

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4230
ANSWERED ON:19.12.2012
PROTEST AGAINST ARREST OF ITALIAN MARINERS
Ray Shri Saugata

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Italy-based Formula One racing team Ferrari displayed the flag of the Italian Navy on its cards during Formula One Grand Prix held in India recently in protest against the arrest of two Italian mariners in India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) Yes. The Italy-based Formula One racing team Ferrari displayed the flag of the Italian Navy on its cars during the Formula One Grand Prix held on 28 October 2012. Team Ferrari, in a press statement issued on 26 October 2012, is supposed to have said that Ferrari was paying tribute to one of Italy's outstanding entities and also in the hope that the Indian and Italian authorities will soon find a solution to the situation currently involving two sailors from the Italian Navy. The Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson, in response to a question, said "Use of sporting events for causes which have nothing to do with sports, is certainly not in the spirit of sports as we deem it". The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports wrote to the organiser of the event, the Federation of Motor Sports Club of India (FMSCI) asking them to ensure that the event is not politicised in any manner and that the sentiments of the people of India are not hurt. The FMSCI had discussions with the Ferrari Team and confirmed to the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports that the Ferrari Team has the fullest respect for the Indian Government and authorities and did not intend to politicise the Indian Grand Prix in any way whatsoever.