

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:276

ANSWERED ON:22.07.2015

Indians Facing Problems in International Marine Borders

Chudasama Shri Rajeshbhai Naranbhai

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that a lot of fishermen from India are regularly facing problems on international marine borders;
- (b) if so, the efforts made by the Central Government to help these fishermen and the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government is mulling to adopt any foreign policy initiative in the wake of problems faced by Indian fishermen along the international marine borders; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (d) Yes. The Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Our Missions and Posts regularly seek consular access to Indian fishermen detained in foreign countries, ensure their welfare and also pursue their early release and repatriation, along with their boats.

Given the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of this issue, the Government has put in place several bilateral mechanisms to ensure cooperation and understanding between India and the countries concerned, to promote the safety and security of Indian fishermen.

In the case of Pakistan, we have a bilateral Agreement on Consular Access, signed in May 2008. The India-Pakistan Joint Judicial Committee, consisting of retired judges from both countries, visit jails in both countries, to review the situation of prisoners, including fishermen, on both sides.

In the case of Sri Lanka, our Mission works closely with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence, the Attorney General's Office and the law enforcement agencies concerned, to secure the release and repatriation of our fishermen. There is a Joint Working Group on Fisheries and a Joint Committee on Fisheries, which take up fishermen's issues for resolution on basis of the bilateral Understanding on Practical Arrangements of October 2008. In addition, talks are also held from time to time between Fishermen's Associations in India and Sri Lanka.

In the case of Bangladesh, our Mission works closely with the Bangladesh Ministry of Home Affairs and the law enforcement agencies to secure the early release and repatriation of detained Indian fishermen.

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