

### **Sindh government plans to set up new port at Ketu Bunder**

The Sindh government is planning to establish a new harbour at Ketu Bunder to help local fishermen providing an easy market reach in areas like Thatta and Badin, a top official said on Wednesday. Speaking at a workshop held to mark the World Fisheries Day 2018, Sindh Fisheries Department DG Dr Mir Allah Dad Talpur said the proposed facility will not only help to save transportation cost of fishermen but also fetch a good price for them. He said the government is consulting with the national and international experts in this connection.

The WWF-Pakistan in collaboration with the Sindh Fisheries Department under its Sustainable Fisheries Entrepreneurship Project supported by Engro Foundation for fishermen of Ibrahim Hyderi, Rehri and Kakapir at Korangi, Karachi. He said "Sea is used as a dumping site," he regretted that the pollution is destroying marine ecosystem of the country. The government is also planning to set up three sewage water treatment plants in the city to scale down water pollution.

"The department is taking all possible steps to improve living standards of the fishers by promoting coastal ecotourism as practiced in Malaysia and other coastal countries in the world," he said. Besides, the Sindh government is also approaching Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank and UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to improve country's fisheries sector. He also unfolded the government's plan to introduce a scholarship scheme through an endowment fund for the fishermen children helping them attain a quality education.

Over the past, he said, 12,000 marine dolphins and 28,000 turtles used to perish annually by getting entangled in fishing nets, which have been significantly reduced to a few hundred now through safe release, awareness, education and innovative practices. "Safe release of various species a significant contribution towards conservation of marine biodiversity, he added.

Calling the illicit catch of juvenile fish a 'serious threat' to the fast depleting marine fish stocks in Pakistan, Dr Mir Allah Dad Talpur said the stakeholders should step up to promote fish farming in inland waters, besides in coastal areas to produce an additional amount of raw material for export purposes.

Engro Foundation business sustainability advisor Maha Amin said organization is taking practical steps to improve livelihood and conserve biodiversity in Pakistani waters. She said plastic waste is a growing challenge which needs to be addressed through joint efforts. She shared that it is heartening to know that local people have become more aware about sustainable use of their resources and feel pride in protection of endangered species.

Marine Fisheries Department deputy director Zafar Imam gave an overview of the status of fisheries in Sindh and Balochistan and shared that fish processing units have been installed at different locations along the coast. He also offered to use these facilities for capacity building of local fishers to improve fisheries resources. He stressed the need for promotion of aqua-culture along the coast of Pakistan.

Sindh Fisheries Department deputy director Aslam Jarwar emphasized on the need to completely shun use of small mesh size illegal nets which are main threat to juvenile fish species. He also shared that the department is making all possible efforts to improve living standards of fisher communities by providing them RO plants, legal nets, boats and has established residential colonies. He appealed the fishers that they should support government in implementation of the policies and efficient management of fisheries resources.

WWF-Pakistan Sindh conservation manager Altaf Hussain Sheikh, WWF-Pakistan Marine Programme coordinator Saeed ul Islam and community representative Mohammad Ayub also spoke during the event. On this occasion, 50 iceboxes were distributed among deserving fishermen which would help fishers reduce post-harvest losses and enhance their income generation capacity.

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