

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:476

ANSWERED ON:17.05.2006

INDIANS IN PAK JAILS

Athawale Shri Ramdas;Rawat Shri Ashok Kumar

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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- (a) the number of Indian and Pakistani prisoners currently held captive in the jails of the respective countries, category-wise;
- (b) The number of prisoners released by the two countries during the last one year and the current year ;
- (c) whether Indian fishing boats are held in Pakistan illegally ;
- (d) If so, the steps taken by the Government to release them;
- (e) Whether the Government has any proposals to cover Indian fishermen fishing in territorial waters under an insurance scheme;
- (f) If so, the steps proposed to be taken in this regard; and
- (g) the measures adopted to get the POWs, fishermen and civilians released from Pak jails?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) to (g) A statement is placed on the Table of the House

Statement as mentioned in reply to the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 476 (Priority XV) for answer on 17.05.2006 regarding `Indians in Pak jails`

(a) According to information available, there are 505 Indian fishermen, 150 civilian prisoners and 74 POWs in Pakistani jails. However, the Pakistan Government does not acknowledge the presence of any POWs in its jails.

There are 59 Pakistani fishermen in Indian jails. The information pertaining to the number of Pakistani civilian prisoners is being obtained from the authorities concerned. There are no POWs in Indian jails.

(b) In 2005, Pakistan released 1171 Indian fishermen and 125 civilian prisoners. No Indian prisoners have been released in 2006 so far.

In 2005, India released 222 Pakistani fishermen and 159 civilian prisoners. In 2006, India has released 16 Pakistani civilian prisoners till April 2006. Another 6 Pakistani civilian prisoners will be released on May 17, 2006.

(c) There are 287 Indian fishing boats in Pakistani custody which were detained during October 2003 to March 2006.

(d) Government has been consistently taking up the matter of release of Indian fishermen and boats with Pakistan through diplomatic channels and during high level contacts from time to time. India has also proposed to Pakistan on March 23, 2006, the release of all Indian and Pakistani fishermen, whose nationalities have been confirmed, along with their boats. However, there has been no response from the Pakistani side.

(e) & (f) The centrally sponsored insurance scheme for fishermen is under the control of Ministry of Agriculture. Under this all fishermen in marine and inland sector are covered against death, permanent/partial disability suffered during fishing. The insurance policies in respect of the beneficiaries from coastal States are shared equally between Centre and States while in respect of UTs, the insurance premium is borne fully by the Centre. National Federation of Fishermen's Cooperatives Ltd. (FISHCOPFED) is the implementing agency. Compensation for death/permanent total disability is Rs. 50,000/- and the cover for partial/permanent disability is Rs. 25,000.

(g) Government has been consistently pursuing the matter of release of all Indian fishermen and civilian prisoners with the Government of Pakistan.

In regard to POWs, Pakistan Government does not acknowledge the presence of any POWs in its jails. The issue has been taken up regularly with Pakistan Government.

A proposal to arrange a visit of relatives of missing defence personnel to various jails in Pakistan to facilitate identification of Indian POWs has been formally made to the Pakistan Government. Pakistan, however, has expressed skepticism over the utility of such a visit.