

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.681
TO BE ANSWERED ON 6TH FEBRUARY, 2024

Data of Indian Fishers in Foreign Captivity

681. SHRI T.N. PRATHAPAN:

Will the Minister of **FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING**
मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन और डेयरी मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has any data of Indian fishers in foreign captivity and if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (b) whether the Government has any data of equipment and fishing materials of Indian fishers under foreign captivity and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the usual procedures of the Government to resolve such conflicts and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government initiate a permanent diplomatic channel to solve these issues and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA)

(a) & (b): As per the information available with the Ministry of External Affairs, there are 266 Indian fishermen languishing in foreign jails. There are 41 fishermen went from Tamil Nadu in Sri Lanka, 184 fishermen went from Gujarat in Pakistan, 10 fishermen in Bahrain and 31 fishermen in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As per the data available, 1172 fishing boats of Gujarat State and 87 fishing boats from Tamil Nadu State are under the custody of Pakistan and Sri Lanka respectively.

(c) & (d): The Government attaches highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. As soon as cases of apprehension of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats are reported, immediate steps are taken by Indian Missions and Posts to seek consular access, ensure their welfare and also pursue their early release and repatriation along with their boats. Consular Officers of Missions/Posts make regular visits to local jails and detention centers to ascertain the condition of Indian fishermen lodged there and provide requisite help and support, including legal assistance through Indian Community Welfare Fund.

Missions/Post abroad also approach the law enforcement agencies to complete the investigation and judicial proceedings at the earliest possible. The focus of the Government's efforts is on securing the early release of fishermen. Steps are taken regularly by the Indian Coast Guard to guide Indian fishermen not to cross the perceived International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) through various community interaction programmes for the fishing community. The Indian Coast Guard ships and aircrafts maintain close surveillance along the perceived IMBL and shepherd the Indian fishing boats towards Indian waters to prevent their apprehension by Maritime Security Agencies of neighbouring countries, if required. Given the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of this issue, the Government remains continuously engaged for early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen along with the fishing boats and has put in place bilateral mechanisms to ensure cooperation and understanding between India and the countries concerned, to promote the safety and security of Indian fishermen.
