

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1339

ANSWERED ON:17.08.2012

PRISONERS OF WAR

Baitha Shri Kameshwar ;Hazari Shri Maheshwar ;Kashinath Shri Taware Suresh;Mahendrasinh Shri Chauhan ;Saroj Smt. Sushila;Upadhyay Seema;Verma Smt. Usha

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large number of Indian defence personnel/civilians (prisoners of war) captured by Pakistan during Indo-Pak war still languishing in jails in Pakistan;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken up the matter with the Government of Pakistan at the highest level to secure early release of such prisoners of war;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor and the response of the Government of Pakistan thereto; and
- (e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for an early repatriation of these prisoners to the country?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) According to available information, 74 Missing Defence Personnel including 54 Prisoners of War are believed to be in Pakistani jails since 1971.

(c) to (e) Government has repeatedly taken up the matter with Government of Pakistan through diplomatic channels and during high-level contacts for the release of Indian Prisoners of War believed to be in Pakistan. However, Pakistan does not acknowledge the presence of any Indian Prisoners of War in its custody.

During the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan in January 2007, Pakistan government was persuaded to receive a delegation of relatives of Missing Defence Personnel to permit them to visit prisons in Pakistan, where they are believed to be incarcerated. A delegation of relatives, accordingly, visited 10 jails in Pakistan from June 1-14, 2007. The delegation could not conclusively confirm the physical presence of the Indian Prisoners of War. Pursuant to the visit of the delegation of relatives of Missing Defence Personnel, a tri-Service Committee for monitoring matters on the subject has been formed in the Ministry of Defence.

The matter was raised with Pakistan at India-Pakistan Home/Interior Secretary talks held in Islamabad on May 24-25, 2012 and India-Pakistan Foreign Secretary level talks in New Delhi on July 4-5, 2012.