

1	2	3	4	5
			OBC-1	OBC-1
			SC-Nil	ST-1
			ST-Nil	
Peon	12	1	UR-8	UR-1
			OBC-3	OBC-3
			SC-1	SC-7
			ST-Nil	ST-Nil

(c) Does not arise.

Fishermen captured by Pakistan Authority

1294. SHRI PRAVIN NAIK :

SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is a fact that 229 Indian fishermen have been captured by Pakistan Authority;
- (b) if so, the steps being taken by Government for release of such fishermen; and
- (c) by when the scheme to pay assistance to such fishermen would be implemented as per Government of India scheme 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):

(a) As per available records, there are 252 Indian fishermen in Pakistan's jails.

(b) Government has been making persistent efforts for the release of Indian fishermen from Pakistan. The matter was taken up at the Foreign Secretary level talks in February, 2010, June, 2010 and June, 2011; in the Home/Interior Secretary level talks in March, 2011 and Foreign Minister level talks in July, 2010 and July, 2011. Home Minister also raised the issue during his visit to Islamabad in June, 2010. As a result of Government's efforts, Pakistan released 454 Indian fishermen in 2010. In 2011, as on date, Pakistan has released 103 Indian fishermen. An India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners was formed on February 26, 2008 to make recommendations to the two Governments, which *inter alia* included immediate release of and

consular access to fishermen, and exchange of a consolidated list of nationals in each other's jails. The committee has met four times so far (February, 2008, June, 2008, August, 2008 and April, 2011).

High Commission of India, Islamabad, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails and requests for consular access for these fishermen. Once consular access is granted by the Government of Pakistan, the verification papers are sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs through the Ministry of External Affairs for nationality status verification of these fishermen. High Commission of India, on a continuing basis, takes up the matter with the Government of Pakistan for the release of all those Indian fishermen who have completed their sentences.

(c) The Ministry of Agriculture, (Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries) is the nodal agency for payment of compensation to the fishermen lodged in Pakistani jails and the scheme — "Soft Loan Package for Replacement of Fishing vessels held in captivity in Pakistan" which is being implemented by Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA).

Opening of PSKs

1295. SHRI S. THANGAVELU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposed to open 70 Passport Seva Kendras by the next year to provide passport services in fast manner;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether Government has set up monitoring mechanism to prevent duplication of passports; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (c) Yes. As part of the implementation of the Passport Seva Project under the e-Governance Plan of the Government of India, it is envisaged to set up 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) across the country. A list of the PSKs is enclosed. Thirteen PSKs are operational at present and the list given in the Statement (*See below*). The Government has taken appropriate measures to prevent duplication of passports by way of setting up a Centralised Passport Database which is accessible to all the Passport Issuing Authorities in India as well as abroad. An essential pre-condition for granting a passport is clearance through this Database. A periodic technical audit of the Database operations is also conducted to check the efficacy of the system.