

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.98
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.03.2017

SOLDIERS IN CAPTIVITY OF PAKISTAN

*98. SHRI NARAYAN LAL PANCHARIYA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the number of Indian soldiers/ officers missing in action or Prisoners of War (PoW) in captivity of Pakistan and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) the number of such soldiers/officers from Rajasthan;
- (c) what steps have been taken to secure their release and what has been the result, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether families of such soldiers/officers are given benefits like enhanced pension, gratuity etc. which are given to martyred soldiers and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 98 REGARDING “SOLDIERS IN CAPTIVITY OF PAKISTAN” FOR ANSWER ON 09.03.2017

According to available information, 74 Missing Defence Personnel (MDP) including 54 Prisoners of War (PoWs) are believed to be in Pakistani jails. This includes one MDP from the State of Rajasthan.

Government has repeatedly taken up the matter with Government of Pakistan through diplomatic channels and during high-level contacts for the release of Indian PoWs believed to be in Pakistan. However, Pakistan does not acknowledge the presence of any Indian PoW in its custody.

During the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan in January 2007, Pakistan government was persuaded to receive a delegation of relatives of MDP to permit them to visit prisons in Pakistan, where they are believed to be incarcerated. A delegation of relatives, accordingly, visited 10 jails in Pakistan from June 1-14, 2007. The delegation could not conclusively confirm the physical presence of the Indian PoWs. Pursuant to the visit of the delegation of relatives of MDPs, a tri-Service Committee for monitoring matters on the subject was formed by the Ministry of Defence. The matter was raised with Pakistan during India-Pakistan Home/Interior Secretary talks held in Islamabad on May 24-25, 2012 and India-Pakistan Foreign Secretary level talks in New Delhi on July 4-5, 2012. However, there has been no change in Pakistan's official position.

The families or next-of-kin of the PoWs were given liberalized pension benefits, as per extant rules. Further, in compliance with the December 23, 2011 judgement of the High Court of Gujarat, where ever possible the families of the PoWs were paid service and retirement benefits as if the PoWs had retired on superannuation.
