

Hon'ble Vice-President of India attends Fisheries Outreach Programme in Agatti, Lakshadweep to Strengthen India's Blue Economy

Major focus on Sustainably Harnessing the Untapped Potential of high value Island Resources including Tuna, Seaweed and Ornamental fisheries

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The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying Government of India organized **Fisheries Outreach Programme** of Ministry of Fisheries, Govt. of India at **Agatti, Lakshadweep** on **31st August 2026**. The Department of Fisheries, Government of India has given special focus to strengthening fisheries farmer producer organizations (FFPO) and fisheries cooperatives while sustainably harnessing high value species like tuna, seaweed and Ornamental fisheries resources. The Hon'ble Vice President also released "**Mission Rangeen Machhli 2031**" Strategic Action Plan for Ornamental Fisheries Development.



The Outreach Programme was graced by the august presence of Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj; Prof. S. P. Singh Baghel, Hon'ble Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj along with Shri Praful Khode Patel, Hon'ble Administrator of Lakshadweep and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. The event also witnessed the participation of fish farmers and fishers including women fish farmers and fishers in person, along with officials from the Department of Fisheries, GoI, Government of Lakshadweep, representatives from fisheries cluster and line Ministries and Departments.

The Hon'ble Vice President of India, **Shri C.P. Radhakrishnan**, described Lakshadweep as a priceless maritime asset of the nation and highlighted its immense fisheries potential, supported by a 4,200 sq. km lagoon area and an Exclusive Economic Zone of nearly 4 lakh sq. km. He noted that the outreach programme reflected the collective commitment of the Government of India, Lakshadweep Administration, scientific institutions and fishing communities towards ushering in a new era of sustainable growth and prosperity through the Blue Economy. Referring to fisheries and aquaculture as a

sunrise sector of the economy, he appreciated the approval of fisheries development projects worth over ₹62 crore under PMMSY for Lakshadweep. The Vice President also highlighted the enabling framework announced by the Government for sustainable harvesting of fisheries resources from the EEZ and High Seas, stating that it would empower fishers to responsibly access deep-sea resources and benefit from new opportunities. He emphasized that Lakshadweep possesses an estimated fisheries potential of over 1 lakh tonnes, including about 94,000 tonnes of tuna and tuna-like species, and underscored the importance of scientific harvesting, digital authorization systems, vessel monitoring, international certification and sustainable fishing practices to enhance fishers' incomes and strengthen India's position in global seafood markets. He further stressed that conservation of marine resources and adherence to responsible fishing practices are essential for ensuring long-term prosperity of the fisheries sector and advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.



During the event, the Hon'ble Vice President distributed Benefits to beneficiaries under PMMSY which included support for acquisition of Deep-Sea Fishing Vessels (DSFVs) for traditional fishermen, promotion of recreational fisheries aligned with the tourism potential of the islands, provision of safety kits for traditional and motorised fishing vessels, facilitation of Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) for fishermen, assistance for replacement of old fishing boats and nets, and supply of communication and tracking devices. The beneficiaries included Mr. Haleema K Cheriadam, President, Malsyam Fishermen Cooperative Society Ltd, Androth Island; Private Entrepreneurs namely Mr. Althaf Munavver Tanveer, Mr. Noor Mohammed, Mr. Ameen Bin Mohammed C N; Boat owners namely Mr. Sadik S, Mr. Noushad Khan Nasheeda Mahal, Mr. Ashik, Mr. Kidave Kunhikadiyapada, and fishermen namely, Mr. Aboobacker Uriyoda, and Mr. Sabeeh Mubarak



Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj, stated that the outreach programme reflects the Government's commitment to understanding the needs of Lakshadweep's fishing communities and preparing a comprehensive roadmap for enhancing fishers' incomes, strengthening infrastructure, improving safety at sea, promoting value addition and expanding market access. He highlighted the transformational initiatives undertaken under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, including the Blue Revolution, FIDF, PMMSY and PMMKSSY, which have significantly accelerated the growth of the fisheries sector. The Minister noted that India's fish production has increased from 95.7 lakh tonnes in 2013-14 to 197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, while seafood exports have witnessed substantial growth reaching a record Rs. 73,890 Crore in 2025-26 despite trade challenges. Emphasizing Lakshadweep's vast untapped high value tuna resources, he underscored the need to sustainably harness the island resources to create new livelihood opportunities for fishers, cooperatives, FPOs and women-led enterprises. He further highlighted the Government's policy initiatives, including the Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone Rules, 2025 and the Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas, 2025, which provide an enabling framework for responsible offshore fisheries development including the launch of Access pass and Letter of Authorization under the same.

Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel, Hon'ble Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj, highlighted Lakshadweep's strategic importance in India's Blue Economy, noting that although small in land area, the islands account for nearly 17% of India's Exclusive Economic Zone. He stated that the Government is working towards securing international sustainability certification and developing a global "Lakshadweep Sustainable Tuna" brand to enhance export competitiveness and fishers' incomes. The Minister further informed that Lakshadweep has been notified as a Seaweed Cluster and that a Seaweed Bank has been approved in collaboration with ICAR-CMFRI. He noted that 575 seaweed cultivation units, supported by an investment of about ₹2 crore, are being promoted to generate livelihood opportunities for women, youth and self-help groups. Highlighting the potential of ornamental fisheries, he stated that Lakshadweep is home to over 300 ornamental fish species and that an ornamental fish hatchery has been established at Agatti, while three rearing units have been approved under PMMSY. He also noted that 19 recreational fishing units have been sanctioned under PMMSY to promote fisheries-based tourism and create additional income opportunities for island communities.

Shri Praful Khoda Patel, Hon'ble Administrator of Lakshadweep and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu., highlighted the immense untapped fisheries potential of the islands, noting that against an estimated annual fisheries potential of nearly 1 lakh metric tonnes, particularly of high-value Yellowfin and Skipjack Tuna, the current harvest stands at only about 15,000 metric tonnes. He emphasized that the Government is taking determined steps to bridge this gap through targeted interventions in tuna fisheries, deep-sea fishing, seaweed cultivation and fish processing. He informed that under the support of the Government of India, 16 Deep Sea Fishing Vessels, each costing about ₹1.2 crore, have been sanctioned

for fishers with full financial assistance, and their construction is already underway. The Administrator further highlighted the vast potential for seaweed farming across the islands and stated that new initiatives in fisheries infrastructure, value addition and processing, along with the upcoming fisheries policy of Lakshadweep, are expected to create substantial livelihood opportunities and significantly enhance the incomes of local fishers. He expressed confidence that Lakshadweep would emerge as a model region for fisheries-led Blue Economy development in the coming years.

Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, highlighted that Lakshadweep occupies a strategic position in India's fisheries and aquaculture landscape, with the island territories of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar together accounting for nearly 50% of the country's Exclusive Economic Zone. He noted that the resource-rich waters surrounding the islands offer immense opportunities for tuna fisheries, deep-sea fishing, mariculture, seaweed cultivation and ornamental fisheries. He noted that the Government has created an enabling framework for sustainable offshore fisheries through the EEZ Rules, 2025 and High Seas Guidelines, 2025, while extending substantial support under PMMSY. He further stated that the establishment of a Seaweed Bank and notification of Lakshadweep as a Seaweed Cluster will create new livelihood opportunities and boost the blue economy, with a continued focus on enhancing fishers' incomes, skills, safety, market access and adoption of modern technologies.



The Government is strengthening Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) and fisheries cooperatives through financial, technical and capacity-building support to enable island communities to sustainably harness high-value resources such as tuna and tuna-like species, seaweed, ornamental fisheries and deep-sea fisheries. These interventions aim to improve aggregation, value addition, market access and income opportunities for fishers and other fisheries stakeholders.

Background

India is endowed with a vast and diverse marine resource base, supported by a coastline of approximately 11,099 km and an Exclusive Economic Zone of about 24 lakh sq. km. The marine fisheries potential within India's EEZ is estimated at 58.6 lakh MT, supporting the livelihoods of approximately 50 lakh fishers and contributing significantly to food security, nutrition, employment, income generation and export revenues. India is presently among the leading fisheries and aquaculture producing countries globally and exported seafood valued at around ₹73,890 crore during FY 2025-26.

Most fishing activities are concentrated within 40–50 nautical miles of the coast, while deeper waters and areas beyond national jurisdiction offer substantial opportunities for harvesting high-value species, particularly tuna and tuna-like resources. recognising the strategic importance of sustainable marine fisheries, the Government of India, has notified enabling framework for sustainable harnessing of fisheries from the Indian EEZ and the High Seas including Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025.

Lakshadweep is endowed with rich oceanic fisheries resources, particularly high-value tuna species such as Yellowfin Tuna and Skipjack Tuna, which form the backbone of the island's marine fisheries sector. Supported by vast and productive waters, these commercially important species offer significant

opportunities for sustainable harvesting, value addition, export growth and livelihood generation, positioning Lakshadweep as a key hub for tuna-based fisheries and blue economy development.

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