

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 3701
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17th MARCH, 2020

Harassment of Indian Fishermen

3701. PROF. SAUGAT RAY:

Will the Minister of FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन और डेयरी मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government noticed that a number of Indian fishermen are facing the harassments by the armed forces of Sri Lanka and Pakistan during fishing in deep seas;
- (b) if so, the steps taken to check such types of harassments in future;
- (c) whether the Government intervened in such types of harassments like arrests and imprisonment of fishermen; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI PRATAP CHANDRA SARANGI)

(a) to (d). Indian fishermen are arrested from time to time by the Sri Lankan authorities for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and fishing in Sri Lankan waters. There have been some reports of attacks on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy. These incidents were immediately taken up with Sri Lankan authorities. Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Government has taken up the fishermen issues at the highest level, including by the Prime Minister in his meetings with his Sri Lankan counterparts. Sri Lankan Government has been requested to treat the fishermen issue as a purely humanitarian and livelihood concern, and it has been stressed that both sides should ensure that there is no use of force under any circumstances. As a result of sustained diplomatic efforts by the Government, 2130 Indian fishermen and 383 boats have been released by Sri Lanka Government since May 2014.

Government also regularly takes up the issue of release and repatriation of Indian fishermen along with their boats with the Pakistan authorities. Due to persistent efforts of the Government, 57 boats were released and repatriated in March 2015. Later, visit of a team of fishermen representatives, was organised to Karachi in March 2016 to assess the condition of 22 other Indian fishing boats in Pakistan's custody. Due to diplomatic initiative taken by the Government of India, 20 Indian fishermen from Andhra Pradesh were released by Pakistan Government in January, 2020.

Indian Coast Guard has also taken steps to guide Indian fishermen not to cross-over the perceived International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) through various community interaction programmes for the fishing community. The Indian Coast Guard ships also shepherd the Indian fishing boats clear from the perceived IMBL to prevent their apprehension by Maritime Security Agencies of neighbouring countries. One Indian Coast Guard ship/aircraft maintains close surveillance at any given time along the India-Pakistan perceived IMBL.
