Govt mulling steps to ensure quality of fish sold in state, says CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

CHIEF Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday said the state government was contemplating introducing certain measures to ensure the quality of fish sold in the state. He was delivering the inaugural address at a function organised to mark the diamond jubilee of the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) at Wil-lingdon Island here.

“Government intervention is required to curb use of chemicals to preserve harvested fish. Certain standards have to be laid down without further delay,” Pinarayi said.

The Chief Minister said the standard of living of fishermen in some places was almost similar to that of tribal communities. “Fishermen are not getting an income proportionate to their efforts owing to the exploitation of middlemen at various levels. They continue to be poor. The government is looking into the problems in the fisheries sector and steps will be initiated to improve the standard of living of fishermen,” he said.

The Chief Minister also released the new logo of CIFT. Fisheries Minister J Mercykutty Amma, who presided over the function, said CIFT, through its technologies, has helped Indian fisheries sector grow globally. “In the wake of fisheries sector facing tribulations owing to multiple reasons, including climate change, CIFT has a vital role to play in the years to come,” she said. The minister said the institute should focus on basic, strategic and applied research in further development of fuel-efficient vessels and fishing gears, designing innovative equipment and machinery and developing eco-friendly technologies. “CIFT is also expected to focus on optimum utilisation of resources and include handling and preservation under its ambit,” the minister said.

CIFT director C N Ravisankar, who welcomed the gathering, brought to the notice of the Chief Minister that the institute was situated on land leased out by the Cochin Port Trust. “We are paying a huge lease amount to the Port Trust. It will be good if the government alloted land for the institute in Ernakulam,” Ravisankar said.

Director general of Indian Council of Agriculture Research T Mohapatra delivered the keynote address. Agriculture Minister V S Sunil Kumar was the guest of honour at the function, which was attended by Kochi Mayor Soumini Jain and MLAs Hibi Eden and K J Maxi. Head of the Division of Biochemistry and Nutrition, CIFT, Suseela Mathew proposed a vote of thanks.