

fishermen are in the custody of the Sri Lankan authorities (as on 12 July 2014). The Indian fishermen were arrested after inadvertently crossing the perceived International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the case of Pakistan and International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the case of Sri Lanka.

Government regularly takes up with the Pakistan authorities the issue of the early release and repatriation of all such prisoners and their boats as well as providing regular consular access to them. Government of India also, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of all such Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails. The India-Pakistan Judicial Committee consisting of retired judges from both countries visits jails in both countries to ensure humane treatment and expeditious release of prisoners, including fishermen, who have completed their prison term.

In respect of Sri Lanka, in 2004 an India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group (JWG) was established which has been dealing with all issues related to straying Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan waters, including working out the modalities for prevention of use of force against them and securing early release of their confiscated boats.

Ministry of Agriculture is the designated nodal agency for payment of compensation to fishermen lodged in Pakistani jails. Additionally a Soft Loan Package for replacement of fishing vessels held in captivity in Pakistan is implemented by the Marine Exports Development Authority (MPEDA).

Land Border Agreement with Bangladesh

959. SHRI Y.S. CHOWDARY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to bring Land Border Agreement with Bangladesh shortly, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether Government has fixed any time-frame to complete its process?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH): (a) and (b) The "Protocol to the Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Bangladesh Concerning the Demarcation of the Land Boundary Between India and Bangladesh and Related Matters" was signed with Bangladesh in September 2011.

The Constitution (119th Amendment) Bill for implementing the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) 1974 and the Protocol to LBA signed in 2011 was introduced in Rajya Sabha in December 2013 and has been referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs.