

Venkaiah Naidu calls for judicious use of fisheries resources

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THE future outlook of the fisheries sector must focus not on increasing fishing efforts of the already depleted resources, but on its judicious use, said Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu. He was speaking after inaugurating the Indian Fisheries and Aquaculture forum - the triennial international conference on fisheries jointly hosted by the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) and the Asian Fisheries Society Indian Branch (AFSIB) - in Kochi on Tuesday.

"We need to focus on reducing losses and value addition and supplementing the ever-increasing need for fish through modern aquaculture technologies and diversification," he said. "Other than farming finfish in the farms on the mainland, our fish farmers are engaged in farming of several species of shrimps, crabs, mussels, oysters and seaweed in



Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu with a model of Chinese Net gifted by J K Jena, chairman, AFSIB and Deputy Director General (Fisheries Science), Indian Council of Agricultural Research, at the inauguration of 11th Indian Fisheries and Aqua Culture Forum in Kochi on Tuesday. Governor P Sathasivam is also seen | MELTON ANTONY

farms and in cages in the open sea." "With production from marine capture fisheries not promising much future in terms of

quantity, most Asian countries have started to focus on increasing the fish production through advanced technological interven-

tions. Studies have shown catches from wild capture fisheries have actually been declining since peak global catches in the mid-1990s. As per the Govt. of India estimates, the total fish production during 2015-16 was 10.79 million tonnes of which 7.21 MMT comes from inland aquaculture and capture fisheries and 3.58 MMT from marine capture fisheries," he said.

"The vibrancy of the sector can be visualised by over 14-fold increase in fish production in just six and a half decades. The dependence of over 14.5 million people on fisheries activities for their livelihood is a testimony to the importance the sector holds today. India contributes about 6.3 per cent of global fish production which is also 1.1 per cent of the national GDP and 5.15 per cent of the agricultural GDP of the country," said Naidu.

The Vice President said it was necessary to ensure economic

benefits from both capture fisheries and aquaculture are reaching the fishers and fish farmers. "Much of the economic benefits from capture fisheries and aquaculture are not going to the farmers," he said.

He urged scientists to focus on areas which will improve the economic condition of farmers.

Speaking at the function, Kerala Fisheries Minister Mercykutty Amma said the government had initiated schemes for commercial cage farming in the sea and backwaters. Governor Justice P Sathasivam presided over the event. AFSIB Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) deputy director general J K Jena welcomed the gathering. ICAR director general T Mohapatra also spoke on the occasion. Local Self Government Minister K T Jaleel, K V Thomas MP were also present. CIFT director C N Ravishankar proposed the vote of thanks.