



Fisheries Minister J Mercykutty Amma during the Southern Fisheries Ministers Conclave 2018 in Kochi on Sunday | **MELTON ANTONY**

PROPOSALS GALORE

Other states to follow Kerala to end juvenile fishing via MLS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

The two-day conference of south Indian states' fisheries ministers, which concluded here on Sunday, decided to recommend a slew of proposals to the Centre including a hike in the budget for buying a trawler from ₹80 lakh to ₹1.5 crore, refund the road-tax collected from fishermen and bringing down the price of kerosene and the fuel for their boats.

The conference saw other southern states agreeing to implement the Kerala model in fisheries rules such as imposing Minimum Legal Size (MLS) measure to end juvenile fishing, banning the use of LED lights for coastal area fishing, and making use of square mesh trawl net mandatory for the trawling boats.

The southern states decided to implement Kerala-inspired Suchitwa Sagaram (clean sea) project, which will see the ban of plastic waste dumping into the sea and procuring all forms of plastic materials in the sea or the ones that get entangled in the nets while fishing.

Fisheries Minister J Mercykutty Amma told media persons that Kerala has already implemented the MLS for 58 fish species to ban juvenile fishing. "Now, other states have also come forward to implement the measure in their territorial waters to make the regulation more effective," she said.

Urging the Centre to reduce the fuel price, the minister pointed out that there was no justification for charging ₹82 per litre for kerosene. "Earlier, there used to be a VAT of 40 per cent for kerosene. Now, VAT is abolished and there is GST of 18 per cent. But, instead of a fall in



The conference decided to seek the Centre's support for equipping fishermen for deep sea fishing. Other states decided to follow the Kerala model to implement participatory fisheries management councils and to use trawl nets

J Mercykutty Amma,
Fisheries Minister

kerosene prices, now the fuel price has gone up under GST," she said. The conference asked the Centre to waive road tax for the fuel for fishing,

Mercykutty Amma said the meet arrived at a consensus for demanding the Centre to permit the supremacy to the states to provide fishing rights beyond the territorial waters of 12 nautical miles.

"The conference decided to seek the Centre's technical and financial support for equipping fishermen for deep sea fishing through cooperative societies. Other states decided to follow the Kerala model to implement participatory fisheries management councils and to use trawl nets with the prescribed square mesh size recommended by the CIFT," she said.

Other major decisions of the conference

According to Mercykutty Amma, the two-day conference of fisheries' ministers from south Indian states took following decisions; to urge Centre to introduce financial safety plans to compensate employment loss to the fishermen during the period of trawling ban; to follow CIFT recommendations for the fishing boat design and horsepower of the engine.

