

Pakistan releases 96 Indian fishermen

Pakistan has released 96 Indian fishermen two days after both countries inked an agreement on consular access to prisoners, jail officials said Friday.

The Indian fishermen were freed from a prison in the southern port city of Karachi and will be handed over to the Indian authorities at the Wagha border in the eastern city of Lahore Saturday, officials said.

They said the Indian authorities had confirmed the nationalities of the freed fishermen.

Three other Indian civilians will also be freed and will be handed over to the Indian authorities Saturday.

On May 20, Pakistan's interior ministry said the fishermen would be released as a 'goodwill' gesture on the occasion of the visit of Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee, who visited Islamabad May 19-20 for talks with the new government.

The Indian fishermen were arrested after straying into Pakistan's territorial waters.

Fishermen from both sides often drift unwittingly into each other's territorial waters, where many are arrested for unauthorised entry.

Out on the sea, there are no markings to indicate the border between the two countries. And two-way radio communication is outlawed due to what officials describe as security concerns.

Those arrested can spend months in jail without being tried and convicted for any offence before they are released. But as part of the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), now both countries release fishermen.

In the Islamabad talks, Pakistan and India agreed to hold a new round of their 'composite dialogue' in [New Delhi](#) this July.

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