

**Alakal** - A fortnightly publication of the Kerala Swatantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation

### **Widespread misuse of tsunami funds**

Thiruvananthapuram: Testifying before the high court, the Under Secretary of the Disaster Management Wing, M Thomas admitted that a large proportion of the tsunami funds were used for Waynad District.

The total money collected was Rs. 37,50,32,829. The expenditure, district-wise is as follows: Thiruvananthapuram – Rs. 2,08,10,150; Kollam – Rs.30,00,000; Alappuzha – Rs. 1,45,81,950; Kottayam – Rs.55,00,000; Iddukki – Rs.59,77,300; Ernakulam – Rs.51,97,800; Thrissur – Rs. 71,92,100; Palakkad – Rs.50,00,000; Malappuram – Rs.61,00,000; Wyanad – Rs.1,51,09,300; Pathanamthitta – Rs.10,00,000; Kasargode – Rs.44,50,000; other expenditures Rs.1,37,27,000 and the balance in hand is, Rs.24,89,58,744.

Fish worker organisations had pointed out earlier that depositing all the tsunami funds in the public treasury was not a good idea. When people's representatives pointed out that the Tamilnadu government had deposited their tsunami funds in a special fund, the Kerala government had rejected their plea.

There are widespread allegations that the Minister of Revenue, KM Mani ensured that tsunami funds were diverted to most of his constituencies. Despite the damage incurred by the tsunami on fisheries, the Revenue Department was authorised to spend all the money, they alleged.

### **Medha Patkar at Trivandrum Secretariat on July 23**

Thiruvananthapuram: The anti-Coca cola satyagraha, under the leadership of the National Alliance of People's Movements, is gaining support from many organisations nation-wide. Hundreds of fish workers, dalits, farm workers, adivasis and environmental activists from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka have already reached the satyagraha site and announced their support. Supporters from other states have decided to stage protests over the indiscriminate use of ground water resources by soft drink companies, the NAPM leadership announced. Medha Patkar will be opening a new aspect of the stike on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. She will also inaugurate a vehicle rally in

support of the anti- Coca cola struggle. She will be greeted by supporters from Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur, on her way to the satyagraha pavilion. The proposed vehicle rally is to strengthen the anti-Coca Cola struggle in the state, said NAPM State Convenor, Suresh George.

### **Strike against fish import strengthens**

Thiruvananthapuram:

Protesting against the fish import policy, license to foreign trawlers and demanding a fisheries ministry at the centre, the Kerala Fisheries Coordination Committee is organising protests before Central government offices at Kozhikode and Ernakulam on July 27<sup>th</sup> and Thiruvananthapuram on August 1<sup>st</sup>. As a prelude to the strike, the coordination committee has decided to hold public meetings in Thiruvananthapuram District, John JP, District Chairman and Pulluvila Stanley, District Convenor announced.

### **Children of fish workers should be given reservations and lump some grants – KSMTF**

Thiruvananthapuram: Children of fish workers, hailing from the most backward segments of society, should be given reservations for admission to private owned educational institutions and those students already enrolled in such institutions should be given lump some grants by the government, demanded the KSMTF. The children of fish workers should not be forced to resort to agitation, the Federation requested the Chief Minister and the Minister for Education. The ongoing lump some grant must be available to students at the beginning of the academic year. Students of the fishing community will be able to advance themselves only if they are exposed to higher education. The performance of students in fisheries schools due to the limited facilities available there. The Department of Fisheries should pay attention to these issues, added the Federation President, T Peter and General Secretary, PP John.

## **Condolence – PKV**

Thiruvananthapuram:

The KSMTF condoles the death of the former Chief Minister of Kerala, PK Vasudevan Nair. He had worked closely with the fishing community and his death is a great loss to the fish workers and all workers, added the KSMTF in a condolence note.

## **Editorial:**

### **Tsunami in Waynad?**

The tsunami that struck on 26 December 2004 has brought pain in the hearts of many people. In response, they generously contributed a share of their earnings to the Chief Ministers' Relief Fund. While tsunami affected fish workers continue to live in misery, a group of individuals who see this calamity as a blessing in disguise, hover around us arrogantly. If the funds were utilised only in the tsunami affected districts of Kollam, Alappuzha and Ernakulam, they would surely have been justified. The misuse of tsunami funds is indeed a shame upon the Kerala government. Districts located inland and on the foothills of the Western Ghats like Iddukki, Wyanad, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta have unfortunately received a lion's share of the tsunami funds and the fish worker community finds this deplorable. (Wyanad District has received the maximum grant) Certain segments of the upper class have ensured that fish workers are kept out of the relief funds. Keeping the Minister of Fisheries deliberately out of the disbursement, and the Revenue Minister and the Chief Minister managed to divert the funds to their constituencies. Fish workers in Alappad, Aratupuzha and Edavanakkad (affected areas) still live in the throes of poverty. Rehabilitation for the people living in overcrowded temporary shelters has not come through satisfactorily and the deserving have not received the dole of fishing equipment. In other coastal districts, though there is no loss of life, losses have been incurred upon fishing equipment. The government has not been able to provide relief to these people. The free rations for the tsunami affected was distributed even to people living inland and not affected by the tsunami. . The government has not been able to provide relief to these people.

Fish workers should rise against the government's attitude and ensure that it is not repeated. The government should refrain from making fools out of fish workers. The government should take note of the fact that fish workers are capable of coming down heavily upon the government, should the need arise.

## **The approximate chemical composition of fish**

...contd from last issue

As soon as fish is landed, it should be washed with fresh water containing 1 PPM chlorine. This will disinfect the fish. In normal temperatures, fish will be rendered unfit for human consumption in 8 to 12 hours after it is caught. The decomposition of fish begins at the moment of death and the high atmospheric temperatures in tropical countries like India greatly add to its decomposition. The fish distribution network in India is poised for expansion. Refrigerated transport facilities are needed for this – both by rail and road. If this cold chain can be strengthened, the distribution system will grow in leaps and bounds ensuring cheap nutrition for the common man. The deplorable state of the dried fish industry is due to the lack of hygiene. Improper drying to increase weight has caused a severe quality drop resulting in fungal infections that leave a reddish hue on the fish. This hue is due to the presence of Red Holo flick bacterium. To overcome this, the fish should be cleaned hygienically. In most cases, fish is dried only when it cannot be sold fresh. By which time, the fish has already decomposed. The fish should be dried before the rot sets in and the laying of fish on the beach or on the ground should be strictly prohibited. Fish should be dried in well ventilated and clean spaces preferably on clean cement floors. It should be protected from scavenging birds, flies and other insects. Insects lay eggs on fish and they hatch to form maggots and other creatures. Fish should be dried till the percentage of water reaches 30 to 35%. Medium sized fish like mackerels etc need to be dried for two to three days to reach the above water content. When fish is dried, most of the bacteria die. Drying of fish hygienically will improve the quality of fish greatly. Proper control of bacteria will definitely energise the dried fish industry. Salmonella infection, commonly seen in fish meal, can be easily killed by sufficient radiation from the sun. Potassium Sorbate, Sodium Sorbate, Boric Acid, Ascorbic acid, Butylated hydroxyl toluene can also be used in small quantities to disinfect fish.

## **Last words of KV Raphael**

Thoppumpadi:

The last words of the late KV Raphael were directed at fish workers. He was speaking at a seminar on the issues facing fisheries, at Cochin Bishop's house, when he fell unconscious. He was taken to the hospital immediately and lost his

life three days later. He was the state vice president and the district president of the KSMTF. A true fisherman, Raphael joined the KSMTF in 1983. He then became the Chellanam unit president. He had tirelessly worked for the welfare of fish workers and his death plunged the entire fish worker community into grief. People flocked to his residence on hearing the news of his death. He was a fish worker who had dedicated his life to the fish worker community, said the Minister of Fisheries, Dominic Presentation in his condolence address.

### **Drinking water project for Vizhinjam**

Vizhinjam: Vizhinjam, a village that experiences severe drinking water shortage, is now home to a new drinking water project initially targeted at 500 families. The project will be undertaken jointly by the Socio Economic Unit, Thiruvananthapuram Social Service Society and the Vizhinjam Parish. The Director of the TSSS, Fr. George Gomes has requested the cooperation of all concerned persons to make this project a success. Fish workers were paying up to five rupees for a pot of drinking water. Middle men, during acute water shortage, hike up the costs. The Socio Economic Unit officials said that they are willing to pay half the costs of any drinking water initiative undertaken by the community.

### **AICUF camp**

Thrissur:

The AICUF conducted a three day leadership camp in Thrissur Vimala College. 47 students from all over the state took part in the camp. Personality development, awareness, organisational abilities and public speaking were the subjects taught by Bishop Paul Chittilapally, D Dheera (Vimala College Principal), Joy Thomas (KFC), CK Thomas (AIR), Fr. C Stephen and Herison (AICUF).

A diploma in Leadership Training will be conducted in August at Kozhikode SRC, the programme co-ordinator Fr. C Stephen announced.

### **Exploitation of nature in Kerala**

The over exploitation of ocean resources is leading us into danger. Our fisheries can be divided into two sectors – inland and ocean. Kerala has 0.85 lakh hectares of rivers, 0.30 lakh hectares of dams, 0.25 lakh hectares of ponds, 2.43

lakh hectares of lakes. Only 11.36% of the total resources exploited is from the inland sector. These are the resources exploited from lakes alone. There are no records of the resources exploited from other water bodies. Recent studies indicate that the resources in other water bodies suffer over exploitation. During the ninth five year plan, a publication called Pan Fish, published under the insistence of Minister TK Ramakrishnan, has numerous data pertaining to fisheries but it lacks details about the resources of fish. All data available now is only from lakes. Increase in the fish landed on our coasts is entirely due to the advancements made in fishing technology. A warning issued by Prof Madhusudhanan Kurup that commercially viable fish stocks are depleting is falling on deaf ears.

Unwarranted exploitation of nature is causing the depletion of fish stocks and denuding our forests. Our biodiversity is being threatened. Water scarcity is increasing.

Prof. MK Prasad

### **Fish workers and sea safety**

Thiruvananthapuram:

The South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) is organising a one-day seminar on Fish Workers and Sea Safety on July 25 at TDFF Hall, Thiruvananthapuram. The Coast Guard, Marine Enforcement Wing, Fisheries Department will be represented in the seminar. There will also be an exhibition of sea safety equipment by leading manufacturers, informed the programme coordinator, VN Roy.

### **National workshop at Chennai**

Maharashtra:

The National Fish workers Forum is organising a workshop on August 20, 21, 22, in Chennai, said the General Secretary, ND Kohli. Each maritime state will be represented by five participants who will join the discussion on the following subjects: National Fisheries policy, Tsunami rehabilitation and coastal conservation and ILO labour laws.

### **Bad odour from shrimp processing unit**

Palluruthi: Residents around Choice Road have complained of the bad odour rising from a shrimp processing unit nearby. They say the odour, which comes most strongly when the boiler is working, is causing untold suffering to the residents and will lead to disease.

### **Tuna prices drop sharply**

Vizag: Fish workers in the Andhra coast have reported an increase in the post tsunami harvest of tuna. Tuna is harvested by traditional fish workers in sail boats using hooks. Two types of tuna, favoured by the export market, is now being harvested. The prices of tuna in the international market has dropped sharply. IN 1990, when the cost of Diesel per litre was Rs.16 and kerosene, Rs.3, a kilo of tuna used to fetch \$12 and a kilo of shrimp, Rs.350. Now, with the price of Diesel at Rs.36 and kerosene at Rs.20 – 25 (black market rates), the price of tuna has dropped to \$4 and shrimp at Rs.160.

There are growing instances of fish workers along the Andhra coast opting to use sails rather than engines, says Andhra Traditional Fishermen Union Secretary TK Rehman. He also requested the state and central governments to intervene, on behalf of traditional fishermen, to resolve the issue of falling prices.

### **Nobel Peace Prize – Maglin Peter nominated**

For the full story, visit [www.keralafishworkers.org](http://www.keralafishworkers.org)

### **NFF central office moves to Calcutta**

For the full story, visit [www.keralafishworkers.org](http://www.keralafishworkers.org)

### **Boat capsized – one fish worker dead**

Kozhikode:

A fishing boat capsized near the Kallai estuary killing one fish worker, AT Mayin, aged 55. His partner survived the accident. Friends and relatives offered their condolences.

### **Computer training camp**

Pathanamthitta: The KSMTF is organising a computer training camp for activists from the fishing sector at the Kovalam Animation Centre on July 22, 23, says Secretary PP John.

### **Donation request for KV Raphael' family**

Dear friends,

KV Raphael (Ippachan), State Vice President, KSMTF, Ernakulam District President, Chellanam-Kandakadavu Fish worker Welfare Union President, NFF State Council member had passed away on 18 June 2005 due to a cerebral haemorrhage.

Raphael's dream of a house of his own could not be realised. His family, now deeply in debt, consists of his wife Tresamma and two daughters. To ensure the security of his family, a fund has been constituted on his behalf by the KSMTF. We request all persons to donate liberally to this fund. The account number is 5370, South Indian Bank, Chellanam Branch. Donations may also be sent to Thaddeus VS (Podiyan), Convenor, VK Raphael Family Welfare Fund, Valiyaveetil, South Chellanam PO, Kochi – 8.

### **Fish workers stage protest before Kochi Port Trust**

Kochi: Demanding a fish landing centre and recreation centre, subsidy for fuel and the ban on foreign trawlers, fish workers staged a protest before the Kochi Port Trust office. It was organised by the Fisheries Co-ordination Committee and inaugurated by the Committee's State general Convenor, Advocate VV Sasindran. He pointed out the necessity of a Fisheries ministry at the centre. Fishing communities are being sidelined in the name of development and fish workers should unite in demanding for a landing centre and the ban on foreign trawlers, he added. AB Mathew Master, PV Pavitran, Charles George, KJ Antony and Kumbalam Rajappan addressed the gathering.