

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.82
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.07.2022**

ATTACKS ON INDIAN FISHERMEN

*82. SHRI K. NAVASKANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the frequent attacks on fishermen of Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan coast guard in the recent past;
- (b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years, year-wise along with the losses incurred to the fishermen as a result thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps for permanent solution of this problem and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the measures/steps taken/being taken by the Government to ensure release of Indian fishermen who are in the custody of Sri Lanka?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR)**

- (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION No. *82 REGARDING 'ATTACKS ON INDIAN FISHERMEN' FOR ANSWER ON 22.07.2022.

During the past three years there have been occasions when the arrested Indian fishermen have complained of assault by Sri Lankan personnel. Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. As soon as reports of alleged attacks on Indian fishermen are received, the Government through diplomatic channel takes up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka.

Issues relating to Indian fishermen have been raised at the highest levels, including by our Prime Minister with the then Sri Lankan Prime Minister during the Virtual Bilateral Summit held in September 2020. In 2021, during my visit to Colombo from 5-7 January, I had met the Minister of Fisheries of Sri Lanka and discussed all issues related to Indian fishermen.

The issue was also taken up by the then Foreign Secretary's discussions with the Sri Lankan dignitaries during his visit to Sri Lanka from 2-5 October 2021. The need to deal with issues pertaining to fishermen in a humanitarian manner was reiterated to the Government of Sri Lanka. It was also stressed that existing understandings between the two Governments in that regard must be strictly observed and both sides should ensure that there was no use of force under any circumstances.

On 15 January 2022, I discussed the issue of early release of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody, during my virtual meeting with the then Finance Minister of Sri Lanka. The matter was also discussed by me with the Sri Lankan Minister of Fisheries, during my visit to Sri Lanka in March 2022.

Following the 2+2 initiative in November 2016, when the Foreign and Fisheries Ministers of the two countries met in New Delhi, a bilateral Joint Working Group (JWG) mechanism and meeting of the Ministers for Fisheries of the two countries was institutionalized to address the fishermen issues with Sri Lanka. On March 2022, 5th Round of JWG was organized between the two governments where the entire gamut of issues related to fishermen was discussed.

The Government is very cognizant of the concerns of our fishermen and consistently strives for their prosperity and safety. Our engagement with Sri Lanka on this matter reflects these objectives.
