

Title : Request regarding permission of public use of Fort ground of Vellore

**SHRI D. M. KATHIR ANAND (VELLORE):** Hon. Chairperson, Vanakkam. I wish to raise an important issue in this august House. My Vellore parliamentary constituency had played a significant role in the national freedom struggle. The first revolt of Indian Independence was started in Vellore. There is an empty ground surrounding the Vellore Fort where great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and K. Kamaraj had addressed the public gatherings. Many public events were organised in the past. Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu *Thalapathi* Shri M.K. Stalin has implemented several welfare schemes for the people from this very important fort ground. You are aware that even the present Prime Minister attended an election meeting at this venue, at the fort ground. But more recently, just 10 days ago, the Archaeological Survey of India has grabbed this land and issued a circular putting a ban on organising public gatherings / events at this venue. The Archaeological Survey of India has also made fencing of this venue. This is a public ground that belonged to the Vellore Fort where all the public events / programs were organised till now. I put before you my request to permit public use of this ground, belonging to the ASI, as it was before. A circular was issued in this regard urgently by the Archaeological Department very recently, saying that this ground should be converted as a lawn with grass besides undertaking archaeological activities. I urge upon this Government that the Fort ground of Vellore should be allowed for public use. There should be a permanent dais or platform to be set up at this place for organising public gatherings. I also urge that the ASI should permit organising exhibitions and entertainment-related functions at this venue free of cost.

The hon. Minister is here. If he can intervene, he can also give reply.