

Tamil Nadu wants back islet ceded to Sri Lanka

The frequent killings of Tamil fishermen in the Palk Strait between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka is developing into a major diplomatic row, with the state government Saturday demanding the return of an islet ceded to Sri Lanka in 1974.

Inaugurating a day-long statewide hunger strike, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi said the demand for Kachchatheevu islet to be returned to the state will be renewed if the Sri Lankan Navy does not stop targeting Indian fishermen.

'Our protests were ignored by the Centre in 1974 and Kachchatheevu was ceded to Sri Lanka. Now the incessant killing of Tamil fishermen in the Palk Straits by Sinhalese chauvinists have necessitated our recalling our demand to repossess the islet,' Karunanidhi said.

'I have assured our fishermen that this government will ensure that the killings will stop and our endeavour towards this end has begun with this hunger strike,' he added.

At least two Indian fishermen were killed in firing by the Sri Lankan Navy last week.

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