



## Stakeholders call for token system for fishers venturing out into sea

It will help speed up rescue operations during an emergency, they say

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A meeting of fishermen and scientists involved in marine fisheries research, ocean studies, space research and communications here on Wednesday ended with a call for the introduction of a token system to account for the exact number of people venturing out into the sea.

The discussion, inaugurated by Fisheries Minister J. Mercykutty Amma, was organised as part of SAFARI-2, an international symposium under the aegis of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute on the application of remote sensing technology for ecosystem analysis and fisheries.

The discussions were held in the wake of cyclone Ockhi which left a trail of destruction in December. One of the key issues that confronted the fishing community, the State government and disaster management agencies was that there was no information available on the exact num-



Fisheries Minister J. Mercykutty Amma looks at an exhibit at the Aqua-Agri-Food Fest held at CMFRI in Kochi on Wednesday as part of SAFARI symposium. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ber of fishermen and fishing boats that had ventured out into the sea.

The speakers at the discussions felt that introduction of a token system would provide an exact picture of the situation and help speed up rescue operations.

Another suggestion that came up at the discussions

was that there should be coordination between fishermen and local government bodies to make warnings on natural disasters effective and timely.

The fishermen participating in the discussions also demanded that the warnings should be issued in Malayalam so that everyone could access the informa-

tion. It must also be ensured that even those who are venturing out into the deep seas are warned about any potential dangers.

The coastal protection forces now in operation should make use of the expertise of fishermen community in meeting any emergency situation, speakers at the discussions said.

Those participating in the discussions reiterated the demand that a Department of Fisheries must be established at the Union level in the background of the cyclone Ockhi.

It was suggested that boats venturing out should not be allowed to spend more than 10 days in the waters. The lack of awareness among fishermen of the latest technology tools was also highlighted during the discussions.

Around a hundred fishermen from across Kerala participated in the discussions held at the CMFRI hall. Scientists from CMFRI, ISRO and INCOIS participated in the discussions.