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Maha eyes large-scale cage fish farming in Sindhudurg

FE BUREAU
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MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT HAS sought technical support from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) for starting large-scale cage fish farming ventures in the brackish water of the Sindhudurg district, sources said on Thursday.

Cage culture involves holding fish within an enclosed space while maintaining a free exchange of water. Cage farming allows aquaculture practitioners to maintain stocks of fish in a controlled manner.

CMFRI has successfully demonstrated cage culture of fishes such as milkfish, mullet, cobia, pompano, sea bass, pearl spot, shellfishes such as shrimps, crabs and lobsters.

In a meeting held at the CMFRI headquarters in Kochi, Maharashtra minister of state for finance, planning and home (rural) Deepak Kesarkar requested the CMFRI authorities to provide technical guidance to the state to launch 500 cage fish farming units in Sindhudurg district. Sindhudurg, a coastal district in Maharashtra, has rich brackish water resources.

The minister said that the Maharashtra government would provide financial support to the CMFRI to help the state implement a suitable cage farming model to the ecological and geographical conditions of the Sindhudurg district.

"The cage farming models being implemented by the CMFRI in Pizhala in Ernakulam district and in the various parts of Mangalore are highly successful. Maharashtra government is much eager to emulate such models in Sindhudurg district too as a better livelihood option for the coastal people", Kesarkar said.

As per the decision taken in the meeting between Maharashtra minister and his team with the CMFRI authorities, a team from the mariculture division of the CMFRI will visit Sindhudurg district to assess the ecological condition and carrying capacity of the water bodies prior to the launch of cage fish farming.

The CMFRI team will also select ideal spots and suitable species for the farming. The CMFRI will soon submit a detailed project proposal to the Maharashtra government after reviewing environmental and geographical aspects of the region.

In addition to the cage fish farming, the Maharashtra minister also wanted the CMFRI to provide technical support to set up backyard hatchery units of cobia and silver pompano in the district to boost the farming ventures. He further requested the institute to help formulate fishing regulation for Maharashtra and to provide technical support to oyster and mussel farming. Kesarkar also sought CMFRI's guidance to establish small scale units for the depuration of oyster and mussel, besides setting up seed production units of the bivalve.