

Attention, and tomorrow also, we will have a Calling Attention. The Zero Hour also was a casualty because of too many Calling Attention. So, it was decided to facilitate a large number of Zero Hour issues also, which are pending. And, as Members have been raising that the Calling Attention is taken up at the cost of Zero Hour, an arrangement has been made to first take up a few Zero Hour issues also and, then, the Calling Attention. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री एम. वेंकैया नायडू (कर्णाटक) : सर, यह सब्जेक्ट का मुद्दा है।*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, you may not dilute. You may take note of it, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : No, on; I am not diluting...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : I request that the importance of the Calling Attention is not lost, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : See, it is very clear, and Zero Hour is over also. Now, I am taking up the Calling Attention. Dr. V. Maitreya to call the attention of the hon. Minister...*(Interruptions)*....

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Kerala) : It is not dilution...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It is not dilution ...*(Interruptions)*.... It is not dilution, please.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : We are not opposing it...*(Interruptions)*... we are all supporting ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : MR. Kurien, please sit down...*(Interruptions)*.... Please call the attention of the Minister, Dr. Maitreya.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Killing of Indian Fishermen and Continuous Attacks on them by Sri Lankan Navy

DR. V. MAITREYAN (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, I would like to speak in Tamil.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You call the attention.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : *Hon'ble Vice Chairman Sir, I would like to call the attention of the Minister of External Affairs with regard to the killing of Indian fishermen and continuous attacks on them by Srilankan Navy.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You have not given a notice for that....(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, there are separate notices. We all have given notices and the Minister should respond. Then, we will speak on that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : See, this is the procedure...(*Interruptions*)... I am asking him because this is the procedure.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka) : Yes, this is the procedure...(*Interruptions*)... He is also saying the same thing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I have asked him to call the attention. The Minister will make a statement. After that, you seek clarifications.

SHRI D. RAJA : That is what I am saying. It should be just clarifications....(*Interruptions*)...

DR. V. MAITREYAN : The procedure followed by the House in respect of Calling Attention yesterday will be followed today also, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : What is this? Before starting itself, you have started behaving like this!...(*Interruptions*)...

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA) : Sir, I rise to respond to the House on the Calling Attention notices regarding the killing of Indian fishermen and continuous attacks on them by Sri Lankan Navy.

I would like to reiterate, at the outset, in this august House that the welfare, safety and security of our fishermen have always received the highest priority of the Government. The Government of India and the High Commission of India in Sri Lanka have consistently taken up issues relating to incidents of firing on or apprehension of our fishermen with the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that the Sri Lankan Navy act with restraint and our fishermen are treated in a humane manner.

Hon. Members would recall that to avoid recurrence of incidents involving our fishermen, and keeping in mind the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of the issue, on 26th October, 2008, India

*English translation of the original speech in Tamil.

and Sri Lanka reached an Understanding of Fishing Arrangements under which both of us agreed to put in place practical arrangements to deal with *bona fide* fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line from either country. As part of these practical arrangements, it was agreed that there will be no firing on Indian fishing vessels and that Indian fishing vessels will not enter into sensitive areas designated by Government of Sri Lanka along its coastline.

I would like to inform this august House that after the October, 2008 Understanding, incidents of apprehension and firing on Indian fishermen in the waters between India and Sri Lanka have come down significantly. In 2008, 1,456 Indian fishermen were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy. In 2009, those apprehended came down to 127 fishermen only. In 2010, till end of July, 26 fishermen were apprehended. In 2008, the number of fishermen reportedly killed was five with one missing. In 2009, there were no fishermen killed or missing. Recently, we have had an incident in which one fisherman was reportedly killed. However, there has been a significant decrease in the incidents of apprehension of Indian fishermen after 2008. It is, therefore, evident that the October, 2008 Understanding has had a salutary effect on the situation.

I would also like to reiterate that whenever incidents of firing or apprehension or ill-treatment of our fishermen come to our attention, we have immediately taken them up with the Government of Sri Lanka. Government of Sri Lanka have in most cases responded to our request and have released these fishermen. We have, time and again, emphasised on the Government of Sri Lanka to scrupulously adhere to the Understanding we have reached and they have assured us of their commitment to adhere to this Understanding. However, they have also consistently denied that their Navy has had any responsibility in such incidents of firing on our fishermen. They have also stated that their Navy does not enter Indian territorial waters.

I would like to inform the hon. Members that most such incidents have taken place in Sri Lankan waters where our fishermen stray across the International Maritime Boundary Line. It is, therefore, important that we sensitize our fishermen to respect the International Maritime Boundary Line and not to stray into Sri Lankan waters for their own safety and security, especially in those areas designated as sensitive by the Government of Sri Lanka. We have also conveyed a similar request to

the Government of Sri Lanka vis-a-vis their fishermen who cross the International Maritime Boundary Line and enter our waters.

India and Sri Lanka are also in discussion in the Joint Working Group constituted to deal with issues related to fishermen and to work out bilateral institutional arrangements for ensuring the safety and security of the fishermen of both countries and addressing such issues in a humane and practical way. Thank you.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : *The customary explanation given by the Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs is disappointing. I would like to quote a couplet from the greatest Tamil epic "Tirukkural" which has been recognized as the greatest epic throughout the world. Tiruvalluvar has said,

"Though things diverse from diverse sage's lips we learn,

'Tis wisdom's part in each the true thing to discern."

(Couplet No. 423)

That is, real knowledge will find the truth from the facts told by different people. The Sri Lankan Government have never kept any of its promise at any point of time. After having so many incidents of breach of promise by the Sri Lankan Government, it is really sad that the Government of India trust their empty words. The Tamil Nadu fishermen trust only the Government of India for their welfare, safety and security. Our fears about the future of Tamil Nadu fishermen are further heightened at the Government of India's trust in the Sri Lankan Government...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, we are Indians.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : I am also an Indian. I am proud of it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Maitreyan, address the Chair. Don't look at others.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, he is talking of Tamil Nadu. I am asking, "Is it not part of India?" This is what I am asking.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : *My Hon'ble Colleagues from DMK, whose main aim is to occupy offices in the Union Government also, may be satisfied at the explanation given by the Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs and would keep silence as usual. But our revered leader, Hon'ble *Puratchithalaivi*

*English translation of the original speech in Tamil.

Amma and our party AIADMK as a whole, are really concerned about the welfare of Tamil Nadu fishermen....*(Interruptions)*... It is my duty to find fault with the Government..It is my right to find fault with the Government, for their omissions and commissions. I am not here to praise them, Sir...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. K.P. RAMALINGAM (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, he must withdraw it...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : Sir, he is...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Maitreyan, you speak on the subject. You have to seek clarifications. You speak on the subject...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Sir, it is my duty to find fault with the Government...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You have to seek clarifications. Do not talk about the Union Ministers and all that. That is not clarification. Please seek clarifications.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Sir, it is my right and duty to talk about their acts of omission and commission...*(Interruptions)*.. I am not here to praise the Government...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Maitreyan...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, it is not clarification. ..*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Just a minute....*(Interruptions)*. Please sit down...*(Interruptions)*.. I am on my legs. Please sit down. I would like to pose a question : is there the Chair or not? Are you being regulated? See, you have to address the Chair. This way we cannot conduct the proceedings of the House. Each one of you is addressing each other. What is the need of the Chair then? ...*(Interruptions)*... Please ...*(Interruptions)*.. I will control you and everybody. I am here. I am listening to him. If you start attacking each other and do not allow others to speak, I am sorry. This is Parliament. Everybody has a right to speak. I am not here to say what he wants to say. If there is any unparliamentary world or if he says anything against the rules, I am there. He says, "It is my right to speak in Parliament". Let him speak.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu) : But it should not be irrelevant.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Whether it is relevant or irrelevant, it is not for you to decide. Mr. Siva, please tell me...*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : It is in the Rules Book ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Siva, please ...*(Interruptions)*... Relevant or irrelevant, it is not for the Chair to decide. I have repeated this several times in the House...*(Interruptions)* He says, he has the freedom of speech ...*(Interruptions)* Kindly tell me, under what rule, I should say, what the Member is saying is relevant or irrelevant, unless it is unparliamentary...*(Interruptions)* You quote the rule, and I will take action...*(Interruptions)*..

DR. V. MAITREYAN : If it is unparliamentary, I can understand. What is relevant or not relevant has to be decided by the Chair and not by Members...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Sir, you kindly look at Rule 240.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Then, you raise a point of order under Rule 240.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : The Chairman, after having called the attention of the Council to the conduct of a member who persists in irrelevance...*(Interruptions)*... I am addressing the Chair...*(Interruptions)*... The rule further says : "...or in tendious repetition either of his own arguments or of the arguments used by other members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech."

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yes, it is for the Chair to decide...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Sir, you cannot forfeit my right...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Siva, this is not the way. You have to raise it in a proper way...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : That is why I got up from my seat and am raising it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You have to raise it as a point of order, but not like this that ten Members would get up at the same time. One member can get up and raise it. But all of you are getting up each time. Why are you cultivating this habit? This is not good.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : If you take the responsibility, then, we will not interfere.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Before I could point out, you get up because I should, first of all, know whether he is speaking relevant or not. And, the Chair is here. Rule 240 is for the Chair, and I should decide. You are not to decide...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI (Tamil Nadu) : Why is he looking at us and pointing out?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : That is what I am saying. You too don't look at him... *(Interruptions)*

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Sir, in so many years of my being here, I have never spoken anything which is irrelevant.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Maitreyan, you are a senior Member. You have to address the Chair. Why do you look at them every time? ..*(Interruptions)*

DR. V. MAITREYAN : When they provoke me, I cannot keep silent. Please tell them not to provoke me.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : If they commit a mistake, you too want to commit it...*(Interruptions)*
This way we cannot ...*(Interruptions)*.. The Members should help the Chair. It is not that I alone can regulate the House. If the Members are not going to follow the rules, and they go on arguing, the Chair can do very little. In this way, we cannot conduct the business in the House...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI D. RAJA : This is a serious issue. We should discuss this.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It is because the issue is very serious, we have listed it, and we are taking it up...*(Interruptions)*.. Is it the way of discussing? ...*(Interruptions)*....

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Tell me one sentence which, I said, was not relevant.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You are not talking about the issue.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : What I said pertains to this issue.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You are talking about some Cabinet Minister of Tamil Nadu. What is the relevance in it?

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Definitely so, Please read it in the context...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : If we are not concluding the discussion in one hour...*(Interruptions)*... The rule is very clear. Only one hour is given for the Calling Attention Motion ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI D. RAJA : Sir, you cannot deprive my right. It is for you to maintain order in the House.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : If you people don't want order, what can I do? I have not policing power, Mr. Raja...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI D. RAJA : But you are in the Chair, Sir...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : If Members are not interested, I can't do anything...*(Interruptions)*...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Kerala) : All of us are interested in this, not only the people of Tamil Nadu...*(Interruptions)* My request is that all of us...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It is not the fishermen; they are interested in other things. They are not interested in fishermen.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : *Our Tamil Nadu fishermen have no fear of the roaring sea. They have high self-esteem and self-respect, to earn their own livelihood, by their own hard work. They are very courageous. They stand on their own legs, unlike the rulers of Tamil Nadu who are in the seat of power with the help of others. Our country is endowed with a long coastline stretching upto seven thousand five hundred kilometres. Among them, Tamil Nadu coastline stretches upto one hundred five hundred kilometres. There are thirteen coastal districts in Tamil Nadu. More than eight lakh Tamil fishermen earn their livelihood by fishing. More than eight lakh Tamil fishermen earn their livelihood by fishing. More than 30 lakh people are dependent on fishing...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You seek clarifications, Dr. Maitreyan.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : No. I can speak, Sir, What is this? I will stop it, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You stop it. I am not worried about it. You stop it. I am only asking you to seek clarifications.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : I have right to explain my points.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : No. You have no right to explain.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : But you follow that practice in all other Calling Attentions. What is this? You can't stop me like this. What is this?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please sit down.

*English translation of the original speech in Tamil.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : What is this ?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : No, Dr. Maitreyan. By shooting, you can't ask the Chair not to follow ...*(Interruptions)*... Please do not shout at the Chair...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. V. MAITREYAN : No. But you can't interrupt.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please do not shout at the Chair.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : You tell me what is irrelevant.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I am warning you. Don't shout at the Chair.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : You only warn from the Chair, you don't want...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I am only implementing the rules.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Sir, rules are for everybody.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The House is adjourned for ten minutes.

The House then adjourned at thirty-two minutes past twelve of the clock

The House re-assembled at forty-one minutes past twelve of the clock,

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) in the Chair

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : The House is adjourned for ten more minutes.

The House then adjourned at forty-one minutes past twelve of the clock.

The House reassembled at fifty-one minutes past twelve of the clock,

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yes, Dr. Maitreyan.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Sir, at the outset, I offer my sincere apologies to the Chair for any disrespect which I have shown. Unconditional apology to you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please carry on.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : *Our Tamil Nadu fishermen have no fear of the roaring sea. They have high self-esteem and self-respect, to earn their own livelihood, by their own hard work. They stand

*English translation of the original speech in Tamil.

on their own legs, unlike the rulers of Tamil Nadu who are in the seat of power with the help of others. Indian coastline has a length of seven thousand five hundred kilometres. Out of this, Tamil Nadu coastline stretches for one thousand five hundred kilometers. There are thirteen coastal districts in Tamil Nadu. More than eight lakh Tamil fishermen earn their livelihood by fishing. They have been mercilessly killed by Srilankan Navy...(Interruptions)...

A fisherman called Chellappan, who belongs to Vellapallam village of Vedharanyam, Nagapattinam district, was shot dead by the Sri Lankan Navy on 7th July, 2010 in Indian territorial waters. So far, more than five hundred fishermen were attacked and killed. Thousands of them have been injured. Many of them have become physically disabled. Some even live as lifeless persons. They are weary of their life after such attacks by the Sri Lankan Navy.

In October 2006, another fisherman called Sounderaj of Karaikal, was severely attacked by the Sri Lankan Navy in Indian territorial waters, at a place called Jagathapattinam near Pudukottai district. He was seriously wounded to the extent that one could find so many bullets from his body. Bullet particles were found in his brain also. If that bullet particles are removed, he may lose his life, and therefore doctors have left those pieces of bullet in his brain itself. He has lost his ears. He cannot breathe through his nose and breathes only through his mouth. He has lost his left hand and left leg. So many Sounderajs are present in Tamil Nadu. There are many such instances to be cited. During the past twenty four months, more than twenty four atrocious attacks have been carried out by the Sri Lankan Navy. Through the attack that was carried out on 7th July 2010, the Sri Lankan Navy have warned that their attacks would not cease, but would continue in future also. But the people who have the responsibility of protecting our fishermen, say that they can only write letters and in returns enquire us whether they can send armed forces towards that nation.

Tamil Fishermen are truly courageous men. They had no fear of great disasters like tsunamis and cyclones. But they fear the Sri Lankan Navy as the Indian Government have not come forward to protect them. A fisherman's family keeps waiting for him in the coast with the hope that he would bring a lot of fish. But only the message of his death reaches them now.

Our founder Dr. *Puratchithalaivar* MGR had a great love for the people of Tamil Nadu. He was identified as the true friend of fishermen. He gave his heart and soul to the fishermen. They also

reciprocated his love and had placed him at a high pedestal. He had showered his affection over the fishermen. The fishermen are the sons of the coastal region of Tamil Nadu. Our party AIADMK's affinity with the Tamil fishermen and our real concern for them have never been appreciated by others. It is doubtful whether due to our close proximity with the fishermen, the attacks on them have been neglected here. I would like to quote a few lines about our founder's concern for the fishermen:

"Sea is our real home where the silver moon serves as our lamp;

Our life is uncertain; It can either continue or end at anytime without any hope of survival:

Sir, these words seem to be incomparable in explaining the real life style of Tamil Nadu fishermen. I would like to humbly request the Government that the life and livelihood of fishermen have to be guaranteed.

Sir, the ocean current may change its direction at anytime. There are chances that the fishermen may be carried away by the ocean current when they are on the sea. It is not their fault. None has the right to accuse the fishermen of crossing the territorial waters when they have been actually diverted by the ocean current. This matter should be pointed out to the Sri Lankan Government. That could not be misconstrued that he had entered the territorial waters of Sri Lanka and crossed the International Maritime-Boundary Line. This movement of ocean current has to be understood by all. It is in the hands of the Government to understand their situation and explain that this movement has taken place due to the influence of ocean current but not by any intention to enter the Sri Lankan territorial waters. The Sri Lankan Army enters Indian territorial waters to attack our own fishermen. It is the responsibility of the Union Government to point out this matter also to the Sri Lankan Government. I would like to point out that India is a sovereign nation and it has full freedom and right to warn the Sri Lankan Government not to enter Indian territorial waters and also not to attack our fishermen. I hope that the Union Government take the responsibility of warning the Sri Lankan Government against its arrogance.

Moreover, there is a necessity to retrieve Katchatheevu from Sri Lanka which is the cause of all these problems. In the year 1974, Katchatheevu was offered to Sri Lanka. Then State Government of Tamil Nadu remained silent when Katchatheevu was offered to them. That had become the real

cause of all these problems. Kutchatheevu can serve as a fortress for the sovereignty of India. The fact is that we have exposed our fishermen to dangerous situations by offering Kutchatheevu to them.

Similarly, Bangladesh asked for 'Teen Bigha', a part of Cooch Bihar region of West Bengal, for annexing with their country. But severe opposition was raised in West Bengal. Due to this opposition, 'Teen Bigha' was offered to Bangladesh only on the basis of tenancy. The far-sightedness of West Bengal has protected 'Teen Bigha'. But the then Tamil Nadu Government's lack of far-sightedness had allowed the offering of Kutchatheevu to Sri Lanka. Our party AIADMK's stand is that the problem of Tamil Nadu fishermen can never be solved without retrieving Kutchatheevu. That is why our revered leader, Dr. *Puratchithalaivi* Jayalalitha had filed a case in the Supreme Court of India for retrieving the Kutchatheevu from Sri Lanka.

The Hon'ble Minister did not mention anything about retrieving Kutchatheevu in his statement. I would like to request him to provide the necessary information about the decision of the Government of India with regard to Kutchatheevu in his reply.

India has a long tradition. Tamil Nadu fishermen have sparkling love for their nation. Their patriotism is symbolized in the thousands of tri-coloured flags carried by them in hundreds of their steam boats and in lakhs of their smaller boats. The blue-coloured sea looks tri-coloured due to their boats carrying our tri-coloured flag. It is our duty to protect them and to provide them safety and security. Their life and livelihood has to be guaranteed by the Union Government. The State Government in Tamil Nadu is not responsible for their suffering. On behalf of AIADMK, I would like to request the Union Government to understand their responsibility of guaranteeing the future of Tamil Nadu fishermen by ensuring safety and security for them. I hope I would be given a full-fledged reply to all the clarifications sought by me on behalf of our fishermen and on behalf of our party. With these words, I conclude my speech. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Thank you, Mr. Maitreyan, for this excellent presentation.

SHRI D. RAJA : Thank you, Sir. I have spoken on this issue several times in this House. Today, with added sadness, I would like to make some observations and I would like to seek some clarifications. Sir, I think, the Government suffers from a sense of complacency that everything is all

1.00 P.M.

right. I am surprised why the Government should have such a sense of complacency because the statement is nothing but a very routine, a very casual statement and there is nothing new. In fact, I can quote the extract from the *suo motu* statement made by the very same Minister, with all due respect to him, Mr. Krishna, and I quote his speech of 4th December, 2009. He himself admitted that 'the understanding with Sri Lankan Government in October 2008 put in place the practical arrangement to deal with the bona fide Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen crossing the international maritime boundary line. The understanding of October 2008 has had a salutary effect on the situation.' This was in December 2009. The same reply is given in the present statement also. Sir, the fishermen communities have been left behind in economic activities and have remained backward socially and economically, and they need protection. This protection is paramount in the given situation. I do not want to narrate how many incidents took place since the so-called end of war in Sri Lanka. The fishermen continue to be harassed, tortured and killed. They are being fired at directly by the Sri Lankan naval forces. Their boats are being confiscated, their lives are being confiscated, and the damage is being caused.

It is going on whether we admit it or not. These are all going on and that is where I think, there is a need for Government to take more pro-active steps in protecting the interests of our fishermen. Sir, the Minister should explain to us whether the question of safeguarding the fishermen has been raised at any point of time in this SAARC forum because we are part of SAARC, Sri Lanka is part of SAARC and several other countries in our region are part of SAARC. I am not speaking only for Tamil fishermen. It can even happen to Sinhala fishermen. I would like to know whether Government of India has raised this issue at any point of time in SAARC forum. The fishermen should be protected. No Government should fire at them. There must be some political understanding on this issue. Did Government of India raise this issue and discuss it with our neighbouring countries, particularly with Sri Lanka? So, Sir, I suggest the Government should think of new ideas. One, I think, the Government should propose that both Sri Lanka and India should agree for a common peace zone, no fire zone. Sri Lankan naval forces should not fire at our fishermen. There must be some political understanding between both the countries. We must mutually accept that this is peace zone, this is

no fire zone. No military or naval force should fire at fishermen who cross the so-called international waters. I think, Sir, it is high time that Government of India should take up this issue. Secondly, Sir, my previous colleague asked about Kachcha Theevu agreement. Again, I quote the written reply from Mr. Krishna's letter. It was written to me on 30th September, 2009 in which the Minister has said, "The Government considers its maritime boundary with Sri Lanka settled under agreements concluded with Sri Lanka in 1974-76. Under the agreement, the island of Kachcha Theevu lies on the Sri Lankan side of the Indo-Sri Lankan International Maritime Boundary Line." Texts of both these agreements were subsequently laid on the Table of the House. Under the Agreement, Indian fishermen are allowed access to Kachcha Theevu for rest, for drying of nets and for annual St. Anthony's festival. The right of access is not understood to cover fishing rights around the island to Indian fishermen.

Now, I ask a few pertinent questions. Sir, if the right to access is not understood to cover fishing rights, why should our fishermen go to Kachcha Theevu? Why should they go to Kachacha Theevu for rest? Why should they go to Kachcha Theevu for drying the nets? Now technique has changed. You don't need to dry nets also. The techniques has canged and why should they go to Kachcha Theevu at all if they do not have right to fishing? When the agreements were signed and the documents were exchanged between the two Governments, on the very same floor of our Parliament, it was assured to the people of Tamil Nadu the traditional rights of Tamil fishermen, Indian fishermen will be protected. That assurance was given by Government of India. What happened to that assurance, I would like to ask from the Government. Why did you let down the Tamil Fishermen, Indian Fishermen in the name of signing agreements with Sri Lanka and Kachcha Theevu. That is why I have been demanding that Kachacha Theevu agreement should not be taken as closed chapter. These agreements need to be re-opened. These agreements needs to be re-negotiated keeping in view the interest of Tamil Fishermen, the interest of Indian fishermen. It is a serious issue.

The Government cannot treat this Agreement as closed. Bilaterally, we can ask for re-opening. We did it in case of several other countries. We did upgrade our bilateral treaties. We did it in case of Bhutan. So, why cannot we do it in case of Sri Lanka?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Raja, please conclude.

SHRID. RAJA : I am concluding, Sir.

So, Sir, I am demanding that the Katchatheevu Agreement needs to be re-opened and re-negotiated.

Finally, I ask the hon. Minister as to why it is happening. The Government of India is not taking any firm position on any issue. The Government of India is succumbing to whether the Government

of Sri Lanka dictates -- I use the word 'dictate' deliberately -- and they think considering the geo-political equations in our region, they can bully the Government of India. But as a sovereign nation, should see the interest of our country. We should see the interest of our fishermen.

The Sri Lankan was against the Sri Lankan Tamils was over.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please conclude, Mr. Raja.

SHRI D. RAJA : I am concluding, Sir.

Even the UN Secretary General has talked about the war crimes and the abuse of human rights. He constituted a 3-Member Committee for an enquiry. The Sri Lanka Government oppose that! The Government of Sri Lanka did not agree to it! But, what is the stand of India? India is keeping quite. Why is our country silent? Why cannot you speak out? What is our stand?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Raja, you have taken more time. Please conclude.

SHRI D. RAJA : It is connected with Tamil Fishermen. That is why the Government of India is not taking a strong measure to protect the interest of the Tamil fishermen. The Government of India, I think, will have to recast its policy towards Sri Lanka. Now, the time has come that the Foreign Policy towards Sri Lanka needs to be recast. I request the hon. Minister, while replying to the debate, to throw some light that the Government is considering to recast its policy towards Sri Lanka. Thank You.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : Sir, I would like to bring, through you, to the notice of the hon. Minister that in Tamil Nadu we have nearly 2.6 lakh fishermen who are actively engaged in fishing. Today, their lives are threatened, their honour is threatened, their families are threatened and the future generations are threatened, because of the on-going attacks on these fishermen who take to the sea.

Sir, we all have heard the phrase 'fishing in troubled waters.' Unfortunately, some of our colleagues do not understand the gravity of the situation and they want to find political mileage even out of this discussion when so many of our fishermen are hurt and their families being ruined because of these attacks. It is very sad that they only find things to accuse....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Don't look at that side. Please address the Chair.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Sir, now, what should I do?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I asked her to address the Chair.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : Sir, I am not accusing him...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Sir, I might be accusing Mr. Raja also ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, I did not mention any name...*(Interruptions)*... I would like to clarify that I did not mention any name. It could be Mr. D. Raja.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You please address the Chair.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : I did not mention any name. It could have even Mr. Raja.

DR. V. MAITREYAN : Sir, she herself is fishing in troubled waters.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) in the Chair]

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : Sir, I would like to quote one of the previous speeches of Mr. Raja in one of his speeches a few months ago he clearly said that the Tamil Nadu Government objected to the Kathchatheevu being given out. There was a Resolution passed in the Assembly. I would like to bring that to the notice of the Government. Of course, as the State Government, everybody has constraints and we have to understand that this is a country and whatever decision that the Central Government takes, we have to go by that.

One more thing I have been reading papers regularly for the past few decades. I don't remember that any fleet leaving Tamil Nadu shores and going to Sri Lanka - like what Jhansi Rani might have done--to save our Tamil Nadu fishermen who have been affected and killed in Sri Lankan or the Indian waters.

I have never read of anything like that. I have always seen that letters are written to the Central Government, asking for protection of the fishermen, as the present Government and the Chief Minister have been continuing to do. The Chief Minister has taken the trouble of coming to Delhi and meeting the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister also. Time and again, unlike many others, who have been ruling before us, he has been insisting that we have to find out a solution to this. The Minister has also given statistics about how many people and how many fishermen have been affected and how many people have been killed. So, I would not like to take too much of time by going into all that.

An MoU was signed in 2009 saying that there will not be any more attacks and shootings against the Tamil Nadu fishermen who take to the waters. It gave us a lot of hope that, perhaps, the sufferings of our fishermen have come to an end. But, unfortunately, it has only taken a different

shape, a different turn and a different form. The shootings might have come nearly to an end, but I cannot say that it has completely stopped. But, now, it has become very common that our fishermen are humiliated and traumatized. In a recent incident, and it is not just a single incident, a fisherman called Chellappan, had died. The Sri Lankan navy and officers had jumped into the vessel. They did not shoot anybody, but they shot at vessel, they shot next to them, they shot in air, thereby trying to intimidate the fishermen. They tried to frisk them by denuding them. They had ropes in their hands with which they whipped them up. They threw their cell phones away so that they were not able to contact the shore. They threw their nets away. This has been continuing for years and so many of our fishermen have gone missing.

Once I met a woman who had lost her son. She asked me if my child did not come back from the school for half-an-hour, would I not panic. *(Time-bell rings)* I will just finish, Sir. She further said that she did not know what happened to her son because it had been seventeen years since he disappeared. Do not cases like this move us? There is not a single man in some families. There is a child studying in Chennai. She belongs to a fisherman family. Her father had been killed; her uncle had been killed; her brother had been killed. There are so many families that are suffering like that. But we have not yet found a solution to this...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Okay, Now, put your question.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : Sir, every time an incident like this happens. Our fishermen are hurt, humiliated and killed. So many times dead bodies return. But even then the Sri Lankan Government has vehemently been rejecting that the allegations leveled against them. And, the media, the Minister and Defence spokesmen say that such allegations are levelled to sabotage the goodwill between Sri Lanka and India. This is the same story, again and again. I would like to know, if it is not the Sri Lankan Navy, which has been humiliating, hunting and shooting at our fishermen, then, who is it. Is it that our fishermen are hurting themselves? We have to find out who it is. And, we will have to take it up more seriously...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Conclude please.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : Just a minute, Sir. We claim to have IRS and INSAT series of satellites. Is it not possible with the imagery, obtained from these sources, to nail the culprits? And, we should have the highest level of officials in the Indian Navy and the Sri Lankan Navy to discuss the ongoing problem and to come out with a standard operating procedure. The Minister, in his statement, has said, "I would like to inform that mostly all these incidents happen in Sri Lankan waters." But even if our fishermen are crossing to their water...*(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : You have already taken seven minutes.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : Sir, it is a very serious issue. I have always listened to you. Please give some more extra time.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Okay, now conclude.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : Sir, it has always been that whenever Sri Lankan fishermen crossed over and came to our shores or waters, we have only arrested them and after proper interrogation, we have sent them back safely, but this never happens to our fishermen except in very, very rare cases. Why does this continue to happen? What has the Indian Government really done to put an end to the sufferings of our fishermen? Thank You.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Nominated) : Sir, I associate myself with it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : That you can do. Okay. Now, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Isn't my name there, Sir?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : No. I am going by this list.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Isn't my name there, Sir?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : One Member from each Party will speak.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Sir, I have given a separate Notice, they said that it would be admitted. Kindly consider it, Sir, and allow me to speak for a few minutes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Let me first exhaust the names in the List ...*(Interruptions)*... Leave it to me. From your Party, already, one Member has spoken.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Sir, it is not Party issue.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : But rules are there.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Those who have not given notice may not be considered.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Sivaji, please, Listen to me. Rules are there. His name is there. I have called him. You take your seat. If you want I will consider your case. Believe me.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : I have given a separate notice. Otherwise, I can be considered on Party basis.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : I will find out the position. Leave it to me. Now, Venkaiah ji, please stick to five minutes.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka) : Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister is totally disappointing. It seems that the Government has become insensitive to the sufferings of the fishermen there. Anybody, after going through this Statement and the Statements by the Minister earlier will come to the conclusion that the Government is adopting a casual approach. Sir, it is not my agony alone. I would to draw the attention of the Minister to a letter written by the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu which says -- "The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Shri M. Karunanidhi, sought Central intervention to ensure that there are no further attacks on fishermen. This is not the first time the violence was unleashed against the fishermen of the State." Sir, see the observation. "In spite of the repeated representations to the Union Government, the Prime Minister and the Central Ministers concerned, there is no change in the plight of the fishermen." This is not an allegation by an Opposition Party. It is an agony expressed by the serving Chief Minister of the State where these people have been affected. Still, the Government of India is unmoved.

Sir, everytime, there is an attack on fishermen. The State appeals to the Centre which, in turn, shoots off a letter and makes a request to Sri Lankan Government to pacify Tamils, but within days, attacks resume. "It was aptly described. This is what is happening there. This is not an issue of Congress or BJP or DMK or AIADMK; it is an issue concerning the fishermen living in that coastal area whose livelihood is only fishing. Sir, we have an agreement. I would like the Foreign Minister to just go through this which says, "India and Sri Lanka deliberated in detail the plight of our Tamil fishermen and agreed that the fishermen would not be attacked or killed but should be treated properly by Sri Lankan Navy even if they have crossed International Maritime boundary line. As attacks still continue, the Centre should intervene immediately." This is the request made by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister.

Sir, now, I come to the issue. I would like the External Affairs Minister to also clarify that these attacks have taken place in Indian waters. This is what the Fisheries Department is saying. Chellappan was fishing in Indian waters and he was killed there. The Agreement is not to fire. So,

they seem to have devised a new method of entering into the boats forcefully, robbing them and then, undressing them, putting them in a nude position, and beating them with rods. These are the reports. Is this the way a civilized Government should behave? They are not terrorists. They are going there for their livelihood.

Then, coming back to the issue of Katchatheevu, as my colleague Dr. Raja has rightly put, there is an agreement. If somebody enters for fishing, he should be allowed. We have to discuss it and then we have to take a policy decision. But the main issue is, when people are going there for livelihood and the Sri Lankan Navy authorities are harassing them, torturing them, beating them, removing their clothes and doing all these things, then, what is the response of the Union Government?

So, I would like to know from the hon. External Affairs Minister the steps that he has taken in this regard. Simply taking to them is not going to suffice. Sri Lanka and India have got a special relationship. We have been coming to the aid of Sri Lanka as and when there is a crisis, there is a problem. I don't want to recall the history. We have a special relationship. Even during the recent episode also, Indian Government went two steps forward to help them, to help the suffering Tamilians. But unfortunately, the Tamils are not treated properly in Sri Lanka. There is a widespread feeling in Tamil Nadu and also in Southern parts of the country that their sentiments are being hurt day in and day out. They are not taking care of the Tamilians in Sri Lanka. They are now harassing and torturing the fishermen who are going there for their livelihood. What is this policy? If they do like this, then what is the meaning of friendship? What is the meaning of having a cordial relationship with Sri Lanka? So what I would like to know from the hon. Minister is, will he take it up at his level -- not to leave it to the officials -- and lodge a strong protest and also engage the Sri Lankan Administration for discussion on the issue to come to a clear-cut understanding? As Shrimati Kanimozhi has said, even if somebody is caught, you have to gracefully check-up whether they belong to some Extremist organization or not and then safely send them back. This is what we have been doing.

There are a number of instances where the Sri Lankan fishermen also came to Indian area. But they were treated with kindness and respect. The same treatment is expected from Sri Lanka also. So, I would like to know from the External Affairs Minister whether he is willing to take personal

initiatives in this matter and see to it that an end is put to this recurring problem every time...(Time-bell rings)... Sir, I have taken just four minutes. the people of Tamil Nadu are becoming restive. The Chief Minister is helpless; the Central Government is helpless; the Parliament is helpless. Is it the message that we want to convey to the country? It is no good for the country. I am telling you. Please don't treat this as an issue of only Sri Lankan's Tamils or Tamilian fishermen. It is an issue which is concerning every Indian. We are all one with those people. But mere sympathies alone will not suffice. Condolence for the dead and compensation for the survived cannot be a policy. We have to take a strong action on this. I would like to hear from the hon. External Affairs Minister as to what are the steps he is going to take to put an end to this on a permanent basis. And, is he willing to say that the Government of India is willing to renegotiate the Katchatheevu Agreement? Thank you.

DR. T.N. SEEMA (Kerala) : Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, for having given me this opportunity.

Sir, I would like to share the anxieties expressed by the hon. Members on the killings of fishermen by the Sri Lankan forces. Actually, the fishermen from Kerala also face these kinds of attacks. Some fishermen of Kerala are still languishing in Sri Lankan jail. So, through you, Sir, I take this opportunity to request the hon. Minister for the quick release of these fishermen who are languishing as prisoners in Sri Lankan jails.

Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in his statement that there has been a significant decrease in the incidents of apprehension and firing on Indian fishermen after 2008. But, Sir, in reality, because of these attacks, the fishing has decreased considerably and it has affected the day-to-day life of the fishermen, as many of the hon. Members have pointed out.

Sir, the annual report for the year 2009-10 of the Ministry of Defence, Government of India states the duties and functions of Indian coastguard. The second duty says, 'providing protection to Indian fishermen, including assistance at sea while in distress.' In another report, it is stated that the cordiality between the Indian coastguard and the Sri Lankan coastguard is very good. If this is the case, then why the Indian fishermen are not protected from the attacks of the Sri Lankan forces?

We would like to the Government to ensure the safety and security of the fishermen, not only of the Tamil Nadu fishermen but of the Kerala fishermen also because they are also fishing in deep sea on that side. So, I would like to request the hon. Minister to ensure the security of our fishermen. I once again request the hon. Minister to look into the issues of fishermen who are still in the Sri Lankan jails and kindly take some action for their release. Thank you.

DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIPPAN (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, the Indian fishermen, the Tamil fishermen, use different kinds of boats and nets and they also fish for different types of fish. For example, they fish for prawns alone while the Sri Lankan fishermen fish only for Tuna fish. It is a big fish and they use a different kind of boats and nets and also, fish at different times. Thus, the fishermen from these two go out for fishing around the same time and get into quarrelling. They are not taking fish from the other's areas but they quarrel about the time and place where they fish. When we met the hon. President of Sri Lanka, he had casually mentioned that fishermen do not have any boundaries; they move along with the fish; wherever there is fish, they travel there. Therefore, we must understand that the Sri Lankan fishermen as well as the Indian Tamil fishermen face the same kind of problems. Therefore, I would suggest, as I had mentioned in a previous intervention, that there should be a joint federation of fishermen from Sri Lanka and India or Tamil Nadu. They should sit together and work out the time and days of fishing. Even now the system is being followed by the Indian fishermen in catamarans and mechanical boats. Another point that I would like to make is, when a problem arose, UPA-I had come out with an agreement on 28th October, 2008. Because of that, there was no firing between the armed forces, but, all the same time, there was some intervention by the fishermen themselves. That should be stopped.

An incident took place about 15 days ago when the Tamil Nadu fishermen found that their friends' steamer had sunk. They had gone there in search of the steamer and went into the Sri Lankan waters. The Sri Lankan Coastguard interfered and they promised that they would get back the sunken boat. They left the place, but, in the meantime, other people interfered. Who are they? Has the Sri Lankan Government filed any FIR against them? What happened to the steamer that sunk? What happened to the fishermen from the Indian side, the Tamilians, who had suffered? What damages would be paid from the Sri Lankan side? I would like to know about this.

Sir, three positive aspects could be taken into consideration immediately. We do not have any sea route operational for the Sri Lankan Tamils or for Tamils from the Indian side. The historical ferry service between Rameshwaram and Talaimannar should be immediately restored, so that there could be interaction among fishermen and people from both sides. Legality would be provided when a ferry service is started. Similarly, ferry services from Colombo to Tuticorin should also be started. Talking of Katchatheevu, it is only beyond 15-16 nautical miles into the Sri Lankan waters that prawn and other fish needed by the Tamil fishermen is available. Therefore, they should be allowed to go and fish there. The Tuna fish is available in the Indian waters, but we are not taking it; they have their own factory in Sri Lanka; So, they should be allowed to fish here. There should be an agreement for that purpose because our fishing is different from their in every aspect. As for Katchatheevu, I had made a Special Mention about that too. A permanent trade fair should be arranged between India and Sri Lanka just like we have trade fairs in New Delhi, so that people from both sides could interact.

Finally, Sir, I would like to make one more suggestion. Mookayur harbour is the one that was considered to be one of the main issues that would help solving this problem. That issue needs to be addressed properly. Now, the Tamil Nadu Government under hon. Chief Minister, Dr. Kalaignar, has granted five crore rupees for the establishment of that harbour.

If that harbour is created and the Government of India also give s around Rs. 50 crore for that immediately, then the fishermen, who are around 10,000 people from Tamil Nadu, will not go into the Sri Lankan territory at all. They will have their own deep fishing in that area. People are ready to migrate there. Therefore, this should be taken as a main issue and the Government of India should also give the grant. Finally, Sir, fishermen should be covered by the insurance scheme. Both the Governments should come forward and prepare identify cards for them so that they can show these cards to authorities. After that, if anybody is hurt in either country then that country should be liable to pay the compensation and people should be properly compensated.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : * Hon'ble Vice Chairman Sir,

"Eyes have dried by frequent moaning;

Heart is weary; Fear haunts everyday about the possibility of Survival

Longing for a permanent solution to put an end to their despair"

*English translation of the original speech in Tamil.

This is the painful situation of Tamil Nadu fishermen who have been suffering from the attacks of Sri Lankan Navy. We want a permanent solution to end their misery.

With regard to the problems of Tamil Nadu fishermen so many discussions have taken place in this august House. So many resolutions have been passed for them. Day before yesterday one Murugesan, yesterday one Munusamy and today one Chellappan, the tragic tales of Tamil Nadu fishermen are continuing day by day. The list should not be expanded further. I wish no more business in this august House in which we have to make another obituary reference for our fishermen brethren. We would like to hear no more convincing messages from the Union Government that this issue would be considered. I request the Government of India to look at this issue with a humanitarian perspective. A permanent solution is needed.

If a citizen of any other country is either killed or attacked by the neighbouring country, his country will not be a silent spectator. Tamil Nadu is also a part of India and the Tamil men trust the Government of India for their protection. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu is eighty seven years old. Even at this ripe age, he is waging struggles for the welfare of the Tamil Nadu fishermen. For their welfare, he has protested by observing fast. We have passed a unanimous legislation in Tamil Nadu Assembly for retrieving Kutchatheevu and to retrieve the source of livelihood of Tamil Nadu fishermen. He had written letters to the Sri Lankan Government. After receiving his letters, the Sri Lankan Government would be silent for two days and then their attacks would start as usual.

Sir, the Sri Lankan Government have always been allergic to Tamils. They have involved in ethnic cleaning of Tamils in their own land. The remaining Tamils are imprisoned in thorny fences. Not satisfied with these tortures, the Sri Lankan Navy enter Indian territorial waters to repeatedly attack our own Tamil fishermen. These incidents necessitate a clarification to enquire about the safety measures the Government of India is providing to the Tamil Nadu fishermen.

I would like to inform the Hon'ble Minister about another important matter. The availability of fish in the Palk strait is scarce now. Therefore the fishermen sail longer distances in search of more fish. Even then they could not return with a considerable catch. Even in such circumstances, the Sri Lankan Government attacks them accusing them of crossing the Sri-Lankan territorial waters. They

snatch not only their fish, but also their cellphones. Their GPS (Global Positioning System) equipments which are used for finding more fish were broken. Their boats were destroyed, nets were cut. Our fishermen were arrested by them and were attacked by butts of guns. Sir, it is truly distressful. How long will this misery continue?

There is a very great thinker in Tamil Nadu called Mr. Vaali. He is a great poet. He has written a poem about our fishermen and I would like to quote a few lines from the poem.

"They go one day and return some other day;
Every day a tragic in their life;
For the sake of food, they have to lead a dangerous life,
But others have taken their life for granted."

Tamil Nadu fishermen can struggle with sea waves, but they cannot struggle against Sri Lankan Navy. The Tamil Nadu Government and our Chief Minister have been pleading to you regularly to mitigate the sufferings of Tamil Nadu fishermen. This situation should not continue. Sir, I would like to enquire from you as to why the Government of India do not give priority to solve the crisis of Tamil Nadu fishermen. Sir I would like to ask an important question. Don't you have a harmonious relationship with the Sri Lankan Government? So many Memoranda of Understanding have been signed between the two nations. An Advanced Scientific Research centre is established by a joint venture of the two nations. An intellectual centre is established in Sri Lanka with your assistance. An intellectual centre is going to be established by a joint venture of two nations. When both the nations are strengthening their bilateral relationships in other matters, why do the Government of India not discuss with the Sri Lankan Government about their attacks on our Tamil Nadu fishermen and warn them that such attacks should not continue further.

Whenever Sri Lankan fishermen cross Indian territorial waters, are they killed by Government of India? I would like to raise a doubt whether the invisible border line denotes the separation India and Sri Lanka or does it denote the separation of life and death of fishermen? Sir, please reply to me. We are pleading from Tamil Nadu with regard to this state of affairs because it is a central subject. The Government of India have to be committed to solve this problem. Had it been a state subject, our

efficient leader, a capable Chief Minister would have solved this problem by the time. He is not the kind of person who would take rest after making so many promises. He is the kind of person who toils hard to implement all the promise made by him. He has the capacity to achieve whatever is possible by him. Sir, now the ball is in your court. Therefore, we request you to put a full stop to all these attacks. Sir, I know that you are a great humanitarian and a capable person to solve this crisis.

Gone are the days when a fisherman's wife would wait at the coast with the hope that he would return with a lot of fish and they would spend the rest of the day happily. But, nowadays, with a child in her arms and longing in her eyes she waits with the fearful doubt whether her husband would return carrying his catch or somebody else would return carrying either his corpse or the news about his death. Sir, how long shall we wait to end such distressful life? How many tragedies can we bear?

India is a sovereign country. India is a courageous country. Sir, please prove our strength. Please issue a warning to the Sri Lankan Government that another attack should not be carried out from their side and that if there is another such attack from their side, the consequences will be severe.

The coastal areas constitute the border regions of our nation. The neighbouring country may become an enemy country at any time. In such circumstances, fishermen living in coastal areas are like our soldiers who will inform us and protect us during intrusions from neighbouring countries. Sir, therefore, I request you to protect our coastal areas to protect our fishermen, to protect their life, and to protect their livelihood. They are Indians. They are our fishermen. They are our brethren. Please send a strong message to Sri Lanka that India has all the rights to protect these fishermen. Please, provide a permanent solution for saving all distressed Tamil Nadu fishermen. We want no more fears, no more attacks, no more shooting, no more tears, no more wailings, no more resolutions and no more condolences. We want only the safety and security of our fishermen and a guaranteed life and livelihood for them. Please do take necessary steps for ensuring the same of them. With these words, I conclude my speech. Thank you.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity. I have very pointed clarifications that I would like to seek from the hon. Minister. First, I would like to add that this is one of the very few issues in the extremely politically-dynamic State of Tamil Nadu

that brings all of us together—all political parties, all persons and indeed every citizen of India. As Mr. Venkaiah Naidu so kindly pointed out, and as you yourself pointed out from the Chair, this is an issue that concerns every single citizen of India, every single political party of India. Every single fisherman, who goes out there, is an Indian fisherman and not just a fisherman of Tamil Nadu or Kerala. And, the life of every single fisherman is precious to this country. So, I believe it is important not to politicise the issue but to look at it in a calm and dispassionate manner. Having said, Sir, the fact of the matter is, in my memory, this must be, at least, the 50th time that we are raising this issue in the House. Therefore, something serious is missing and something serious needs to be done.

All-party delegation has met the hon. Prime Minister several times. The Prime Minister has taken steps time and again. The Prime Minister sent his special envoy, expressed his concern. But, Sir, the matter still remains at this alarming stage. Now, there are new ways. The International Maritime Boundary is not a line which is drawn on the ocean. Fishermen will necessarily follow the fish. The fact of the matter is that Sri Lankan fisherman, who stray into the International Maritime Boundary on the Indian side, never make these complaints. These complaints are made only by Indian fishermen who are caught by the Sri Lankan Navy; and the fact of the matter which should be brought home very strongly, very strenuously and unequivocally to the Sri Lankan Government is that it will not be tolerated that India fishermen are dishonoured, distraught, tortured by the Sri Lankan Navy, that we will no longer tolerate this. This is a message that needs to be sent unambiguously by the Indian Government to the Sri Lankan Government. This is what every single citizen of India expects. We will not allow this to happen and we will not be a passive spectator. Sir, Mr. Raja raised some issue. He raised it in a pointed way that what is your Sri Lankan policy. I would say that there is only one policy — the life of every single Indian is precious and our Government will not be a passive spectator.

Sir, now I come to my pointed questions. Will the Government — of course, this is the Ministry of Defence — enhance the presence of the Coast Guard and Navy to intensify this sea and air patrolling with additional manpower, state-of-art vehicles and aircraft so that lives of our fishermen are saved? Will the entire sea patrolling of the Tamil Nadu coast be brought under one single command irrespective of east or west sea coast, as presently, there may be some confusion in the matter creating difficulty? Will an OPV with a helicopter be stationed at Tuticorin under the exclusive control of the Eastern Command of the Coast Guard? Will the Government provide for seamless

communication with the State Fisheries Departments, whichever the State where the fishermen are coming from, so that there can be immediate communication with our Defence Forces? And, will the Government establish state-of-art patrol and intercept posts, Coast Guard station at Kanyakumari, bring the entire Coast Guard and put it in position without any delay to substantially increase the security of the Tamil Nadu coastline and the International Maritime Boundary?

Sir, our people, the Indian people have had enough. Not one life further should be lost, and, it is indeed the responsibility of the Central Government to send this message and to ensure that it happens with the Sri Lankan Government. No other policy is important to us than the safety of the lives of our fishermen. The hon. Minister should state unambiguously whether he is willing to put this in motion. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Thank you. Now, the hon. Minister.

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : Sir, as I have conveyed through my written statement about the change of situation that has come about after October, 2008 understanding with the Sri Lankan Governmental authorities, I share the concern of the entire House, cutting across party lines, that life of every citizen of India, be it a fisherman or be it somebody else, is precious, and, the Government of India is duty bound to protect and safeguard the lives of Indian citizens.

It is with this in view that we have been talking to the Sri Lankan authorities and Sri Lankan Government. Very recently, the President of Sri Lanka was here in India, and, this was one of the issues, which were taken up with the President by our Prime Minister. We have issued assurances that Sri Lankan Government will give due consideration to the legitimate concerns of our fishermen.

A number of useful suggestions have been made, and, at the same time, certain criticism has also been made. I am not going to take up every issue that has been raised, but, broadly speaking, I think, I would be right in saying and in asserting that the number of incidents, which were on the ascendency are now going down, and, that should be a cause of some satisfaction that certain change of attitude is taking place.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : Sir, even if one life is lost, it is a unhappy thing.

SHRI S. M. KRISHNA : I entirely agree with Shri Venkaiah Naidu that every life is precious to us

including the one of Chellappan. We feel sorry that Chellappan died in one of these incidents. The entire House condones his death and we convey our sincere condolences to the bereaved family. It was said by Shrimati Jayanthi Natarajan that the maritime waters do not mean much to the fishermen.

I think, that is a matter of fact. Fishermen are basically not literate; some of them may be, but most of them are not literate. So, they do not understand anything beyond fishing itself because they happen to fall upon fishing as a means to their livelihood. And, it is the responsibility of the Government of India that they should be given every encouragement and then the right kind of atmosphere should be created so that they can pursue their profession, their occupation with a degree of success so that they can maintain their families.

My esteemed friend, Dr. Maitreya, mentioned about Katchatheevu. Sir, there was an agreement which was entered into between the Government of India and the Sri Lankan Government in 1974-75. I am sure that everyone in this august House understands that in order to reopen an international agreement arrived at between the two countries, there will have to be a consensus on either side. Minus that consensus, unilaterally, the Government of India cannot reopen the Katchatheevu. Well, the 1975 agreement also provides that the Indian fishermen can go to Katchatheevu to dry their net, to rest and various other non-fishing activities. I think, the point was asked, "Then, why did we come to some agreement"? Well, it was decided that Katchatheevu does not belong to India; it belongs to Sri Lanka. When once a decision of that kind has been taken, then, I think, I would pose this question to every hon. Member whether it can be reopened unilaterally by India.

My esteemed friend, Mr. Raja, mentioned that the Government of India should not be complacent. I entirely agree with you. Let me assure you that the Government of India is not complacent. As I mentioned, when, very recently, the Sri Lankan President came to this country, we did take up this issue with the Sri Lankan President. Is that an indication of the Government's position that it is complacent? The highest political authority, the President of Sri Lanka and the highest political authority in India, the Prime Minister, when both of them talked about the problems that fishermen are finding, that means the Government is fully alive to the problem and they will

certainly pursue with the Government of Sri Lanka that they should look at it from the humanitarian point of view. Forget about the territorial waters, forget about the maritime waters and various other things, we are dealing with a friendly country like Sri Lanka. As one of the hon. Members did mention that the Government of India has been helping the Sri Lankan Government and the people of Sri Lanka, we have decided to build 50,000 houses in order to help our Tamilian brethren there. We have also provided them monetary assistance so that thousands of Tamilian minorities of Sri Lankan origin, who have been displaced, could be settled back in their villages, in their hamlets, in their cities or wherever they lived before they moved out because of certain developments there.

I share the concern of Mr. Raja that fishermen need protection. Let me assure you that the Government of India intends to provide that protective cover to the fishermen as long as they do not stray into the territorial waters of Sri Lanka.

SHRI D. RAJA : That is the problem.

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : That is the problem. We are bound by an international law; we are bound by a treaty; and we are bound by an understanding. We will have to play the game according to the rules...*(Interruptions)*... We cannot say...*(Interruptions)*.. What I say ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Please, ...*(Interruptions)*.. No, ...*(Interruptions)*.. Please ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : Let me complete my sentence and then I will yield...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Please take your seat...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : What applies to the Government of India and the Indian fishermen will equally apply to the Sri Lankan fishermen and the Sri Lankan Government. It does not call for any discrimination. We have *(Interruptions)*..

SHRI D. RAJA : Sir, it is not just a humanitarian issue. In fact, the Sri Lankan Government does not bother about the human rights. I don't want to go into that debate. It is not just a humanitarian issue. It is an issue of rights. Indian fishermen have the right to go and fish around Katchatheevu island. That was a promise given on the floor of the House in Indian Parliament. I want to know whether the Government of India maintains that position, that Indian fishermen have the traditional fishing right, or not...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : No...*(Interruptions)*.. Please...*(Interruptions)*... Let the hon. Minister complete his reply...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN : Sir,...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Your name is not here. You did not participate in it...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN : Sir, I want to intervene...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : No, It is not like that...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN : What is wrong in it?

DR. V. MAITREYAN : What about Sri Lankan Navy coming into our territory and killing our people? Even for that the Government of India has not taken any action...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Now let the hon. Minister conclude his reply...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN : Sir, I have a clarification. After the Katchatheevu Agreement, till 1983 our fishermen were fishing in that area. Only after 1983, because of civil war in Sri Lanka, our fishermen were not allowed. Now my request is that our fishermen must be allowed to fish there. The fishermen don't have fish here.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : You did not participate in it...*(Interruptions)*... Please take your seat...*(Interruptions)* That is enough. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let the hon. Minister finish his reply...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : Sir, my submission is that if the Minister makes a general observation, it will be taken for granted by the Sri Lankan authorities that even the Indian Government is in agreement with them.

Sir, I would like to draw your attention to this fact that Sri Lankan Navy personnel had brutally beaten the fishermen with iron rods. Chellappan (55) died in this attack on the boat itself. Sri Lankan Navy forced the fishermen to undress and continued torture and attacks using iron rods in their nude state. After Sri Lanka Navy left Indian waters, severely injured seven fishermen sailed back. This is the fact. These fishermen, Chellappan and others, were attacked in Indian waters. Please try to understand...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Now let the hon. Minister respond...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : That is the issue...*(Interruptions)*... What is the Indian Government going to do on this? ...*(Interruptions)*... This is the issue...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI : Sir, the Minister has pointed out in his statement that it happens many times in Sri Lankan waters. Even agreeing with the Minister that it happens many times in Sri Lankan waters, it is not right to kill people; it is not right to humiliate them. There is a law. The United Nations Law of the Seas 145 says that measures will be taken to ensure protection of human life at any cost.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Now let the hon. Minister complete his reply.

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : With regard to Katchatheevu island, it was settled in 1974 agreement. Second maritime agreement was signed in March 1976. That demarcated our boundary with Sri Lanka in the Gulf of Mannar and the Bay of Bengal. Subsequently, these agreements were laid before Parliament. It must be emphasised, therefore, that as far as the Government of India is concerned, the issue of maritime boundary between India and Sri Lanka and consequently, that of sovereignty over Katchatheevu island is a settled matter. The Government of India's position on the rights of our fishermen *vis-à-vis* Katchatheevu island is that under the agreements, our fishermen have access to visit the island for rest, for drying nets and for the annual St. Anthony's festival, but, rights do not cover fishing around Katchatheevu island. This is an agreement which has been on the record books. So, can we go back? Suppose you are sitting here, I am sitting there and I pose this question to you. What would be your answer?

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : Sir, I am thankful to the hon. Minister because he has raised a relevant point. If both sides are sincerely implementing the accord, yes, you can't go back. But, if one side, time and again, is violating the spirit of the agreement and harassing people, what would you do? You have umpteen number of instances. You yourself were kind enough to say that there were higher number of incidents, but, now it has come down. That means, the other side is violating and killing people. So, taking that as a reason, the Government of India has got every right to ask for reopening and revisiting the issue. First of all, is the Government ready to apply its mind and think on those lines? That is the issue...*(Interruptions)*...

2.00 P.M.

SHRI D. RAJA : Whether Sri Lanka agrees or not, it is for the Government of India to raise this issue. We find there is a need to reopen the agreement because when we conceded Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka, what was the understanding of the Government of India? The island was of no strategic importance. But, now, it has assumed tremendous strategic importance and the Government of the day will have a re-look at the entire agreement.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Let the initiative be taken, at least, now...*(Interruptions)*..

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : No more clarifications. No more questions. Mr. Minister, please, don't yield any more. You finish the reply.

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : Very recently, the Katchatheevu festival was held. It was held after a long gap of 25 years. I think, that is a move in the right direction. We are moving in the right direction ...*(Interruptions)* I am trying to cover a few points..*Interruptions*..in between will certainly make me go out of mind because it is a chain of thoughts. My friend, Mr. Raja, suggested that we should take it up with SAARC. What are we to take up with SAARC? It is a bilateral issue between two countries and every now and then, we have been meeting the Sri Lankan authorities. President Rajapaksa has come to India and very soon, I am going to Sri Lanka to pursue our bilateral ties with Sri Lanka..*(Interruptions)*.. I was coming to that...*(Interruptions)*.. I will certainly do that. Any discussion with the Sri Lankan Government is not complete unless we discuss the question of fishermen, particularly of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and other States. When I go to Sri Lanka, I can assure to this august House that I will take it up with the Sri Lankan authorities again after listening to all the Members who have pointed out certain instances of torture and inhuman treatment. All this will be taken up with the Sri Lankan Government. Sir, India is not a country that can be bullied any more. It was never bullied by anybody. In 1971, when the Seventh Fleet came in, when it was sighted. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was never bullied. We completed that mission. So, I can assure this hon. House that I represent a party and I represent a legacy that does not get easily bullied by anybody...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : But I hope that you will never stand again to explain, this has happened; we will see to it. Such things should be avoided.

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : This is an on-going problem. The fishermen they are going astray and fishermen from Sri Lanka they come astray. But the problem here is that the catches available in the Sri Lankan waters are much more lucrative and attractive, and that is the reason which tempts our fishermen.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : The point is, why should our fishermen be tortured if they have gone to the other side? That is the point. Why should they be tortured.

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI (Tamil Nadu) : The other point was, all these incidents have taken place in our territory...*(Interruptions)*....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : You are not permitted. Please take your seat.

Now, no more question. Let the Minister complete his answer. Address The Chair.

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : Now, the ferry services which were referred to by Dr. E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan, I think, the agreement reached with Srilankan Government, Rameshwaram-Thalaimannar-Tuticorin-Columbo Ferry Services will be resumed. It will be agreed upon between Sri Lanka and India.

There is also another parallel development which is very encouraging. The fishermen's community of both countries is meeting informally and they are trying to exchange views about the difficulties that they face and how the problem that they encounter could be overcome legally. So, I think, we should encourage such contacts between the fishermen of the two countries, and I can assure you that the Government of India will be fully supportive of these efforts by the fishermen's association. Let me once again thank the hon. Members for offering various suggestions even though they were critically framed. But I take it with the spirit with which they were made and the spirit was to help fishermen in general, and fishermen in particular. Thank you.

Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) 2010-11.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED) : Sir, on behalf of my senior colleague, Km. Mamata Banerjee, I beg to lay on the Table, a statement (in English and Hindi) showing the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways), for the year 2010-11.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : The House is adjourned for one hour for lunch.
