

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. - 2778
ANSWERED ON 12/08/2026

ACCESS PASS FOR FISHING IN INDIA'S EEZ

2778. SHRI SADANAND MHALU SHET TANAVADE:
SHRI TEJVEER SINGH:

Will the Minister of FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING be pleased to state:

- (a) the objectives and salient features of the Access Pass launched for fishing in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and the manner in which it operationalises the duty-free catch benefits announced in Union Budget 2026-27;
- (b) the number of fishing vessels and fisheries-cooperatives registered under the Access Pass since its launch, State-wise/UT-wise;
- (c) the strategic framework adopted under the Joint Working Group with the Ministry of Cooperation to strengthen fisheries-cooperatives and expand deep-sea fishing opportunities;
- (d) whether safety systems such as real-time transponders and Potential-Fishing-Zone (PFZ) advisories have been integrated with the Access Pass framework to safeguard fishermen at sea; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)

(a) and (b): The Access Pass for fishing in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), is a free digital pass issued via the ReALCRaft Portal. Its core objective is to empower the traditional fishers, cooperatives, and Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) for fishing in the EEZ (12 to 200 nautical miles), while ensuring sustainability of oceanic fishery resources. The Access Pass is issued under the *Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Rules, 2025* notified by the Government of India on 04 November 2025. The Access Pass is required for mechanized fishing vessels and large motorized boats over 24 meters length, while traditional non-motorized and small artisanal crafts are fully exempted to protect local livelihoods. This landmark initiative aims to empower traditional and small-scale fishermen, Fisheries Cooperative Societies, and Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) to expand fishing operations, harness untapped resources through deep-sea fishing, and access new income streams through processing and exports, thereby enhancing livelihoods. As per the EEZ Rules, the Access Pass is required for undertaking fishing operations in the EEZ of India, beyond 12 nautical miles. So far, a total of 9,650 Access Passes have been issued based on applications received through coastal States and Union Territories. The State/UT-wise status of Access Passes issued under the EEZ Rules, 2025 is placed at *Annexure*.

To create new export opportunities for Indian fishers operating beyond territorial waters, the Union Budget 2026–27 announced that fish caught by Indian fishing vessels in the EEZ or the High Seas

would be duty-free, and that landings at foreign ports would be treated as exports of goods, with safeguards to prevent misuse during transit or transshipment. In pursuance of this announcement, necessary amendments have been carried out in the Customs Act, 1962 to ensure that the fish caught in the EEZ is duty-free. The Access Pass issued through ReALCRAFT portal, is linked with the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and the Export Inspection Council (EIC) to provide seamless catch and health certificates, to ensure traceability and eco-labelling.

(c): Adopting a whole-of-Government approach, the Department of Fisheries, GoI is collaborating with the Ministry of Cooperation through a Joint Working Group (JWG) to promote small-scale fishermen, fisheries cooperatives, and FFPOs in deep-sea fishing, post-harvest handling, processing, and exports. The Ministry of Cooperation supports this initiative by strengthening cooperative institutions and facilitating access to cooperative credit through the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC). Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), the NCDC has supported for acquisition of Deep-Sea Fishing Vessels in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Puducherry and Goa. The NCDC has also supported the acquisition of Deep-Sea Fishing Vessels under the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) implemented by DoF, GoI.

(d) to (e): The Access Pass framework operates in convergence with the existing digital fisheries and maritime safety systems. It is integrated with satellite-based transponders installed onboard Fishing Vessels and linked with the Nabhmitra mobile application to provide real-time advisories of Potential-Fishing-Zone (PFZ), dissemination of weather forecasts, cyclone and tsunami warnings, navigational advisories, International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) alerts, emergency communication, and other safety-related information delivered directly to fishers at sea for enhancing safety and improving fishing efficiency.

ANNEXURE

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) AND (B) OF RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2778 REGARDING "ACCESS PASS FOR FISHING IN INDIA'S EEZ" PUT IN BY SHRI SADANAND MHALU SHET TANAVADE AND SHRI TEJVEER SINGH, HON'BLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, LOK SABHA FOR ANSWER ON 12TH AUGUST, 2026

Sr. No.	Coastal States/UTs	Access Passes issued under EEZ Rules, 2025 (as on 5th August, 2026)
1.	KARNATAKA	2563
2.	GUJARAT	2524
3.	ANDHRA PRADESH	1952
4.	ODISHA	887
5.	MAHARASHTRA	627
6.	DAMAN & DIU	372
7.	LAKSHADWEEP	257
8.	KERALA	256
9.	GOA	87
10.	ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR	52
11.	PUDUCHERRY	46
12.	WEST BENGAL	21
13.	TAMIL NADU	6
	Grand Total	9650
