

Difficulties of fishermen of Gujarat

1065. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of serious difficulties faced by the fishermen of Gujarat from Pakistani Marine Security agency;

(b) the total number of fishermen from Gujarat arrested by Pakistani Marine Security Agency in the year 2005-06, district-wise, month-wise and the steps taken by Government to get them released;

(c) whether Government are considering any mechanism to avoid such incidents in future; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) According to available information, there are 412 Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails. 271 Indian fishermen were arrested between September to December, 2005 while 234 were arrested between January to March, 2006 by the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency. Out of 412 fishermen, 284 belong to Gujarat, while 128 are from other States including Diu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Nani Daman and Haryana. According to information available on the district-wise breakup of fishermen from Gujarat, most of them belong to Junagarh while there are also a number of fishermen from Amreli, Navsari, Porbandar, Bhavnagar and Valsad. Government has taken up this issue with Pakistan at various levels. As a result of Government's constant efforts 1171 Indian fishermen were released in 2005 while 93 have so far been released this year. Government is taking steps at various levels to secure early release of remaining fishermen.

(c) and (d) India and Pakistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on October 3, 2005 at Islamabad which provides for establishment of a communication link between Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA). The MoU, *inter alia*, provides for reporting of EEZ violations, exchange of information about apprehended vessels and coordination of return passages. The MoU will come into effect after ratification by both the Governments. Instruments of ratification have been exchanged while operational details are under process.