

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2987
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.03.2020

INDIAN PRISONERS IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

† 2987. SHRI C.R. PATIL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Indian citizens currently in the prisons of Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka according to the information available with the government;
- (b) whether the concerned Governments inform our embassies about the arrest or awarding punishment to an Indian citizens; and
- (c) the details of the manner in which we help our citizens because in most of the cases our citizens including fishermen mistakenly cross the border?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a) As per the information available with the Ministry, the number of Indian prisoners in the prisons of Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as of 31.01.2020 is 1487 which also includes fishermen. Country-wise detailed list is given below -

S.No	Country	Number of Indians in Foreign Jails as on 31.01.2020
1	Bangladesh	157
2	Nepal	886
3	Pakistan	337*
4	Sri Lanka	107
	Total	1487

* Indian and believed-to-be Indian prisoners, including fishermen

In addition, as per available information, 83 missing Indian defence personnel, including Prisoners of War, are believed to be in Pakistan's custody. The Government has consistently taken up the matter with Pakistan. However, so far, Pakistan has not acknowledged the presence of these missing Indian defence personnel in its custody.

(b) The concerned Governments in these countries inform our Embassies about arrest of Indian citizens. In case of Pakistan, as per the Agreement on Consular Access signed between Indian and Pakistan on May 21, 2008, the list of

civil prisoners and fishermen in Pak jails is provided by Pakistan Government twice a year i.e. on 1st of January and 1st of July, which includes details like charges leveled and duration of sentence.

(c) The Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indians in foreign countries, including those in the foreign jails. Indian Missions / Posts abroad remain vigilant and closely monitor the incidents of Indian nationals being put in jail in foreign countries for violation/ alleged violation of local laws.

As soon as the information about the detention/arrest of an Indian national is received by an Indian Mission/Post, it immediately gets in touch with the local Foreign Office and other concerned local authorities to get consular access to the detained/arrested Indian national to ascertain the facts of the case, confirm his Indian nationality and ensure his welfare. Government of India also provides initial legal assistance to distressed Indian nationals in deserving cases.

Steps taken by our Missions include requesting local authorities for speedy trials, seeking remission of sentence, providing advice and guidance in legal and other matters, ensuring fair and humane treatment in foreign jails, issue of emergency certificates and repatriation to India of those who are released. In cases of arrest of fishermen, the concerned government is also requested to consider the issue from a humanitarian and livelihood perspective.
