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Breakthrough in oyster breeding

By Our Staff Reporter

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) Cochin, achieved a significant breakthrough in artificial breeding and rearing of pearl oyster which forms the biological raw material for production of pearls.

This follows a major gain the institute achieved in 1973 by developing indigenous techniques for production of cultured pearls, an official Press release said.

Dr E. G. Silas, director of CMFRI, said that through controlled spawning and larval rearing, thousands of spats were produced in the institute's research centre at Tuticorin for the first time.

One of the major constraints in the development of pearl culture as an industry in the country has been the paucity of adequate pearl oyster population in the natural beds of the Gulf of Mannar and the Gulf of Kutch.

Dr Silas said that the production technology of pearl oyster in the laboratory could easily be scaled up for mass stock to pearl culture farms.

The current development has the potential for reducing or eliminating dependence on natural stocks and, coupled with the indigenous technology for production of pearls in culture farms, has put in our hands a total tech-

nology range for controlled production of pearls.

The results were achieved through concerted team efforts under the leadership of senior scientist Dr K. Alagarswami associating with scientists S. Dharmaraj, A. Chellan, A. C. C. Victor and T. S. Velayudhan who have been working on the project for the last three years.