

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 664
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.12.2022**

DISCUSSION WITH SRI LANKAN HIGH COMMISSIONER

664. SHRI T.R. BAALU:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Indian High Commissioner for Sri Lanka had met the fishermen of Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu recently and held consultations with them with regard to their problems;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the issues raised and suggestions made by them at the meeting to find lasting solutions to their problems which are persisting for several years; and
- (c) the details of diplomatic initiatives/actions proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a) to (c) High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka visited Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry on 21-24 November 2021. During the visit, High Commissioner visited Rameshwaram and interacted with the local fishing community on issues faced by Indian fishermen.

During the meetings with Senior officials of the State Government of Tamil Nadu and other stakeholders, importance of holding of India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group on Fisheries as well as interactions between Fishermen Associations of both the countries at the earliest, were discussed.

The 5th Meeting of India- Sri Lanka Joint Working Group on fisheries took place on 25 March 2022. Interactions among fishermen associations were held in Kachchateevu on 11-12 March 2022 when close to 100 Indian fishermen from various fishermen associations interacted with their Sri Lankan counterpart fishermen associations.

Issues relating to Indian fishermen have been raised at the highest levels, including by our Prime Minister with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister during the Virtual Bilateral Summit held in September 2020. In 2021, during his visit to Colombo from 5-7 January, External Affairs Minister (EAM) had met the Minister of Fisheries of Sri Lanka and discussed all issues related to Indian Fishermen. On 15 January 2022, EAM discussed the issue of early release of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody during his virtual meeting with Finance Minister of Sri Lanka. The matter was also discussed by EAM with the Sri Lankan Minister of Fisheries during his visit to Sri Lanka in March 2022.
