

## Centre eyes developing a sustainable seaweed economy: Fisheries Secretary



The Central government is looking forward to developing a sustainable economy through highly prospective seaweed cultivation, Jatindra Nath Swain, Fisheries Secretary has said.

At a time when climate change is increasingly posing a major threat to human life, cultivating seaweed would help mitigate the global crisis, boost the economy and reduce the impact of the climate crisis as well, he said.

He was speaking at an interactive meeting with scientists of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

“An additional livelihood option, seaweed farming will play a major role in the socio-economic uplift of traditional fishermen during this difficult time”, the secretary said.

### Seaweed Seedbank

He asked the CMFRI to set up a seedbank of seaweeds to popularise the practice among the coastal region.

“Marine scientists should come up with ways for capacity development to enhance seaweed cultivation on large-scale”, he said, adding that the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) has a special thrust for promotion of seaweed farming.

He was in Kerala to understand the issues and challenges being faced by the sector after taking over the portfolio four months ago. Apart from those in the Kochi headquarters, CMFRI scientists from various regional research stations across the country also attended the meeting.

### Doubling seafood export

The Fisheries secretary said that India is eyeing doubling seafood export in the next five years. Technological development is crucial in this regard, especially for areas such as seed production and other hatchery infrastructure for diversified mariculture activities.

The government is supportive of cage fish farming, which would help the traditional fishermen double their income, Swain said and lauded the efforts of CMFRI to give a major boost to this practice across the coastal States.

### Sea ranching

Sea ranching initiatives, a practice of stocking seeds into the sea, should be strengthened by extending it into more areas as the practice by CMFRI proved a huge success in the Palk Bay for the past few years in maintaining a sustainable stock of the species and in their conservation.

Flagging his concern on resource depletion and ecosystem degradation, he urged scientists to focus on ways to promote responsible fishing and to adopt appropriate mechanisms to improve sustainable fishing.