

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. 267

ANSWERED ON 13.12.2024

INDIAN FISHERMEN IN PAKISTANI JAILS

†*267. SHRI PATEL UMESHBHAI BABUBHAI

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that many fishermen from the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu are imprisoned in Pakistani jails, if so, the details thereof;**
- (b) whether the Government is making any efforts to get them released;**
- (c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard; and**
- (d) whether the Government has formulated any policy for getting such fishermen released and if so, the details thereof?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER FOR 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) in respect of Lok Sabha Starred Question No †*267 for reply on 13.12.2024. regarding “Indian Fishermen in Pakistani Jails.”

(a to d) As per the ‘India-Pakistan Agreement on Consular Access’ signed on 21 May 2008, the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen of each country, lodged in the jails of the other, are exchanged on 1 January and 1 July of every year. According to the lists exchanged on 1 July 2024, Pakistan has acknowledged the custody of 211 Indian/believed-to-be-Indian fishermen, which includes 24 fishermen from Daman and Diu and none from Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

The 24 fishermen from Daman and Diu have been provided consular access and their Indian nationality has also been confirmed and conveyed to the Government of Pakistan. Pakistan has been asked to expedite the release and repatriation of all Indian fishermen, including those from Daman and Diu, who have completed their sentence and whose nationality has been confirmed. Pakistan has also been asked to provide immediate consular access to the remaining fishermen in Pakistan’s custody, who are believed-to-be-Indian.

Government attaches highest priority to the welfare, safety and early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen. As soon as cases of apprehension of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats by Pakistan are

reported, immediate steps are taken by the High Commission of India in Islamabad to seek consular access from the Government of Pakistan. During consular access, officials from the High Commission of India visit the Indian/ believed-to-be-Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails to ascertain their well-being and distribute daily-use welfare items. All possible assistance, including legal 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 Government of Pakistan and it is conveyed that the issue may be considered on purely humanitarian and livelihood grounds.

As a result of sustained efforts by the Government, 2639 Indian fishermen have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2014.
