

22 January 2018

CMFRI to expand research to tap pharma prospects of marine life

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here has decided to expand research network to tap pharmaceutical prospects of marine organisms, its top scientist said today. CMFRI Director Dr A Gopalakrishnan said there was a growing demand for new bioactive compounds of marine natural origin in pharmaceutical fields. He said the institute has already developed and commercialised various nutraceutical products for various diseases such as diabetes, arthritis, cholesterol and obesity. "In addition, several products from marine organisms as promising therapeutic agents against diseases such as thyroid are in pipeline to be out licensed soon," Gopalakrishnan said in a release.

Aimed at expanding the research network towards exploring the fortunes of highly prospective marine organisms for the development of promising therapeutic agents against various diseases, the CMFRI is all set to open a 21-day Winter School from Tuesday to train young researchers about the latest technologies in the area. Organised by the Marine Biotechnology division of CMFRI, the Winter School on 'recent advances in bioactive compounds from marine organisms' will be attended by 25 researchers and officials from various institutes under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the universities from across the country.

"Training will be provided to the budding researchers on various research aspects for developing medicines and other nutraceutical products from sea that include isolation and characterisation of natural products of pharmaceutical importance from marine organisms such as seaweeds, molluscs, sponges, coelenterates, etc," the release said. Padma Bhushan Dr Manju Sharma, eminent biotechnologist and former secretary of Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, will inaugurate the Winter School on Tuesday.

Renowned scientists and experts in the area of marine natural product chemistry from across the globe will lead the technical training sessions at the Winter School. CMFRI is the pioneering marine research institute to work in the frontier area of marine bio-prospecting molecule discovery, marine food product technology and development of high-value nutraceutical products such as dietary and health management supplements.

CMFRI's training programme would help the participants formulate strategies further research in the area, paving the way for an upsurge of research on marine bio-prospecting in the respective laboratories and various institutes of the participants, Gopalakrishnan said.