

the PVR process. This would further bring down the time required for completion of PVR within the desired time limit of 21 days resulting in easing getting passport and other related services by the citizens accordingly.

### **Visit of dignitaries from Sri Lanka**

2580. SHRI. K.R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of Head of State from Sri Lanka who visited India during the last three years;
- (b) the details of trips to Sri Lanka undertaken by the Prime Minister of India during the same period;
- (c) the areas identified for co-operation/ discussion held during the said visits; and
- (d) the agreements signed and the advantage to the country as a result thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH]: (a) President of Sri Lanka visited India during February 15-18, 2015; May 13-14, 2016; October 15-17, 2016; and November 6-7, 2016. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka visited India during September 14-16, 2015; and October 4-6, 2016.

- (b) Prime Minister of India visited Sri Lanka during March 13-14, 2015.
- (c) The discussions during the visits sought to further strengthen the bilateral relationship.
- (d) Documents signed during the visit of President of Sri Lanka to India from February 15-18, 2015 were:

- (i) Agreement on Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy
- (ii) Programme of Cultural Cooperation for the years 2015-18
- (iii) MoU on the establishment of Nalanda University
- (iv) Work Plan 2014-15 under the MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture

Documents signed during the visit of Prime Minister of India to Sri Lanka from March 13-14, 2015 were:

- (i) Agreement on exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic and official passports

- (ii) Agreement on cooperation and mutual assistance in customs matters
- (iii) MoU for the establishment of Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Auditorium in the University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka
- (iv) MoU on cooperation in the field of Youth Development

Documents signed during the visit of Prime Minister of Sri Lanka to India from September 14-16, 2015 were:

- (i) Bilateral Agreement on Orbit Frequency Coordination of Satellite for SAARC Region
- (ii) Renewal of MoU regarding Indian grant assistance for implementation of Small Development Projects (SDP)
- (iii) MoU regarding supply of Medical Equipment to 200 bed ward complex at District General Hospital, Vavuniya
- (iv) Exchange of Letters on Establishment of Emergency Ambulance Services in Sri Lanka

These agreements have helped to further strengthen India-Sri Lanka bilateral relations in the fields of agriculture, education, culture, economic collaboration and development issues.

#### **Resolution of issues of Tamil fishermen**

2581. SHRI. K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state what are the steps taken by Government to resolve the issues of Tamil fishermen of India, during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH]: Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. As soon as reports of apprehension of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan authorities are received, Government, through diplomatic channels, takes up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka to secure the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen along with their vessels. India has consistently maintained that the fishermen issues involve longstanding livelihood and socio-economic practices and humanitarian concerns on both sides. It has been conveyed to the Sri Lankan side at the highest levels that the issue needs to be handled with great care and sensitivity.

The India-Sri Lanka Ministerial level meeting on fishermen issues held in New Delhi