

Impact of American ban on Chabahar port

†662. SHRI SANJAY SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is building Chabahar Port with the help of Iran which is an important project in order to check the increasing intrusion of China in the area; and

(b) if so, whether it would have any impact on the Chabahar Port project, if India ceases to import oil from Iran due to the ban imposed on Iran by America?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) and (b) India is participating in the development of the first phase of Shahid Behesti Port in Chabahar in cooperation with the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran. Given its location, Chabahar Port opens up greater opportunities for promotion of trade and commerce, especially from the ports along India's western coast, with Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia and beyond.

The Indian company, India Ports Global Limited, has taken over port operations at the Shaheed Behesti Port at Chabahar in December 2018 and has been successfully handling cargo since then.

Afghanistan has also started using the port facility. It has sent its first export consignment to India through Chabahar Port in February 2019. Subsequently, it has sent three more consignments to India through Chabahar Port in June 2019.

The U.S has shown understanding of the importance of the Chabahar Port operations for continued humanitarian supplies to Afghanistan and to provide Afghanistan with economic alternatives.

Attack on fishermen

†663. SHRI NARAYAN RANE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the Indian fishermen were attacked in some foreign countries while they went for deep sea fishing;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the action taken by the Ministry in this regard and the results obtained therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) and (b) From time to time, Indian fishermen along with their boats are apprehended by authorities of neighboring countries for allegedly fishing in their waters. There have been few reports of Indian fishing boats being attacked by Pakistan authorities. Most recently, in January 2019 an Indian fishing boat was reportedly fired upon and sunk by Pakistan Marine Security Agency (PMSA). Similarly, there have been few instances when some Indian fishermen who were arrested on grounds of fishing in Sri Lankan waters have complained of assault by Sri Lankan Navy.

(c) Government attaches highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. The matter of apprehension of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats is raised at the highest levels and strong protests are lodged in the countries concerned. It is reiterated to the countries concerned that the fishermen issue may be considered as a purely humanitarian and livelihood concern and there should not be any use of force under any circumstances. As a result of sustained diplomatic efforts by the Government, 2004 Indian fishermen and 380 boats have been released by Sri Lanka Government since May 2014. Similarly, persistent diplomatic efforts of the Government of India has led to release and repatriation of 2080 Indian fishermen and 57 Indian fishing boats from Pakistan's custody since 2014.

Indian land in possession of China

664. SHRI Y. S. CHOWDARY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has so far failed to regain 38 thousands sq. km. area of its land in the border areas of India from the possession of China despite years of discussions and meetings held;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of the efforts made during the last three years to resolve the issue of occupation of Indian territory by China?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) to (c) China disputes the international boundary between India and China. Indian territory under the occupation of China in Jammu and Kashmir is