



Fisheries Ministers' meet supports uniform trawl ban period

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THE two-day conference of the fisheries ministers of South Indian states decided to work towards a uniform trawl ban period considering the spawning period of the common fish species. The proposal is to divide the trawl ban into two phases of 30 days each to avoid fishing activities during the South West monsoon season and the North east Monsoon season.

According to scientists, the Southwest monsoon season, which falls in June and July, is the spawning period of the pelagic fish species, while October - November period is the spawning period of demersal (deep sea) fish species. The recommendations will be placed in the stake holders meet scheduled to be held at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute on Sunday, said Fisheries Minister J Mercykutty Amma.

The southern fisheries ministers' meet failed to yield the desired result as only two ministers turned up. Though Kerala was expecting the participation of the ministers of five states, the ministers of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Goa decided to stay away from the meet.

Only ministers from Maharashtra and Puducherry attended the meet. The absence of the ministers denied the opportunity to make a joint statement seeking intervention of the Union Government to address the problems faced by the fishing community.

Mercykutty Amma, who briefed the decisions of the meeting to the media, said all states supported Kerala's demand to form a separate ministry for fisheries. The meeting urged the Centre to extend the territorial wa-

ters from 12 nautical miles to 36 nautical miles to support the traditional fishermen. The proposed shipping channel should be shifted outside the fishing ground, she said.

The delegates from all states agreed to Kerala's demand that fishermen cooperatives should be provided rights for deep sea fishing. "The Union Government should remove the provision to allow public-private partnership in deep sea fishing and provide training and financial support to the traditional fishermen to undertake deep sea fishing. The participating states also supported Kerala's view that the construction of fishing vessels and the engine power of the vessels should be regulated," said Mercykutty Amma.

Shrimp ban: TED devices by January

Expressing confidence that India will be able to convince the US that the country follows safe fishing practices, Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) director C N Ravishankar said the institute has developed a turtle excluder device (TED) which will be distributed to fishing vessels. The US has imposed restrictions on import of fish from countries that have not initiated steps to protect sea turtles during commercial shrimp fishing.

"CIFT has perfected the technology and we have distributed the device to fishermen in Odisha. The nesting of turtles take place in the Eastern coast and we can convince the US officers that there is no turtle nesting in the West Coast. The cost of the device ranges from ₹5,000 to ₹8,000 and we are confident of installing the device in all fishing vessels by January, 2019," he said.

State will equip traditional fishermen to undertake deep sea fishing, says Pinarayi

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THE state government will introduce a new scheme to enhance the skills and capabilities of the traditional fishermen and to equip them to undertake deep sea fishing, said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. For this the state will initiate steps to modernise the existing fleet and introduce new indigenous deep sea fishing vessels through fishermen co-operatives and self help groups.

The traditional fishermen will be provided on board training and linkages to markets and export.

While implementing the scheme, the government will ensure that initiatives comply with the international regulations relating to fishing in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and the high seas, said Pinarayi while

inaugurating the Southern Fisheries Ministers' Conference at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here on Saturday.

The Chief Minister urged the Union Government to develop a holistic resource utilisation plan for the EEZ considering the requirements of the coastal states. The Centre and the states should come together and agree upon the management policies and measures for sustainable utilisation and management of marine resources in the EEZ.

He urged the states to work together to develop a uniform regulation to ensure sustainable fishing and conservation of marine resources.

To realise the full potential of marine fisheries, focus should be on fishing effort management, fleet size optimisation, mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and crea-

tion of fish refugia through consultative processes.

An integrated approach is needed to manage the fisheries by blending traditional knowledge and science with business principles.

Governments should ensure legislative support to ensure the tenure rights of the traditional fishermen are secured and their livelihood are not adversely impacted by development activities, said Pinarayi.

Fisheries Minister J Mercykutty Amma presided over the inaugural session. Maharashtra Fisheries Minister Mahadev Jagannath Jankar, Puducherry Fisheries Minister Malladi Krishna Rao, MLAs Hibi Edon, John Fernandez, Kochi Mayor Soumini Jain, CMFRI Director A Gopalakrishnan and others spoke.

Fisheries Principal secretary K R Jyothil welcomed the delegates and Fisheries Director S Venkatesapathy proposed vote of thanks.

