

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2634
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.03.2021**

INDIAN FISHERMEN

2634. SHRI K. NAVASKANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Hon'ble External Affairs Minister visited Sri Lanka recently and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether discussions were held regarding Indian fishermen who are frequently arrested by Sri Lankan Navy during the said visit;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a) EAM paid an official visit to Sri Lanka from 5-7 January 2021 at the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka Dinesh Gunawardena. Apart from bilateral talks held with his counterpart, he discussed a range of bilateral and regional issues with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

During his visit, EAM called upon Sri Lanka to fulfill its commitments on addressing the issues related to protecting the interests of Tamils in Sri Lanka. He reiterated that India's support for the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka is longstanding, as indeed for an inclusive political outlook that encourages ethnic harmony. It is in Sri Lanka's own interest that the expectations of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace and dignity within a united Sri Lanka are fulfilled. That applies equally to the commitments made by the Sri Lankan Government on meaningful devolution, including the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.

During his visit, further areas of cooperation in investments, including in port infrastructure, energy, connectivity, special zones for pharmaceutical manufacturing, vocational training as also in tourism to accelerate post-covid economic recovery were also discussed. In response to Sri Lankan President's request for Covid vaccine, he conveyed that India will prioritise Sri Lanka when supplying Made in India vaccine to other countries.

(b) & (c) During his visit, EAM met the Minister of Fisheries of Sri Lanka and discussed all issues related to fishermen and strongly conveyed to the Sri Lankan side India's concerns with respect to the issues related to our fishermen and their boats.

(d) Does not arise.

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