

Information Technology on the Demands for Grants (2013-14) pertaining to the Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

...(Interruptions)...

CALLING ATTENTION TO THE MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Situation arising out of repeated attacks on Indian fishermen

by Sri Lankan Navy

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members, yesterday, there was near consensus in the House for a Calling Attention which is to be raised by Dr. Maitreyan, Shri Raja and Shrimati Kanimozhi. ...(Interruptions)... There was a consensus, almost near consensus. ...(Interruptions)... There was near consensus. I would, therefore, request the Members that since this is an important subject concerning all of us, please allow the Calling Attention to be taken up. ...(Interruptions)... Just one minute. ...(Interruptions)... One minute. ...(Interruptions)... Allow me one minute. ...(Interruptions)...

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल (उत्तर प्रदेश) : सर, पहले हम लोगों को नोटिस है। ...(व्यवधान)... नहीं, नहीं। ...(व्यवधान)...

प्रो. राम गोपाल यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) : नहीं, नहीं। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति : एक मिनट मुझे अलाऊ कीजिए। ...(व्यवधान)... एक मिनट अलाऊ कीजिए। ...(व्यवधान)... One minute. ...(Interruptions)... One minute. ...(Interruptions)... I will hear you. ...(Interruptions)... I am ready to listen to you. ...(Interruptions)... Ask them to keep quiet. ...(Interruptions)... Ram Gopalji, I am ready to listen to you. ...(Interruptions)... Kindly ask them to stop it. ...(Interruptions)... I will listen to you. ...(Interruptions)... Hon. Members, there was consensus in the House yesterday to take up the Calling Attention on the Indian fishermen issue. ...(Interruptions)... There was consensus in the House. ...(Interruptions)... I would request you to honour the consensus. The Minister is there. ...(Interruptions)... The Minister is there. ...(Interruptions)... Mr. Salman Khurshid is out of India. The MoS is here. ...(Interruptions)... I am ready to take it up. ...(Interruptions)... Dr. Maitreyan, I am ready to take it up.... ...(Interruptions)... What do you want? ...(Interruptions)... You are better. They are misbehaving. ...(Interruptions)... What can I do?

[Mr. Deputy Chairman]

...(Interruptions)... What am I to do? ...(Interruptions)... What do you want me to do? ...(Interruptions)... I really want to take up the Indian fishermen's issue....(Interruptions)... I really want it. ...(Interruptions)... The hoh. MoS is here. ...(Interruptions)... The MoS is here. That is enough. ...(Interruptions)... I was to start the discussion. ...(Interruptions)... What will we do? ...(Interruptions)... The House is adjourned up to 12.30 p.m.

The House then adjourned at ten minutes past twelve of the clock.

The House reassembled at thirty minutes past twelve of the clock,

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

DR. V. MAITREYAN (Tamil Nadu) : Where is the Prime Minister? ...(Interruptions)... Where is the External Affairs Minister? ...(Interruptions)... Sir, what about the Calling Attention?

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu) : Please call the Prime Minister or the External Affairs Minister. ...(Interruptions)...

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल : माननीय उपसभापति जी, हम लोगों ने एक नोटिस दिया है कि उत्तर प्रदेश में ...(व्यवधान)...

DR. V. MAITREYAN : When Calling Attention is scheduled, you cannot take up anything else. ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I am ready to take up the Calling Attention. ...(Interruptions)...

DR. V. MAITREYAN : When Calling Attention is scheduled, you cannot take up anything else. ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I am ready to take it up. ...(Interruptions)...

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल : सर, हम लोगों ने एक नोटिस ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री राम गोपाल यादव : सर, मुझे चेयर ने अलाऊ किया था। ...(व्यवधान)...

DR. V. MAITREYAN : When Calling Attention is scheduled, no other matter can be taken up. ...(Interruptions)... You are the custodian of the rule.

...(Interruptions)... You take that first ...(Interruptions)... I will be forced to come to the well. ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I have already announced that I am taking up Calling Attention. ...(Interruptions)... You please take your seat. ...(Interruptions)... Calling Attention to matter of urgent public importance, Dr. V. Maitreyan.

DR. V. MAITREYAN (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, I would like to call the attention of the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister. ...(Interruptions)... We want the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister to come here. ...(Interruptions)... Summon the Prime Minister for the Calling Attention to be taken. ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You call the attention of the Minister. ...(Interruptions)... You call the attention of the Minister. ...(Interruptions)... You have to call the attention of the Minister. ...(Interruptions)... Now, you sit down. ...(Interruptions)...

DR. V. MAITREYAN : They are treating the fishermen issue in a very very casual way. ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, the Minister. ...(Interruptions)...

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): Sir, I rise to respond to the House on the Calling Attention Notice regarding the "Repeated Attacks on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy." Sir, I am laying it on the Table.

*"At the outset, I would like to reiterate to this august House that the Government attaches the highest importance to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen.

In response to reports of incidents of attacks on Indian fishermen and apprehension, the Government, through diplomatic channels, immediately takes up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that the Sri Lankan Navy acts with restraint, our fishermen are treated in a humane and pragmatic manner and are released expeditiously.

* Laid on the Table.

[Shrimati Preneet Kaur]

Hon'ble Members would recall that to avoid recurrence of incidents involving our fishermen and keeping in mind the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of the fishermen's issue, the Government had reached an understanding through a Joint Statement with the Sri Lankan Government on 26th October 2008 to put in place practical arrangements to deal with *bona fide* Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line. As part of these practical arrangements, it was agreed that there would be no firing on Indian fishing vessels and Indian fishing vessels would not tread into sensitive areas designated by the Government of Sri Lanka along its coastline.

Following the October 2008 understanding, the incidents of attack and apprehension of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan authorities have come down. The Sri Lankan side has, however, denied the involvement of their Navy in any incidents of harassment or intimidation or attack on Indian fishermen and has stated that none of the alleged attacks have taken place in Indian waters.

I would like to inform this August House that at the 4th meeting of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group on Fisheries, held from 13-14 January 2012 in Colombo, both sides reiterated the highest priority accorded by their respective Governments to the well being, safety and security of fishermen from the two countries. Both countries agreed that the use of force could not be justified under any circumstances, and reiterated in this regard the importance of extending humane treatment to all fishermen. Acknowledging that fisheries involved the socio-economic and livelihood dimensions of the fishermen living in coastal areas in India and Sri Lanka, the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation that would allow both countries to pursue their fishing activity in a safe, secure and sustainable manner, including discouraging fishermen from using destructive fishing methods. They also discussed measures for the expeditious release of *bona fide* fishermen from both countries. It was in this context, that the India-Sri Lanka Fishermen's Associations' level talks were held on 27.1.2014 at Chennai .

To generate conducive atmosphere and goodwill for holding the fishermen talks in January 2014, both sides also agreed, at the highest levels, to release all

fishermen in custody. The release of fishermen commenced on 13th January, 2014 on the occasion of Pongal festival. Government, as a result of its consistent efforts, secured release of 317 Indian fishermen in custody of Sri Lanka before the fishermen talks were held on 27.1.2014 at Chennai. As per available information, Government has secured release of 726 Indian fishermen in custody of Sri Lanka in the year 2013 and 2014, as of date.

I would like to inform this august House that during meetings of External Affairs Minister with External Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka on 29th January, 2014 and with the Sri Lankan Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development on 15th January, 2014, the Government strongly took up the issue of expeditious release of Indian fishermen in custody of Sri Lanka.

The need for creating greater awareness among our fishermen to avoid crossing over into Sri Lankan waters for their own safety and security has been felt. In this context, the Government is working with the concerned State Governments on the need to sensitise Indian fishermen to respect the International Maritime Boundary Line.

I would like to reiterate that to encourage a greater understanding between the fishermen community of both countries, the Government is consistently engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka and working with the Government of Tamil Nadu, to consider the practical measures proposed by the fishermen communities of both countries during the fishermen talks to ensure that fishermen on both sides can continue to pursue their livelihood in a safe, secure and sustainable manner."

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. D. Raja, please. *...(Interruptions)...* Don't you want it? *...(Interruptions)...* What do you want? *...(Interruptions)...* Use your mike. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, it is a serious issue. *...(Interruptions)...* It is a very sensitive issue. *...(Interruptions)...* Prime Minister is not here. *...(Interruptions)...* External Affairs Minister is not here. *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Raja, I called you. *...(Interruptions)...* Whatever you want to say, you say it. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI D. RAJA: We have respects for the MoS. *...(Interruptions)...* But the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister should be here. *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, don't you want Calling Attention? *...(Interruptions)...*

DR. V. MAITREYAN : UPA Government is not concerned about the Tamil Nadu fishermen. *...(Interruptions)...* UPA Government is not concerned about the Tamil Nadu fishermen. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATH (Tamil Nadu) : What is this? *...(Interruptions)...* You allow our leader. *...(Interruptions)...* You allow our leader. *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I have three names. *...(Interruptions)...* I am allowing them. *...(Interruptions)...* You go to your seat. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI D. RAJA : We have respects for MoS. *...(Interruptions)...* But we want the Prime Minister or the External Affairs Minister to answer to our questions. *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I can't do that. *...(Interruptions)...* If you want to raise questions, you raise questions. *...(Interruptions)...* I can't do that. *...(Interruptions)...* MoS is here. *...(Interruptions)...* Kanimozhi, do you want to say something? *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, this issue has been raised *...(Interruptions)...* It has never been taken up and *...(Interruptions)...* Today, it was promised to take it up *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I am sorry, I have to adjourn the House. *...(Interruptions)...* The House is adjourned up to 2.00 p.m.

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

— — —

The House re-assembled at two of the clock,

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.