

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:442
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2012
ARREST ON INDO-PAK BORDER
Gandhi Shri Dilip Kumar Mansukhlal

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government of Pakistan have illegally arrested many innocent Indians on Indo-Pak border and confined them into jail;
- (b) if so, the steps taken by the Union Government to get such innocent persons released from the jails of Pakistan and bring them back to India;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that Shri Bhanudas Vitthal Karale, a mentally challenged Indian, was confined into jail by the Government of Pakistan, while he was roaming on Indo-Pak border and his relatives have made utmost efforts to request the Union Government to take action to get him released; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

- (a) According to information available, there are 255 civilian prisoners and 428 fishermen believed to be Indian, who are in various Pakistani jails. These prisoners have been detained on various charges, which are naturally contested by these persons.
- (b) Government of India has been consistently taking up the issue concerning all Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails with the Government of Pakistan at all appropriate levels. The matter was taken up at the Foreign Secretary level talks in February 2010, June 2010 and June 2011; in the Home/Interior Secretary level talks in March 2011 and Foreign Minister level talks in July 2010 and July 2011. Home Minister also raised the issue during his visit to Islamabad in June 2010. An India-Pakistan Judicial Committee has also been set up consisting of retired judges of superior judiciary from India and Pakistan to ensure humane treatment and expeditious release of prisoners, including fishermen, who have completed their prison term. The Committee has held five meetings so far and given several recommendations. High Commission of India, Islamabad, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of Indians prisoners in Pakistani jails and requests for consular access for these prisoners. Once the consular access is granted by the Government of Pakistan, the verification papers are sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs through the Ministry of External Affairs for nationality status verification of these prisoners. High Commission of India, on a continuing basis, takes up the matter with the Government of Pakistan for the release of all those Indian prisoners who have completed their sentences.
- (c) & (d) Government is aware about the case of Shri Bhanudas Vitthal Karale. High Commission of India, Islamabad has been taking up Shri Karale's case at regular intervals with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. Consular Access was provided to him on 15.7.2011 at Central Jail, Lahore, Pakistan and his verification papers were forwarded to Ministry of Home Affairs for nationality status verification. Government is committed to secure the early release and repatriation of Shri Bhanudas Vitthal Karale.