



Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India

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QUESTION NO.411 PRESENCE OF SRI LANKAN NAVY PERSONNEL IN KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND

July 21, 2016

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.411
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.07.2016

PRESENCE OF SRI LANKAN NAVY PERSONNEL IN KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND

411. SHRI T. RATHINAVEL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Sri Lanka has enhanced the presence of its Navy personnel in Katchatheevu island preventing the fishermen from Tamil Nadu fishing in and around the said area;
- (b) if so, whether Government has taken up this issue with the Sri Lankan Government;
- (c) whether Government has asked the Sri Lanka Government to allow the fishermen from Tamil Nadu to construct a Church at Katchatheevu; and
- (d) whether Government has received a representation from the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu recently in this regard, if so, the action taken thereof?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (d) As per the Agreements of 1974 and 1976 signed between India and Sri Lanka, Indian fishermen are allowed access to the Katchatheevu Island for rest, for drying fishing nets and for the annual St. Anthony's festival. The issues related to Indian fishermen are regularly taken up with Government of Sri

Lanka, including at the highest levels.

Indian fishermen have been attending the annual St. Anthony's festival at Katchatheevu Island. In February 2016, 3248 Indian pilgrims attended the festival. St. Anthony's Church in Katchchativu Island is believed to have been built in 1905 and, being in a dilapidated state, is repaired every year for the annual Katchchativu Festival in February-March. The Bishop of Jaffna has requested the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy to construct a new Church adjacent to the existing St Anthony's Church.

A letter from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was received in May 2016 on the Katchatheevu Island issue. The matter relating to the Katchatheevu Island is currently sub-judice in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.



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