

Vessel Monitoring System

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The Department of Fisheries, Government of India under the *Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana* (PMMSY), has approved a project “National Rollout Plan for Vessel Communication and Support System (VCSS)” for installation of indigenously developed transponders on one lakh marine fishing vessels covering mechanized and motorized vessels of all 13 coastal states and UTs with an outlay of Rs. 364 Crores. Vessel Communication and Support System is being implemented with technical support of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). The VCSS is a satellite based two-way communication system, which helps the fishers out at sea for sea-safety and security, provides alerts during adverse weather conditions, ‘No Fishing Zones’, International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) with geo-fencing and integration with the *Nabhmitra App*. The VCSS project envisages to cover one lakh vessels and pan-India coverage. Till date, more than 49,000 transponders have already been installed in the coastal States/UTs under this project.

The Government of India has prohibited the harmful fishing methods such as bull trawling or pair trawling and use of artificial lights or LED lights for fishing in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). While purse seine fishing is prohibited by some coastal states/UTs in their territorial waters, this method of fishing is allowed by some other states/UTs in their territorial waters. As far as, the EEZ beyond territorial waters is concerned, considering the recommendations of the Expert Committee the purse seine fishing is not prohibited in the EEZ area beyond the territorial waters.

(d) Enforcement of fishing regulations, including action against prohibited fishing practices is primarily undertaken by the State/UT Governments under the respective Marine Fisheries Regulation Acts (MFRAs). All the maritime States/UTs have been advised to take necessary steps including harbour based monitoring of fishing vessels, issuance of necessary Government Orders to prevent harmful fishing within and beyond the territorial waters, monitoring by patrol vessels and drones, and to take punitive actions against the violators as per the provisions of their respective State MFRAs. As such no joint patrolling is conducted by State Fisheries Departments & Coast Guard. However, the Coast Guard ships on their routine patrol, monitor and report the prohibited fishing activities undertaken by fishing boats at sea to the concerned State Fisheries Authorities for taking necessary action. The action against illegal fishing activities include seizure of fishing boats, gears, imposition of penalties, or prosecution, is taken by the competent State authorities as per the MFRAs and other applicable laws.

This information was given by Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Minister Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh in the Lok Sabha today in response to a question asked.

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