

Artificial reefs to be deployed in 3,477 villages in India



An artificial reef being deployed on the seabed.

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has taken part in a pioneering project of the Union Department of Fisheries to deploy artificial reefs in a total of 3,477 fishing villages in the country with the aim of promoting sustainable fisheries and livelihood, according to a communication.

As part of the ambitious project, a nationwide campaign has been launched in association with the respective State governments and with technical support from the CMFRI, starting from Kerala where artificial reefs have been proposed in 220 villages.

In the first phase of the project, five pre-stakeholder workshops were conducted from Tuesday to Friday for 42 villages in Thiruvananthapuram district, providing a platform to educate and engage village-level fishermen leaders about the potential of artificial reefs in transforming the marine fishing landscape. Site identification for the deployment of reefs was finalised during the meetings held at Poon-

thura, Vettukad, Perumathura, Kayikkara, and Vizhinjam under the organisation of Kerala State Coastal Area Development Corporation Limited (KSCADC), the operational agency in Kerala, the communication said.

An artificial reef is a sheltered human-built structure, placed on the seabed as a substitute for natural habitats. With a fixed scientific design, it functions as a self-sustaining production system on the seabed.

The project is under the Prime Minister's Matsya Sampada Yojana, with 60% funding from the Centre and 40% from the State governments. According to the CMFRI, a 17% to 30% increase in fisheries was observed from locations where the reefs were already deployed.

"The CMFRI has developed protocols for site selection, design, fabrication, deployment, and impact assessment of this innovative technology," said CMFRI Director A. Gopalakrishnan. He said the reefs would help restore the marine environment and boost coastal fish production.