

(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

approximately 38,000 sq. kms: In addition, under the so-called China-Pakistan "Boundary Agreement" signed between China and Pakistan on 2 March 1963, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq. kms. of Indian territory in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to China.

India and China have each appointed a Special Representative (SR) to explore the framework for a boundary settlement from the political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship. There have been twenty one meetings of SRs so far with the last three meetings being the 19th meeting held in Beijing on 20-21 April 2016, 20th meeting held in New Delhi on 22 December 2017, and the 21st meeting held in Chengdu on 24 November 2018. The two sides have agreed to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question through dialogue and negotiations.

Inter-linking services in passport offices

665. DR. ASHOK BAJPAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of regular passport offices operating in the country, State-wise;
- (b) the number of Post Office Passport Seva Kendras operating in the country, State-wise;
- (c) the number of privately outsourced Passport Seva Kendras operative in the country, State-wise;
- (d) whether any inter-linking services have been provided for customers among all the passport service providers; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) There are 36 Passport Offices in the country as on 21 June, 2019. The list is in the Statement-I (*See* below).

(b) There are 412 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) in the country as on 21 June, 2019. The list is in the Statement-II (*See* below).

(c) There are 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) in the country as on 21 June, 2019. The list is in the Statement-III (*See* below).

(d) and (e) The Passport Seva Project (PSP) was rolled out on 12 June, 2012 with the help of only one Service Provider (SP). The entire passport issuance process is online.