

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:375

ANSWERED ON:02.05.2012

INDIAN FISHERMEN

Pathak Shri Harin;Veljibhai Jat Poonamben

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a number of Indian Fishermen and fishing boats have been captured by Pakistan during 2011 and 2012;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the number of such fishermen and fishing boats in the custody of Pakistan at present;
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government to secure the release of such fishermen and get back the fishing boats; and
- (d) the time by which financial assistance to such fishermen is likely to be provided as per the Government of India scheme of 2007?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.375 REGARDING "INDIAN FISHERMEN" FOR ANSWER ON 02.05.2012

According to available information, as on 27 April 2012, 108 Indian Fishermen have been arrested by Pakistan authorities in 2012, while 123 were arrested in 2011. Similarly, 39 boats have been detained, so far, by Pakistan in 2012, while 75 were detained in 2011. As per available reports, there are 434 fishermen, believed to be Indian, in various Pakistani jails. There are approximately 575 Indian boats in Pakistan custody.

Government has been consistently taking up the issue concerning all Indian fishermen and their boats in Pakistani custody 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 from both countries to ensure humane treatment and expeditious release of prisoners, including fishermen, who have completed their prison term. The Committee has recommended that the fishermen should be repatriated by sea lanes, along with their boats. High Commission of India, Islamabad, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of Indians prisoners including fishermen in Pakistani jails and takes up the matter with the Government of Pakistan for their early release and return of their boats. Due to Government's consistent efforts, 218 Indian fishermen have been released by Pakistan in 2012 so far; 103 fishermen were released in 2011 and 454 fishermen in 2010.

The Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries) is the nodal agency for payment of compensation to the fishermen lodged in Pakistani jails and the scheme – "Soft Loan Package for Replacement of Fishing vessels held in captivity in Pakistan" which is being implemented by Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA).