

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:322

ANSWERED ON:20.03.2013

DETENTION OF INDIAN FISHERMEN .

Shankar Alias Kushal Tiwari Shri Bhisma;Thamaraiselvan Shri R.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the detention of Indian fishermen along with their boats by our neighbouring countries including Sri Lanka for alleged violations of territorial waters;
- (b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years and the current year, country-wise including the recent incident near Tuticorin;
- (c) the number of fishermen and fishing boats in the custody of Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh as on date; and
- (d) the efforts made by the Government to get them released?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 322 REGARDING "DETENTION OF INDIAN FISHERMEN" TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.03.2013

(a) to (d) From time to time, Government receives reports of apprehension of Indian fishermen by our neighbouring countries for alleged violations of territorial waters.

As per available information, number of fishermen, believed to be Indian, who have been detained by neighbouring countries over the past three years, including the current year, is as below:

Country	2010 (till date)	2011	2012	2013	
Sri Lanka		32	203	202	69
Pakistan		100	476	250	27
Bangladesh		02	79	82	Nil
Maldives		Nil	Nil	11	Nil

As per available information, as on 15 March 2013, there are about 400 fishermen, believed to be Indian, and about 600 boats in the custody of Pakistan and 19 fishermen and 4 boats (apprehended by Sri Lankan Navy on March 13, 2013) in the custody of Sri Lanka on fisheries related charges. Besides, five fishermen along with one boat have been arrested in Sri Lankan waters on charges of smuggling narcotics and contraband in November 2011.

The Government attaches the highest importance to the welfare, safety and security of Indian fishermen. As soon as the reports of apprehension of Indian fishermen are received, the Government has, through diplomatic channels, immediately and consistently taken up the matter for their expeditious release and repatriation with the Governments concerned. The matter has also been taken up during bilateral meetings at various levels.

The Government has also emphasised upon the need to ensure humane treatment and that there should be no resort to violence against fishermen under any circumstances.