

Fisheries Ministers seek change in rules

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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The group of fisheries ministers from south Indian States, who met here on Saturday and Sunday, has made a joint appeal to the Union government to allow fishermen to go beyond the present 12 nautical mile limit to exploit fish resources, Minister for Fisheries J. Mercykutty Amma has said.

They also agreed to seek the Union government to step in to impose a uniform trawling ban period for the entire country.

Talking to reporters here on Sunday, Ms. Mercykutty said the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) had carried out a study on the impact of the current practice of annual

trawling ban.

However, the ban period could be reorganised to help Indian fishermen optimally exploit the resources available to them. In this regard, a Central government action would be welcome, she said.

The Ministers appealed to the Centre to avoid imposing road tax on diesel sold to fishing boats. They felt that kerosene should be sold cheaper to fishermen.

Ms. Mercykutty said that fisheries cooperatives and traditional fishermen should be equipped and trained to exploit deep sea resources.

The Union government should come forward to provide financial aid for the purpose, she said.