should be respected by all. India and Japan held the first bilateral dialogue on maritime affairs in New Delhi on January 29, 2013. Issues of mutual interest including maritime security, non-traditional threats, cooperation in shipping, marine sciences and technology were discussed. During Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's recent visit to India on 25-27 January, 2014, the two sides noted with satisfaction the ongoing bilateral exchanges on maritime affairs including counter-piracy activities, participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises as well as sharing of information.