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title: Need to lift the ban on fishing of sea cucumbers.

SHRI A. ANWHAR RAAJHAA (RAMANATHAPURAM): Fishermen of southern Tamil Nadu particularly those in the fishing areas of Rameswaram, Pamban, Vedalai, Devipattinam, Mandapam, Keelakkarai, Yeruvadi, Thangachimadam and Dhanushkodi are the worst affected due to the indifferent attitude of various Central government agencies for many years now. Apart from the huge loss of lives and damage to fishing boats and nets caused by Sri Lankan Navy, about which Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has been ceaselessly drawing the attention of the Prime Minister, our people both involved in fishing and its sales are put to great harassment due to the inevitable and inadvertent handling of Holothurians or sea-cucumbers, a by-catch in fishing. In 1982, under the Indian Wild-life (Protection) Act 1972, catching of small-size-cucumbers was restricted. But in 2001, a blanket-ban was imposed enlisting them with about 60 other so called rare species. This sea-cucumber found in abundance in our south-eastern coast is not really rare and can easily be aqua-cultured abundantly in our waters. They are in great demand in South-East Asian countries both for food and medicine. Exporting this shallow-water sea-organism is a thousand-year-old traditional occupation in our reign which has now come to an end thereby depriving thousands of fishermen of their livelihood. No country including the UN body on conservation of rare natural resources has banned catching of sea-cucumbers. But in India the catching of small-size sea-cucumbers is banned. Hence, I urge upon the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to lift the ban for the benefit of fishermen of Tamil Nadu.