

Creation of separate dept for fisheries welcomed

TEAM TOI

Kochi: Finance minister Piyush Goyal, in his interim budget, announced the creation of a separate department for fisheries that will ensure development in the sector. The need for a separate central department had been a long-pending demand among fishermen.

“Centre’s decision is most welcome and this move will bring funding in the sector. There are many areas in coastal states that require much attention. Formation of a separate department would give it the much-needed impetus to implement and follow-up various programmes,” said Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) director A Gopalakrishnan.

UNION BUDGET

The budget has given importance to fish farmers on par

with paddy farmers, said Shyam Sundar, a farmer from Nayarambalam in Ernakulam. While welcoming the decision to set up a separate ministry, he said Kerala requires support for farmers doing both paddy and fish cultivation and not just subsidies.

“When we approach national banks for a loan, they don’t give one against our land. We must pledge our gold. My land was inundated in floods and I couldn’t pay back the loan. Nationalized bank wanted interest at 4% and I paid Rs 30,000 as interest for a loan of Rs 6 lakh for one-and-a-half years. Farmers are not getting budget benefits.”

MORE FUND INFUSION LIKELY



BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

2%

interest subvention to farmers pursuing animal husbandry

and fisheries

➤ In case of timely repayment of loan, fish farmers will also get an additional 3% interest subvention

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A Gopalakrishnan | DIRECTOR, CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Charles George | STATE PRESIDENT OF KERALA MALSYATHOZHILALI UNION

“We had raised the demand for a separate ministry for nearly three decades. Now the minister announces a separate department in a country with nine coastal states. While this is a first step, this announcement is part of BJP’s national policy on fisheries. They are trying to fool

us because there is nothing concrete in the budget for the community,” said state president of Kerala Malsyathozhilali Union Charles George

Since this is an interim budget, we don’t know whether it will be a reality, said Binish K, a fish farmer from Ernakulam.