

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2786

ANSWERED ON 12/08/2026

SAFETY OF INDIAN FISHERMEN IN NEIGHBOURING WATERS

2786. SHRI A. A. RAHIM

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

- (a) the number of Indian fishermen detained, injured and killed by the authorities/individuals of neighbouring countries during the last three years, year-wise and country-wise;
- (b) whether the Ministry has data on the number of such fishermen who have been repatriated, those still under detention and the compensation or assistance extended to the affected families;
- (c) whether Government has taken up the issue with the neighbouring countries to prevent recurrence of such incidents and to secure the early release of detained fishermen; and
- (d) the measures taken by Government to ensure the safety and legal protection of Indian fishermen operating in border maritime areas?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING:

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)

(a) and (b): The Department of Fisheries (DoF), Government of India (GoI) has consistently taken up the issues related to apprehension and early release of Indian fishermen and fishing boats which are under the custody of foreign countries through diplomatic and bilateral mechanisms in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and other relevant agencies. The details of Indian fishermen detained by the authorities of neighboring countries, including those repatriated and deceased during the last three years, as reported by the MEA, are at Annexure.

Under the schemes implemented by the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, there is no standalone activity towards providing compensation to the affected fishermen families. However, the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) implemented by this Department *inter alia* envisages providing financial assistance towards activities supporting livelihood namely bivalve cultivation, seaweed farming, fish farming, inland cage culture, open sea cage culture, deep sea fishing vessels, upgradation of existing fishing vessels, value addition units, fish kiosks, ornamental fisheries, deployment of fish transport vehicles and need based training etc. The scheme is open to all eligible beneficiaries including those fishermen affected by apprehension by neighboring countries.

In addition, a National Rollout Plan for Vessel Communication and Support System (VCSS) is implemented for installation of indigenously developed transponders on one lakh marine fishing vessels covering mechanized and motorized vessels of all 13 Coastal States and UTs. The VCSS is

a satellite based two-way communication system, which helps the fishers out at sea for sea-safety and security, provides alerts during adverse weather conditions, provides information on Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ), International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) with geo-fencing and integration with the Nabhmitra App. The DoF, GoI also issues advisories to Coastal States/UTs for strict implementation of gear and mesh size regulations, implementation of conservation and management measures such as uniform fishing ban for a period of 61 days for rejuvenation of fish stock, ban on destructive fishing practices like bull or pair trawling & use of artificial LED lights for fishing in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Besides conservation measures like installation of artificial reefs along the coast and sea ranching are also undertaken towards replenishing of fish stock.

Further, the respective State Governments are implementing schemes towards providing relief to families of fishermen apprehended by neighboring countries. Government of Tamil Nadu and the Government of Gujarat have reported that relief assistance of Rs.500 per day and Rs.300 per day, respectively, is provided to families of fishermen detained by neighboring countries, starting from the date of capture until their release.

(c) to (d): The Government has been consistently taking up these issues, including the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen and fishing boats, with the foreign Governments through bilateral mechanisms, diplomatic channels, and various official interactions. MEA has informed that the Indian Mission in respective countries makes 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 Indian Mission also provide necessary travel documents to facilitate repatriation of released fishermen to India. All possible assistance is extended to the Indian fishermen for their early release and repatriation, along with the release of their boats. The issue is consistently raised with the foreign governments, underlining that the issue may be considered purely on humanitarian and livelihood grounds. Under the schemes of the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, transponders are installed on fishing vessels to provide real-time positional information. This enables fishermen to avoid inadvertent crossing of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and enhances safety during fishing operations.

In addition, Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ships maintain extensive surveillance along the IMBL to provide safety and security to Indian fishermen and prevent cross-border fishing violations. Additionally, ICG aircraft are also tasked for surveillance in the area. ICG maintains regular interaction with the fishing community through Community Interaction Programmes (CIPs) in the coastal fishing villages. During the community interactions, the fishermen are advised on issues such as safety at sea, use of life-saving appliances and communication equipment, and dangers of operating close to the IMBL or crossing over, as it may lead to arrest of crew and confiscation of their fishing boats.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) AND (B) OF THE RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2786 PUT IN BY SHRI A. A. RAHIM, HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, RAJYA SABHA FOR ANSWER ON 12TH AUGUST, 2026 REGARDING 'SAFETY OF INDIAN FISHERMEN IN NEIGHBOURING WATERS'.

DETAILED OF THE INDIAN FISHERMEN DETAINED BY THE AUTHORITIES OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES INCLUDING THOSE REPATRIATED AND DECEASED DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS AND COUNTRY-WISE:

Sl. No.	Country Wise	Year wise	Detained	Indian fishermen died	Number of fishermen repatriated
1.	Sri Lanka	2023	240	Nil	240
		2024	560	01	555
		2025	360	Nil	358
		2026 (as on 04.08.2026)	146	Nil	123
2.	Bangladesh	2023	04	Nil	All the Indian fishermen in the custody of Bangladesh have been repatriated.
		2024	95	Nil	
		2025	71	01	
		2026	Nil	Nil	
3.	Pakistan	2023	09	04	2661 Indian fishermen have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2014 and currently 198 Indian/believed-to-be Indian fishermen are in Pakistan's custody
		2024	27	03	
		2025	07	03	
		2026 (as on 04.08.2026)	Nil	01	
4.	Iran	2024	Nil	Nil	Nil
		2025	02 (both released and repatriated in 2025)	Nil	02
		2026	Nil	Nil	Nil
