



# 16th agri science congress concludes

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Kochi:** Curtains came down on the 16th Agriculture Science Congress (ASC), a four-day event that saw the participation of over 1,600 delegates. A total of 114 technical papers were presented on 10 thematic areas under the broad umbrella of addressing food security in the wake of challenges of climate change and sustainability. It called for more technological interventions, use of artificial intelligence and smart solutions in agriculture and allied sectors.

Officials said that a series of recommendations from the conference will be submitted to the government for interventions at the policy level.

On the concluding day, the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) in Kochi, which hosted the event organized by the National Academy of Agriculture Sciences (NAAS), proposed the establishment of mariculture parks across the country to enhance coastal fish production. A total of 46,823.2 hectares of cage fish farming sites have been identified along Indian



Indian Council of Agricultural Research director general Himanshu Pathak speaks at the valedictory function of ASC on Friday

territorial waters and 333 prospective seaweed farming sites covering 23,950 hectares have also been identified. This proposal was presented at a discussion on aquaculture and fisheries-based transformation of food systems.

Indigenous technologies for offshore and nearshore cage fish farming, bivalve farming, seaweed farming, integrated multi-trophic aquaculture practice, and a combined farming practice using either seaweed or bivalve with cage fish farming have been developed,

CMFRI said.

Experts said that conservation of marine mammals has become an important requirement for international markets, especially the US which has a stringent marine mammal protection act (MMPA), that prohibits the intentional killing of marine mammals in commercial fisheries.

"If India fails to comply with the MMPA, its seafood exports to the US could be affected, impacting the livelihoods of fishermen communities," said P Anilkumar, joint director, marine products export development authority.

Renowned fisheries scientist E Vivekanandan said that research on marine mammals is a complex and challenging task, requiring the collective support of biologists, veterinarians, environmentalists, and conservationists. "The major focus of marine mammal research is to estimate the status of the stocks, understand the correlation between environmental variables and abundance, assess the impacts of climate change, and develop conservation measures," he said.