

time, on account of differences in the perception of the LAC, situations have arisen on the ground that could have been avoided if we had a common perception of the LAC. Government regularly takes up any transgression along the LAC with the Chinese side through established mechanisms including border personnel meetings, flag meetings, meetings or Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs and diplomatic channels.

Government has firmly conveyed its stand to the Chinese side. India and China are engaged in discussions to arrive at a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question at an early date. The two sides agree that peace and tranquility on the border is the basis for the continued expansion of India-China relations.

Attack/kidnapping of Indians

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

(a) whether a large number of incidents of attacks and kidnapping on Indians in oil richer nations, particularly in Iraq have been reported during the last three months, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether many Indian employees who are working in these countries are in distress and seeking Indian Government's help for their safety; and

(c) if so, the details of steps taken/being taken by Government to ensure safety and security of our people in these countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH): (a) There are no reported incidents of attacks and kidnapping of Indian nationals in oil rich Gulf nations.

Some Indians were trapped in the conflict areas following sudden attacks and capturing of several cities in northern and central Iraq by the organization named Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) beginning 8 June. A group of 41 Indian nationals working in a construction company in Mosul were taken captive by an unidentified group.

Another group of 46 nurses working in a local hospital in the city of Tikrit, Iraq got stuck due to the conflict. They were abducted to Mosul on 3 July by an unidentified group. On 4 July, they were released and a special Air India flight was arranged on the same day to bring them back to India.

(b) No incident of Indian workers in distress in the oil-rich Gulf countries seeking Government's help for their safety has been reported by our Embassies in these countries.

However, due to ongoing turmoil in Iraq, the Government is facilitating Indian nationals in Iraq in their safe return to India, if they so desire.

(c) The Government is closely monitoring the security situation in Iraq and is making every effort and taking all necessary steps to ensure safe return of our nationals from there. Our Embassy in Baghdad is in close and regular contact with the Iraqi Government authorities for assisting Indian nationals currently in Iraq. Our Embassy in Baghdad and the Ministry of External Affairs have established 24 hour helplines to assist our nationals in Iraq and their concerned family members in India. We have also set up special camp offices in Basra, Najaf and Karbala and strengthened our Mission in Baghdad through the addition of 25 staff members. These field offices are proactively contacting Indian nationals and companies where they work, offering their services for the facilitation of our nationals to leave Iraq by offering air tickets as well as help with immigration and departure facilities. The details of these helplines have been well publicized through the media.

Permanent solution of fishermen's problem

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

(a) whether Government is seriously considering the permanent solution for the harassment and arrests of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Government;

(b) if so, the details of talks held with the Sri Lankan counterpart for solving the fishermen issue during the last one year; and

(c) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government for permanent solutions of fishermen issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH): (a) to (c) Government attaches the highest importance to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Government has consistently taken up issues relating to apprehension of and incidents of attack on our fishermen with the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that the Sri Lankan Navy acts with restraint and our fishermen are treated in a humane and pragmatic manner. The Sri Lankan side has, however, denied the involvement of their Navy in any incidents of harassment or intimidation or attack of Indian fishermen and has stated that none of the alleged attacks have taken place in Indian waters.

An India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group (JWG) to deal with issues relating to