

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter addressed to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India by Selvi J Jayalalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 5.12.2012 is reproduced below:

"I wish to inform you that 22 fishermen from Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu and 18 fishermen from Karaikal in Puducherry who were engaged in fishing in the Bay of Bengal in five mechanised fishing boats bearing Registration Numbers TN/06/MFB/940, TN/06/MFB/88, TN/06/MFB/1208, TN/06/MFB/1222 and IND-PY-PK-MM 683 are reported to have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the early hours of 3.12.2012 near Pulmoddai on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. The fishing boats and fishermen were reportedly taken to the Trincomalee harbour for further investigations and it is learnt that they have now been remanded till 10.12.2012. The Indian Navy has also confirmed the arrest.

I am deeply pained to point out that the incidents of apprehension and harassment of innocent Indian fishermen have become a regular occurrence in the past few months creating a feeling of insecurity and fear amongst the fishermen community. In this context, I wish to inform you that the Sri Lankan boats and fishermen who poach in the Indian EEZ are warned and sent back whenever such incidents occur in the vicinity of Tamil Nadu. It is noteworthy to mention that no apprehension of Sri Lankan fishermen has occurred in the Tamil Nadu waters in the recent past. The Sri Lankan authorities should also reciprocate the gesture of goodwill and release the Tamil Nadu fishermen immediately, after ascertaining the genuineness of these apprehended 40 fishermen. The action of the Sri Lankan Navy in detaining our fishermen will only escalate the tensions between the two countries, besides causing immense anxiety and unrest amongst the fishing community.

I, therefore, request you to kindly urge the Sri Lankan authorities to immediately release the 40 fishermen and their five boats without filing any cases against them.

I solicit your urgent action in this regard"

Issued by: Director, Information-Public Relations, Chennai.9

Date : 5.12.2012.