

name(s) subject to their providing of at least one public document such as Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC) issued by the Election Commission of India, PAN card, Aadhaar Card, etc. wherein the name of the Guru has been recorded against the column(s) for parent(s) name(s).

GSR 1170(E) and 1171(E) dated 26.12.2016 and other executive instructions have been issued bringing into force these changes with effect from 26 December, 2016.

Study India Programme

30. SHRI MD. NADIMUL HAQUE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the steps being taken by Government, in view of less number of enrolments during the last few years, to promote 'Study India Programme' among students of Indian origin abroad; and

(b) how many students Government is planning to enrol during the next two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH): (a) Enrolments in the Study India Programme (SIP) have been at a low level, since its inception in 2011. Further, SIP's objectives are similar to that of the Know India Programme which is also aimed at strengthening engagement with Indian origin youth. Therefore, following a review of SIP last year, the scheme was discontinued to avoid duplication.

(b) Does not arise.

Curbing of visas to Indians by British Government

31. SHRIMATI RANEE NARAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the British Government's plan to curb visas for Indians; and

(b) if so, what initiatives have been taken by Government to discuss the matter with the British Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH): (a) and (b) Government has been regularly taking up with the UK side, the issue of UK's visa provisions that have been adversely affecting

Indian nationals. It may be noted that such visa provisions are not India specific and apply to all non-EEA (European Economic Area) nationals. Government has urged the UK to address our concerns and liberalise its visa regime for Indian students, business people and professionals in the interest of bilateral economic engagement, people-to-people ties and the valuable contributions they make to the UK's own economy and growth. The matter was also raised during the visit of UK PM to India in November 2016.

Fishermen apprehended by Navy of Sri Lanka and Pakistan

†32. SHRI VISHAMBHAR PRASAD NISHAD:

SHRIMATI CHHAYA VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that reports of Sri Lankan Navy repeatedly apprehending Indian fishermen fishing in Indian waters keep on surfacing and such incidents have happened in last January too;

(b) if so, the number of Indian fishermen apprehended and imprisoned by Sri Lankan and Pakistani Navy, as on date; and

(c) the steps being taken to get such Indian fishermen released who are lodged in Sri Lankan and Pakistani prisons and the number of fishermen who got released during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH): (a) Instances of Indian fishermen apprehended for allegedly fishing in Sri Lankan waters have been reported from time to time.

(b) The number of Indian fishermen apprehended and in custody in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, as on date, is as under:—

(i) Sri Lanka - 20

(ii) Pakistan - 147

(c) Government regularly takes up with the Governments of Sri Lanka and Pakistan the matter of early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen and fishing boats. Our High Commissions in Colombo and Islamabad provide humanitarian and legal assistance to the apprehended fishermen. India has consistently maintained that the fishermen issues involve longstanding livelihood and socio-economic practices and humanitarian concerns that need to be handled with great care and sensitivity.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.