

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3910

ANSWERED ON:20.03.2013

FISHERMEN IN CUSTODY OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Bavalia Shri Kuvarjibhai Mohanbhai;Shukla Shri Balkrishna Khanderao Balu Shukla;Singh Shri Pradeep Kumar

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats in the custody of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as on date; and
- (b) the steps being taken by the Government for their release?

Answer

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

(a) As per available information, as on March 15, 2013, there are about 400 fishermen, believed to be Indian, and approximately 600 Indian boats in custody of Pakistan. 19 fishermen and 4 boats are 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. .

(b) Government attaches the highest importance to the welfare, safety and security of our 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 emphasized upon the need to ensure humane treatment and there should be no resort to violence against fishermen under any circumstances.