

Title : Indefinite hunger strike by fishermen of Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, in protest against seizure of their boats by Sri Lankan Navy.

SHRI K. SHIVKUMAR ALIAS J.K. RITHEESH (RAMANATHAPURAM): Madam, my district has one of the highest population of fisherman. But they are unable to carry on with their fishing activities because of the cruel attacks by the Sri Lankan army who arrest them, seize their boats and also torture them.

Madam in support of what I have stated above I would like to mention that on the 5th of this month the Sri Lankan Navy had seized five boats and arrested 21 fisherman in Rameshwaram. It has become a very serious issue in my constituency. About 50,000 fishermen have stopped their fishing activities and have started a hunger strike along with their family members. The businessmen associated with Fisheries have also extended their support and closed their shops.

Madam, this problem should be sorted out immediately. This is not the first incident that has happened in my constituency. Such incidents have been happening since 1983. After I became a Member of Parliament this is the third incident in my constituency. I am very thankful to the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister for External Affairs because when I brought the last incident to their knowledge they replied me and took immediate steps to get the boats and the fishermen released from the Sri Lankan Army.

Madam, as per the Kutch Island Agreement the fishermen of both the countries are allowed to do fishing activities and dry their nets in the sea. Both the parties were allowed to celebrate St. Antony's church festivals. Unfortunately, the Sri Lankan Government is not respecting this agreement. I would like to request the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of External Affairs to implement the Kutch Island Agreement of 1974. In this context I would also like to bring to the knowledge of the House that our Indian Navy also has seized seven boats and arrested 36 Sri Lankan fishermen during this month. [\[R4\]](#)

This will not solve the problem. In this situation, I request the Government to find out a permanent solution and timely action in this regard.

I do not want to take more time of the House. Hence, I am cutting short my speech. If you permit me, I would read the relevant details. Otherwise, I may be allowed to lay it on the Table of the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: You may lay it on the Table of the House.