



(b) Government has been making persistent efforts for the release of Indian fishermen and their boats from Pakistan and Sri Lanka. An India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners was formed on February 26, 2008 to make recommendations to the two Governments, which inter alia included immediate release of and consular access to fishermen, and exchange of a consolidated list of nationals in each other's jails. India and Sri Lanka agreed on 26th October 2008 to put in place practical arrangements to deal with bonafide Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). As part of these practical arrangements, it was decided that there will be no firing on Indian fishermen and vessels, and Indian fishing vessels will not tread into sensitive areas designated by GoSL along its coastline. After the October 2008 understanding through Joint Statement, incidents of apprehension have come down significantly. The Foreign Secretary visited Sri Lanka in January 2011, to convey Government of India's strong concern over the killing of our fishermen. A joint statement was issued during Foreign Secretary's visit where both sides agreed that the use of force cannot be justified under any circumstances. During his meeting on 7th February 2011 with the Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister Prof. Peris in Thimphu, EAM took up strongly the issue of attacks on Indian fishermen and conveyed our deep concern on the violence against our fishermen.

As soon as the matter of arrest of Indian fishermen by Bangladesh authorities is brought to Government's notice, immediate steps are taken by our High Commission to secure early repatriation of the detained fishermen. Efforts are on to repatriate the two fishermen currently detained in Bangladesh.