

**P.R. No. 371**

**Date:21.06.2011**

Text of the D.O. Letter dated 21.6.2011 addressed to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India by Selvi J Jayalalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu is reproduced below:

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"It has been brought to my notice that 23 fishermen of Tamil Nadu who accidentally strayed into Sri Lankan waters while fishing were taken into custody by the Sri Lankan Navy and taken to Thalaimannar Police Station yesterday (20.6.2011) afternoon.

After my Government took charge in May, 2011, 4 fishermen whose boat had capsized were arrested and remanded to custody by Kayts Court in Sri Lanka. I had written to you about this on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2011. In your letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2011, you had informed me that the matter had been taken up with the Sri Lankan Government. These fishermen were released on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2011, and I thank you for your kind intervention in this regard.

I wish to reiterate that the frequent incidents of arrest and detention of Tamil Nadu fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line which is very close to the shore off Rameswaram in the Palk Bay area, is worrisome. This also creates a lot of tension and unrest among the fishermen in Tamil Nadu. I had discussed this vexatious issue when I called on you at New Delhi on 14.6.2011. I also discussed this issue with Shri Shivshankar Menon, National Security Advisor, on two occasions, once when he called on me before leaving for Colombo on 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2011, and again during our discussions on 14.6.2011.

I am distressed to note that the Sri Lankan Navy has again taken into custody 23 fishermen along with 5 boats because they strayed accidentally into Sri Lankan waters. I seek your kind intervention in this issue and request you to ensure that the Sri Lankan Government releases the 23 fishermen taken into custody immediately."

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