

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2315
ANSWERED ON 12/03/2026

ARREST OF FISHERMEN

2315. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) The number of Indian fishermen arrested in different countries, year-wise and country-wise, during the last five years;
- (b) the details of meetings held by the Joint Working Group on Fisheries between Indian and Sri Lankan representatives to discuss the issue of arrest of fishermen; and
- (c) the steps being taken by Government to ensure that fishermen are brought back to the country safely?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA)

(a) The number of Indian fishermen apprehended over the last five years in different countries is placed below:

Year	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	Bahrain	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	Bangladesh	Myanmar
2021	159	223	05	21	296	54	10
2022	268	132	07	20	106	184	0
2023	240	09	05	31	86	04	0
2024	560	27	37	29	07	95	0
2025	360	07	18	04	09	71	0

(b) Beginning December 2016, regular meetings of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on fisheries, which includes representatives from the Ministries of Fisheries, Foreign Affairs, the Coast Guards and Navies of both countries as well as representatives from the Government of Tamil Nadu, have been taking place with an aim to address fishermen-related issues in a comprehensive manner. So far, six meetings of the JWG on fisheries have been held, with the last meeting held on 29 October 2024. The Government is in

constant communication with the Sri Lankan side to schedule the next round of the JWG. Details of the JWG meetings held so far are placed below:

JWG meeting on fisheries	Dates
1 st meeting of JWG on fisheries	31 December 2016, New Delhi
2 nd meeting of JWG on fisheries	07 April 2017, Colombo
3 rd meeting of JWG on fisheries	13 October 2017, New Delhi
4 th meeting of JWG on fisheries	30 December 2020, (Virtual Mode)
5 th meeting of JWG on fisheries	25 March 2022, (Virtual Mode)
6 th meeting of JWG on fisheries	29 October 2024, Colombo

(c) The Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. The Government has been taking up all fishermen related issues, including the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen and boats, with respective governments through diplomatic channels, various official interactions and established bilateral mechanisms. In all interactions, it is conveyed that the issues related to fishermen may be considered purely on humanitarian and livelihood grounds and that the use of force should be avoided in all circumstances. Further, Indian Missions and Consulates in the respective countries make regular visits to local jails and detention centers to ascertain the condition of Indian fishermen and provide requisite help and support, including legal assistance. The Missions also provide necessary travel documents to facilitate repatriation of released fishermen to India.
