

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6835

ANSWERED ON:08.05.2013

ARREST OF INDIAN FISHERMEN BY SRI LANKA

Bapurao Shri Khatgaonkar Patil Bhaskarrao;Choudhary Shri Bhudeo;Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo;Ganeshamurthi Shri A.;Jeyadurai Shri S. R.;Lingam Shri P.;Panda Shri Prabodh;Paranjpe Shri Anand Prakash;Sugavanam Shri E.G.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Sri Lankan Navy has arrested some Indian fishermen and seized their trawlers recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has taken up the matter with the Sri Lankan Government;
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken/being taken by the Government for the release of the Indian fishermen;
- (e) whether the State Government of Tamil Nadu has urged the Union Government to reclaim the Island of Kachchatheevu in view of frequent attacks on Indian fishermen; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the action contemplated in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) to (d) From time to time, there have been reports of apprehension of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy for allegedly fishing in Sri Lankan waters. As per available information, 125 Indian fishermen along with 22 vessels were apprehended in Sri Lankan waters by the Sri Lankan Navy since 1 January 2013.

The Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. In this context, as soon as reports of apprehensions of Indian fishermen are received, the Government has, through diplomatic channels, immediately and consistently taken up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka to secure an early release and repatriation of apprehended Indian fishermen. As a result of Government's efforts, 69 Indian fishermen along with 12 vessels in the custody of Sri Lanka were released and repatriated. Government continues to remain engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka to secure the expeditious release and repatriation of the remaining 56 Indian fishermen and 10 vessels in the custody of Sri Lanka.

(e) & (f) The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu met the Prime Minister on 14 June, 2011 and submitted a Memorandum on a number of issues, including the retrieval of Kachchatheevu and restoration of traditional fishing rights of Tamil Nadu fishermen.

The Government of India considers its maritime boundary with Sri Lanka settled under the Agreements concluded with Sri Lanka in 1974 and 1976. Both these Agreements were subsequently laid before Parliament.