

Regarding US ban on the import of sea shrimp from India

SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): Thank you Madam for giving me an opportunity to raise the most important issue relating to the US ban on the import of sea shrimp from India.

Since 2019, the US has not imported shrimp from India, accusing Indian fishermen of not attaching Turtle Excluder Devices (TED) to their nets. As a result, our fishermen are suffering greatly. Since then, there has been only a meagre increase in the export of sea shrimp from India. The US claims that sea turtles are getting caught in the nets, but this argument is not entirely true. Traditional fishermen are the ones who traditionally protect sea turtles. Moreover, in 2019, the CMFRI reported that the presence of sea turtles on the West Coast is very low, with fewer than 10 sea turtle eggs found on these beaches in a year.

The fishermen argue that various Governments and the Seafood Export Development Authority, who were supposed to act on the said report, have completely failed to address this reality. No sea turtles are caught during trawling in any Indian State. In Odisha, where the sea turtles are largely concentrated, trawling has been banned during their breeding season. In Kerala also, there are no reports of sea turtles being caught in nets at any stage of fish production.

Due to the US ban initiated in 2019, India is estimated to lose Rs. 2,500 crore in seafood exports every year. Taking advantage of this situation, the European Union, China, Japan, and other countries are bargaining and reducing the price of shrimp. Consequently, the prices of shrimp varieties like kara, naran, karikadi, poovalan, and kazhanthan in the domestic market are falling, pushing our fishermen into a severe crisis.

Considering the seriousness of this matter, I urge upon the Government to intervene in this matter urgently and find out a solution to this issue.

Thank you, Madam.