

## **Kerala signs pact with US-based EMCC for Rs 2,950 cr project**

EMCC International to build fishing trawlers, harbours in a move that leapfrog Kerala's fishing sector.

KOCHI: US-based EMCC International and Kerala Shipping and Inland Navigation Corporation Ltd (KSINC) have joined hands for a Rs 2,950 crore project to build deep-sea fishing trawlers, new harbours, and port development activities among others in a move that leapfrog Kerala's fishing sector.

KSINC MD N Prasanth and EMCC International India Pvt Ltd president Shiju Varghese signed the MoU here on Tuesday.

As per the deal, EMCC will build 400 trawlers in Kerala with the help of KSINC. Currently, foreign trawlers are more in use in the state. "When this scientifically planned project is implemented, there will be a complete Kerala touch to this sector. Further, this will be the largest foreign investment project in the state," said a KSINC release here.

KSINC will be providing all technical help and giving full responsibility to EMCC to build the trawlers. The cost of building one trawler of international quality and standards is around Rs 2 crore. The 400 trawlers to be built is to be distributed to the existing fishermen of the state.

"When these many trawlers return from fishing, there will be a shortage of berthing facilities in Kerala. So KSINC will also be building new harbours and renovating and expanding existing harbours. EMCC will also be opening units in Kerala to process the fish harvested through these trawlers," the release said.

Families of the fishermen will be given primacy in employment in these units. EMCC's Varghese said that processed food will be distributed through 200 outlets to be opened in Kerala and also exported to other countries as part of the project.

Prasanth said that with this project, over 2500 employment opportunities will be created in the state. One trawler will be given free to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute for research purposes with the aim of using CMFRI's research developed methods for eco-friendly fishing.

It is hoped that this can lead to doubling the income of fishermen communities. Hospitals for fishermen will also be set up as part of the project. The first one will be set up at Attingal in Thiruvananthapuram.

Prasanth also said that this is the biggest work order in the history of KSINC.