

Need to review the proposal of offshore sand mining along Kerala coast.

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson for giving me this opportunity to raise a very important matter relating to the fishermen in the country.

My 'Zero Hour' submission is against the proposed offshore sand mining in the States of Kerala, Gujarat and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The first phase of sea-sand mining is proposed to begin in Kollam region in my constituency for which the Mining Ministry has already invited tenders in three blocks of Kollam sea region comprising of 242 kms.

The interesting fact to be noted here is that this sea-sand mining is within 12 nautical miles and outside 12 nautical miles. It may kindly be seen that 12 nautical miles is within the domain of the State of Kerala or within the domain of the State, but unfortunately the Government of India / Central Government has never got the concurrence of the State Government for sea-sand mining within 12 nautical miles of the coastal area.

Further, you may kindly see that the area proposed for mining is known as Kollam Parappu or Quilon Bank, which is extending to the areas of Thiruvananthapuram and Allapuzha districts having a length of 85 kms. and having availability of abundant fish wealth. I will name them in Malayalam.

I will speak in Malayalam: *Mathi, ayla, natholi, choora, vellappara, neymeen, kilimeen, chemmeen* (shrimps), *kanava* (tuna), etc. Like this, there is availability of abundant fish. It is called Parappu or the Quilon Bank. In the Kerala-sea region, 40,000 fishing vessels are fishing and both the traditional and the mechanized fishing works are done there. The livelihood of thousands of fishermen is based on fishing. If this offshore sand mining is done, it will certainly destroy fish wealth, coastal ecosystem and livelihood of thousands of fishermen. Further, the proposed move of the Government in sea mining is without conducting any environmental impact and socio-economic impact. The coastal area, offshore Kollam, Alappuzha, contains rare earth minerals, including radioactive minerals. The proposal to mine

these minerals is against the existing policy of the Government of India, and the intent is to privatize the sea sand mining.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Premachandran ji, please conclude now.

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN: Sir, I am concluding. I urge upon the Government to stop and withdraw from the move of sea sand mining. This is my submission because it is adversely affecting the fishing ecosystem, fishermen and also the ecosystem of the coastal area as a whole. So, I once again urge upon the Government to withdraw from the move of this offshore sand mining.