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Title: Need to set up a separate Ministry for Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare.

SHRI K. ASHOK KUMAR (KRISHNAGIRI): Bifurcation of the agriculture and farmers welfare ministry and creation of a separate ministry for Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare by the Union government is the need of the hour. On behalf of AIADMK Party, I make this fervent appeal to the Union Government. Indian fishermen are subjected to frequent harassment in the context of crossing the border and entering the international waters, by the Navy personnel of the neighbouring countries of Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This issue relating to traditional fishing rights should immediately be resolved, through bilateral and consistent dialogue process. All the confiscated boats which are not given back so far should immediately be handed over to the fishermen and those who are incarcerated should be released with immediate effect. Fishermen community should be included in the list of Scheduled Tribes as recommended by the Mandal Commission. It will not only ensure reservation for education and employment, but also will have reservation of constituencies in various elected bodies including State assemblies and the Parliament. I also insist that the coastal belt should not be made the power generation hub of India at the cost of the fishermen communities. A subsistence allowance should be given to every family of fishermen community that is affected by any fishing ban such as breeding season ban, lean season ban, etc. We demand from the Government of India that the fishermen be given the subsistence allowance at the rate of Rs. 500 per head per day. This should include days of natural calamities as compensation for livelihood, Compensation for damages to the habitat and equipment is different from livelihood allowances, We demand in case of disaster as climate change refugee status and demand compensation accordingly. I, therefore, urge that the Union Government should immediately set up a separate Ministry for Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare.

