

Sri Lankan Navy arrests 26 Indian fishermen

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Colombo: The Sri Lanka navy arrested 26 Indian fishermen and seized three Indian fishing trawlers allegedly for poaching in Sri Lankan waters, the navy media unit said on Sunday.

The navy said the Indians were arrested on the sea north of Point Pedro late on Saturday and they were brought ashore on Sunday, Xinhua reported.

The arrested fishermen and trawlers were brought to the Kankesanthurai harbour in the north of the country and handed over to the officials of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Kankesanthurai.

Indian fishermen continue to fish in Sri Lankan waters despite warnings from Sri Lanka that they will be arrested.

Earlier this month, the Sri Lankan navy arrested 14 Indian fishermen while they were allegedly poaching in the country's waters in the northern sea.

The government said last month that Sri Lanka and India will, in the spirit of goodwill and understanding that exists, continue to engage in dialogue on the fishermen issue to seek satisfactory short-term and long-term solutions.

Sri Lanka said it recognises that the issue of Indian fishermen fishing in Sri Lankan waters is one that requires the careful attention of the authorities on both sides, especially in view of the impact on livelihoods of both Sri Lankan fishermen in the North of the country as well as Indian fishermen.

The matter of Indian fishermen apprehended in Sri Lankan waters was approached from a humanitarian perspective in view of the livelihood dimension involved, it said.

Consultations between the two governments on these issues have taken place at various levels over time and are continuing, the statement said.

- IANS