

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2115**

**ANSWERED ON - 01/08/2025**

**MARITIME BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT**

**2115. SHRI MANICKAM TAGORE B**

**SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR ALIAS VIJAY VASANTH**

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government has prepared any long-term bilateral agreement with neighbouring countries to prevent the arrest or harassment of Indian fishermen near maritime boundaries, if so, the details thereof;**
- (b) the details of recent diplomatic engagements aimed at strengthening peaceful and cooperative relations with neighbouring countries;**
- (c) whether the Government has issued any diplomatic protest or demarche in recent months against territorial violations or aggressive actions near India's borders;**
- (d) the strategy of the Government to safeguard India's territorial sovereignty while promoting regional peace and stability;**

**(e) the number of Indian fishermen currently imprisoned in foreign jails, particularly in Sri Lanka, Pakistan or Bangladesh and the efforts being made for their release;**

**(f) whether the Government has proposed any joint Maritime Boundary Management Mechanisms with neighbouring countries to avoid cross-border fishing conflicts, if so, the details thereof; and**

**(g) the measures being taken by the Government to ensure that border or maritime disputes do not harm India's long-standing ties with friendly neighbouring nations?**

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**(SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA)**

**(a) & (f) India and Myanmar have signed an MoU on Maritime Security Cooperation in September 2017, to address legal and policy issues related to illegal activities at sea. Similarly, India and Bangladesh have signed an MoU on Maritime Cooperation and Blue Economy in June 2024, which includes cooperation in addressing the issue of inadvertent crossing of the International Maritime Boundary by fishermen and facilitating their early release. Bilateral discussions are held regularly under various joint**

**mechanisms with respective authorities of Bangladesh and Myanmar to improve cooperation in the sector of maritime and land boundary management. With regard to Sri Lanka, these issues are dealt with through the regular meetings of the India Sri Lanka Joint Working Group on fisheries, which includes representatives from the Government of Tamil Nadu. The last JWG meeting on fisheries was held on 29 October 2024.**

**(b) & (g) The Government of India has taken measures to advance effective border management and maintenance of peace and tranquillity at the border. In relation to China, such measures have been discussed in several meetings since the October 2024 disengagement, including the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of Special Representatives in December 2024, 33<sup>rd</sup> meeting and 34<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) in March 2025 and July 2025 respectively. With regard to Pakistan, the Government has been raising the issue of cross-border terrorism, ceasefire violations, and any attempts of violation of India's sovereignty and territorial integrity, through diplomatic channels.**

**(c) Government of India has expressed serious concerns over continuing instances of illegal crossing of the international border between India and Bangladesh by Bangladeshi nationals. In December 2024, the Government**

**of India had strongly condemned and protested against the social media post by an Adviser of the Interim Government portraying an erroneous map of Bangladesh which was violative of India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Further, Government of India raised an instance of inadvertent air violation by a Bangladesh domestic airlines in June 2025, so that appropriate steps are taken to prevent recurrence of such instances.**

**(d) The Government of India maintains a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's national interest and takes all necessary measures to safeguard them. With a focus on self-reliance, from defence production to technological innovation, India has been strengthening its sovereignty and territorial integrity.**

**(e) Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. The Government has been taking up all fishermen related issues, including the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen and fishing boats, with respective governments through diplomatic channels, various official interactions and established bilateral mechanisms. In all our interactions, it has been conveyed that this issue may be considered purely on humanitarian and livelihood grounds and that the use of force should be avoided in all circumstances.**

**Further, our Missions and Consulates in respective countries make regular visits to local jails and detention centers to ascertain the condition of Indian fishermen and provide requisite support and legal assistance. Missions also provide necessary travel documents to facilitate repatriation of released fishermen to India.**

**The details of the fishermen imprisoned in foreign jails, particularly in Sri Lanka, Pakistan or Bangladesh are as under:-**

- Sri Lanka – 56 Indian fishermen**
- Bangladesh – 34 Indian fishermen**
- Pakistan – According to the lists exchanged on 1 July 2025, Pakistan acknowledged the custody of 193 Indian/believed-to-be-Indian fishermen. 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.**

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