

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO.103**  
ANSWERED ON 13.02.2025

**SAFETY, SECURITY AND WELFARE OF INDIAN FISHERMEN**

\*103. SHRI NIRANJAN BISHI:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government prioritizes the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen at sea;
- (b) whether there have been incidents in the last three years of Indian fishermen being attacked by naval forces of neighboring countries, including Sri Lanka;
- (c) whether the Sri Lankan Navy has arrested and released Indian fishermen since 2022, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether Indian fishermen are still imprisoned abroad, including in Sri Lanka, if so, the measures taken for their release;
- (e) whether fishermen from Odisha are in Sri Lankan jails; and
- (f) whether identity cards are issued to fishermen for safety?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (f): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (F) IN RESPECT OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.103 FOR REPLY ON 13.02.2025 REGARDING SAFETY, SECURITY AND WELFARE OF INDIAN FISHERMEN ASKED BY SHRI NIRANJAN BISHI.**

1. Government of India attaches highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. The fishermen issue is dealt with in a bilateral manner and the Government has been taking up the fishermen 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. The matter of early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen is consistently raised with respective countries at all levels and it is conveyed that this issue may be considered purely on humanitarian and livelihood grounds. Further, our Missions and Consulates in respective countries make regular visits to local jails and detention centres to ascertain the condition of Indian fishermen and provide requisite help and support, including legal assistance. Our Missions also provide necessary travel documents to facilitate repatriation of released fishermen to India.

2. With respect to Sri Lanka, the fishermen issue was taken up at the highest level, including by the Prime Minister in his recent meeting (16 December 2024) with the Sri Lankan President during the latter's State Visit to India. The issue is also dealt with through bilateral institutional mechanisms such as the regular meetings of the 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. Sustained diplomatic efforts of the Government have secured the release and repatriation of 535 fishermen apprehended by Sri Lankan authorities since 2024.

3. Details regarding apprehension of Indian fishermen abroad are as follows:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of Fishermen in custody</b>
Sri Lanka	98 (39 under trial, 59 serving sentences)
Pakistan	217
Bahrain	04
Saudi Arabia	28
Kuwait	04

4. Details of reported attacks on Indian fishermen over the last three years are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Incidents of attack on Indian fishermen by Sri Lanka Navy</b>
2025	01
2024	03
2023	06
2022	03
<b>Incidents of attack on Indian fishermen by Pakistan Navy</b>	
2022-2024	03

5. Details of Indian fishermen apprehended and released by Sri Lankan authorities since 2003 are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Indian fishermen apprehended by Sri Lankan authorities</b>	<b>Number of Indian fishermen released by Sri Lankan authorities</b>
2003	606	606
2004	109	109
2005	NIL	NIL
2006	19	19
2007	107	107
2008	1456	1456
2009	127	127
2010	26	26
2011	198	198
2012	197	197
2013	676	676
2014	787	787
2015	454	454
2016	290	290
2017	453	453
2018	156	156
2019	210	210
2020	74	74
2021	159	159
2022	268	268
2023	240	240
2024	560	520
2025	88	30

6. Currently, no fishermen from Odisha are in Sri Lankan jails.

7. On apprehension of Indian fishermen, Consular officials from our High Commission in Colombo and Consulate in Jaffna corroborate their national identification with relevant authorities in India to ensure coordination with Sri Lankan authorities for early release as well as for extension of necessary help, including legal assistance to the fishermen.

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