

Fisherfolk to get satellite-enabled navigation devices

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Kochi: The government will make use of all advanced scientific technologies available in the country to ensure the safety of fisherfolk, said fisheries minister J Mercykutty Amma here on Wednesday.

The minister said that navigation with Indian constellation (NavIC)-supported devices developed by Indian space research organization will be distributed to fisherfolk in the state soon.

NavIC is India's regional satellite navigation system

which can be used to alert fisherfolk about adverse weather conditions. To ensure the safety of fisherfolk, fishing vessels in the state will be fitted with this satellite-based navigation system. Fisherfolk can also download the NavIC-based mobile apps on their phones to receive alerts.

"The government will distribute 500 satellite-enabled communication devices to fisherfolk in the state on January 30 and 1,000 such gadgets will be distributed in February. Using this device, fishermen can stay connect-

ed up to 1,500km from the shore. Warning signals and messages can be sent to boats from the shore. The pilot trials of these gadgets have already been carried out in Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam," said the minister.

Speaking at a stakeholder workshop on disaster management system and weather warning system at an international symposium on societal applications in fisheries and aquaculture using remote sensing imagery (SA-FARI) at Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute,

the minister said that special training would be given to fisherfolk to make them understand how to install the device in their boats and download the NavIC-based mobile application in their phones.

The minister also inaugurated the electronic display board developed by the Indian national centre for ocean informatics services (INCOIS) based in Hyderabad.

T M Balakrishnan Nair, head of ocean science and information services group, INCOIS, said that the display board would give informa-

tion on ocean weather forecast, including high tide and tsunami warning, and alert on unexpected high-swell waves.

The minister added that electronic display boards would also show international price rates for fish species in the state. She said these boards would be installed at all major harbours. In Kochi, the board would be installed at Munambam, she said.

Representatives of various fisherfolk unions raised a slew of demands, including setting up a punching system on fishing boats and har-

bour, introduction of information dissemination devices that are user-friendly and need to use local languages while communicating messages and alerts intended for them.

"Fishing boats as well as harbours should be equipped with biometric punching system. This will provide accurate information regarding the number of people venturing out to sea," said Dayanandan V, a fisherman.

The minister said that the government is planning to install punching system in boats.