

Polar regions warming four times faster than global average say experts at Kochi symposium

Kochi, Nov 6 (PTI) Marine scientists at the international symposium on marine ecosystems, which concluded Thursday, said polar regions are warming nearly four times faster than the global average, causing widespread impacts on marine ecosystems. Delivering a lead talk on polar dynamics, Dr Thamban 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 said. He added that melting ice alters salinity, acidification, and nutrient balance, impacting phytoplankton productivity, fisheries, and even wildfire activity in polar and subpolar ecosystems.

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, a statement said. 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 its recommendations, MECoS 4 placed women's empowerment and start-up support at the core of the proposed roadmap for sustainable ocean development, the statement added. 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 further said.

Dr A Bijukumar, Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), inaugurated the valedictory session of the symposium. He said collaboration is key to unlocking the full potential of marine ecosystems and protecting the livelihoods of coastal communities. CMFRI Director Dr Grinson George, Dr Shubdeep Ghosh, Dr V V Sugunan, Dr P Jayasankar, and Dr Rekha J Nair also spoke on the occasion.