

>

Title: Regarding problem faced by fishermen in Ramanathapuram Parliamentary Constituency of Tamil Nadu.

SHRI K. NAVASKANI(RAMANATHAPURAM) : Thank you, hon. Speaker, Sir. ...(*Interruptions*)

माननीय अध्यक्ष : आप सभी नए माननीय सदस्य को बोलने दें । मैंने व्यवस्था दे दी है । आप बैठ जाएं।

...(व्यवधान)

SHRI K. NAVASKANI: Sir, in the morning of 26th June, 2019, four poor fishermen, namely, Selvaraj, Nambuvel, Selvarasu and Balakrishnan who set out for fishing from Rameswaram fishing jetty, which falls under my parliamentary constituency, were reportedly arrested by the Lankan Navy after they allegedly crossed the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). The Navy also seized their boat. A sense of vulnerability and insecurity prevails in the minds of families of the arrested fishermen.

Such incidents of arrest, detention and harassment of Rameswaram fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy are continued unabated since long. Their boats, trawlers, nets, etc. are seized and destroyed, putting the livelihood of fishermen at stake. It is because of the declining amount of catch near the shores that the fishermen have to go further deep inside the high seas, which leads to such arrests.

The International Maritime Boundary Line between India and Sri Lanka and the issue of Kachchatheevu are not settled. I urge the

Government to first retrieve Kachchatheevu. The Government should restore the traditional fishing rights of fishermen in Palk Bay by annulling the 1974 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement following which Katchatheevu was ceded to the island nation by India. This island was originally owned by the Ramnad Kingdom of Ramanathapuram district in Tamil Nadu before Independence. Thus, it belonged to India till 1974. As per the Indian Constitution, these agreements have to be ratified by the Parliament through a constitutional amendment. But this was not done so far. If this happens, the major problem of fishermen would be resolved by itself.

Keeping this in view, I request the Minister of External Affairs to take up this issue on top priority with Sri Lankan authority and bring an immediate halt to these apprehensions. The Government should find a permanent solution to the recurring mid-sea arrests and secure immediate release of four fishermen along with their motorized fishing boat seized recently.

I also urge upon the Centre to help in skilling these fishermen so that they can explore other opportunities and also modernize their fishing equipment.

Thank you, Sir.