

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. Letter dated 16.12.2014 addressed by Thiru O. Panneerselvam, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:

"The Government of India through two letters written by the Foreign Secretary dated 1.12.2014 and 11.12.2014 to the Chief Secretary, Government of Tamilnadu requested the Government of Tamil Nadu to release the 30 Sri Lankan fishermen and their fishing boats in custody in Tamil Nadu in order to pave the way for the release of 66 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu and 81 fishing boats currently in Sri Lankan custody.

As you are aware, My Beloved Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has consistently taken up the issue of the release of the Tamil Nadu fishermen and specifically of the fishing boats which have been detained since June, 2014 leading to their deterioration in the South-West and North-East monsoon periods.

In the past, Tamil Nadu had always co-operated with the Government of India to ensure that there was a parallel and simultaneous release of fishermen of both the Indian and Sri Lankan sides. However, on this occasion the Government of India is insisting on the Government of Tamil Nadu initiating the process of release of the Sri Lankan fishermen and their boats.

Ordinarily, we would have expected the Government of India to have supported the Government of Tamil Nadu's stand and prevailed upon the Sri Lankan Government to arrange a simultaneous release of fishermen and their boats. It now appears that the Government of India has ruled out this possibility. In these circumstances, and in view of the approaching Christmas festival, in a spirit of accommodation and magnanimity and as a humanitarian gesture, the Government of Tamil Nadu is prepared to release the 30 Sri Lankan fishermen and their 19 boats currently in custody in Tamil Nadu on 22.12.2014, after completion of formalities, so that they can return home and celebrate Christmas with their families. I request you to ensure that the Government of Sri Lanka also releases the 66 Tamil Nadu fishermen and their 81 boats which are in the custody of Sri Lanka at the same time so that they can also return home in time for Christmas."

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Dated : 16.12.2014