

Global Marine Symposium concludes with roadmap for sustainable blue economy



Polar regions warming up nearly 4 times faster than global average

The fourth edition of the International Symposium on Marine Ecosystems (MECoS 4) at ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) concluded with a strong call for adopting ecosystem-based, multi-species management approaches to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources and to strengthen India's blue economy framework.

The symposium, organised by the Marine Biological Association of India (MBAI) in association with CMFRI brought together global experts, policymakers, industry leaders and researchers. In a set of recommendations, MECoS 4 placed women empowerment and start-up support at the core of the proposed roadmap for sustainable ocean development. The symposium urged that targeted capacity building, innovation support, and leadership opportunities be extended to women and young professionals in the marine and coastal sectors. Among the major scientific recommendations were to mainstream climate change resilience, strengthen public-private partnerships in mariculture, develop robust cold chain and traceability systems, and incorporate environmental and socio-economic indicators into national fisheries management frameworks. It also called for regional collaboration and institutional partnerships to establish centres of excellence for research, innovation, and policy support.

Dr A Bijukumar, Vice Chancellor of Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) inaugurated the valedictory of the symposium. He said that collaboration is the key to unlocking the full potential of the marine ecosystems and protecting the livelihood of the coastal community. CMFRI Director Dr. Grinson George said the outcomes of MECoS 4 would guide India's strategy for sustainable fisheries and ocean governance, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and advancing the nation's blue economy vision. Dr. Shubdeep Ghosh, Dr. V V Sugunan, Dr. P Jayasankar and Dr. Rekha J Nair spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, marine scientists highlighted that polar regions are warming up nearly four times faster than the global average, triggering manifold impacts on marine ecosystems, according to marine scientists. Delivering a lead talk on polar dynamics, Dr. Thamman Meloth, Director of the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) pointed out that melting sea ice is not merely a polar concern but a global one. "The loss of polar sea ice contributes to sea-level rise that directly affects tropical coastlines and intensifies cyclone genesis in the Arabian Sea," he cautioned. He added that the melting of ice alters salinity, acidification, and nutrient balance, impacting phytoplankton productivity, fisheries, and even wildfire occurrences in the polar and sub-polar ecosystems.