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Title: Need to declare Cuddalore Port as a major port in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI M.C. DHAMOTHARAN (CUDDALORE): Sir, Cuddalore Port in Tamil Nadu is very ancient. It was an international trading centre for many centuries. But in recent years it has lost its old glory.

Yet, steamers have been using this port for various purposes including fishing. A few thousand families living near the coastal lines of Cuddalore depend on fishing for their livelihood. They go for fishing in steamers using the port at Cuddalore.

But during the last few months these fishermen are unable to use this port due to silting at the harbour. Since the harbour has become shallow due to silting of sand, the fishermen are unable to take out the steamers into the sea for fishing. This has resulted in extreme hardship to the fishermen. They are in danger of starvation. Unless the harbour is desilted immediately, thousands of fishermen will have to starve.

Since the State Government is unable to provide funds for such works, I appeal to the Centre to declare Cuddalore Port as major port and save our fishermen. If desilting is done, fishermen will be able to go for fishing as usual. This will also help us to export seafoods like fish and prawn that fetch precious foreign exchange.

If it is developed into a major port, it will be useful in industrialising the districts of Cuddalore, Villupuram, Thanjavur, Trichy, Salem and Chengalpattu, because movement of coal and other raw material for the Thermal Power Plants in Neyveli and an upcoming 2000 Mega Watt Thermal Power Plant at Cuddalore would be easy and cost efficient. Another industrial complex at Cuddalore, SIPCOT will also be benefited. The seafoods could be exported directly from the port. Therefore, I appeal to the Centre to declare Cuddalore Port in Tamil Nadu as a major port and save the lives of fishermen.