



Department of Fisheries to Organize National Workshop on Promotion of Deep-Sea Fishing and Interaction with Access Pass and LoA Holders

Major Focus on Technology, Financing, Skill development and Market Linkages promoting Harnessing of High-Value Marine Resources and Seafood Exports

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The Department of Fisheries, Government of India is organizing a **National Workshop on Promotion of Deep-Sea Fishing and Interaction with Access Pass and LoA Holders** on **17th September 2026** in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**. The National workshop aims to promote deep-sea fishing by encouraging fishers to harness high-value fisheries resources, while also providing a platform to understand on-ground challenges and gather stakeholder suggestions for further strengthening the sector.

The National workshop will be graced by presence of Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj; Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat, along with Prof. S. P. Singh Baghel, Hon'ble Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj. The event will also witness the participation of fishers including women fishers in person, along with officials from the Department of Fisheries, GoI, Government of Gujarat and all other coastal States/UTs, ICAR, CIFNET, NABARD, NCEL, NCDC, SEAI, MPEDA, EIC and other fisheries stakeholders.

Department of Fisheries, Government of India has given special thrust to strengthening fisheries farmer producer organizations (FFPO) and fisheries cooperatives while also focusing on digitization of the fisheries sector through various initiatives.

The National workshop will feature focused technical sessions covering the entire deep-sea fishing value chain, from resource potential and vessel modernization to skill development, financing, processing, value addition and access to export markets. Discussions will explore opportunities for harnessing high-value fisheries resources in India's EEZ and High Seas, adoption of modern fishing technologies and global best practices, capacity building for fishers and crew, access to institutional finance and cooperative-led investment models, and strengthening of post-harvest management, traceability, value addition, and export compliance systems. Each session will comprise expert presentations, fishers or industry perspectives, and stakeholder discussions, providing participants with practical insights and a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and support mechanisms available for advancing deep-sea fishing in India.

The deliberations are expected to serve as a significant platform for strengthening India's deep-sea fishing ecosystem by bringing together policymakers, technical experts, financial institutions, industry stakeholders, cooperatives, and fishers for focused deliberations. The discussions and recommendations emerging from the workshop will help identify practical solutions to on-ground challenges, improve access to technology, skills, finance, and markets, and facilitate greater participation of fishers in deep-sea fishing.

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 including Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Rules, 2025 and High Seas Guidelines, 2025 for sustainable harnessing of fisheries resources by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels.

The Access Pass for fishing in India's EEZ, is a free digital pass issued via the *ReALCRaft* Portal. Its core objective is to empower the traditional fishers, cooperatives, and Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) for fishing in the EEZ (12 to 200 nautical miles), while ensuring sustainability of oceanic fishery resources. The Access Pass is issued under the *Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Rules, 2025* notified by the Government of India on 04 November 2025. The Access Pass is required for mechanized fishing vessels and large motorized boats over 24 meters length, while traditional non-motorized and small artisanal crafts are fully exempted to protect local livelihoods. This landmark initiative aims to empower traditional and small-scale fishermen, Fisheries Cooperative Societies, and Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) to expand fishing operations, harness untapped resources through deep-sea fishing, and access new income streams through processing and exports, thereby enhancing livelihoods. As per the EEZ Rules, the Access Pass is required for undertaking fishing operations in the EEZ of India, beyond 12 nautical miles. So far, a total of 9,650 Access Passes have been issued based on applications received through coastal States and Union Territories.

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