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Title: Regarding reported decision of the Central Government for total and uniform ban on fishing for 61 days in the eastern zone of India.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS (ERNAKULAM): Sir, on 10th April, 2015, the Ministry of Agriculture imposed a uniform ban on fishing by all fishing vessels in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) beyond territorial waters on the East Coast including Andaman & Nicobar Islands and West Coast including Lakshadweep Islands. This ban is for the first time in the history of India. In the West Coast, it is from 1st June to 31st July, that is 61 days, and in the East Coast it is from 15th April to 14th June, that is also 61 days.

The territorial waters, which is 12 nautical miles from the coastline, is with the State Governments. It is the prerogative of the State Governments to take a decision on the territorial waters. Beyond the territorial waters comes the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone. All the State Governments – Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra – have opposed this decision of the Government which will support only the foreign trawlers. The Indian farmers, the Indian fishermen who live on day to day by fishing on the sea will become starved; there will be starvation in the country.

Usually, when such type of decision is taken, States Governments are also consulted. Now, the fishermen have to carry their passports. Have you ever heard of fishermen carrying their passports with them? They have got the certificates from the State Government. Why should they carry their passports? This Government is taking decisions without studying the problems of the fishermen and without consulting the coastal States. These decisions are detrimental to the fishermen.

I request the Government to withdraw this order and consult the State Governments. My colleagues Mr. K.C. Venugopal and others are with me on this issue.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri M.K. Raghavan, Shri Md. Badaruddoza Khan, Shri Abhijit Mukherjee and Shri P. Karunakaran are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Prof. K.V. Thomas.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): Sir, I have given a notice of Adjournment Motion today morning itself. My constituency is a coastal constituency. I have to say something on this issue.

After farmers, the Union Government is behind the fishermen. A lot of miseries have been faced by our fishermen. The Meenakumari Commission Report is one among them. Your Government is also opposing this Meenakumari Commission Report. The fishermen are also under distress.

Now, I am coming to trawling ban. The fishing community has launched a raging protest against recommendations of the Meenakumari Commission. The fisher folk in the country is preparing another war against the move of the Central Government to impose total and uniform fishing ban in the coastal belt, from Gujarat to Kanyakumari. Hon. Defence Minister is here, I think, he can supplement something on this issue.

According to a notification signed by Dr. Raja Shekhar Vundru, Joint Secretary to the Government of India, a uniform ban on all the fishing vessels in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone, beyond the territorial waters in the East Coast including Andaman and Nicobar Islands and in the West Coast including Lakshadweep Island, will be imposed with the aim of conserving and managing fishery resources.

The notification issued on April 10 says that sea safety concerns were also behind the ban, which will be imposed in the West Coast from June 1 to July 31, and in the East Coast from April 15 to June 14. The ban is applicable to fishing activities within 12 to 200 nautical miles. The notification also directs the Coast Guard to implement the ban in the EEZ.

As per the latest order of the Central Government, the trawling ban begins 15 days earlier and Kerala will be the State which will be the worst hit because of it. The Central Government wants to implement trawling ban in a unified manner in all States. However, monsoon arrives first in Kerala and by the time it ends, the fish would have left Kerala shores. If uniform trawling ban is implemented, Kerala will be the only State which will suffer.

This move undoubtedly will endanger the lives of traditional fishermen in the country. When the Meenakumari Commission Report came with similar suggestions, we had raised the concerns of lakhs of traditional fishermen in this house. The present notification is a serious threat to our traditional fishermen.

In addition to this, it has been reported that the Central Government is going to cut down the amount of kerosene that was given to State Governments as a subsidy.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can raise only one issue. You have already raised the fishermen issue.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL: Sir, I need few minutes. Even many States including Kerala have received the Circular from the Government regarding this subsidy cut. Now, once in three months, the Kerala Government receives only 10,016 kilo liter kerosene from the Central Government. Through the PDS shops kerosene is provided for cooking and lighting purpose, but in States like Kerala due to the need of fishing community, a major portion of kerosene is distributed to fishing communities. Once in three months Kerala Government is providing 2,329 kilo liter kerosene to common fishing men who use kerosene generated engines in their small boats. It seems that the Central Government is reluctant to provide kerosene to fishing communities for this purpose. What would be the fate of the poor fishermen community? We want a response from the Government. This Government is targeting the fishermen. They are very poor. We are very much concerned about the fishermen.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. A. Sampath is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri K.C. Venugopal.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Sir, I do endorse the views expressed by Shri K.C. Venugopal.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE (GULBARGA): Sir, when an important issue is raised by all the coastal area MPs, I request you to direct the Government to make some statement on this issue....(व्यवधान) आपको तकलीफ नहीं है लेकिन जो लोग कोस्टल एरिया में हैं, उन्हें तकलीफ है।

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Sir, I have also given a notice for Adjournment Motion today in the morning. Sir, the matter is very important as far as fishermen are concerned. On 10th April 2015, the Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture has issued an Order for a total ban not only on the East Coast but also on the West Coast. It is highly dangerous as far as fishermen are concerned.

Sir, the Chair has directed to have a meeting with the Members of Parliament regarding the Meenakumari Commission Report as well as the Saida Rao Commission Report. The Minister has convened the meeting. The Minister has given an assurance that no trawling ban would be imposed and no Commission recommendations would be implemented. But unfortunately, this Order has come. This Order has to be withdrawn. We are demanding the withdrawal of this Order. This Order has to be withdrawn with immediate effect. ...(*Interruptions*)

DR. P. VENUGOPAL (TIRUVALLUR): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to facilitate the breeding of fish and to conserve fish stock in the marine ecology, every year the Government of Tamil Nadu imposes 45-day annual ban on fishing by mechanized boats. The fishermen are instructed not to venture out to the sea to avoid disturbances caused by fishing boats during the breeding season. From 15th April to 29th May, the ban comes into effect. In order to compensate the loss of livelihood to the fishermen, a monthly assistance of Rs.2,000 and Rs.4,000 are provided to each of 16,433 fishermen family and 17,193 beneficiaries. In a systematic manner application for assistance are obtained from the fishermen who need the relief amount. This is directly deposited into the bank account of the fishermen through the National Electronic Fund Transfer. 30,265 members enrolled in 25 co-operative societies are receiving these benefits. Since there is no source of income during the ban period and considering the cost of living, the Centre may come forward to uniformly increase the compensation amount to Rs.5,000 *per mensum* for 61 days. The Centre may allocate funds through special assistance package as the livelihood of these fishermen is affected by the Sri Lankan Navy also every now and then. I would also request that this money is paid within the month of May to benefit all the fishermen families and the school-going children.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, do you want to say something?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will put up only one. Already this matter was discussed with all the State Governments. The ban, which he is talking about, is in Exclusive Economic Zone beyond 12 nautical miles. ...(*Interruptions*)

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: That is beyond territorial waters? ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR: Yes, beyond territorial waters ...(*Interruptions*) Within territorial waters, it is for the State Government to decide. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We cannot have a discussion now. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR: I have requested the Minister of Agriculture and I will see that he calls the Members of Parliament. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Sir, kindly go through the Orders. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He said already that he would consult the Agriculture Minister.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, Shri M. Raja Mohan Reddy.