

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 379
TO BE ANSWERED ON 3rd December, 2025

Sustainable harnessing of fisheries in India's EEZ

379 Smt. Rekha Sharma:

Dr. Sumer Singh Solanki:

Dr. Kavita Patidar:

Shri Mokariya Rambhai:

Will the Minister of ***Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying*** be pleased to state:

- (a) the key provisions of recently notified Rules for sustainable harnessing of fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and objectives behind their introduction;
- (b) the measures undertaken to empower small-scale fishers, cooperatives and Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) for deep-sea fishing and export-oriented activities;
- (c) the steps being taken to ensure transparency, safety and traceability through the ReALCRaft digital platform, including its integration with other national systems; and
- (d) whether these measures are expected to contribute towards sustainable fisheries, biodiversity conservation and the growth of India's Blue Economy?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)

- (a): The Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs has notified the *Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone Rules, 2025* which aims to empower traditional and small-scale fishermen, Fisheries Cooperative Societies, and Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) to expand their operations to harness the untapped resources of deep-sea, access new income streams with processing and exports, thereby enhancing and strengthening their livelihoods.
- (b): The Department of Fisheries, Government of India is implementing a flagship scheme *Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana* (PMMSY) which aims to enhance the overall growth of the fisheries sector and wellbeing of the fishers and fish farmers. One of the key objectives of PMMSY is to empower the traditional and small-scale fishers in deep-sea fishing. Accordingly, support is provided under the PMMSY to traditional fishers for acquisition of deep-sea fishing vessels (DSFVs) as well as upgradation of existing fishing vessels for export competency. Under the schemes of Blue Revolution, PMMSY and Fisheries & Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF), a total of Rs. 895.9 crore worth of projects have been sanctioned towards acquisition of 1243 number of

deep-sea fishing vessels (DSFVs) by traditional fishers and for upgradation or conversion of 1330 existing fishing vessels for export competency.

The Department of Fisheries (DoF, GoI) by adopting the “whole of Government approach”, is collaborating with the Ministry of Cooperation through a Joint Working Group (JWG) to promote small-scale fishermen, cooperatives and fishers societies in the areas of deep-sea fishing, post-harvest, processing and exports. Ministry of Cooperation supports this initiative by strengthening cooperative institutions and facilitating access to cooperative credit through National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC). As an example, in Maharashtra, 14 DSFVs have been supported by NCDC with a total project cost of ₹20.30 crore, including NCDC loan assistance of ₹11.55 crore, PMMSY assistance of ₹6.72 crore, and society contribution of ₹2.03 crore. Adopting this model two societies of fishermen of Mumbai city have recently received 02 DSFVs under PMMSY on 27.10.2025. This initiative is a model example of cooperative-led development in the fisheries sector empowering our fishermen to reach to deeper waters, and ensuring that India moves towards more sustainable and economically rewarding marine harvesting practices. This mechanism is strengthening the efforts of the Government to facilitate credit support, new technology, training and insurance to the small sector fishermen, societies and cooperatives to acquire and operate modern DSFVs.

(c): Registration and Licensing of Fishing Craft (ReALCRaft) is a web enabled online application portal established for issuing Vessel Registration Certificate (VRC) and fishing licence or access pass to fishing vessels under relevant laws or rules. ReALCRaft also promotes digital and data-driven citizen centric services and maintains transparency. VRC is issued by the coastal States/UTs under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. The ReALCRaft portal has been integrated with *Nabhmitra* Application and with coastal Security agencies for ensuring safety and security of fishermen out at sea.

(d): The *Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone Rules, 2025* are framed to promote sustainability of marine ecosystem with optimum utilization of untapped fishery resources. Emphasis is also given to promote ecosystem approach for sustainable harnessing of resources and implementation of the conservation and management measures, such as uniform ban on fishing during monsoon or fish breeding season, minimum legal size of fish for capture, bycatch reduction measures, best practices for reducing post-harvest losses on board the fishing vessel, conservation of fish stocks or rejuvenation measures including sea ranching, installation of artificial reefs, identification and protection of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), including spawning, breeding, and feeding grounds etc. The Rules also prohibit destructive fishing and juvenile fishing in the EEZ to protect the marine biodiversity of our seas.

These efforts are expected to significantly enhance the marine sector's contribution to India's seafood exports, while increasing the share of value-added seafood products in the global markets. Special emphasis is given on promoting exports of high-value seafood products through certification, traceability and sustainability. These initiative are likely to play a pivotal role in enhancing the seafood export from the country.
