

TAMIL NADU

## PM flags off deep-sea fishing project



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### Will help fishermen give up bottom trawling and construct longliners

Seeking to find a permanent solution to the vexatious fishermen issue, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday launched the 'deep-sea fishing project' by distributing sanction orders to fishermen to construct tuna longliner trawlers under the 'Blue Revolution' scheme.

Addressing public meeting at Mandapam near here after inaugurating a memorial for former president A.P.J. Abdul Kalam at Pei Karumbu, Mr. Modi distributed the orders to five fishermen to enable them to take up deep-sea fishing and avoid bottom trawling in the Palk Bay.

As the fishermen 'trespass' into the Sri Lankan waters while fishing in the Palk Bay and get arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy, the Centre and State governments have chalked out a scheme to make 2,000 trawlers to switch over to deep-sea tuna longliner-cum-gill-netter boats over a period of three years.

The ambitious project, seeking to find a permanent solution to the fishermen problem, would be implemented with funding assistance from the Centre and State governments. The Centre has allocated Rs. 200 crore and the State Rs. 86 crore towards subsidy for 500 fishermen to switch over to deep-sea fishing in the first phase (2017-18).

Under the scheme, the beneficiaries would be offered assistance to construct tuna longliners at a cost of Rs. 80 lakh per boat. The Centre would provide 50% subsidy and the State government 20%. The beneficiaries would be helped to raise 20% institutional finance after their 10% contribution.

### **Beneficiaries selected**

Official sources said 31 beneficiaries have been selected in the initial phase and the construction of longliners would begin in August. Priority is being given to those fishermen whose boats have been impounded by Sri Lanka and those whose boats have been damaged beyond salvage, official sources said.

The Pandyan Grama Bank has come forward to provide institutional finance support under its *Meenavar Thozhan* scheme and a few of the registered boat builders have agreed to set up yards in Kunthukal, Mandapam and Rameswaram. The Fisheries College and Research Institute, Thoothukudi, has come forward to open a training centre for deep-sea fishing in Kanniyakumari district, they said.