

समुद्री उत्पाद निर्यात विकास प्राधिकरण

(वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)

एम पी ई डी ए भवन, पनपिल्ली एवम्

डाक पेटी सं. 4272, कोच्ची-682036, भारत

**The Marine Products Export
Development Authority**

(Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India)

MPEDA House, Panampilly Avenue

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Press Release

Union Minister Suresh Prabhu opens MPEDA Multi-species aquaculture complex at Vallarpadam.

Kochi, Dec 8: Kerala must host an international summit on fishing for the crucial sector to make a steady development in the coastal state, Hon'ble Union Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Suresh Prabhu said today.

The Centre will provide all the support for such a summit that can feature experts from countries like Korea and Japan that are major consumers of India's marine food, he said after inaugurating a pioneering multispecies aquaculture complex built by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) in Vallarpadam island. The Rs 7.26-crore state-of-the-art facility in 9 acres of land facilitates production of marine food from disease-free breeds, featuring a hatchery for black tiger shrimp and six nurseries.

Noting that value-added products will play an increasingly decisive role in the growth of the fishing sector, Shri Prabhu said India was aiming at a 60-million-dollar turnover of Agricultural exports in the next five years. He called upon fish farmers to eye international market and fulfil international business parameters.

The minister exhorted fish farmers to rely majorly on sustainable technology, adding that MPEDA will offer help on this front. "India's fishing sector is facing multiple problems, also owing to climate change. That gives fresh vitality to aquaculture using inland water-bodies," he added.

Minister emphasized that export should be the ultimate aim of each aqua farmer and they should ensure that the aquaculture produce are sustainable and meets the export quality norms. MPEDA will offer all kinds of assistance in this direction, he added.

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Shri Prabhu later distributed fingerlings raised at the MPEDA aquaculture complex to farmers and deposited a fresh bunch of fingerlings at its hatchery.

The new MPEDA project will cater to the demand from the aquaculture farmers in Kerala as well as the neighbouring states. Its highlight is a hatchery for black tiger shrimp and six nurseries for Mud crab and 4 varieties of fin fishes namely Seabass, Cobia, Silver Pompano and GIFT (Genetically improved Farmed Tilapia). The hatchery has an annual production capacity of 20 Million post-larval Black Tiger shrimp, and the nurseries can produce 16.5 lakh fingerlings of fin fishes and 0.5 lakh crablets which will help the farmers to diversify and scale up the aquaculture production.

The hatchery has a quarantine facility and an effluent treatment system as per biosecurity norms. The nurseries meant for diversified fish/shellfish species are ponds lined with high density polythene and provided with necessary biosecurity protocols.

The facility's proximity to the international airport is an added advantage, ensuring faster transportation of seeds. The Vallarpadom facility can become a model for the establishment of similar facilities in other parts of the country especially in the Konkan region and parts of Maharashtra.

Smt J. Mercykutty Amma, Hon'ble Kerala Minister for Fisheries, Harbour Engineering and Cashew Industry, said the MPEDA complex will boost Kerala's fishing sector. "As much as 57 per cent of the country's fish production comes from aquaculture, but this is much less in Kerala," she added, presiding over the function. Aquaculture in the state should focus more on inland water-bodies, Smt Mercykutty Amma added, supporting Shri Prabhu's view.

Prof. K.V. Thomas, Hon'ble MP, expressed the concern on dwindling catches from the marine sector and hoped that MPEDA's new facility at Vallarpadam will help to compensate the gap in fish production through aquaculture.

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The other speakers were Shri S. Sarma, Hon'ble MLA, Dr A. Jayathilak former chairman MPEDA and Secretary Kerala Port Department, MPEDA Chairman Shri K.S. Srinivas IAS who is the President of RGCA, and MPEDA Secretary Shri B. Sreekumar.

The Union Minister also inaugurated MPEDA's signature stall that will function from the authority's headquarters in Ernakulam.

The MPEDA's signature stall, named 'Seafood India', is a 1700-sq ft facility in Panampilly Nagar, selling and displaying value-added marine products of exporters, besides exhibiting products developed by prominent fisheries research institutions such as CMFRI, CIFT and NIFPHATT. It also has literature narrating the activities of MPEDA and its societies such as NETFISH, RGCA and NaCSA. Enabled with information kiosks to browse the details about each product displayed in the stall, the stall provides information ranging from its production, processing, cooking and nutritional content also, making it a 'must visit' spot in the city.

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