Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying

Union Secretary Chairs Review Meeting on Pithoragarh Coldwater Fisheries Cluster; Discusses Future Roadmap for Trout Farming Development.

Uttarakhand Becomes the First State in the Himalayan Region to Export Trout to Nepal and first state to supply in ITBP.

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Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India, chaired a review meeting on the Pithoragarh Coldwater Fisheries Cluster at the Collectorate in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, on 19 October 2026. The hybrid meeting was attended by Shri Sanjay Kumar Gunjyal, Additional Director General (ADG), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP); Smt. Gunjan Krishna, Joint Secretary, Department of Fisheries; Dr. J. K. Jena, Deputy Director General (Fisheries Science), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR); Dr. B. K. Behera, Chief Executive Officer, National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB); Shri P. Jawahar, Chairman, Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA); Shri Ashish Kumar Bhatgain, District Magistrate, Pithoragarh; Shri Chandra Singh Dharamshaktu, Director of Fisheries, Uttarakhand; and representatives of Himalayan states, NABARD, ICAR-DCFR, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), trout farmers and other stakeholders, through physical and virtual modes.



The Union Secretary highlighted importance of Coldwater fisheries in Himalayan Region of India which offers unique and favorable ecological conditions for rainbow trout farming. Government of India has notified 34 fisheries clusters across the country and cold water fisheries cluster notified in Pithoragarh.

During the review Shri Ashish Kumar Bhatgain, District Magistrate of Pithoragarh, presented an overview of the achievements and initiatives in the district's fisheries sector. He highlighted the need to strengthen market linkages, promote trout value addition and ensure better prices for fish farmers. He assured that the district administration would work in coordination with the Department of Fisheries to address these challenges and further strengthen the sector.

Dr. B. K. Behera, Chief Executive, NFDB, delivered a detailed presentation on the Coldwater Fisheries Cluster Programme, highlighting pre-production and post-production gaps and outlining a roadmap for the next five years.

Smt. Gunjan Krishna, Joint Secretary, DoF, GoI, in her opening remark highlighted importance of convergence and interventions of technology in the cold-water fisheries. She further added the requirements of strengthening value chain infrastructure.



Union Secretary has suggested other Himalayan States to explore possibilities of MoU to supply trouts to ITBP and other armed forces in coordination with Department of Fisheries Government of India. Shri Sanjay Kumar Gunjyal, Additional Director General (ADG) has informed that ITBP in north-eastern states like Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh have significant requirement of trout fish.

Union Secretary interacted with trout fish farmers during the meeting on the Pithoragarh Coldwater Fisheries Cluster at the Collectorate Conference Hall, Pithoragarh. Trout farmers highlighted key issues, including the need for better prices for trout, training and capacity building, and the availability of quality feed at reasonable rates. Smt. Rekha Joshi, a woman fish farmer, shared her success story and informed that she started producing value-added fish products such as fish balls, fish fingers and fish momos, generating daily sales of approximately ₹5,000. Another trout farmer from Munsiyari highlighted that the rates for trout supplied to ITBP are quite low, considering the high costs of feed and transportation.



Union Secretary discussed the future roadmap for strengthening trout farming across the Himalayan states. Deliberations focused on addressing challenges related to trout seed availability, feed supply, productivity and cold-chain infrastructure, alongside strengthening scientific support, market linkages and the fisheries value chain. He also suggested to submit DPR of various projects meeting the futuristic requirement of pre-production, production and post production with due diligence to NFDB. Union secretary also stressed upon.

The Secretary further emphasised the need to encourage greater participation of start-ups and entrepreneurs in coldwater fisheries clusters. He highlighted the importance of strengthening cold-chain infrastructure, including establishing cold storage facilities near airports and railway stations, to facilitate trout transportation and exports. He also stressed the need to collaborate with the armed forces, including ITBP, to expand trout procurement from other Himalayan states, supported by a whole-of-government approach and a cooperative-led model to strengthen the cluster.



Shri P. Jawahar, Chairman, MPEDA, emphasised the importance of training and capacity building for trout farmers to strengthen their technical skills and improve export readiness. He highlighted the need to promote best practices in post-harvest handling, quality assurance, processing and value addition to enhance product quality, competitiveness and access to domestic and international markets.

Dr. J. K. Jena, Deputy Director General (Fisheries Science), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), highlighted ICAR's research and technical support for the development of trout fish clusters. The focus is on promoting scientific aquaculture

practices, strengthening technical capacity and supporting the sustainable development of cold-water fisheries.

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