

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4344  
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2001  
RELEASE OF INDIAN FISHERMEN  
ABUL HASNAT KHAN

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether Sri Lanka recently arrested 39 Indian fishermen poaching in its waters as reported in the `Hindu` dated May 28, 2001;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof; and
- (c) the steps being taken to get them released?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ADBULLAH)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) & (c) Government maintain regular contact with Sri Lanka through diplomatic channels for securing the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody. The matter is taken up at appropriate levels in both New Delhi and Colombo and is pursued till the fishermen are released and repatriated. On July 11 and August 10, 2001, the Sri Lanka Government released 35 of the 39 Indian fishermen referred to in the news item.