

Gujarat News Articles

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Gujarat: Coastal industry projects affect livelihood: Fisher leaders seek land rights

<https://www.counterview.net/2022/08/coastal-industry-projects-affect.html>

"Raising a series of demands following a meeting of the Samast Machimaar Samaj (Gujarat), Gujarat's small fisherfolk have insisted that they should be entitled to land rights over the sea coast, pointing out, projects along the coastal regions ""adversely affect"" their livelihood, a fact overlooked by policy makers. Issues discussed at the meeting held in Ahmedabad included clean drinking water at the fishing ports, angandwadis for children, schools near fishing ports, electricity connection, transportation facilities at ports, connection of roads from ports to their villages and main roads, removal of taxes imposed on diesel, rapid implementation of diesel subsidies for boats, kerosene supply to outboard motor boats, and so on.

They also discussed rapid registration of boats following a complete survey, fish market facilities for women and cold storage facilities for fish catch, asserting, these issues and demands would be soon placed before the state government. After the participation of around 30 leaders of the various coastal districts of Gujarat, the meeting chose an executive committee consisting of Usmang Gani Sherasiya (convener), Hiralbhai Dhimmar (Bharuch), Ayyubbbhai Manjaliya (Mundra) and Siddikbhai Jasraya (Salaya). It was pointed out at the meeting that the fish production has been decreasing rapidly due to industrialization over the coast and various projects of the government are directly affecting the small and poor fisher communities.

A demand for the livelihood of the fisher communities was raised, stating, the government should permit projects on the coast after detailed interaction with them. There should be expert level studies on livelihood options and on how such projects would affect the fisherfolk. There should also be a detailed study on the impact of dams on the fisher communities. The meeting raised the issue of Bhadbhut barrage. The barrage, to be built on the estuary of Narmada river, will directly impact the breeding of the rare hilsa fish. Ever since the Banas river has dried up, there is no hilsa fish catch in Surajbari area in the Bay of Kutch. Now, it was pointed out, only the Narmada estuary has hilsa breeding grounds, but the construction of the barrage will directly affect livelihood of 25,000-30,000 fishermen of Bharuch district, as it would affect the hilsa fish catch."

Gujarat: Coast Guard rescues five fishermen from flooded boat

<https://www.newsdrum.in/national/coast-guard-rescues-five-fishermen-from-flooded-boat-in-gujarat-sea-70153.html>

"The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has rescued five fishermen from a partially submerged boat off the Gujarat coast in Devbhumi Dwarka district, an official said on Wednesday.

The operation was carried out on the intervening night of August 2 and 3 near the Okha port.

""At about 12:45 am on August 3, the Indian Coast Guard District Headquarters at Okha received information regarding uncontrolled flooding onboard Indian Fishing Boat 'Raj Ayushi' nearly 10 nautical miles off the Okha port,"" said a release issued by the Defence PRO office in Gujarat.

The ICG dispatched its fast interceptor class of ship, C-413. Some vessels sailing in the vicinity of the distressed fishing boat were also alerted by the ICG to assist when needed, the release said.

""When the ICG ship reached the spot, the fishing boat was partially submerged due to heavy flooding. At around 02:15 am, all the five crew members were rescued and were taken onboard the ICG ship,"" the ICG said, adding that the rescued men were brought to Okha safely.

Using a submersible pump, the Coast Guard personnel also managed to control the flooding and brought the boat to Okha, the release added."

Gujarat: Needs to replicate white revolution model for blue revolution

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2022/state-editions/gujarat-needs-to-replicate-white-revolution-model-for-blue-revolution.html>

"The success of Gujarat in heralding India's White Revolution became a legend long ago. The cooperative movement by the traditional dairy farmers in the State culminated into a model with few parallels in the world. Amul, the most iconic brand that has emerged in post-independent India, was the concrete expression of that model. Today, Amul looks like an integral part of India since time immemorial. The lessons learned from the White Revolution could be harnessed successfully for launching the second Blue Revolution in the country.

Gujarat is ideally located for another path-breaking experiment called the mari-tech park promoting precision aquaculture. The strong cooperative culture coupled with the famed

entrepreneurship of Gujarat and the vast coastline makes the State ideal for this innovative project. Instead of pond-based farming the mari-tech park concept, using innovative information technology solutions, is putting forward the idea of precision farming based indoors. A section of the freshwater fish farming community in Gujarat could switch over to the 'zero waste, net-zero energy consumption' aquaculture put forward by the mari-tech park concept. The project by the blue economy framework formulated by the Union Government represents the next generation of aquaculture.

The aquaculture shrimp farming in Gujarat mainly concentrated in South Gujarat currently focuses mainly on the brackish water resources abundantly available in the state. According to Gujarat Aqua Feed Dealers' Association (GAFDA), the State is having around 3.75 lakh hectares of brackish water land fit for shrimp farming. A presentation made by GAFDA President Manoj Sharma in 2020 stated that out of this only 7,000 hectares are under farming and that shows the enormous potential for expansion.

According to the Marine Products Export Development Authority in 2020-21 Gujarat had over 9,000 hectares under shrimp farming with an estimated production of 50,526 tonnes. A report on the status of inland fisheries in the country by the Department of Fisheries of the Union Government highlighted the potential of the brackish water resources in Gujarat. According to the report, ""Owing to the high tidal amplitude, the Department (Fisheries) has identified Gujarat and Odisha as higher potential states for brackish water aquaculture and plans to boost the brackish water aquaculture area in the states"". I do not doubt the capacity and potential of the brackish water resources for shrimp farming.

The country needs to utilise the potential to the maximum possible extent. At the same time, we should also think about the kind of aquaculture that would address the needs of the future requirements in the global and domestic markets. The world is moving rapidly toward an ecologically sustainable farming practice with sustainability as a primary objective given the growing concern over the negative fallout from global warming and climate change.

The attention of governments across the world has been drawn to the blue economy to help find remedial measures to address some of the concerns arising from global warming. The farm-to-fork concept with complete traceability gaining wider acceptance in the global food industry is another factor that calls for a relook at the systems and practices prevailing in the aquaculture sector. The increasingly stringent food safety standards including limits to antibiotics and other chemical residues would require changes in many practices prevailing in the sector.

The idea of the mari-tech park concept gains significance in this background. The Kings Infra

Venture spearheading the concept has developed the proprietary systems and protocols for the successful implementation of the venture across the country. The pilot version of the project currently under implementation at Toothukudi in Tamil Nadu has shown salient features of the project and its benefits.

The model could be replicated in any part of the country with slight modifications as per the agro-climatic conditions prevailing in the region. The park provides plug and play facility that promises the next generation of aquaculture with zero waste and net-zero energy consumption. The project is ideal for implementation in the cooperative sector. The strength of the cooperative sector in Gujarat could be used for developing a similar matrix in the fisheries sector in the state. A research paper on the freshwater fish culture in Gujarat has identified the lack of awareness of scientific cultivation practices as one of the main constraints to the growth of the sector in the State.

According to the paper, 85 per cent of the people have stated ""information on the scientific cultivation practices are not available"" to them. The mari-tech park project with its system for regular seamless communication with farmers would ensure that the latest cultivation practices and knowledge would be at their fingertips. The project is also having an in-built facility to address the other major concerns highlighted by the researchers including quality feed and brood stocks. Nearly 79 per cent of farmers also complained about the lack of post-harvest infrastructure and proper marketing channels.

The lack of timely credit facilities and information deficit on loan and subsidy schemes also acts as serious constraints to the fish farmers in the State. The research paper has highlighted many positive points about the sector including the age and educational profile of the farming community. Nearly 48 per cent of the farmers belonged to a group identified as young with a maximum age of 30 years.

The educational qualification showed that 43 per cent studied up to secondary school levels, 12 per cent senior secondary levels, and six per cent up to the college level. Overall only six per cent of the farmers belonged to the category of not having had formal school education. The age and educational profile of the farming community appears to be ideal for a project such as mari-tech park using information technology tools including AI and IoT. It is time for Gujarat to seize the moment and be at the forefront of another path breaking revolution in the country and the world."

Gujarat: BSF apprehends 4 Pakistani fishermen, seizes 10 boats near India-Pakistan

border

<https://theprint.in/world/bsf-apprehends-4-pakistani-fishermen-seizes-10-boats-near-india-pakistan-border/1028547/>

"The Border Security Force (BSF) apprehended four Pakistan fishermen and seized 10 Pakistan boats along the India-Pakistan maritime border near Kutch on early Thursday morning.

In a statement, BSF informed that a special ambush party of BSF Bhuj apprehended four Pakistan fishermen and seized 10 Pakistan fishing boats while they were sneaking into Indian territory through one of the water channels of Harami Nalla near the border in Kutch District of Gujarat. Special Ambush party of BSF Bhuj observed movement between Border Post No. 1165 and 1166 and has cordoned the area. The search of the area is in progress, the statement read. After the seizure, BSF patrolling teams launched a massive search operation to find out if any more such boats from the neighboring country had entered Indian waters. "Nothing suspicious recovered from the fishing boats," it read.

Meanwhile, recently, a three-year-old Pakistani child who inadvertently crossed the International Border (IB) was handed over to security personnel of the neighboring country by the Border Security Force (BSF), officials said. BSF informed that on Friday at about 7:15 pm, troops of 182 Bn BSF, Ferozepur Sector apprehended one Pakistani child aged approximately 3 years while he crossed the border and entered Indian territory.

They said the child was unable to reveal anything and was kept under safe custody of BSF, the statement read. As it was a case of inadvertent crossing, BSF further approached Pak Rangers and at about 9:45 pm, said Pakistani child was handed over to Pak Rangers as a goodwill gesture and on humanitarian ground. "BSF always takes a humane approach while dealing with inadvertent border crossers," it read."

Gujarat and Maharashtra: Between devil & deep blue sea

<https://www.mid-day.com/sunday-mid-day/article/between-devil-and-deep-blue-sea-23233080>

"The grey clouds grow heavier as we negotiate the bends in the road leading to Yezdi Patel's chikoo farm in the Dahanu-Gholvad belt of Palghar district, three hours from Mumbai. Two days earlier, the monsoon made a dramatic show of its arrival—it rained relentlessly for an entire day and a little more, we are told. Today, the spells are intermittent. Patel, who greets us at the entrance of his 50-acre orchard, looks up at the sky, and seems unimpressed. It won't rain heavily, he hints, asking us to join him under the trees, where he has placed a few plastic chairs.

“This year, the monsoon is already delayed by 10 days.”

A Dahanu local, Patel joined the family tradition when he became a chikoo farmer in 1983, at the age of 18. It would have been a lucrative career choice, except for the fact that, six years later, the state and Central governments cleared a proposal by the then Bombay Suburban Electricity Supply Company Limited (BSES) for a coal-fired thermal power plant to be set up in Dahanu taluka. At the time, the move was fiercely resisted by environmental activists—leading this fight was Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Group, whose petitions were dismissed by the Supreme Court in 1991, paving the way for the plant. Thirty one years on, Patel, whose farm is barely 12 km from the plant, says that nothing good has come out of that decision. “You know the story of the golden goose?” Patel asks, “Let’s just say that Dahanu has stopped laying its golden eggs.”

He is talking about the chikoo or sapota, a fruit indigenous to the region which this tribal-inhabited belt is most famous for. In 2017, the Dahanu-Gholvad chikoo got a geographical identification (GI) tag from the Centre. Not that it particularly helped. “My yield has dropped by 70 per cent,” Patel says remorsefully.

The downward trend, he says, began somewhere post 2000, four years after the thermal power plant was operational. “It’s hard to put a finger on what went wrong. The plant [Adani-Dahanu Thermal Power Plant] is one of the major causes, because around 6,000 tonnes of coal is burnt daily [to produce electricity]. But climate change is also at play. We’ve seen exceptionally heavy rain, especially post 2007.” In August 2020, Dahanu broke its 75-year August rainfall record after it received 383 mm of rainfall. According to Patel, not all farms have been affected as badly as his. “The plant stands exactly southwest from here [Patel’s farm]. Since the monsoon also comes from the southwest direction, farms that are downwind [in the path in which the wind is blowing] seem to be greatly impacted by it [dust particles and flyash that settle on the leaves].”

For the last three years, Patel has adopted newer organic farming methods in the hope of “changing the micro-climate in the farm”. “We have been practising regenerative farming. For starters, we’ve stopped tilling the soil or using fertilisers from outside [he makes his own vermicompost]. We’ve also brought in cows [to mitigate degraded soils], and have created a basin around the tree [to hold the rain water], so that when it rains heavily, the soil soaks in the water. This prevents important nutrients in the soil from getting washed away. I’ve learnt all of this after taking hard knocks... fatka khaayne,” says the Parsi in trademark Gujarati.

Patel’s concerns are mirrored by a just-released study on Dahanu taluka by Chennai-based Healthy Energy Initiative (India), a global collaboration of health professionals, organisations,

and researchers engaging in science-based advocacy. The study revealed that Dahanu suffers from alarmingly high levels of air pollution.

The organisation was invited by the Dahanu Taluka Environment Welfare Association (DTEWA), a group of residents and environmentalists, who've been mediating with the authorities to address the environmental tragedy that's unfolding in the eco-fragile region. "The alarmingly high levels of pollution were not only affecting the horticulture industry, but also affecting the health of local residents. We conducted a small survey with the PHC [primary healthcare centre] which gave us indicative data of new cases of cancer and an increase in respiratory issues among the locals. We felt that something was not right and required investigation," Rajeev B Lamba, founder of Nest Farms, and chairman of DTEWA says, when mid-day visits his farm. "We wrote to all the government agencies to immediately look into the matter. But, their response was lukewarm," he says, explaining why they decided to invite an independent body to conduct the study.

Earlier this year, between January 23 and 30, Healthy Energy Initiative conducted a 24-hour air sampling exercise using a low-volume air sampler device at 12 locations in Dahanu—Patel Pada, Masoli, Kainad-Naikpada, Kainad-Morpada, Narpad, Bordi-Borigaon, Shankpada-Khunavde, Shishupada-Agwan, Pale, Tanashi, Damn Bhat-Chinchani and Vadhavan. The samples were later analysed in Chester LabNet in Oregon, USA, for particulate matter (PM) less than 2.5 micrometres in size and heavy metals. Simultaneously, an interview-based qualitative study was also conducted with 14 farmers, six fishermen and one fisherwoman, six social workers, three health care providers and two chikoo traders from the region.

The results showed PM 2.5 levels between 117.9ug/m³ and 637.9ug/m³ (Patel Pada being worst hit)—a range that is between two and 10.6 times more than the 60ug/m³ threshold prescribed by the National Ambient Air Quality Standard. According to the analysis report, the PM mainly comprised dust, pollen, ash, soot, carbon and heavy metal. Patel Pada showed the highest level of silica (76.4 µg/m³), nickel and manganese. "Long-term, as well as acute high-level exposure to Manganese, is proven to cause neurological damages and result in a condition known as manganism," it states.

Speaking with mid-day, Dr Vishvaja Sambath, programme lead, Healthy Energy Initiative (India), who has written and compiled the report, says that the data is cause for worry. "When we visited Dahanu for the study, it was with the full knowledge that this is an eco-sensitive zone. So, we had certain expectations about how the environment should be. But our real-time experience and the results of the study have pointed out that the ambient air is polluted, and it's somewhere between hazardous to very unhealthy levels. Immediate, stringent and continuous action needs to

be taken..."

Tamil Nadu and Gujarat: World Bank approves Rs 4,400-cr funding for three projects

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/world-bank-approves-usd-562-million-funding-for-3-projects-in-india-122062301191_1.html

"World Bank has approved three loans totalling USD 562 million (about Rs 4,393.70 crore) to fund an education project in Gujarat, a social protection programme in Tamil Nadu and a project to help recovery in the fisheries sector post the pandemic, the multilateral funding agency said on Thursday.

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved additional financing of USD 250 million for Outcomes for Accelerated Learning (GOAL), a programme which aims to improve education results for children across the state of Gujarat, it said in a release. The financing towards GOAL will benefit an additional 3,000 schools that have been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Besides, the board of executive directors of the World Bank approved a USD 150 million funding to support the recovery of India's fisheries sector and a USD 162 million for the RIGHTS project to strengthen the social protection systems and capability of the State of Tamil Nadu to promote inclusion, accessibility, and opportunities for persons with disabilities. In 2020-21, the fisheries sector saw losses of about USD 5.5 billion and fish production fell almost 40 per cent in one year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, said the multilateral funding agency.

GOAL project financing complements the original loan of USD 500 million, which was approved in March 2021. It is in line with the Bank's Rapid Response Framework that seeks to reach every child and retain them in schools, assess learning levels regularly, prioritize teaching the fundamentals and increase catch-up learning, World Bank said. It also aims to develop psychosocial health for students and teachers.

"This additional financing will scale-up the coverage of the original programme from a total of 9,000 to 12,000 schools, while also supporting new efforts to test the efficacy of the program's interventions," said Shabnam Sinha, Lead Education Specialist and Task Team Leader for the project. Under the USD 150 million loan to support the recovery of India's fisheries sector, World Bank said it currently employs about 12 million people directly and another 13 million through associated activities.

The Fisheries Sector COVID-19 Recovery Project will complement the Government of India's

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, which aims to transform the sector in a sustainable manner by introducing modern practices, improving access to finance and making it more climate-resilient. Incentives for larger private investment in the fisheries sector in India have been limited, mainly due to lack of access to financing or credit, and perceptions that the sector is high-risk.

The project will help microenterprises access working capital by connecting them with government schemes that provide financial support to farmers such as the Kisan Credit Card and the Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency Limited (MUDRA)."

Gujarat: Fishermen in trouble due to polluted rivers and problematic regulations

<https://in.investing.com/news/gujarat-fishermen-in-trouble-due-to-polluted-rivers-and-problematic-regulations-3246300>

"Even as Gujarat ranks third amongst Indian states for fish production across marine and inland fishing, its fishermen get a raw deal because of polluted rivers and problematic regulations, as per a think tank's report. The main problem is the pollution in rivers, especially industrial effluents that flow untreated and result in food and oxygen scarcity in the water, leading to the depletion of fish and deterioration of water quality.

Another issue is the restriction on the size of nets which hurts small fishermen. The Gujarat Fisheries Act, 2003 mandates that the size for square mesh cod should be 40 mm. The think tank, Centre for Civil Society (CCS) in its report 'Saving the Blue Economy' also gave suggestions to improve the living conditions of fishermen in Gujarat, including by changing certain regulations.

In 2019-20, the total marine fish production was 37.27 lakh tonnes, with Gujarat contributing the most at 7.01 lakh tonnes (19 per cent) of the total production.

""These numbers, however, pale in comparison to the total inland fishing catch. Inland fish production was 104.37 lakh tonnes in the same period, with Gujarat contributing only 1.58 lakh tonnes. Gujarat ranks third amongst Indian states for fish production across marine and inland fishing,"" the report pointed out. No new licences have been issued as there is a shortage of berths at the harbours but no efforts are being made to address this problem, it said.

Gujarat has also put restrictions on displacement/migration and discouraged state-to-state interoperability for fishermen, boat owners etc., because of which boats once registered outside Gujarat are not allowed to enter its territorial waters, the authors of the report, Arjun Krishnan and Prashant Narang said.

Among the report's recommendations, the top one is for the Gujarat Pollution Control Board to strictly enforce restrictions and quality standards on industrial effluents. Reconsidering the restrictions on the size of nets, a single combined licensing and registration system for boats to simplify the process for fishermen and timelines for approvals for ensuring there is no delay would help in the long run to improve the lives of the fishermen, the CCS report recommended."

Gujarat: Pakistan set to release 20 Indian fishermen

<https://www.outlookindia.com/international/pakistan-set-to-release-20-indian-fishermen-officials-news-202981>

"Twenty fishermen from Gujarat, who had been captured at sea by Pakistan in the past, will be released and handed over to the Indian authorities on June 20, a state government official said on Friday.

"We have been informed that 20 fishermen from Gujarat will be freed from jail in Pakistan on Monday and handed over to Indian authorities at Wagah border in Punjab," state Director of Fisheries, Nitin Sangwan, said. These fishermen will be brought to Gujarat following their release, he said.

As per the latest figures shared by the Gujarat government in the Legislative Assembly in March this year, nearly 500 fishermen from Gujarat are languishing in jails in Pakistan, of whom 358 were arrested by that country in the last two years. In the last two years, 20 fishermen from Gujarat have returned home following their release from Pakistan, the state government had said.

The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) apprehends fishermen from Gujarat in the Arabian sea on the charge of entering the Pakistani waters by crossing the notional International Maritime Border Line (IMBL)."

Gujarat: Fishermen at sea due to steep hike in fuel prices, big fall in catch

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/gujarat-fishermen-at-sea-due-to-fuel-price-hike-fall-in-production/article65508114.ece>

"Abid, a mechanic on the coast of Veravel in Gujarat, earns his livelihood by servicing the boats of fishermen. He is now looking for other vocations in other cities as the fishermen are unable to pay him. "The sea has started drying up. There is no fish. So how will they pay me," he asks. His father was also a helper at the yard in Veravel.

The steep increase in diesel prices, freight cost that went up six times in two years and the

dwindling fish production are creating a distress-like situation in the coastal belt of Gujarat, giving tough times for the ruling BJP ahead of the 2022 Assembly elections. The belt of about 33 seats had supported the Congress in 2017 and the Opposition party won 24 seats. This year, the BJP is trying to address the woes of fishermen and industries in the fishing sector ahead of the elections. The Congress is also equally engaged to improve its tally and is ready with a lot of promises to voters in the belt.

Market concerns

More than five lakh people are directly involved in the fisheries sector and Gujarat is the largest exporting State in terms of volume. Several processing units have been shut due to lack of orders from China and European markets. The president of the Seafood Exporters Association of India and a former Mayor of Veraval, Jagdish Fofandi, said there were market and fiscal concerns for the sector. Mr. Fofandi, a BJP activist, said the freight charges had increased six times.

“In aquaculture products, for the U.S. market, the rate increased from ₹15 to ₹70 a kilogram. Because of the increase, the fishermen are not getting adequate prices. We are also not getting our working capital as the payment is usually delayed for months. It is a major issue. Certain units have been forced to shut as Chinese markets have been closed due to COVID 19 restrictions. We do not have a favourable free trade agreement with the European Union. So countries like Vietnam get the benefit of import tax concessions,” he said.

50% women workers

“Diesel price and high duty are the major issues here. There is no fishing industry without fishermen. They used to get subsidy in excise duties for the diesel they use in their boats and now it is very limited,” said the Gujarat region president of the Seafood Exporters Association of India, Ketan C Suyani. “About 50% of the workers in processing units are women. So any help to this sector is also a help to the women of Gujarat,” Mr. Suyani said.

The inland fishing too is in crisis due to decrease in prices. “For fishing backwater prawns, we use boats and if the water is shallow we walk and do fishing. This product is dependent on the mix of fresh water from rains and the sea water. The season is limited to July, August and September. About 22,000 people of the Maliya-Miyana block are working in this mode of fishing. There are 16 settlements of fishermen in these blocks who do this traditional form of fishing. They do not get adequate price. For a box of 18-20 kilos they get ₹600. Since the season is short, middlemen are their only resource. They do not have cold storage facilities,” said Ramesh Parmar, who works among inland fishermen in Morbi district.

BJP leader and Junagadh MP Rajeshbhai Chudasama also agrees that both the industries and the fishermen are facing a lot of problems. “We have also asked the governments to address these concerns. These are policy issues. I am sure that the governments will address it. Another issue is that the production is down. We should make it sure that juvenile fish are not caught by fishermen. We are trying to educate fishermen about this,” he said.

The Congress says the BJP did nothing to protect a segment that contributes a lot to the GDP of the State and the country. “We will include the problems of fishermen in our manifesto. They need a better cooperative system, rebate on excise duty and a minimum export price for what they catch. Gujarat fishermen get the lowest fuel subsidy compared to other States. The umbrella cooperative of fishermen, Gujarat Fisheries Central Co-operative Association Limited (GFCCA) is functioning under bureaucrats. There should be marketing yards for fishery products and the trolling ban in both the gulfs of Gujarat should be reconsidered,” said Congress’ Dwaraka district president Yasin Gajan.”

Gujarat: Fishing season marked by high diesel prices, low fish rates draws to a close

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/rajkot/gujarat-fishing-season-high-diesel-prices-low-fish-rates-7946598/lite/>

"The fishing season along the Gujarat coast formally drew to a conclusion Tuesday. Fishermen from major fishing hubs of Porbandar, Veraval, Okha, Mangrol, Jakhau, etc have dropped their anchors with almost no boat at sea. This comes more than two months after soaring diesel prices forced a majority of fishermen from going to the sea in March.

Officially, the fishing season ends on May 31. But leaders of the community say the season for most fishermen ended in February. “The soaring diesel prices forced many fishermen to end their season in February when the price of subsidised diesel, which fishermen get as bulk consumers, drew level with the retail prices. Then came the Rs 25 increase in price of bulk diesel. This meant that 90 per cent of fishermen dropped anchor and ended their fishing season,”

There is palpable anxiety among the fishermen and their cooperative societies over high prices of bulk diesel coinciding with falling prices of fish.

The state government gives Rs 15 per litre VAT (value-added tax) rebate on up to 24,000 litres of diesel per annum per fishing boat. However, to avail the VAT rebate, one has to mandatorily purchase diesel from one of the 18 diesel pumps run by cooperative societies or the 18 diesel pumps run by the Gujarat Fisheries Central Cooperative Association (GFCCA) Limited, the state government-controlled federation of the fishermen’s cooperatives.

Through FGCCA, these cooperative societies get diesel from OMCs at discounted rates and sell them to their member-fishermen by charging an average Rs 2 per litre service charge to fishermen. In all, 289 cooperative societies of fishermen are GFCCA members.

The steep hike not only annulled the VAT subsidy benefit for a fishing boat owner, but also made diesel costlier by an average Rs 14 per litre at 38 pumps run by GFCCA and fishermen's cooperative societies as compared commercial petrol pumps retailing diesel and petrol in the state. Therefore, fishermen stopped purchasing from these diesel pumps and instead, started purchasing from private petrol pumps.

Meanwhile, after representations made to Union Fisheries Minister Parshottam Rupala and Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, IOC decreased the price for fishermen of Gujarat. However, Panjari says it is still Rs 8 higher than the price in the retail market.

“We were getting some catches as not many fishing boats were operating and there was time for one more trip. But the boat owner told me that the diesel price is too high and it was economically too risky to go on one more trip. Therefore, our fishing season ended on May 18,” Devji Baraiya (52), tandel or captain of Porbandar-registered fishing trawler Annapurna said.

Fish traders say the prices of ribbon fish and croaker fish—the two varieties that form the bulk of catch of fishermen from Gujarat round the year—have decreased. “Before the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, croaker used to fetch Rs 125 to Rs 150 per kg. Ribbon fish also used to trade between Rs 100 to Rs 125 per kg. But China, which is the biggest market of these varieties, is importing less. Therefore, the prices have dropped to average Rs 70 for croaker and Rs 60 for ribbon fish. Prices of squid have gone up but fishermen are not netting them in enough quantities,” says Ramesh Bharadiya, a fish trader in Porbandar.

Premji Vandariya, who owns eight fishing boats, cut down the operations. He ordered tandels of six of his boats to end the season in February while continuing to operate only two. “At Rs 100 per litre, we need Rs 2.5 lakh exclusively for diesel per fishing trip. That is around Rs 60,000 more than usual. With no assurance of a good catch nor of good prices of fish, it was wise to call an early end to the season,” Vandariya says. However, the leaders of fishermen's cooperative societies are the most worried lot. For the cooperative societies as well as the GFCCA, sale of subsidised diesel is the main and almost only source of revenue these days. Diesel sales accounted for Rs 482.59 lakh crore of GFCCA's total revenue of Rs 492.09 crore in 2020-21. The profit from diesel sales was Rs 17.46 crore out of the association's total profit of Rs 21.84 crore.

But the price disparity in the bulk market and reduced demand for diesel from fishermen are threatening the very existence of these cooperative bodies. “No fisherman has shown up at our diesel pumps for the last three months to purchase diesel. If something is not done by the beginning of the next fishing season in August, we may well become redundant and defunct,” Manu Modi, member of executive council of Porbandar-registered Jay Sagar Matsyodhyog Sahkari Mandali Limited, a fishermen’s cooperative society that runs a diesel pump each in Porbandar and Veraval, says.

Damodar Chamudiya, chairman of Mahavir Machchhimar Sahkari Mandali (MMSM), a cooperative society in Mangrol, says it has an annual turnover of around Rs 600 crore and more than Rs 420 crore revenue comes from the sale of diesel from a pump it operates. “We use the profit of the Mandali for the welfare of the fishermen like organising mass weddings, extending loans to fishermen, etc. Without revenue from diesel sales, we may not be able to sustain and with that, fishermen may lose bargaining power in the market and our weight in the government,” Chamudiya says.

Gujarat: IMD advises fishermen in Kutch, Jamnagar, Porbandar and Devbhumi Dwarka districts not to enter sea from May 27 to 29

<https://www.latestly.com/india/news/gujarat-weather-update-imd-advises-fishermen-in-kutch-jamnagar-porbandar-and-devbhumi-dwarka-districts-not-to-enter-sea-from-may-27-to-29-3746709.html>

“With strong winds likely to blow over the north Gujarat coast, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday advised fishermen not to venture into the Arabian sea for three days from Friday. There is no such warning for fishermen at the south Gujarat coast during the period, the IMD said in a release.

“Strong winds with speed reaching 40 to 50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph are very likely to prevail along and off the north Gujarat coast from May 27-29, 2022. Fishermen are advised not to venture along and off north Gujarat coast from May 27 to May 29,” it said.

The advisory has been issued for fishermen operating along the Arabian Sea coast covering Kutch, Jamnagar, Porbandar and Devbhumi Dwarka districts. The IMD said the Rajkot taluka of Rajkot district in Saurashtra region received an unseasonal rainfall of 6 mm on Tuesday. Weather Forecast: Heavy Rain Likely Over Isolated Places of Kerala; Thunderstorms to Brew Over Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka.

But, no large change is likely in the maximum temperatures over the region in the next four-five days, it said. The IMD has forecast light rainfall and thundershowers at isolated places in some parts of south Gujarat districts."

Gujarat: Fisherfolk leader moves Gujarat HC to seeks euthanasia

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/fisherfolk-leader-seeks-euthanasia/articleshow/91358073.cms>

"The leader of a fishing community from the Gosabara wetlands in Porbandar filed a petition in the Gujarat high court on Thursday, seeking permission for active euthanasia for himself and 600 members of his community. Allarakha Ismail Thimmar, in his petition filed through advocate Dharmesh Gurjar, alleges that the authorities discriminate against them based on their religion, do not provide them facilities and hinder their business activity.

Thimmar — who claims to represent 100 Muslim fisherfolk families in Gosabara — sought directions to the authorities concerned to permit the fisherfolk to moor their boats at Gosabara Bandar (port) or Navi Bandar, or “otherwise your lordships may be pleased to pass such other and further appropriate order and direction, directing the concerned authorities for collective active euthanasia (ichha mrityu) for 600 lives of the petitioner and his community to end their lives happily and willfully as per their desires”.

Since 2016, the authorities concerned have been disturbing and harassing members of the Gosabara Muslim Machhimar Samaj and prohibiting the parking of their boats. The state authority “with malafide intention” does not provide parking licences to members of the community in breach of their fundamental rights. Their representations to allowing parking of boats at Navi Bandar, which is 8km from Gosabara Bandar, have also not been heeded.

The petitioner has alleged discrimination based on religion and stated that all basic facilities are regularly given to the Hindu Kharva Machhimar Samaj, but the authorities give the cold shoulder to his community members because they are Muslim. “The petitioner and his community are totally loyal to the nation and have never been involved in any kind of anti-national activities like smuggling of gold, drugs, etc. On the contrary, the petitioner and his community have given inputs and information to security agencies from time to time regarding such illegal anti-nation activities which are sponsored by Pakistan and other international agencies,” the petition reads."

Gujarat: BSF seizes Pakistani fishing boat from Creek area near Kutch

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/gujarat-bsf-seizes-pakistani-fishing-boat-from-creek-area-near-kutch-5111287.html>

"The Border Security Force (BSF) on Wednesday seized a fishing boat abandoned by Pakistani fishermen in a creek area along the Indo-Pak border near the Kutch district of Gujarat, an official said. During patrolling, the BSF personnel had noticed the movement of a Pakistani fishing boat with three to four fishermen on board inside the Indian territory in Harami Nala creek area on Wednesday morning, a statement issued by the BSF's Gujarat Frontier said.

On seeing the BSF patrolling party, Pakistani fishermen abandoned their boat and fled to their side of the maritime border by taking advantage of the marshy terrain, it said. Fish, fishing nets and other equipment were found in the boat, but nothing suspicious was noticed there, the release said, adding that no other boat was found during the search operation carried out in the area after the seizure of the engine-less boat.

The Harami Nala creek separates India and Pakistan. Its marshy terrain is home to many varieties of fish and attracts fishermen from the neighbouring country. Fishermen from the neighbouring country are caught at regular intervals in this area by the BSF after they are found entering Indian waters. While Indian fishermen are barred from entering the creek due to security reasons, those from Pakistan many a time enter into the Indian side in search of a better catch. In February this year, the BSF had launched a massive combing operation in Harami Nala area against intruders and caught six Pak nationals with 11 of their fishing boats."

Gujarat: Rising fuel prices force fishermen to drop anchor

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/rising-fuel-prices-force-fishermen-to-drop-anchor/articleshow/90831654.cms>

"If you love fish, enjoy it while you can. Rising fuel prices are causing a shortage of fish in the market, and whatever is available is quite expensive. The rising cost of diesel has led to the docking of 70 percent of fishing boats in Veraval, Porbandar, and Okha ports. Unable to go deeper into the sea without enough fuel, fishermen have been bringing in 50 percent less catch than before. This has made fish dearer by 30 percent, said fishermen.

Fishing season begins in September and ends in June. During winters, the catch remains low. Fishermen make up for this during summers by getting 80 percent of the total catch of the season. On Tuesday, the price of diesel was Rs 99.43 per litre. This has hit fishermen at a time when they are already suffering from the steep price rise of essential commodities and the

crippling impact of Covid-19 pandemic. “To get a good catch, we need to be at sea for 21 days at least. We used to spend around Rs 3 lakh just on diesel for such a trip. Now, we must shell out Rs 4 lakh just for fuel,” said local fishermen. While heading into deep sea to reel in bigger catch, fishermen must ensure they have enough ice, salt, oil, and other supplies since they must stay offshore for an extended period. “The net cost, including money spent on labour, has increased by 15-20 per cent making such trips unfeasible for us,” they added.

Tulsi Gohil, vice-president of Akhil Bhartiya Fishermen Association, said, “We have made a representation to the petroleum minister two times in the past two weeks, requesting the government to provide us diesel at a cheaper rate. We can’t afford to venture into the deep sea because the price we get from exporters does not leave us with a profitable margin. This is peak fishing season. If things continue the way they are now, it will create a shortage of fish for consumers.”

Meanwhile, exporters say that business is likely to go down by 30 percent this year. Gujarat’s yearly catch is around 6 lakh tonnes, of which 2 lakh tonnes are exported. Naresh Vanik, secretary of seafood association of Gujarat, said, “Increasing fuel cost has pushed up freight charges by about 30 percent. After paying these costs, we cannot afford to pay more to fishermen because it is a buyers’ market.””

Gujarat: 519 fishermen imprisoned in Pakistan jails, says Minister

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/gandhinagar/519-fishermen-from-state-imprisoned-in-pak-jails-says-minister-7823472/>

"A total of 519 fishermen from Gujarat are languishing in Pakistani jails, till December 2021. This information was given to Gujarat Assembly by Minister of State for Fisheries Jitu Chaudhary in a written reply to Congress MLA Punja Vansh’s starred question, on Wednesday.

As per the minister’s reply, 163 and 195 fishermen were apprehended by Pakistani authorities in 2020 and 2021 respectively. It further said that the state government has made a total 18 representations to the Union Home Ministry to get these fishermen released.

Chaudhary also informed the state assembly that 247 fishermen are languishing in Pakistani jails for one year, 76 for three years and one fisherman has been languishing there for more than five years. In reply to another question by Congress legislator Ashwin Kotwal, Chaudhary said that in 2021, a total of 20 Gujarati fishermen were released from Pakistani jails.

The Gujarat government is paying Rs 300 as daily maintenance cost to the families of these

imprisoned fishermen and in the last two years, it has paid over Rs 6.58 crore for the same. In reply to another separate starred question, Chaudhary informed the Assembly that to ascertain the identity of fishermen in sea, the state government has issued biometric cards to over 1.68 fishermen.

Gujarat: BSF seizes seven abandoned Pakistani fishing boats from creek area near Kutch

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/gujarat-bsf-seizes-seven-abandoned-pakistani-fishing-boats-from-creek-area-near-kutch-10385041.html>

"The Border Security Force (BSF) on Thursday recovered seven abandoned Pakistani fishing boats in Harami Nalla creek area along the Indo-Pak maritime border near Kutch district of Gujarat on Thursday, officials said. Exactly a week ago — on February 10 — the BSF had apprehended six Pakistani fishermen from the same area and seized 11 such boats. "Seven more Pakistani fishing boats with rotten fish were seized in Harami Nalla by the BSF. Intensive search operation of the area continues," the BSF said in a statement. The BSF has launched a major operation against intrusion by Pakistani fishing boats into the Indian waters. While Indian fishermen are barred from entering the creek area, Pakistani fishermen enter the Indian side to catch fish. Many times, such fishermen escape towards the Pakistan side after abandoning their boats after spotting the BSF patrol boats, an official of the agency said. A week back, three commando teams of the BSF were airdropped from three different directions from the Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopters to nab the intruders in Harami Nalla, a marshy terrain.

Pakistan apprehends 60 Gujarat fishermen

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/pakistan-apprehends-60-gujarat-fishermen-7765280/>

"The Pakistani Maritime Security Agency has apprehended 9-10 Indian fishing boats and captured 50-60 fishermen from Gujarat from the international maritime border, sources said on Wednesday. "Fishermen who are at sea informed us that Pakistan on Tuesday seized 9-10 of our boats and taken 50-60 of fishermen captive near the international maritime boundary. These fishermen who set sail eight days ago are from Porbandar, Okha and Mangrol. The exact number of fishermen will be known once they land in Pakistan," Manish Lodhari, an activist and head of Porbandar based Marine Fisheries Cooperative Society. This is second such incident within a week. Couple of days ago, two Indian boats and 13 fishermen from Gujarat were captured by PMSA from the high-seas near the maritime border. When asked if the fishing boats were not fitted with GPS devices, Lodhari said, "Yes they do. But sometimes, the fishermen while fishing too close to the boundary, accidentally cross over." There are over 600 fishermen from Gujarat who are lodged in jails in Pakistan, sources added.

Gujarat: Diseased Fisherman's body reaches home from Pakistan

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/gujarat-fishermans-rotting-body-reaches-home-after-45-days-from-pak-jail-2740620>

"The body of a 53-year-old fisherman from Gujarat's Gir Somnath district finally reached his native town on Monday, nearly 45 days after his death in a Pakistani jail, an official said. His last rites were performed by his family members who expressed anguish over the condition of the body. The official blamed Pakistani authorities for the delay, saying they informed about the death of the fisherman Jenti Solanki in Karachi's Landhi jail on January 12 but didn't hand over his body saying that they had to conduct an autopsy. There were further delays before the body was finally handed over at the Indo-Pak border on January 29, he said. Solanki had spent nearly two years in the Landhi jail before he died of illness on December 14, said the official from the Gujarat fisheries department. The body of the fisherman, finally brought to the Wagah-Attari border on January 29, was received by officials of the Gujarat Fisheries Department who then took it to Amritsar - from where it was brought to Ahmedabad by air. From Ahmedabad, the body was taken to his hometown in an ambulance, about 400 km away, on Monday, he said. Solanki was held by the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) along with his companions which claimed that their boat, 'Rasul Sagar' had entered the Pakistani territorial waters after crossing the notional international maritime boundary line in February 2020, the official said. Solanki's relatives said that the body was decomposed since he had died nearly 45 days ago. They appealed to Indian authorities to intervene and ensure that bodies of fishermen who die in another country are brought back on time so that families can perform the last rites properly. Pakistan recently released 20 Indian fishermen lodged in Karachi's Landhi jail on humanitarian grounds, but 568 fishermen are still lodged there.

Gujarat: NGT asks joint panel to assess illegal shrimp farms floodplains

<https://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=915484>

"The National Green Tribunal has directed a Joint Committee to look into a plea against illegal shrimp farms in violation of Coastal Zone Regulation Notification and norms for the protection of flood plain area of the Kim and Sena rivers in Surat and Bharuch districts of Gujarat. ""We are of the view that for compliance of environmental Rule of Law, enforcement of CRZ Regulations needs to be assessed and remedial action ensured by a Joint Committee of GCZMA, State PCB, District Magistrates, Bharuch and Surat and Directorate of Fisheries, Gujarat"", said the bench headed by NGT chairperson A.K Goel in an order dated January 12. The petitioner Brackish Water Research Centre, an NGO, had moved the tribunal saying the illegal shrimp farms are increasing the risk of man-made floods. Gulf of Khambhat where the

two rivers flow is a designated "Critically Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCA)" as per CRZ, 2019, requiring special consideration. Accordingly, in an order on August 24 last year, the Tribunal had issued notice to the respondents which includes Collectors of Surat and Bharuch, Gujarat Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA), and State PCB.

In the reply filed by the Collectors, Surat and Bharuch giving details of study undertaken for identification of shrimp farms and salt pans to decide the status of compliance of CRZ and other violations. It is stated that the assessment is still not complete. Counsel for GCZMA submitted that in Bharuch 55 operating units were stopped but the Gujarat High Court remanded the matter for giving a hearing. However, no activity is going on as of today. Some leases were given in the CRZ area wrongly which are proposed to be recalled. The action was earlier taken for violation of the Land Revenue Act which was not adequate but now effective action is proposed to be taken under the CRZ Regulations, it said. Counsel for the applicant submitted that activities are stopped at the moment as it is off-season but the remedial action taken is inadequate. After taking note of the submissions, the Green Court has formed the joint committee and asked them to hold a meeting within two weeks and further action in the light of information compiled may be overseen and ensured so that there is no illegal shrimp farming on the flood plains of the rivers and in violation of CRZ regulations, adversely affecting the ecology.

Gujarat: Gender insensitive? Model cyclone relief package ignores 40,000 fisherwomen

<https://www.counterview.net/2022/01/gender-insensitive-gujarat-tauktae.html?m=1>

"A Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) note on the Gujarat government's compensation package to the victims of the devastating Tauktae cyclone, which hit the coastal belt of Saurashtra's Amerli, Rajula, Una, and Gir-Somnath districts in May 2021, has said, the relief offered was so terribly inadequate that many of the fisherfolk were not able to fish for the rest of the year. Pointing out that many small and big fishing boats in Amreli and Gir Somnath districts were "destroyed", the note by the top Ahmedabad-based NGO which has been working with fisherfolk of the region said, "The government announced Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh as assistance for the damaged boats. However, this is very meagre considering that the cost of the boats is around Rs 35-40 lakh." Hence", it said, the boat owners failed to "restart their fishing business", and the result was that, fish workers -- known as khalasis -- went jobless. "The one time aid package of Rs 2,000 to the khalasis was grossly insufficient. Hence, while boat owners should be offered Rs 40 lakh, Rs 30,000 should be provided at the rate of Rs 5,000 for six months", it added. The note complained, the government announced an assistance of Rs 35,000 to Rs 75,000 for the loss of boat equipment, which again is very small -- not even to buy a net.

It said, one boat has four nets of Rs 1 lakh each, it said, adding, over and above this, there was the loss of Rs 50,000 of GPS and wireless devices; of the solar panel, battery, inverter, power

supply etc. to the tune of Rs 50,000; of two fish crates worth Rs 50,000 each; of loss gas bottles, ration goods, utensils etc. worth Rs 15,000; and of diesel of around 300 to 800 litres, worth Rs 30,000 to Rs 80,000. Insisting that assistance for the lost boat equipment should be Rs 5 lakh, the note, prepared following intense interaction with the affected fisherfolk, underlined, "For the families of the fisherfolk who died during the cyclone, the government has announced a total of Rs 6 lakh assistance. However, that should be increased to Rs 15 lakh." Pointing towards several "unaddressed" issues in the package, the note said, "In Amreli and Gir Somnath districts, fisherwomen work day and night on the coastal jetty just like fishermen work in the sea. In Amreli and Gir Somnath districts, more than 40,000 fisherwomen work to support their families financially." Pointing out that "the hurricane robbed thousands of fisherwomen of their livelihood", the note said, "Such working women are mostly from the poorest families of our society. Despite 40,000 women becoming unemployed, the government has not announced any relief for them." Significantly, in July last year, CSJ activist Arvind Khuman submitted a memorandum to the district administration, which among other things highlighted gender insensitivity of the compensation sought to be offered to the fisherfolk. However, the officialdom appears to have turned blind towards this factor. The note further said, there were those who "had not used their boats for fishing in the last 2-3 years".

Stating that they have been excluded from the package for compensation of damage for boats, it insisted, "Despite them not using the boats, these boats must be surveyed and the boat owners must be compensated." It continued, "The compensation package only provides compensation to those who have registered boats in their name. However, lot of people who have sold their boats still have the registrations for these boats in their names." Hence, "whether those reporting damage to boats are registered or not, they should be compensated for the losses incurred." Asserting that "dried fish, fresh fish and stocked fish were destroyed, causing an estimated losses between Rs 3 lakh to 5 lakh to the fisherfolk," the note regretted, "No compensation has been given for such loss." Pointing towards how at the ports, the boat owners dry the fish, lands near the shores are prepared for drying fish by the fisherfolks at their own cost, the note demanded, "Such lands have been eroded and large pits have formed on them due to the cyclone which have made these lands not suitable for drying fish. Hence, a special plan should be prepared so that these lands can be restored and fisherfolk can start drying their fish again." Referring to the fisherfolk that "migrated to ports like Jafrabad, Saiyad Rajpara for employment had built houses and huts", many of which were destroyed during the hurricane, the note lamented, no relief has been announced for them.

It added, no compensation has also been announced for the fisherfolk who have two houses, "one that is their permanent home and one where they reside during their work. Because of this, many have missed the survey of their other houses, where they were not residing at the time of the survey." CSJ volunteers, said the note, sent a Right to Information (RTI) plea addressed to

the District Superintendent of Police (DSP), which was forwarded to the District Collector. ""This implies that the DSP office is not aware of their duty as a Task Force Leader as per the 2020 District Disaster Management Plan"". ""According to District Disaster Management Plan, DSP as a task force leader has to prepare a final report after two weeks of the disaster. The 2020 District Disaster Management Plan also mentions how each task force has the responsibility of providing a report detailing the activities undertaken by them and the lessons learnt"", it added. While disaster reporting and assessment is also ""elaborated in the Gujarat State Disaster Management Plan, according to which one of the reports that ought to be made is the Preliminary Report, ""None of these were provided to us by the DSP office as a response to our RTI"", the note said. ""The RTI sent to the DSP was also forwarded to the District Magistrate, and the RTI filed to the Chief Medical Officer (Gir Somnath) forwarded the RTI to the Chief District Health Officer"", note stated, regretting this suggests official indifference towards helping those who suffered from the cyclone. It commented, ""All this clearly implied that the different task force leaders (identified under the District Disaster Management Plan) are still unaware about their duties, or have intentionally withheld information or have forwarded the RTI application to dodge their responsibility.""

Gujarat: Fisherman arrested a year ago, dies in Pakistan jail

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/gujarat-fisherman-arrested-a-year-ago-dies-in-pakistani-jail-due-to-unknown-reasons-2712861>

"A 50-year-old fisherman from Gujarat, who was arrested by Pakistani authorities a year ago on high seas, died in a jail in that country due to unknown reasons, an official said on Monday. The victim is identified as Jayanti Solanki, a resident of Sutrapada village in the Gir-Somnath district. He died a few weeks back but the information was received by local authorities on Sunday, the official said. A team of Gujarat Fisheries Department from Veraval has reached the Wagah-Attari border in Punjab to receive the body of the fisherman, said Fisheries Officer Vishal Gohel. ""Our team has already reached the Attari-Wagah border. We expect that the body will be handed over to us by tonight. The mortal remains will be brought back here and handed over to the family members at Sutrapada,"" said Mr Gohel. After learning about Solanki's death from the Indian Embassy in Pakistan, the Central government asked the Gujarat Fisheries Department to carry out the further procedure, he said. The primary investigation revealed that Solanki was a native of Vanakbara village in the Union Territory of Diu and Daman and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. He was arrested near the IMBL (International Maritime Boundary Line) in the Arabian Sea a year ago by the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) when he was onboard ""Rasool Sagar"" boat with other fishermen, Mr Gohel said.

""Though Solanki was a native of Vanakbara, he was living with his family and in-laws at

Sutrapada for the last many years. He was languishing in a Pakistani jail for the last one year following his apprehension. While he died a few weeks back, we received the information only yesterday (Sunday). The cause of his death is still not known to us,"" added Mr Gohel.

Gujarat: Relief package announced for fishermen

<https://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=901882>

"The Gujarat government on Tuesday announced a relief package of Rs 265 lakh for the damages suffered by the fishermen in the state's Amreli and Gir Somnath districts recently due to heavy winds. The decision was taken during a cabinet meeting chaired by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. ""The relief package was declared following huge damages inflicted by heavy winds in the coastal areas of Arabian Sea at Amreli and Gir Somnath districts. A total of 29,716 boats including 17,557 small boats and 12,159 large boats are associated with fisheries,"" Rajendra Trivedi, the revenue minister told reporters. ""A total of 50 boats, fishing nets and other equipment have faced damages of around Rs 265 lakh,"" added Trivedi. According to the relief package, either 50 per cent of the estimated damages or Rs 35,000 relief, whichever is less, will be provided for partial damage to the small boats. For complete destruction of small boats, either 50 per cent of the estimated damages or Rs 75,000 relief, whichever is less will be provided. For the partial damage to troller/ dollnetter/ gillnetter boats, either 50 per cent of the estimated damages or Rs 2 lakh relief, whichever is less, will be provided. For the complete damage to troller/ dollnetter/ gillnetter boats, either 50 per cent of the estimated damages or Rs 5 lakh relief, whichever is less, will be provided.

Gujarat: Bodies of two fishermen found

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/bodies-of-two-fishermen-found/articleshow/88079828.cms>

"Dead bodies of two of the eight fishermen who went missing on Thursday early morning were found on Friday. The fishermen went missing after their anchored boats capsized at the Nava Bandar fishing port near Una in Gir Somnath district due to inclement weather. Coast Guard, Navy, marine police and NDRF teams are still searching for the other six fishermen. The boats anchored at the port collided with each other due to stormy weather in the wee hours of Thursday. While some of the fishermen were sleeping inside the boats others were preparing to sail when the weather suddenly worsened. At least 10 boats were totally destroyed and 40 other boats were partially damaged.

Gujarat: 8 fishermen go missing, rescue operation launched

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/fishermen-go-missing-in-gujarat-rescue-operation-launched/article37801665.ece>

"Around eight fishermen in Gujarat have gone missing, prompting the authorities to launch a rescue operation near Veraval in Saurashtra region. They went missing after their boats anchored at a fishing harbour near the sea coast got destroyed and capsized amid the stormy weather and rain overnight as Gujarat is witnessing unseasonal rains in coastal areas. The Gujarat Government, in coordination with other agencies, has launched a rescue operation deploying a Coast Guard helicopter as well as boats to find the fishermen. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel directed the officials to make all efforts to trace the missing. The State Chief Secretary Pankaj Kumar is monitoring the rescue operation launched by the Coast Guard personnel. According to locals, at least 10 boats were completely destroyed and 40 others, which were anchored at the coast, were partially damaged due to the stormy weather that turned the sea conditions extremely rough with high waves along the coast.

"The sea conditions turned rough after midnight in Navabandar village due to the strong winds and sea waves. Initially 12 persons were untraceable, but four of them managed to swim back to the shore, while eight are still missing. We have started a rescue operation with the help of a helicopter sent by the Coast Guard," a local official told media persons from Una. It is learnt that the fishers were sleeping inside their anchored boats when the strong winds and waves struck the coast after the midnight. Since Wednesday, Gujarat witnessed a change in the weather conditions with some parts of the State particularly the coastal areas in South Gujarat and Saurashtra regions receiving rain, which is unusual in December. On Wednesday, part of Maharashtra and Gujarat received rain owing to a low-pressure area in the Arabian Sea and a western disturbance, the India Meteorological Department earlier said, adding that the showers were likely to continue on Thursday.

Gujarat: 20 fishermen to be released by Pakistan today

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/20-fishermen-to-be-released-by-pakistan-today/article37482553.ece>

"A week after killing an Indian fisherman in a firing in the mid-sea by the Pakistan Marine Security Agency (PMSA) on November 6, Islamabad will release 20 fishermen lodged in Landhi jail in Karachi on Sunday and will hand them over to the Indian authorities the next day at the Wagah border. The fishermen to be released are from Gir Somnath and Porbandar districts of Gujarat. Before the mid-sea firing incident on a fishing trawler Jal Pari, India had released 10

Pakistan fishermen jailed in Gujarat on November 2. On November 6, the PMSA had in a rare act allegedly chased and fired at Jal Pari, which had six fishermen aboard, while it was fishing at the Arabian Sea off the Gujarat coast. Shreedhar Chamre, a fishermen from Palghar in Maharashtra, was allegedly killed in the firing while Dilip Solanki, captain of the fishing boat was wounded. Six others on the boat were reportedly abducted and taken to Pakistan. The fishermen to be released were apprehended by the PMSA for allegedly crossing over to the Pakistan side of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) off the Gujarat coast during deep sea fishing.

They are being released after completion of their jail term. “Even after the release of the fishermen, there are still around 600 fishermen, mostly from Gujarat and the Union Territories of Diu and Daman, who are languishing in the jails in Pakistan,” said Manish Lodhari, a prominent activist and chief of the Marine Fisheries Cooperative Society in Porbandar. He and other activists working for the welfare of the fishermen demand that both countries must voluntarily release the fishermen lodged in each other’s jail. “There are 62 Pakistani fishermen in jail in Gujarat,” said Jivan Jungi, another activist from Gujarat. According to Mr. Jungi, the nationality of 376 of the 600 fishermen has been confirmed by India and they must immediately be released and repatriated. The 20 fishermen are among the 376. Besides seeking the release of fishermen, activists and people associated with fisheries in Gujarat have also been demanding the release of around 1,200 boats taken away by the PMSA. The boats are lying anchored at the Karachi harbour. “Each boat is worth Rs.50 lakh totalling approximately Rs.600 crore. The Indian Government must work with the authorities in Pakistan to get the boats, which are mechanised trawlers used in deep sea fishing, released and handed them back to their rightful owners,” Mr. Lodhari told The Hindu.

With almost 1,680-km long coastline, Gujarat is among the largest fisheries producing States. There are around 25,000 boats registered for fishing and almost 2.5 million people directly and indirectly dependent on related activities. According to Mr. Lodhari, an average 75-90 Indian boats are apprehended by Pakistan’s national agency every year. Since 2003, only twice less than 100 boats were released by Pakistan — in 2014 and in 2017. Both India and Pakistan have been engaged in detaining fishermen due to the dispute over the alignment of the IMBL in the Arabian Sea. From Pakistan side, it’s national agency PMSA apprehends a few hundred fishermen along with their boats while the Indian Coast Guard and other security agencies detain a few dozen Pakistani fishermen. The detained fishermen are then handed over to the local police who lodge them in jails while initiating proceedings against them for violating laws. They are periodically released and repatriated after completion of jail sentence and establishing of nationality.

Gujarat: Fisherman killed as Pakistani forces fire at Indian fishing boat off the state coast, 6 others abducted

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/fisherman-killed-as-pakistani-forces-fire-at-indian-fishing-boat-off-gujarat-coast-6-others-abducted/829824>

"A fisherman has been killed as Pakistan Navy fired upon an Indian fishing boat off the Gujarat coast. The marine commandos also seized the boat and abducted six other fishermen. The incident took place when Indian fishermen were fishing in Indian waters near Okha town in Gujarat's Dwarka, reports Times Now's Amit and Pradeep. ""Joint interrogation of the crew of an Indian fishing boat that was fired upon by the Pakistani Maritime Security Agency in the Arabian Sea off the Gujarat coast is underway. One Indian fisherman is dead and one is injured,"" said the Indian Coast Guard officials. At the same time, the Pakistani Marine Commandos boat came out from there and they opened fire at the Indian boat named 'Jalpari'. An FIR has been registered into this matter and the investigation is currently underway.

In a separate incident, the Indian Coast Guard has saved the lives of seven fishermen in distress after a fire engulfed a fishing boat IFB Varda Vinayaka-I due to a short circuit in the wheelhouse. According to an official statement of the Coast Guard, the fishing boat was at a distance of 10 NM from Karwar lighthouse. ""On receipt of the message by marine rescue sub-centre (MRSC), New Mangalore at 10 pm on November 5 from CSP Malpe sources, C-155 from Karwar was sailed during night hours at 10.15 pm for SAR MISSION for an assessment of the incident and evacuation of fishermen,"" the statement said. The boat had reportedly seven fishermen crew onboard. Indian Coast Guard Ship AC-155 reached datum at 10.15 pm and immediately swung into the action of dousing the fire after ascertaining all seven crew were shifted to nearby fishing boat IFB Vajra, it added. ""C-155 braving the inclement weather took 3 hours to completely douse the seat of the fire. On assessing that there was no further possibility of fire outbreak, C-155 provided all assistance to IFB Vajra for towing the ill-fated IFB to Karwar Fishing Harbour,"" the Coast Guard said.

Gujarat: 18 Maharashtra boats caught for line fishing in state waters

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/18-maha-boats-caught-line-fishing-in-guj-waters-illegally/articleshow/87345146.cms>

"Following a video of illegal fishing sent by Gujarat fishermen, coast guard and Somnath marine police conducted a joint patrolling on Wednesday evening and caught 18 boats with Maharashtra registration fishing illegally near Gujarat coast. Under an ordinance to the Gujarat Fisheries Act, cops seized these fishing boats and reported the matter to the fisheries department. According to the police, these boats were found conducting line fishing nine nautical miles away from Sutrapada coast on Wednesday. Line fishing is a method which is considered harmful and

Gujarat's fishermen are opposing the use of this method. A local fisherman made a video and sent it to the authorities. According to fishermen, for the past few days nearly 200 Maharashtra boats were found conducting the illegal line fishing. All kinds of fish, including the juvenile are captured from a certain area in this kind of fishing, which results in drying up of catch for next few years from nearby areas.

The ordinance, passed in the assembly with the intention of securing the rights of Gujarat's fishermen, also empowers police officials of sub-inspector rank of marine police station to search and seize boats found fishing near the Gujarat coast. It has also has given adjudicating powers to sub divisional magistrate (SDM) to impose a fine of Rs 1 lakh to the boat owners and auction the catch. The SDM also has the power to collect a five-time penalty of the amount of auction. President of Veraval Boat Association, Tulsi Gohil, told TOI: "Maharashtra has since a long time implemented this law, but it has come into force in Gujarat since last year. Many Gujarat fishermen were made to pay heavy penalties comprising lakhs of rupees in Maharashtra while their boats also remained seized for two to three months.

This is one of the exceptional seizures here, but we want all the marine police stations to remain alert and take action against the boats of other states found fishing in our territory." Gohil further alleged that there are several Mafia gangs that are also actively providing protection to these illegal boats in exchange of money. "In this case too, such a gang helped the Maharashtra boats to escape, but the police and coast guard managed to captured them in the sea again," he added. The seized boats have been anchored at Veraval coast. Somnath marine in-charge police inspector, N G Vaghela said, "We found 18 boats fishing illegally on Gujarat coast and have seized them. We have submitted a report to the fisheries department and the SDM who will start further process." Meanwhile, the fishermen of those seized boats are at Veraval coast awaiting adjudication.

Gujarat: The marginalised community of Agariyas, the salt workers in the Little Rann region of Gujarat, produce 30 percent of India's inland salt

<https://india.mongabay.com/2021/10/when-salt-is-an-essential-commodity-and-salt-makers-are-not/>

"On the last Monday of the monsoon month in September 2021, 48-year-old Gunawant Ramji Koli left for the Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) to place idols in a mud puddle. During the monsoon, waters of 11 rivers and many nullahs drain here and mix with the tidal waves from the Gulf of Kutch. The water recedes in September-October. Then, the puddle in which Koli placed the idols would have massive saltpans around it. Koli belongs to Agariya, a traditional salt-making community in the Western Indian state of Gujarat. The Agariyas, like farmers, pray to their gods every year through such rituals for a bumper harvest and for no natural calamities.

Koli's prayers now include protection from man-made calamities too. Surplus water from the Narmada canals floods their saltpans, destroying salt worth several hundred thousand rupees. The 60,000-odd Agariyas at the Little Rann produce 30 percent of India's inland salt but they have no legal rights over the land on which they have been making salt for centuries. The LRK is an area where no human being stays.

Agariyas make salt in three percent of this land but the 2011 census indicates that a population of 1.75 million from nearby areas is dependent on it – the fishers, truck drivers, labour to load salt and packaging units. The 5,000 square kilometres region was notified as a Wild Ass Sanctuary (WAS) in 1973, to protect the equine species. It is part of India's largest National Biosphere Reserve and one of the few nesting sites for lesser flamingos and the endemic prawn species, *Metapenaeus kutchensis*. It attracts endangered cranes and other migratory birds and supports unique salt-tolerant plants and grasses. But now an ambitious water infrastructure project threatens to permanently wipe out their traditional occupation and way of life. Called Rann Sarovar, the project aims to turn Little Rann into the biggest freshwater lake in Asia. In 2019, Jaisukh Patel, who is the managing director of the Ajanta-Oreva Group that makes the Ajanta brand of wall clocks, had proposed to the central government, to build a freshwater lake in the LRK called Rann Sarovar. The idea was to dam the creek to prevent seawater from entering the Rann, creating a vast freshwater lake that can be used around the year. The central government referred the proposal to the Central Water Commission (CWC) in early 2019. After a series of meetings with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), the CWC recommended that the Gujarat government should form a committee to study the proposal, as water is a state subject. The state and union governments are currently studying the proposal.

“This blockage of seawater and movement of freshwater will in the long term, push the sub-surface salinity towards the sea and improve groundwater recharge,” Patel told Mongabay-India. The project, however, has invited criticism on account of technical viability, socio-economic and ecological impact. The CSIR said that the project is a “huge techno-economical challenge” because the LRK has an arid climate and is seismically active. “Extensive evaporation from the lake will lead to humidity that will destroy the cumin, castor and cotton crop that grow in the dry Saurashtra region,” Bharat Somera, an Agariya, associated with the NGO Agariya Hitrakshak Manch (AHRM) that works for the rights of salt workers, told Mongabay-India. Asked about the livelihood of the Agariyas, Patel said that he has proposed to the government that the Agariyas should be given 10 acres of agricultural land where they can be rehabilitated. “Inland salt making is a dying profession. The Agariyas are the poorest people in Gujarat. I have proposed that they be employed to run the water-sports and boats when the Rann Sarovar comes up,” he said. Presently, Gujarat's water resources department has asked the Centre for Salt and Marine Chemical Research Institute (CSMCRI), Bhavnagar to study how long will it take to remove the

inherent salinity of soil in the LRK. “If it takes 2-3 years to turn the saline water fresh, it is worth it, but if it takes 20 years, then we can’t spend public money on it.

Also, the government has to consider the sanctuary and livelihoods issue,” M.K. Jadhav, Secretary, Water Resources, Gujarat government told Mongabay-India. - The marginalised community of Agariyas, the salt workers in the Little Rann region of Gujarat, produce 30 percent of India’s inland salt. - They live in dire circumstances as the state government refuses to recognise their legal rights. - Now, a proposed freshwater lake in the area could swamp everything the region stands for: salt, prawn trade and the habitat of the near-threatened wild ass. Unique landscape and livelihoods threatened by man-made floods The Agariyas can obtain rights through India’s wildlife protection law and the landmark Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006. But the local community members allege that the state has either slowed down or rejected their claims under these laws. “One can bear the wrath of nature, but the indifference of the administration is really exhausting, for it refuses to recognise our existence,” Koli, a third-generation Agariya, told Mongabay-India. Once the water recedes in winters, it leaves behind an expanse of cracked land. This is when Agariya families from 102 villages within 7-45 kms of the LRK migrate inside with their water pumps, tools and household stuff and set up temporary huts for the next eight months.

They pump sub-soil brine from underground wells and spread it on large prepared pans called ‘Agar’. Evaporation leaves behind white crystals of salt. “Except pumping brine from the wells, everything is done manually. From extreme winter to blazing sun, we bear it all. And end up with grave injuries by constantly handling salt,” said Dhana Koli from Patdi, whose salt pans are 35 kms from his village. They earn about Rs. 0.30 for a kilogram of salt that is later sold at a premium in the retail market at about Rs. 20 per kilogram, he said. However, the pata (pans) are under threat from man-made floods. “It takes 40-45 days to prepare a pata (pan) so that when we spread brine on it, it does not seep into the ground. We trample upon it until it hardens. All this effort is reduced to zilch in a day when the Narmada waters flood the pans like it happened this January. Sometimes, the water is released in May, flushing down the entire harvested salt,” laments Sehdev Bhai, from Kudagam village in Kharagoda. He lost salt worth Rs. 80,000 this year. “Every year, there is a loss of Rs. 20-25 million (Rs. 2-2.5 crores) due to these manmade floods,” salt trader Hingor Rabari, who is also the president of the Kharagoda Iodised Salt Manufacturers Association, told Mongabay-India.

Somera, of Agariya Hitrakshak Manch, observed that the instances of the Narmada canals releasing surplus water have gone up since 2015. “In 2017, 136 Agariya families were affected when they released water from Madia canal, 10 kms from the LRK. We conducted a survey and pleaded for compensation to the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd (SSNNL) in Gandhinagar. Their team visited the LRK and approved a compensation of Rs. nine million (Rs. 90 lakhs). But

it has not been disbursed yet. Every time it happens, officials visit, appeals are made, but nothing happens,” Somera told Mongabay-India. In 2015, the command area of the Narmada dam’s canals got completed. Since the LRK is the lowest point in the topography, excess water drains here. “Low-quality material has been used to construct the canals and their capacity is also lower than the amount of water released. Besides affecting the saltpans, this is gross wastage of the Narmada waters,” Rabari clarified.

However, Vivek Kapadia, director of the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited (SSNNL), one of the largest water resources project in India, said that good rainfall in the last seven years and the completed drainage network of the Narmada river are only contributory reasons for flooding. “The three fringe channels from north Gujarat, Saurashtra and Wagar are natural formations along the LRK that would carry water from the river catchments to the Gulf of Kutch. But they are choked up now due to siltation, leading to the horizontal spread of water towards saltpans. The solution lies in excavating these channels,” he said. But Kapadia’s report on the issue is yet to be accepted by the state government. About compensation to Agariyas, Kapadia told Mongabay-India that, “Compensation is a revenue matter and the Agariyas stay in a wildlife sanctuary and don’t even have a lease to make salt. It is legally difficult to establish their right to compensation.”

Rights of community ignored According to the AHRM estimates, the Tauktae cyclone in May 2021 washed off about a million tonnes of salt worth Rs. 360 million (Rs. 36 crores). The administration did not conduct a survey or announce compensation. “When natural disasters happen, farmers can claim insurance/compensation for crop loss. Not Agariyas, because salt making is considered illegal. No bank gives them loans because the Agariyas have no documentary evidence of tenure. Even when the Agariyas made the environment-friendly move of using the solar pumps instead of crude oil to pump brine, they did not get any loans from banks,” said Harinmesh Pandya, managing trustee of the AHRM. In 1948, in order to ensure self-sufficiency in salt, the newly independent Indian government allowed salt farmers operating on less than 10 acres to produce salt without any licenses. “Such salt producers came to be known as ‘unrecognised’. Most of the Agariyas in the LRK fall under this category, and hence have no documentary evidence of their salt farms,” according to Yet to be Freed, a 2008 study on the Agariya salt workers by Charul Bharwada and Vinay Mahajan. In 1973, the Wild Ass Sanctuary was notified under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Under the law, after the first notification for a wildlife sanctuary, the state forest department begins a settlement process to identify land rights of individuals and communities within sanctuary limits. The settlement process for the WAS began only 24 years later in 1997. The government came out with a notification to file land claims within 60 days. But this was not publicised enough so most Agariyas did not file claims, alleged Pandya. The government also

did not conduct any survey to get the exact number of Agariyas dependent on the Rann, he said. In November 2006, in the middle of the salt season, the Agariyas received eviction notices from the state's forest department, stating that their claims had been rejected. "Most Agariyas were shocked and clueless because they had never made claims in the first place," said Pandya.

The AHRM conducted radio programmes to inform people about their rights. New claims were filed, but the forest department rejected them on the ground that the time period was over. Now, as of September 2021, the settlement is still not complete, 48 years after the sanctuary was first notified. Earlier, the government used to issue short-term leases to Agariyas and renew them. They stopped renewing these after the settlement process began. "As per the procedure, we cannot renew the lease for Agariyas till the settlement is done but we are not stopping them from earning their livelihood. The process has taken a long time because the LRK fell within the jurisdiction of five districts earlier, making coordination difficult," said Prabhresh Dave, Deputy Conservator of Forests, WAS. The LRK now falls in the Kutch district of Gujarat. "Since then, we have been living in constant fear. The forest department says that the Wild Ass is in danger because of Agariyas and wants to evict us but their own numbers show that the wild ass population has gone up from 700 in 1976 to 5,000 now," claimed Tejal Makwana, an Agariya from Patdi village. A case for the community to claim rights The AHRM and Agariyas have also tried to obtain rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest rights) Act, 2006 (FRA) under a provision that allows communities to claim "seasonal community rights."

Agariyas are categorised as a de-notified nomadic tribe but have been living in the Rann for more than 75 years so can qualify as "other traditional forest dwellers" under the FRA. The AHRM has been trying for a Forest Rights Committee at the gram sabha (village council) level for filing claims but it hasn't happened so far. In 2017, the state-level monitoring committee on FRA said that the FRA is not applicable to the WAS. An official in the Gujarat Tribal Development Commissioner's office, while wishing anonymity, told Mongabay-India that the matter was dismissed on two grounds: ownership of land in WAS is still a contentious issue between the revenue and the forest department and that salt does not count as forest produce but a mineral. However, the experts working on the interpretations of the FRA claim it is incorrect. "[Under the FRA], the community can access any resource in the forest, including water, fish, place of worship, etc. In this case, the Agariyas hold seasonal use of water in the desert to farm salt," Pushpanjali Satpathy, a forest rights expert from Vasundhara, an NGO based in Odisha, told Mongabay-India. According to the FRA, rights can be recognised on any 'forest land', which includes sanctuaries, and does not depend on the land's ownership by the revenue or forest department.

"In March 2007, the additional collector, WAS granted fishing rights to nearby villagers during

the monsoon recognising their customary right. If fishing rights can be granted, why not the right to make salt by the traditional small producers?” questioned the Bharwada and Mahajan report. Formal recognition of rights is crucial as it can help direct social welfare schemes towards the Agariyas. “They can package their salt better and market it through the Tribal department offshoots like TRIFED,” says Satpathy.

Gujarat: Cyclone Shaheen to emerge off state coast by Friday morning; is expected to head Pakistan, no direct threat to India

<https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/science/cyclone-shaheen-to-emerge-off-gujarat-coast-by-friday-morning-is-expected-to-head-pakistan-no-direct-threat-to-india/2341312/lite/>

“In a matter of less than a week, another cyclone has started brewing in the North Arabian Sea. The India Meteorological Department on Wednesday said that, ” The cyclone is expected to develop in the North Arabian Sea by Thursday morning”. This will be the second cyclone after Tauktae that will be developed in the basin of the Arabian Sea this year but it may not affect India’s coast directly. The upcoming cyclone will be developing from the remnants of Cyclone Gulab, that had formed in Bay Of Bengal, crossed the coast of Andhra Pradesh on September 26. Later, its remnants were moved across Telangana, Maharashtra and now lay over Gujarat. Gulab’s trail lay as a well-marked low pressure over south Gujarat as on Wednesday morning, says IMD. According to the IMD’s bulletin issued on Thursday afternoon, “by Thursday morning, the system will intensify into a depression and continue moving west-northwestward direction. ”

It also said that by Friday morning, “the depression will further intensify into a cyclonic storm and emerge in the north Arabian sea”. And then, the cyclonic storm will be known as Cyclone Shaheen. The name of this cyclone was proposed by Qatar. Places like North Konkan, Gujarat, Kutch and Saurashtra remain on ‘red’ alert till Thursday. Some places in Gujarat recorded non stop rains (24 hours) between Tuesday and Wednesday. The places were Umerpada (Surat) – 218mm, Valsad – 160mm, Dholera (Ahmedabad) – 152mm, Vadodara – 102mm, Surat city – 101mm, Bhavnagar – 77mm, Vapi (Valsad) – 67mm and Rajkot – 54mm as reported in the Indianexpress.com. As per the Indianexpress.com, the cyclone is expected to move away from India’s west coast. It is headed towards Pakistan–Makran coasts and hence, there no direct threat to Indian as yet. The fishermen, however, from India and neighboring Indian ocean countries have been warned against venturing out into the sea till October 2. Those who are already present at sea have been advised to take themselves to safer places.

Gujarat: Cyclone Shaheen likely to form over the Arabian Sea by October 1

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/cyclone-shaheen-likely-to-form-over-west-coast-101632910340934-amp.html> "Cyclone

Shaheen that is likely to form over the Arabian Sea on Friday is among two extremely intense weather systems developing over India's eastern and western parts, which could lead to widespread and extremely heavy rain in parts of the country, India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Wednesday. There is also a well-marked low-pressure system over western parts of Gangetic West Bengal and neighbourhood. The Joint Typhoon Warning Center suggested it could intensify into a land cyclone but later said that it is only an area of convection. Some European models are indicating intensification of the system. "We do not think it is going to intensify into a cyclone. It will remain well marked for some time. The system is intense which brought extremely heavy rain yesterday (Tuesday) and bring very heavy rains today (Wednesday) also," said Sunitha Devi, the in-charge of cyclones at IMD. Another well-marked low-pressure area, a remnant of Cyclone Gulab, is over north Madhya Maharashtra, adjoining Gujarat and southwest Madhya Pradesh. It is likely to move west-north-westwards, emerge into the northeast Arabian Sea and intensify into a depression by Thursday morning. The remnant is likely to move further west-north-westwards and intensify into the cyclonic storm Shaheen during the subsequent 24 hours. Thereafter it is likely to continue to move west north-westwards towards Pakistan. "Though the cyclone will not hit the Indian coast, we can expect high sea around Gujarat and the Gulf of Kutch. Fishermen and coastal populations will be affected," said Devi. In view of likely tropical cyclone formation over the northeast Arabian Sea, fishermen have been advised against venturing into the north and adjoining central Arabian Sea and along and off Gujarat and north Maharashtra coasts from Thursday. Fishermen, who are out at sea, have been advised to return to safer places by Wednesday evening.

Gujarat: 24 Indian fishermen with four boats apprehended by Pakistan

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/24-indian-fishermen-with-four-boats-apprehended-by-pakistan/articleshow/86626703.cms>

"The Pakistani Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) apprehended four Indian fishing boats and its 24 crew members on September 27. According to president of Marine Fisheries Cooperative Manish Lodhari the PMSA has claimed that the four fishing boats named Dharti, Janbai, Devdai Dev and Radhey Krishna and its crew members were found in the exclusive economic zone of Pakistan and hence they were apprehended. While two boats are from Veraval, the other two are from Porbandar and Okha. The crew members and the boats were taken to Karachi on Tuesday.

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Gujarat: Fishermen advised against venturing too close to IMBL with Pakistan

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newsscroll/gujarat-fishermen-advised-against-venturing-too-close-to-imbl-with-pakistan/2168098>

"Anticipating retaliation by the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) over the recent apprehension of 12 fishermen from that country in the Indian waters, authorities in Gujarat have issued advisories asking fishermen to not venture too close to the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the Arabian sea. In a circular, the Gujarat fisheries commissioner has said that with the PMSA increasing its presence along the IMBL, fishermen are advised against operating close to the country's boundary with Pakistan in the Arabian sea. The Indian Coast Guard on September 15 seized a Pakistani boat with 12 crew members from the Indian waters. ""In such a situation, there is a possibility of the Pakistani Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) apprehending Indian fishermen from near the IMBL with the intention to retaliate,"" said the circular.

The fisheries commissioner has directed officials in coastal districts of Gujarat to contact all the boat owners, associations, leaders etc. and to take necessary precautions. Recently, the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Indian Coast Guard had seized an Iranian boat with 30-kg heroin worth Rs 150 crore in the international market off the Gujarat coast and arrested seven Iranian crew members. Police in the coastal districts of Gujarat has also been asked to create awareness among the fishermen regarding recent events concerning India's coastal security. They have been asked to advise fishermen to keep an eye on illegal activities within Indian waters and inform authorities on the toll-free number 1093 or 100, an official release said. ""Keeping in mind the past incidents, fishermen are advised not to go too close to the IMBL,"" the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the coastal district of Porbandar said in the release issued on Monday. As per the release, the police teams have been asked to contact the fishermen and inform them about the security situation along the Gujarat coast and to ask them to keep an eye on the illegal activities within the sea. The Gujarat government had in March this year informed the Legislative Assembly that 345 fishermen from the state, apprehended by the PMSA from near the IMBL on different occasions, remained lodged in Pakistani jails.

Gujarat: IMD forecasts cyclonic storm off Guj Coast, Asks fishermen not to venture into sea till Oct 2

<https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/general-news/imd-forecasts-cyclonic-storm-off-guj-coast-asks-fishermen-not-to-venture-into-sea-till-oct-2.html>

"A well-marked low pressure area over south Gujarat was likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm, the IMD said on Wednesday, and asked fishermen not to venture into the Arabian Sea off the state coast and suggested total suspension of fishing activities till October 2. It also asked fishermen who were out in the sea to return to the coast by Wednesday evening. Several parts of south Gujarat and Saurashtra region received heavy rainfall on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted more widespread showers in the state in the next two days. A few places in Amreli, Bhavnagar, Rajkot and Jamnagar districts of Saurashtra, as well as Anand, Bharuch, among others, likely to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall with isolated extremely heavy rainfall during the next two days, the IMD said in its latest forecast. In a special bulletin issued in the afternoon, the IMD said the remnants of cyclonic storm 'Gulab' lay as a well-marked low pressure area over south Gujarat region and the adjoining Gulf of Khambhat at 8.30 am on Wednesday. ""It is very likely to move west-northwestwards, emerge into the northeast Arabian Sea and intensify into a depression by Thursday. It is then very likely to move further west-northwestwards and intensify into a cyclonic storm during the subsequent 24 hours.

Thereafter, it is likely to continue to move west-northwestwards towards Pakistan–Makran coast, moving away from the Indian coast,"" it said. The IMD warned fishermen not to venture into the north Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast from Wednesday to Saturday and suggested total suspension of fishing activities there during the period. It also asked fishermen who were out in the sea to return to the coast and move to safer places by Wednesday evening. Gujarat has so far received 90 per cent of its average annual rainfall, the state's Special Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) said. In the 24-hour period ending at 6 am on Wednesday, Surat's Umarpada taluka received 218 mm rainfall and Palsana got 192 mm rain. Several parts of Dangs, Valsad, Narmada, Ahmedabad, Anand, Tapi and other districts also received very heavy showers on Tuesday, the SEOC said. In six hours since 6 am Wednesday, heavy rainfall was recorded in parts of Bharuch and Navsari districts in south Gujarat, and Amreli and Bhavnagar in Saurashtra, as per the SEOC data. Bharuch taluka of the district received 95 mm rainfall, Rajula in Amreli recorded 78 mm, and Jafrabad in Amreli district 69 mm rainfall.

Gujarat: Hikes financial aid for flood-hit people

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/gandhinagar/gujarat-hikes-financial-aid-for-flood-hit-people-7528310/lite/>

"Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel-led Gujarat government in its second cabinet meeting, on Wednesday, decided to increase the financial assistance to those affected by the recent floods in Jamnagar, Junagadh and Rajkot districts under various heads. Two senior ministers of the Council of Ministers, Rajendra Trivedi and Jitu Vaghani, informed the decision taken in the meeting of the cabinet. Vaghani said that the increase in the assistance will be in addition to the assistance the flood affected people are entitled to under the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF). Trivedi said that the increase in assistance will cost Rs 13 crore to the state government. In cases of household items lost in the flood, the affected family will get total Rs 7000 that will include Rs 3800 under SDRF and additional Rs 3200. For damage to huts in the slums of low lying areas, the state government has announced assistance of Rs 5,900 in addition to Rs 4,100 under SDRF taking the total assistance to Rs 10,000. Similarly, for partially-damaged pucca houses, an affected family will get total Rs 15,000 — Rs 5,200 under SDRF and additional Rs 9,800. For partial damage to kutchha houses, the total assistance of Rs 10,000 will be awarded to the affected families — Rs 3,200 under SDRF and additional Rs 6,800. In case of loss of livestock, the affected family is entitled to Rs 30,000 per cattle for maximum three cattle under SDRF. The state government has decided to give additional assistance of Rs 20,000 for loss of per cattle making it total Rs 50,000. In addition to that, the state government has also made the financial assistance available up to five cattle.

Under SDRF rules, for the loss of small cattle (goats and sheep), the cattle owners are entitled to get Rs 3000 per cattle with upper limit of 30 cattle. Vaghani said that the cabinet has decided to provide additional Rs 2,000 per cattle in the case of loss of small cattle making it total Rs 5,000 per cattle. Vaghani clarified that the additional financial assistance is applicable to the people affected by the recent floods in Jamnagar, Junagadh and Rajkot districts. In reply to a question, Trivedi said that total 14 persons have been killed in the flood and close relatives of all of them have been provided with the compensation. Vaghani said that the state government has ordered a survey of the three districts to ascertain the loss to agriculture there and the survey is likely to be over soon. Ministers to hear grievances Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has given instructions to all the ministers and senior officials to stay in their respective office on Mondays and Tuesdays to give hearing to the grievances and issues of MPs/MLAs and general public. Senior minister Rajendra Trivedi said that the CM has given clear instructions in this regard so that general public can represent their issues to the ministers and senior officials. Trivedi also said that the CM has also given clear instructions that on Mondays and Tuesdays, whenever an

MP/MLA goes to meet the senior officials, the former must not be made to sit and wait outside. “The officers will have to call the MLAs honorably in the office...Earlier, it was being witnessed that officials used to make MLAs wait outside (their chambers),” Trivedi said. He added that on days other than Mondays and Tuesdays, if the MLAs want to meet senior officials, they will have to go with prior appointment. Trivedi and Vaghani have been appointed as the spokespersons of the new government.

Gujarat: Tauktae relief package ignores everyday realities of migrant fisherfolk

<https://thewire.in/rights/inadequacies-in-tauktae-relief-measures>

"Cyclone Tauktae wreaked havoc on the coast of Gujarat, among other Indian states and Union Territories, in May of this year. The initial estimated loss to the state's fishing industry stands pegged at Rs 160 crore, while experts expect the actual loss is much higher. The Gujarat government released a relief package of Rs 105 crore for the damage caused to fisherfolk, inter alia, to their boats and equipment. The government also announced funding assistance for fisherfolk seeking loans. While the government has set aside Rs 80 crore from the relief package for the restoration and strengthening of port infrastructure along the Jafrabad, Nava Bunder, Saiyad Rajpara and Shiyalbet coasts, only Rs 25 crores has been set aside for monetary relief. Amidst debates over whether the monetary relief is adequate, what has been missing from the discourse are the inadequacies of the announced relief package itself. Severe shortcomings in the package's design have led to a flood of implementational challenges and roadblocks. The cyclone relief package did not specify the procedure or the documents necessary to determine who would be eligible to receive compensation.

A narrow view might make the process seem flexible to ensure that the lack of documents does not exclude otherwise-eligible people from receiving the compensation (especially since many fisherfolk lost their government-issued identity documents due to the cyclone). However, this non-transparent process resulted in ration cards being used to determine the eligibility for cash dole assistance and house damage compensation. The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) – which shifted from a welfare approach to a rights-based approach to food security – provides for ration cards to be issued by respective state governments. The Gujarat government, after several extensions, implemented the national legislation on food security only in 2016. Thus, the linkage of relief packages to ration cards encountered several problems at the ground level as the existing system and infrastructure for food security in Gujarat is poorly functioning. The poor implementation of the NFSA has adversely affected the relief disbursement of cash dole assistance and house damage compensation for cyclone damages. These problems are compounded by the migratory nature of the work of many fisherfolk communities.

Realities of migrant fisherfolk Saiyad Rajpara Dharabandar Vistar is a migrant fisherfolk

village in the Una tehsil of Gujarat which fisherfolk communities from the Dharabandar village migrate to for employment. They build houses and huts and stay here during the fishing season, leaving for their village during the monsoons. These fisherfolk face a unique set of vulnerabilities due to the migratory nature of their work. The inability of the existing systems in society to capture and adequately address this identity has unfavourably impacted their ability to receive both the cash dole and housing damage compensation. All of these concerns have been raised by several fisherfolks' organisations of Shiyalbet, Jafrabad, Chanch port and Dhara port, as well as those of Saiyed Rajpara of Gir Somnath, Saiyed Rajpara, Nawa Bandar and Simar in their letter of demands to the Fisheries Commissioner, Gandhinagar. The relief package provided for a daily cash dole of Rs 100 per day for an adult and Rs 60 per day for a minor, for a period of one week.

While providing this cash dole, using ration cards to determine eligibility caused many eligible people to slip through the cracks. In Saiyad Rajpara Dharabandar Vistar, ration cards have not been updated since 2011. This probably means that none of the members of these migrant fisherfolk communities have received the new NFSA cards, issued post-2013. Since cash doles were distributed as per the age of the people recorded on their ration cards as of 2011, people who were children in 2011 received Rs 60 instead of the Rs 100 they were entitled to. This also meant that new family members (since 2011) did not get any compensation at all. A similar exclusionary situation has been observed in other states too and the issue has been raised, time and again, in demands for the implementation of the right to food through the NFSA. Some migrant fisherfolk had cancelled their old ration card in Dharabandar (where they migrated from) but they have since not been able to get new ration cards in Saiyad Rajpara (where they migrated to). This, once again, resulted in many families not receiving any compensation.

A woman we met said that her ration card was cancelled because she did not collect the ration for two months and as a result, she did not receive the cash dole. There may be many other migrant fisherfolk who had their ration cards cancelled because they could not collect their ration. If they have not been able to make a new ration card, they have been systematically excluded from receiving the relief disbursement. Problems with the house damage compensation In the case of house damage compensation, a significant drawback of the cyclone relief package is that it does not define what constitutes a 'unit of entitlement' or 'family unit' for relief disbursement purposes. In practice, ration cards were used once again. The migratory nature of the fisherfolk communities in these areas means that they have two living spaces; their home in the village and another at the place they migrate to. While the state government promised to undertake a survey, take stock of the situation and provide financial assistance to those who had incurred damages to their homes, the promise has not been fulfilled. In many places, the survey has not been carried out.

In places where the survey has taken place, only the house mentioned in the ration card has been taken into account for compensation. If the house not mentioned in the ration card has been destroyed or damaged in the cyclone, those have not been recorded as entitled to compensation. Despite living as a separate housing unit, families with a joint ration card received compensation for only one house. While Gujarat has adopted the ambitious 'One Nation One Ration Card' (ONORC) scheme, the central government initiative that is meant to ensure the national portability of a ration card, the poor implementation of the NFSA is impacting the functioning of other programs and initiatives. Had the NFSA been appropriately implemented, using ration cards to determine what constitutes a unit of entitlement would have been adequate. In the absence of this, any entitlement which uses a ration card as the basis for eligibility will face complications and further distress to the affected communities. Thus, releasing a relief package with glaring lacunae in its design has deprived many rightful people of their entitlements.

Gujarat: Cyclones, price hike, Covid: Boat-building industry sees the worst slump in decades

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/cyclones-price-hike-covid-gujarats-boat-building-industry-sees-the-worst-slump-in-decades-7483419/>

"ISMILE KOTAL and other workers frantically cut pieces of fiberglass to paste on the plywood-sheet walls rising above the deck of an under-construction fishing trawler at Mahadev Enterprise, one of the 72 boat building yards in the coastal Mangrol town in Gujarat's Junagadh district. The sultry weather doesn't bother them as they are racing against time to complete the last six boats of the season. Save Mahadev and a dozen odd yards, the rest of the boat yards are deserted, the half-built boats encroached by tall weeds, telling the tale of an industry that is seeing its worst slump due to the Covid-19 pandemic and frequent cyclones. Manufacturers say, 250-300 boats were built per year in Mangrol till 2015-16, but it was 50 last year. In the nearby Sahyog Boat Building Yard, teams of workers specialised in creating fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP) structures, installing engines, colour-coating, etc., work on three under-construction fishing boats. Hussain Pathan, one of the partner-owners of the yard, is busy inspecting them and updating Joaquim Rodrigues, one of his clients from Goa, on phone. Boats made here are in great demand in the coastal states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Goa. Dhabi Agencies on Bandar Road, belonging to Hussain Kadu (59), was abandoned for a year as the boat builder and his four sons shifted focus to coconut cultivation. "Last monsoon, we got orders for three boats before the Covid lockdown began. Since then there are no orders. Therefore, we spent the last one year on our 13-bigha orchard," Kadu, who joined his father in the boat-building business in 1989, says. "We have not seen such slump in business in decades," he adds. Gujarat is among the leading marine fish producers of the country.

Gujarat Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda had told The Indian Express during Cyclone

Tauktae that there were around 20,000 active fishing boats, a majority of them conventional wooden vessels. As per the Gujarat government data, the state accounted for 6.12 per cent (8.42 mt) of the fish production in India in 2018-19. The state, exported seafood worth Rs 5,202 crore, accounting for 11.17 per cent of the total exports of seafood from India that year. The budget allocation for fisheries department also rose from Rs 366 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 376 crore in 2020-21. However, the Gujarat Fisheries Central Cooperative Association (GFCCA) started building FRP boats in Mangrol in 1980s and within three decades, Mangrol became the largest hub of FRP boat building industry in the country. By 2015-16, yards here stopped building wooden boats and fishermen from Gujarat as well as Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu prefer FRP boats built in Mangrol, industry leaders say. The raw material for building FRP boats are manufactured in Gujarat whereas for constructing a wooden boat, sal wood has to be imported from Malaysia.

Small FRP boats, which require minimal maintenance in their initial 10 years, allayed the apprehensions of trawler owners and gained popularity over the last decade. Around 250 to 300 such boats were produced per annum in the years preceding 2015-16, says Harun Padaya, president of Mangrol Fiberglass Association, a chamber of the industry. From there on, it has been a downward slide to just 50 boats last year. “The production started declining with diminishing returns for fishermen due to cyclones and dwindling catch. Covid-19 pandemic and the soaring diesel prices were the last straws. Hardly 50 boats were built last year and the number is unlikely to go up this year,” Padaya says, adding, the boat-building industry employs around 6,000 people. Kiran Chumadiya, partner of Mahadev Enterprise, agrees. “Fishermen place orders for new boats in the beginning of the monsoon so that they become available by the time the fishing season starts. Mahadev used to build around 30 boats per annum till a few years ago. This year, we don’t have further orders once we complete these six,” Kiran, says, adding one of the six boats being built was his own. Pathan, whose firm specialises in designs preferred by fishermen of Maharashtra and the southern states, says, “Usually, we build seven boats every year.

But beyond the three we are constructing now, we don’t have any order at present,” he says. Building a wooden boat takes up to four months while an FRP boat can be rolled out in two months. But the work on some boats has been affected due to the slump. One such half-built boat lies on Mahadev’s yard. “We had leased space to Noah Fiber, an FRP boat building firm, on our yard a year-and-half ago for building a boat. However, the fisherman reported inability to pay anything beyond the initial Rs 4 lakh to Noah Fibre. The firm invested around Rs 8 lakh of its own. But that was hardly 15 per cent of the total money required to build the boat,” says Dinesh Koriya, another partner of Mahadev Enterprise. Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda could not be reached but officials said that the Covid-19 pandemic and disruption in the Chinese market has hit the state’s fishing industry at large. “The state government is issuing new licences only for

smaller boats. This can be a constraint for boat building industry. The pandemic and falling exports volumes have also hit the fishermen. They don't have money to get new FRP boats... Consequently, there's a slump in boat building industry," an officer of the fisheries department said on condition of anonymity, adding the government does not provide any assistance to fishermen for new boats.

Prices of Malaysian sal wood and wood of gum Arabic tree sourced from central Gujarat for wooden boats have almost doubled over the past five years, builders say, tilting the scales in favour of FRP boats. "A fisherman has to spend Rs1.5 lakh per year on maintaining his wooden boat whereas for FRP, the maintenance is nought during initial years and around Rs 50,000 after a few years. Even tandels (captains) and their crew prefer FRP boats over wooden ones as the former offer better safety at sea. But due to successive poor seasons and disruption caused by Covid-19 have left the fishermen with little capacity to invest in new boats," says Dhanji Oza alias Babubhai, president of Mangrol Boat Owners Association. Tulsi Gohel and Mukesh Panjri, presidents of boat associations of Veraval and Porbandar, the two largest fishing harbours of Gujarat, say, 90 per cent of fishermen prefer to have an FRP boat built after scrapping their wooden trawlers. "Costs of maintaining a wooden boat are high but a steel boat costs Rs 1.5 crore, while an 80-foot FRP boat costs around Rs 80 lakh... therefore, we are going for them," Rodrigues, a fisherman from Mormugao whose family owns six trawlers, including two FRPs, says. "They don't build FRP boats in Maharashtra or Karnataka so we come to Mangrol," he adds. The boat being built by Pathan is the third FRP boat in his family's fleet.

Gujarat: Between diesel price and deep sea: Many fishermen unable to set sail this season

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/between-diesel-price-and-deep-sea-many-fishermen-unable-to-set-sail-7481261/>

"The fishing season begins Wednesday but an uneasy calm prevails in Junagadh district's Mangrol harbour, one of the biggest fishing hubs of Gujarat. The fishermen are a worried lot, thanks to high diesel price as well as falling exports volumes of seafood and low consumption in domestic market due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Fishermen leaders apprehend a sizeable number of fishermen will not be able to set sail this season. Devchand Vardhan, a khalasi (crew) onboard a fishing boat, who is on a stroll on the road lined by hundreds of fishing trawlers in the harbour as waves crash on to the tetrapods, says, "Diesel costs Rs 97 a litre. I don't know if the owner of the boat where I work, can afford such high prices." Gopal Sukhadiya, whose family owns five fishing trawlers, shares Vardhan's worries. "Diesel price has shot up from around Rs 65 per litre at the beginning of the fishing season last year to Rs 97 now. Apart from that, China, the largest importer of Indian marine products, is not buying our fish. So even if I get a good catch, there is no certainty that I will get a good price," 56-year-old Sukhadiya says, adding, "Last fishing season was lost to Covid-19 pandemic and consequent crash in the fish market. I had to borrow

money from three persons to repay the bank loan.”

Fishing season in Gujarat generally begins from August 15 and ends on May 13. However, the state government pushed it to September 1 this year, anticipating rough sea conditions during the rainy season. Sukhadiya finds relief in the fact that his turn to lower his boat into the harbour will come only around September 21. “By that time, I should be able to get an idea as to how this season is going to pan out. That said, I will have to go to the sea eventually as that is the only thing we know.” According to fishermen, a trawler burns around 3,500 litre diesel during a typical fishing trip lasting 15 to 21 days. “Due to the soaring diesel price, a fishing trip this season is likely to cost at least Rs 4 lakh, higher by a quarter compared to last year. A trawler carries around 4,000 litres of fuel, ice worth Rs 25,000 and ration for the crew worth around Rs 10,000. A boat owner pays around Rs 70,000 to tandel (captain) and khalasis. But there is no certainty about the catch. A boat can return with a catch worth Rs 4 to Rs 6 lakh or as low as Rs1.5 lakh. Much depends on luck,” says Damodar Chamudiya, chairman of Mahavir Machchhimar Sahkari Mandali, a cooperative society of fishermen in Mangrol. The state government gives VAT rebate to fishermen on diesel and Rs 25 per litre subsidy on kerosene to the owners of pilanas — smaller boats operated by onboard motors (OBM). However, the VAT rebate is capped at maximum Rs 15 per litre and is available for up to 24,000 litres per year per boat.

The kerosene quota has also been fixed at a maximum 150 litres per month. The Gujarat Fisheries Central Cooperative Association (GFCC), a federation of cooperative societies of fishermen functioning under the aegis of fisheries department of the state, tenders contracts for supplying diesel in bulk to its fuel retailing stations located in all major harbours. Oil marketing companies generally supply diesel to GFCC fuel stations at rates up to Rs 3 lower than other retail outlets. As per data from the Commissioner of Fisheries, Gujarat, marine fish production in Gujarat was seven lakh metric tonnes (mt) in 2019-20. The state exported 2.79 mt of marine products that year, the lowest in the past three years, data shows. This was largely due to the floundering Chinese market, says Jagdish Fofandi, president of Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI). “China accounts for around 40 to 50 per cent of seafood exports from Gujarat in terms of value and more than that in terms of volumes. But due to Covid, the Chinese market has destabilised and therefore, exports to that country declined by 20 per cent in terms of volume and value last season. This put pressure on Chinese-market oriented products, resulting in a price drop of around 20 per cent. However, prices of products exported to European countries, US, Canada, Gulf, etc., have seen a general rising trend,” says Fofandi, adding SEAI is expecting a revival in Chinese demand this season.

Around 2,000 boats operate from Mangrol harbour but Mangrol Kharva Boat Association (MKBA) says around a third of them won’t be able to resume fishing this season. “Small time

fishermen have not been able to clear their loan dues for the past two years and they may not be able to cope with the increased input costs. Around 30 per cent of boats here won't be able to set sail as their owners have run out of their savings and creditworthiness," says Jamnadas Vantur, vice-president of MKBA. Mukesh Panjari, president of Porbandar Machhimar Boat Association, says diesel priced at Rs 65 was within tolerance limits of fishermen. "We could even stretch it to Rs 70. But Rs 97, which means at least Rs 80 for us, is way too high. This hurts especially in times when we have to go far from the coast in search of a good catch as pollution is destroying marine life in the near-coast waters, forcing us to burn more diesel," Panjari says, adding around 30% of nearly 4,000 boats in Porbandar may not be able to operate. Tulsi Gohel, president of Samyukta Machhimar Boat Association of Veraval, the largest fishing harbour of the state with around 7,000 boats, also shares similar estimates. "The increased diesel prices can be back-breaking for fishermen.

The difference in price of subsidised diesel kept the earnings of fishermen sustainable but we are entering a new territory now," says Velji Masani, national president of All India Fishermen Association and a fisherman from Mangrol. The fishermen's concerns are also due to instability in overseas fish markets, says Dhanji Oza alias Babubhai, president of MKBA. "Earlier, Chinese importers used to come here personally, check the quality of fish and pay advance after placing orders. This stopped five years ago. Now, we sell our fish to traders, who in turn supply it to exporters. As they are not paying in advance, payment to fishermen is delayed and sometimes traders manipulate the situation," says Oza. Market functionaries also add that Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Surat, etc., are big domestic markets of fish but as hotels were closed or did little business due to Covid-19, price of fish came down in the domestic market as well.

Gujarat: CIFT to help fish export units upgrade testing labs

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/cift-to-help-fish-export-units-upgrade-testing-labs/articleshow/85721576.cms>

"Small fish exporting units of Gujarat finally see a silver lining in the dark times that had engulfed the industry after China took an adverse stand declining to take in Indian fish. Hope now shines on state's beleaguered fishing industry that enjoyed exports to around Rs 5,000 crore per annum in pre-Covid era, after the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) decided to help these units conduct their microbiology tests on the catch at their own laboratories. The upgrading of the laboratory will not only improve export quality, but also reduce rejections by importing countries and industry players will be able to export to European countries without any hesitation. The hub of fish processing in the state, Veraval town, has nearly 100 units where fish from all across the state is brought in for processing and exporting. There are a few units in Porbandar and south Gujarat too. According to export rules, these processing units require an in-house laboratory for microbiology tests for detection of microorganisms in the food product. An

exporter is required to create batches and test raw material as well as processed fish.

The hygiene standards of importing countries are very stringent and according to fish exporters, if they find the presence of microbes in the fish, the entire container faces rejection. More rejections would result in getting the country's export image tarnished. According to sources in the industry, south India's export is considered better than Gujarat in many countries in terms of quality. Director of CIFT, Ravishankar C N on Saturday signed an MoU with four Veraval based units and one Porbandar-based unit in Veraval to upgrade exporters facilities. Ashish Kumar Jha, scientist at CIFT Veraval said, "This is the first phase and we will sign MoUs with all those units which require upgrading. We will help them improve their standards, which will be able to meet international requirements. We will give them a standard layout like chemicals required for testing, environment control for temperature and humidity levels and other necessary equipment. Our scientists will personally visit their units and will provide the lab staff of these units with training." The rejection of container also costs high to the exporters, claim trade experts who peg the costs to around \$25,000 for every rejection. Secretary of Gujarat Seafood Exporters Association, Naresh Vanik said that the exporters only wish that their containers to Europe clear the tests for entry. "Upgrading our labs will provide us with that security. If we detect any microbes in the raw fish, we will not process them further and won't export them too. Thus, that will save our effort and cost. The improved quality will result in more demand from other countries than China."

Gujarat: Dead fish, snakes raise stink in Tapi

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/surat/dead-fish-snakes-raise-stink-in-tapi/articleshow/85572985.cms>

"Locals in Sarthana area of Surat were in shock on Monday morning when they found dead fish and snakes on the shore of Narmada Sarovar on river Tapi. Locals who informed the civic authorities were in panic as water from the river was their main source of drinking water. The water body created due to weir-cum-causeway on Tapi river is named Narmad Sarovar. Water flows from bank to bank in the river throughout the year due to regular discharge of water from Ukai reservoir. Recently, due to heavy rains in the catchment area, a lake was formed in the area with water level going up to 6 meters. As soon as the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) officials got news of the dead fish and snakes on the shore of the river, they swung into action. The health department teams visited the spot and collected water samples. "Actions will be taken by concerned departments like fisheries or GPCB. But SMC's health department team is closely monitoring the situation," said an SMC health official. "If more fish are found in the next couple of days we will start an investigation with the support of other departments," the official added. In the past, thousands of dead fish were found on Dumas beach. Marine experts said that due to a drop in dissolved oxygen in water, sometimes the fish die in

large numbers.

Gujarat: Seafood exporters set to shake off China's chains, enter new markets

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/seafood-exporters-set-to-shake-off-chinas-chains-enter-new-markets/articleshow/85140159.cms>

"With China beginning to choke Indian seafood exports by suspending supply from a multitude of Indian marine export companies, frozen seafood exporters from Gujarat have now started scouting for greener pastures. The local firms are exploring ways to add value to marine products to crack newer markets, and overcome the Chinese debacle. Chinese authorities have been suspending seafood exporting companies from India for certain periods after they allegedly found dead coronavirus cells on package exteriors of seafood shipped from the country. China's claim, however, has been termed 'baseless' by local frozen seafood exporters. China buys 50% of marine products exported from Gujarat. As the stalemate over exports to China is unlikely to be resolved in near future, frozen seafood exporters from the state, mainly from the coastal region of Veraval, have made up their mind to cast their export net wider and cover more countries. They have also agreed to produce and export more value-added products such as ready to cook seafood. China is considered an easier market, as local firms export plain seafood items after just cleaning them without any value addition.

On the other hand, Chinese processors add value to imported products and re-export them to other international markets, including Europe and America. In a recently held meeting, Veraval-based exporters decided to penetrate markets where China re-exports Indian seafood after value addition. Apart from this, they are also looking at countries such as Singapore, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Japan and Thailand, where there is a great demand for value-added marine products. There are very few exporters in Veraval who are making value-added marine products for the European and US markets. There are around 100 exporters in Veraval, but most of them primarily export to China. ""Currently, plain or raw seafood items shipped to China cost us around Rs 25-30 per kg. The cost goes up to Rs 60-80 if we add value to those products. However, the buyer would buy at higher cost if we offer value-added products,"" said Naresh Vanik, one of the few exporters of value-added seafood products in Veraval. ""The Chinese processors know everything about our business, so they don't allow us to earn more profit. However, we can book more profits if we go for value-addition,"" he added. In the market of value-added seafood, China is India's biggest competitor. The other prominent competitors include Thailand and Vietnam.

""We can explore new markets by doing value-addition. But 35% of our catch is ribbon and croaker fish and there is no alternate market other than China for these products. In other

countries, these products fetch 50% of what China pays us," said Jagdish Fofandi, president, Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI). "However, there is a scope for value-addition to the remaining 60-65% of our catch," he added. Stating that the government has set a 30% higher target for marine exports this fiscal, he said, "Government intervention is needed to resolve the China issue and get our funds released so that we can achieve the export target set by the government of India." Troubled waters China has clamped stricter restrictions on Indian seafood consignments and therefore a container takes months to get through. Around 1,000 containers of Indian exporters are stuck at different ports in China waiting to get cleared, suggest estimates by SEAI. Chinese importers, according to agreements they sign with exporters, make payments only when container reach them. The containers used to reach importers within 20 days in pre-Covid times.

However, the period has prolonged to 50-60 days due to restrictions after the outbreak of the pandemic disturbing the payment cycle. Industry players estimate that Veraval-based exporters' payments worth about Rs 100 crore are currently stuck with Chinese buyers. The seafood exports from Gujarat to China has reduced 60%. Rejection of a container costs about \$25,000 to the exporter. At present, 70 Indian exporting companies, including 20 from Veraval, are facing suspension by China.

Gujarat: Fishermen in Devbhumi Dwarka block highway to protest against delayed start to fishing season

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/fishermen-block-dwarka-okha-highway-to-protest-delayed-start-to-fishing-season-7442120/>

"Fishermen of Rupen harbour near Dwarka town in Devbhumi Dwarka district on Thursday blocked Dwarka-Okha highway demanding that they be allowed to start fishing, but the state government on Friday clarified that the decision to defer the beginning to the fishing season by a month was taken only after fishermen demanded so. "During consultation, fishermen of Saurashtra as well as of south Gujarat requested that the fishing season be delayed by a month, as due to cyclones, the normal cycle of seasons seems to have been affected. Their argument was that sea remains rough during August and when the government directs fishermen to return to shores in events of cyclones, costs of fuel and ration they incur is huge but get little catch. Therefore, we agreed to their demand and notified that the fishing season will begin from September 1 this year instead of August 1," Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda said. The minister said that 90 per cent of fishermen wanted the season to be delayed. "Fishermen, who view their traditional occupation not as a business but as a religion are happy with the decision as they believe that the delayed start would allow juvenile fish to become adult and that would eventually lead to better catch over a season.

However, a minority, who are not fishermen but businessmen are probably in a hurry to go to the sea,” said Chavda. Fishing season in Gujarat normally used to begin from August 15 and would go on till May 31. However, the Central government permits fishing from August 1. Last year, the government started issuing tokens to fishermen for fishing trips from August 1 in line with other states like Maharashtra and Goa. But this year, it has decided to push the start to September 1. “Leaders of fishermen organisations like Akhil Bharatiya Fishermen Association, Samyukta Machhimar Boat Association of Veraval etc made representations to the government, requesting delayed start to the fishing season and we welcomed the government’s subsequent decision. But we want that authorities to not allow any boat to set sail from any fishing harbour in the state till September 1,” Mukesh Panjari, president of Porbandar Machhimar Boat Association said. However, Rupen fishermen said they Covid-19 has hit them badly and that small time fishermen need to begin fishing to provide for their families.

“Due to the pandemic, past two fishing seasons have been affected and whatever little savings fishermen had were spent in getting treatment of Covid early this year. As the fishing season has been delayed, around 12,000 residents are struggling to make the ends meet. We made representations to the government that those operating pilanas should be allowed to start fishing but to no avail. The previous day, police caught fishermen on board five boats after they went to the sea. Therefore, people came on the highway on Thursday to protest,” Satar Bharucha, president of Sagar Rupen Macchimar Samaj Association told The Indian Express. Bharucha said that Rupen fishermen operate only pilanas (small boats) powered OBMs (onboard motors) which can go on fishing trips only one day long whereas fishermen of Porbandar, Veraval etc operate large fishing trawlers whose fishing season typically lasts for two weeks. “Rupen fishermen are living a hand-to-mouth life wherein they require to earn something daily so that they can afford ration etc for that day. In any case, our boats are not large enough to go far from coast and therefore in events of cyclone we can always return to coast immediately. The government should have taken this into consideration. But instead, they are treating us at par with big fishermen who operate five to 15 trawlers,” the Rupen fishermen leader said, adding they have moved the Gujarat High Court against the Fisheries Commissioner’s circular dated July 15 which ordered September 1 as the beginning of the fishing season this year.

Gujarat: Govt gender insensitive? Cyclone package for fisherfolk ‘ignores’ poor women

<https://www.counterview.net/2021/07/gujarat-govt-gender-insensitive-cyclone.html>

"A memorandum submitted to the Gujarat government by various fisherfolk associations of the Saurashtra region of Gujarat under the leadership of Ahmedabad NGO Centre for Social Justice's senior activist Arvind Khuman, who is based in Amreli, has suggested that the relief package offered to the fishermen affected by the Tauktae cyclone is not only inadequate, it is also gender insensitive. Of more than one lakh fisherfolk affected in Amreli and Gir Somnath

districts, nearly 40 per cent are women, who work along the coast just as the males go out to fish in the sea. All of them belong to poor families, and the cyclone has robbed these women of their livelihood, yet the government package to the tune of Rs 105 crore ignores them, said the memorandum. In fact, said the memorandum, which demands a relief of Rs 5,000 per month for women for the next six months, those ignored include the fisherfolk working exclusively on land, involved in drying up the fish catch. Since the landing points of the cyclone at Shialbet island, Piplikantha, Jafrabad, Chanch port, Dhara port, Syed Rajpara, Nawa Bandar, Simar, Mahuva port and Katpar port were badly affected, those working on this job, including women and migrant workers, have been "ignored." "The lands have been eroded so much that large pits have been created which makes these lands not suitable for drying fish. Hence, a special plan should be prepared so that these lands can be restored and fishermen can do their business", the memorandum, submitted to the fisheries commissioner, Gujarat government, said.

The devastating cyclone hit Saurashtra coast in May third week this year. Also ignored are the unregistered fisherfolk who operate boats on rent; those who have not used their boats for fishing during the last 2-3 years but their boats have been damaged; the fisherfolk that migrated to ports like Jafrabad and Saud Rajpara for employment and built huts along the coast which stand destroyed; and so on. Other demands in the package include Rs 5,000 compensation instead of Rs 2,000 per month to all affected khalasi fisherfolk for the next six months; subsidised loan of Rs 35-40 lakh instead of assistance to the tune of Rs 2-5 lakh for rebuilding or replacing their destroyed boats; compensation to the tune of Rs 5 lakh for loss of boat equipment instead of Rs 35,000 to 75,000; and Rs 15 lakh to the families of the fisherman who died during the cyclone instead of 6 lakh assistance. Said the memorandum, the government should know the extent of damage -- each boat has four nets worth Rs 1 lakh each; GPS and other wireless devices worth Rs 50,000; solar panel, battery, inverter, power supply etc. worth Rs 50,000; gas bottles, ration goods, utensils etc. worth Rs 15,000; and 300 to 800 litres of diesel worth Rs 30,000 to 80,000. Also, it added, many boat owners have lost their boat licences and other documents due to the cyclone, hence they are facing difficulty in being compensated. Signatories to the memorandum include Fishermen Interest Protection Union, Shiyalbet; Sant Shelaiya Mahila Mandal, Shiyalbet; Ramdev Education Trust, Shiyalbet; Shiyalbet Swayam Sevak Sangh; Sagar Khedu Trust, Jafrabad; Jal Kanya Matsya Udyog Seva Sahakari Mandali Rajpara Bandar, Una; Daria Dil Machhimar Hak Rakshak Sangh Syed Rajpara, Una; Resistance Committee, Una; Khodiyar Mandal, Dharabandar; and fisherfolk of the Rajula region.

Gujarat: Govt's compensation inadequate: Fishermen affected by cyclone

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/govts-compensation-inadequate-fishermen-affected-by-cyclone-7425770/>

"Claiming that the monthly compensation of Rs 2000 announced is not enough to buy a tin of edible oil, fishermen affected by cyclone Tauktae in Gujarat made a representation before the fisheries department on Tuesday and sought higher compensation. Fishermen from Shiyalbeyt, Chanch, Dhara, Syed Rajpara, Nawa Bandar, Simar and Mahuva that are part of Amreli, Gir Somnath and Bhavnagar districts met the officials in Gandhinagar. "We told the government that the compensation announced for the fishermen is inadequate. Over one lakh fishermen are currently unemployed after their boats were damaged or destroyed in the cyclone. In the government's package, there is no provision for 40,000 fisherwomen who are an integral part of fishing industry and are involved in cleaning, drying and packaging of fishes," said Arvind Khuman, who represented the fishermen from Rajula in Amreli district. "The government's package has no provisions for fishermen owning small boats. Secondly, the survey for the compensation was done at a time when most evacuated families had not returned. These families were left out. Thirdly, there are at least 5000 boats that have got damaged, which is much higher than the government's count of 1000," said Khuman while addressing media persons after meeting the state government officials.

Talking about the compensation, Bharat Kamlaiya from Rajpara said, "A measly Rs 2000 isn't enough to buy a tin of edible oil (15 litres). We want at least Rs 5,000 for a year as most fishermen will take about an year to get their boats repaired. Till then they would remain unemployed." While announcing a Rs 105 crore package, the government had stated that it will pay a sum of Rs 2,000 to each of the fishermen whose boats got damaged in the cyclone. According to Bharat, the banks in these districts were not giving loans beyond Rs 2 lakh and so the government's package that mentions 10 per cent interest subventions for loans up to Rs 10 lakh for repairing boats, is insufficient. He said the fishermen who migrate to ports like Jafrabad for employment and have lost their shelter and belongings have not been surveyed. Daksha Baria, 18, the youngest in the group said she had come to represent her mother who used to package fish, but have remained unemployed since the cyclone hit. The fishermen present also said that they have sought a resurvey of the losses from the government. The cyclone also destroyed dried fish and fresh fish stocks. These were also not taken into account by the government. The fishermen also asked the government to hike the compensation for death from Rs 6 lakh to Rs 15 lakh. Officials in the government said they were looking into the demands made by the fishermen.

Gujarat: State continues to receive heavy rainfall; IMD issues warning for fishermen

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/gujarat-continues-to-receive-heavy-rainfall-imd-issues-warning-for-fishermen-101627289874235.html>

"Gujarat continued to receive heavy rainfall on Monday which led to waterlogging and caused damage across the state in the past 24 hours. The state emergency operation centre (SEOC) in its 6am bulletin said several parts of Gujarat, including Saurashtra region, witnessed heavy to moderate rainfall in the 24-hours-span. Lodhika taluka in Saurashtra's Rajkot district received the highest rainfall (198mm) during this period, the weather bulletin reported, followed by Chhota Udepur and Kwant talukas in Chhota Udepur district with 190mm and 182mm rainfall, Becharaji in Mehsana district with 160mm rainfall and Kalavad in Jamnagar with 147mm of downpour, the SEOC said. Officials told PTI on Sunday that many causeways in Saurashtra's districts and central Gujarat had overflowed while dams reported heavy inflow of water owing to heavy downpour in catchment areas. The state authorities said as many as 56 roads across Gujarat were closed for vehicular movement due to the heavy rainfall, including a state highway. The SEOC said all national highways passing through the state were open for traffic. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday predicted heavy rainfall at isolated places in Valsad, Jamnagar, Gir-Somnath districts of Gujarat in the next 24 hours. Fishermen have been cautioned against venturing into the Arabia Sea till Thursday as a precaution against the worsening weather and rough sea conditions. An active wet spell is likely in the state till Tuesday, the IMD said.

Gujarat: Losses mount, fish exporters agree to virtual inspection of stock by China

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/losses-mount-fish-exporters-agree-to-virtual-inspection-of-stock-by-china/articleshow/84769511.cms>

"After resisting for several months, the exporters of frozen fish have agreed to allow Chinese authorities to conduct virtual inspection of containers. Thousands of containers have piled up at various ports of China, the biggest importer of frozen fish from India, after the country rejected them on the grounds that dead Covid-19 cells were found on the outer side of packaging material. As a result of this delay, payment of crores of the exporters was held up and their finances went haywire. China has suspended the import from around 30 exporters from Gujarat in the last two months. Earlier, the exporters had urged government of India to bring a diplomatic solution as they have been following all Covid guidelines strictly and no country except China had objected to Indian fish.

According to exporters, China rejected their containers on finding dead nucleic acid material on the packaging material. Jagdish Fofandi, president of Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI) said, "We are following all international standards in exporting frozen fish but still we

have given our consent for virtual inspection and informed the central government about the same. China's claims of finding dead nucleic acid material are baseless." According to SEAI, nearly 1,000 containers from India have been awaiting clearance at Chinese ports for months. As a result they are incurring huge losses as vessels have to pay demurrage, a charge that is payable to the shipping company for delay in cargo clearance. Chinese buyers pay only after the stock gets cleared by their authorities and they receive it at their end. Around 34 containers were returned in recent times after Chinese authorities rejected the stock. Kenny Thomas, an exporter in Veraval, said, "The returned stock of fish are rendered useless as they are specially prepared for Chinese market and there are no alternate buyers. If the situation continues, we won't buy fish from fishermen from next season." The fish catch from the entire Gujarat coast like Porbandar, Mangrol, south Gujarat, Diu, Okha comes to Veraval for processing and export. There are five lakh people directly getting employment from fishing.

Gujarat: Villagers protest to save land and livelihood as Govt set to build port in Valsad

<https://www.newsclick.in/Villagers-Protest-Save-Land-Livelihood-Gujarat-Govt-Set-Build-Port-Valsad>

"Residents of Nargol, a coastal village in Umargam taluka of Valsad, Gujarat, have once again erupted in protest against an upcoming port in their village. The Gujarat government recently gave a nod to the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) to float global bids to build a multi-functional port at Nargol, which the villagers say will snatch their land and destroy livelihoods. The upcoming port at Nargol is expected to be the alternative to Jawaharlal Nehru Port or JNPT in Mumbai that is almost running in full capacity. The Vijay Rupani government gave the nod to Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) to float global bids to build a multi-functional port at a cost of Rs 3,800 crore that will be capable of handling solid, liquid and container cargo. As per a statement issued by the Gujarat government on June 24 this year, the Jawaharlal Nehru Port near Mumbai is expected to reach its optimal operational capacity by the year 2025, and therefore, a greenfield port in South Gujarat can help serve industries in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The Gujarat government has been planning to develop a port in Valsad since 1997. The present location identified for building the port is at Nargol village, about 140 kilometres from Mumbai and 120 kilometres from Surat. Locals claim that the land chosen for the port is around the village and it contains fertile marine life and fruit orchards, which are the primary source of their livelihood. In June, the 14-member Nargol Gram Panchayat held a general board meeting and passed a resolution opposing the development of the port.

"Nargol has a population of about 16,000 and about half of the population depends on fishing as their primary source of livelihood. The fishermen fear that the coastal line, which is a breeding ground for fish like Surmai, prawns, Bombay duck, lobsters, pomfrets, will be affected once a port is built in the area. The area has rich maritime life and fish from this area is exported to

several countries for a good price. The land that will also be acquired for transportation of cargo belong to villagers and tribals of the area who are dependent on agriculture for livelihood. We grow mangoes, chiku, berries and other vegetables and crops here. Besides, Nargol isn't the only village that will be affected by the upcoming port. Apart from the coastal line of four kilometres in Nargol, the port is expected to extend into neighbouring villages like Umargam, Tadgam, Saronda, Maroli, Fansa, Kalai etc," Yatin Bhandari, former panchayat head of Nargol, told the Newsclick. "The government of Gujarat one day announced that it had decided to build a port here again. No authority has approached us or the gram panchayats, sought our opinion or informed us about the details of the project. We are yet to be told if there will be any rehabilitation after our land is acquired.

We are not against development but it should not come at the cost of our livelihood," added Bhandari who is a farmer by profession. The locals of Umargam taluka in South Gujarat have been protesting against the upcoming port since the project was announced in 1997. After the announcement, the port was planned to come up at Maroli, a coastal village about 10 kilometres from Nargol in Umargam taluka. The then Keshubhai Patel-led government had issued the letter of intent (LoI) to the Natelco-Unocal consortium for the project. Following which, in 1999, the villagers erupted in protest against the project under the banner of Kinara Bachao Samiti and the Umbergaon Taluka Bandar Hatao Sangharsh Samiti. "Earlier, when the project was announced for the first time, both fishermen and farmers of the area had come together to protest against the port. The reason for protesting remains same as it was in 1997 -- the affect that the port will have on the maritime fauna and the fertile land around the coast. After strong resistance from locals for years, the government of Gujarat decided to shift the location of the project from Maroli to Nargol," Krishnakant Chauhan, a Surat-based environmental activist, told the Newsclick.

He added, "Between 2012 to 2014, bids were floated again for the project and the LOI was given to Cargo Motors Pvt Ltd and Amarillis, the international arm of Israel Ports Company (IPC). However, locals of several villages around the port resumed protest again. Subsequently, a public hearing was organised for the project and huge number of villagers had participated in it to express their concern. Eventually, both the companies backed out of the project. Last month, the Gujarat government announced to commence the project again." Noticeably, the protests were led by retired Lt Col Pratap Save, a resident of Nargol and president of the Kinara Bachao Samiti. On April 7, 2000, at the peak of the protests against the proposed port, more than 40 protesters including women were arrested by the state police. Save, who was arrested with the villagers, was brutally thrashed till he lost consciousness and was shifted to a hospital in Vapi, Gujarat. Later, he was shifted to a hospital in Mumbai where he succumbed to the injuries on April 20, 2000. His wife, Sunita Save had filed a case against then Deputy Superintendent NK Amin (also accused in Shohrabuddin encounter case) and a constable for the custodial death. "One night, the police encircled Nargol and picked up the men of the village. When Pratap Save

got to know about it, he followed the detained men to the police station. However, police detained him too and thrashed him in a separate cell. After he was allowed in the same cell as others, the villagers reported that Save was unable to stand. The detained villagers raised hue and cry and Save was hospitalised. Later he was shifted to Mumbai where he succumbed to his injuries. The protests had intensified following his death,” said Chauhan. Interestingly, the port is not only project that the Gujarat government is planning to build in South Gujarat. The bullet train project and a dedicated freight corridor are also slated to come up in the same area for which massive stretches of land have been acquired in districts between Mumbai and Surat amid protests by land owners.

Gujarat: Cyclone Tauktae damage: Rs 12.6 cr paid to fishermen in Saurashtra

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/cyclone-tauktae-damage-rs-12-6-cr-paid-to-fishermen-in-saurashtra-7403415/>

"THE STATE fisheries department has paid Rs12.6 crore in ex gratia to the fishermen of Saurashtra whose boats and fishing gears were damaged by cyclone Tauktae on May 17 this year but payment of maintenance to khalasis (men who work as crew on fishing boats) is yet to be done as they do not have bank accounts. According to Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda, the survey by his department identified 1,199 boats that were damaged partially or fully and against that, owners of 1,134 boats have been paid compensation by the government. "Of them, 131 were fully damaged and 1,003 were partially damaged. The government has released Rs 3.84 crore for fully-damaged boats and Rs 5.83 crore for partially-damaged boats. In addition, we have released Rs 2.53 towards ex gratia to 897 fishermen against damage to their fishing gears," Chavda told The Indian Express on Tuesday. The minister said that of the 1,134 damaged boats, 908 were from Jafrabad-Shiyal Bet and Chanch Bandar harbours in Amreli, the district affected the worst by cyclone. They include 127 fully damaged boats. Gir Somnath and Bhavnagar reported 188 and 38 damaged boats, respectively.

"In case of the remaining 65 partially-damaged boats, owners of 27 did not apply for seeking compensation and therefore, the government has not paid them. Owners of 38 other boats applied for compensation but their applications have been rejected as their boats had not set sail over the past two years," the Minister said. To help the fishermen get back on their feet, the state government had announced Rs105 crore relief package on June. The relief package provided for paying ex gratia ranging from Rs 35,000 to Rs 5 lakh for damaged boats, up to Rs 35,000 for damaged fishing nets and other fishing gears as well as provisional amount of Rs 2,000 per fishermen who have lost their source of livelihood due to damaged boats as nibhav bhatthu (maintenance grant). The Minister said that the uptake in maintenance grant is much below expectations. "Our survey estimated that around 8,000 khalasis will be eligible for one-time maintenance grant of Rs 2000. However, only 1,956 khalasis have claimed it so far," said

Chavda. Kanaiyalal Solanki, president of Kharva Samaj Machhimar Boat Association of Jafrabad, said the limited banking facilities in Jafrabad is an issue. “There is only one bank branch in Jafrabad and it is not able to cater to demands of the fishermen,” he said.

Gujarat: Why Nargol village is resisting a port

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-why-gujarats-nargol-village-is-resisting-a-port-7395266/>

"Public protests have rekindled in South Gujarat, nearly 21 years after the state government decided to float global bids for a second time to develop an all-weather, multipurpose port at Nargol village in Umargam taluka of Valsad district, known for its quaint beach, lined with tall casuarina trees and old Parsi dwellings. What is the state government's latest proposal for Nargol? Being positioned as a future alternative to Jawaharlal Nehru Port or JNPT in Mumbai, the Gujarat government has been planning to develop a port in Valsad since 1997. The present location identified for building the port is at Nargol, located 140 kilometres north of Mumbai and 120 kilometres south of Surat. Recently Chief Minister Vijay Rupani gave the go-ahead to Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) to float global bids for a second time to build a multi-functional port at a cost of Rs 3,800 crore that will be capable of handling solid, liquid and container cargo. A port in Nargol has been in the pipeline to help divert port traffic from JNPT which is operating close to its full capacity. Why are the villagers opposed to the idea of port development? The land chosen for the port is around this village and is among the most fertile for marine life and fruit orchards apart from its pristine beach. Earlier this month, the Nargol gram panchayat passed a resolution to oppose the port project. According to Nargol gram panchayat member Upendra Tandel, the village has a population of 16,000, a majority of whom depend on fishing.

“Good quality the fish like Surmai, prawns, waam, Bombay duck, lobsters, pomfrets, etc., are found in the coastal areas of Umargam, which is also a fertile breeding ground . The local fishermen sell their stock to the traders who later sell the stocks to dealers in Mumbai and Okha and from there it is exported to the USA, UK, China, Singapore, etc. Due to port activity, the breeding ground of the fish will be affected. The land will also be acquired for transportation of cargo as the majority of the land is owned by the tribals. The local fishermen will have to go deeper into the sea to get a good catch. Due to the port, the local fishermen will be deprived of their livelihood. Many of the land is agricultural and mostly the farmers grow rice, wheat, and own orchards of mango, chikoo and other fruits, which will be affected.” The reclamation of land and the heavy traffic of ships would not only destroy these breeding grounds but also contaminate the sea water with spillage, say environmentalists and local fishermen. Tandel talks about how Bhasker Save's experiment in organic farming at his farm, Kalpavruksh, at Dehri village in Umbargaon taluka had got him world fame. Why did government's plans to build a

port in the region fail in the past ? The plan to build a port in Valsad was made way back in 1997. The land chosen was in Maroli, a coastal village located just 10 kilometres in the same district, north of Nargol. In September 2018, GMB had awarded the development rights for the port project to an Indo-US consortium comprising Unocal Corporation and a Mumbai-based telecommunications firm, National Telecom of India Ltd or Natelco. GMB too had a minority stake in the project that was to spread over the villages of Umargam, Dehri, Sarando and Nargol with an investment of Rs 2,600 crore.

When the Keshubhai Patel-led government issued the letter of intent (LoI) to the Natelco-Unocal consortium, villagers organised under the Kinara Bachao Samiti and the Umbergaon Taluka Bandar Hatao Sangharsh Samiti launched an agitation and resisted surveys carried out for the project. Following a violent clash with the police on April 7-8, 2000, a retired Lt Col, Pratap Save, who was a resident of Nargol and president of the KBS, was injured and died in Hinduja Hospital in Mumbai. His brother Bhaskar Save, who died in 2015, was a pioneer of organic farming and founded Kalpavruksha, his farm along the Umargam coastal highway. After the public protest related to land acquisition at Maroli died down, the Gujarat Maritime Board changed the location to Nargol and invited fresh bids in 2009. Nargol was chosen because compared to Maroli, less private land was needed as majority of it would be acquired through reclamation. In 2011-12, GMB invited bids for Nargol, where 22 companies had submitted the Request for Proposal (RFP). Of these 19 had qualified, but only four submitted the final proposals. The LOI was given in 2012 to a consortium of Ahmedabad-based Cargo Motors Pvt Ltd and Amarillis, the international arm of Israel Ports Company (IPC). The proposed port was meant to create facilities to handle coal, containers, RO-RO and break bulk cargo at cost of Rs 4600 crore in first phase. The first phase of project would need about 175 hectares of land of which 171 hectares was to be reclaimed from sea, while the rest was expected to be forest land. Water for the project was proposed to be sourced from nearby Varoli river. The consortium failed to fulfil the obligations under the LOI. Secondly, the Israeli firm too pulled out of the consortium. Even though an extension was given, the project could not take off. Finally in July 2019, the government decided to cancel the proposal. Even the Gujarat government admits that the port project at Nargol has faced “huge gestation lags”.

Apart from land acquisition issues, what are the challenges that Gujarat is silent about? Experts say that Nargol will face competition from another port Vadhavan, which is coming up in Maharashtra and is located just 45 kilometers away. JNPT is the lead partner in the Rs 65,544 crore port project at Vadhavan which too faced protests from local villagers in the later part of 2020. Experts also said Nargol will also have to compete with Hazira, a functional port located in close proximity to Surat. Moreover, JNPT has also proposed to expand its existing container handling facility. A fact-finding report by a Maharashtra NGO, Lokshahi Hakk Sangathana, in 2000 on the earlier project and the agitation, says that the port at Maroli was considered

necessary by the government, as an earlier port project for Vadhavan near Dahanu had to be abandoned because of local resistance. What are the changes the government has made currently to invite private players for the project? Nargol is being developed through PPP or Public Private Partnership model. Usually, the government gives BOOT period of 30 years for any greenfield port development in Gujarat. However, for Nargol, the BOOT period has been extended to 50 years. "This presents potential port developers with an assurance of greater Return on Investment. Similar arrangement exists in other states where the concession periods have been extended to 50 years," said a state government official. Secondly, the government is also offering the flexibility to quote discounted waterfront royalty rate in addition to the prevailing system of quoting premium on the base rates.

Gujarat: Tauktae relief package: CM felicitated for providing aid to fishermen

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/tauktae-relief-package-gujarat-cm-felicitated-for-providing-aid-to-fishermen-7390675/>

"Various fishermen community leaders of Gujarat felicitated Chief Minister Vijay Rupani for the relief package of Rs 105 crore the government announced for losses sustained by the fishermen due to Tauktae cyclone that hit the Saurashtra coast in May, said a government release Monday. The release also quoted vice-president of All India Fishermen Association in Gujarat Veljibhai Masani as saying that due to timely action of the state government, 300 fishermen were brought to safety before the cyclone hit the coast and that within a month of announcement of the relief package, all the affected fishermen got it. Office bearers of All India Fishermen Association's Gujarat chapter felicitated Rupani by giving him a memento. On the occasion, office bearers of other fishermen bodies like Jafrabad Boat Association, Okha Boat Association, were also present.

Gujarat: Panchayat in Valsad passes resolution against port plan

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/gujarat-panchayat-in-valsad-passes-resolution-against-port-plan-7381880/>

"A protest has been brewing among the fishermen community in Nargol after the Gujarat government announced a plan to build a greenfield port on the Nargol coast in Valsad district of South Gujarat, bordering Maharashtra. On Tuesday, the Nargol Gram Panchayat held a general board meeting and passed a resolution opposing the development of the port, fearing it would affect the livelihood of farmers and fishermen. There are 14 elected members, including the sarpanch, in Nargol Panchayat. Last week, the state government announced plan to develop a port at Nargol in Umargam Taluka as a cargo port on Build, Own, Operate, Transfer basis for a period of 50 years, on public-private partnership basis. Talking to The Indian Express, Nargol village sarpanch Kantibhai Kotwal said, "The major source of income of people of Nargol and its

neighbouring villages are farming and fishing. They will lose their livelihood. The state government has not shared information about the project with us. People of nine villages neighbouring Nargol village are supporting us in opposing the project.” Deputy sarpanch of Nargol village, Sweety Bhandari, said, “Villagers don’t want a port, we want tourism. Nargol is of historical significance as the Parsis from Iran landed in Sanjan and stayed in Nargol village... The port would pollute the coastal area... The land in the coastal area belongs to the tribals and it is the only source of their income.” Nargol Gram Panchayat member Upendra Tandel told this paper, “If a jetty comes up, fishermen will have to suffer.” Tandel is member of the Umargam Taluka Kinara Bachao Utkarsh Samiti, an offshoot of Kinara Bachao Sangharsh Samiti, that protested Maroli port project in the same taluka in 1999-2000 under Lt Colonel (retd) Pratap Save. The project was abandoned.

Gujarat: Fishermen suffering due to non-implementation of govt policies properly: Fisheries Minister

<https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/fishermen-suffering-due-to-non-implementation-of-govt-policies-properly-gujarat-fisheries-minister-714000> "Gujarat Minister of State for Fisheries Parshottambhai Solanki on Tuesday said that the fishermen community is suffering due to the non-implementation of the government's policies properly, not getting help from the Vijay Rupani government. ""The fishermen community is facing difficulties for the past 15 years, and not getting much help from the Vijay Rupani government. However, the chief minister has assured me that work will be done for this community.

A number of people I met from the fishermen community have expressed dissatisfaction over the government's policies for them, but there are limitations of government as well,"" said Solanki. ""I understand their problem, so I am trying to help the people as much as possible,"" he added. The minister also expressed his unhappiness over the ""improper implementation"" of the Rs 105 crore relief package for fishermen by the state government after cyclone "Tauktae" ravaged coastal areas last month. ""The government is working and good work is also being done but not as much as required. The relief package was announced after the cyclone, it has not been implemented properly. The package is not enough for those living on the coastline. I believe the government should increase the amount"" Solanki said.

Gujarat: Exports of marine products down 17% in fiscal 2021

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/exports-of-marine-products-down-17-in-fiscal-2021/articleshow/83759944.cms>

"Exports of marine products from Gujarat took a beating in fiscal 2020-21 due to the disruption in export markets, especially China. The state’s marine exports declined by 17% to Rs 4,137 crore in 2020-21 from Rs 4,985 crore in the previous financial year, shows data from the

Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI). Exports in volume terms dipped by about 20% to 2 lakh tonnes in 2020-21 compared to 2.51 lakh tonnes. “Seafood exports from Gujarat have declined due to Covid-19 induced disruptions in export markets, especially China, loss of fishing days on account of the pandemic as well as depleting catches,” said Jagdish Fofandi, national president, Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI). The decline in exports to China pulled down overall exports from the state, which is among the top seafood exporters in India. Seafood exports to China plummeted by 41% to Rs 1,287 crore in 2020-21 from Rs 2,197 crore in 2019-20. Exports in volumes dropped to 71,637 tonnes from 1.26 lakh tonnes during the same period. Exports to Southeast Asia and the Middle East also declined.

However, the reductions were not as steep as China. According to seafood exporters, China made its import protocols and norms stricter due to Covid-19. Previously, it was an easy market for exports. However, the risks in the Chinese market increased and its seafood market shrank due to the pandemic. There were a few rejections of consignments, containers were held up and exporters also faced payment-related issues. “Gujarat’s exports of seafood also depend on the catch from the sea as well as inland production. Overall, marine output has not gone down but catch from the sea have dropped partly due to cyclonic conditions in the previous years,” said Fofandi. “There is a need to adopt sustainable fisheries to save the industry from a major hit in the long run,” he added. Freight cost has increased by around 200%-300% across the board over the past six or seven months, which has affected bottom lines in the seafood trade. Seafood exporters also complained that non-payment of incentives under the previous Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) is also hampering cash flow for the seafood trade. The rates under the new scheme, called Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP), which came into force after MEIS, have not been declared, which has further added to the woes of exporters.

Gujarat: Ahmedabad civic body monitors oxygen levels in river after thousands of fish die

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/world/rest-of-asia/india-ahmedabad-civic-body-monitors-oxygen-levels-in-river-after-thousands-of-fish-die>

"The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) is monitoring the dissolved oxygen levels in Sabarmati river after thousands of fish were found dead over the weekend. Civic officials have attributed the deaths to the reduced dissolved oxygen levels in the water and weather change including overcast skies. “The fish are dying due to less amount of dissolved oxygen in the water,” Harpalsinh Zala, the AMC city engineer told the media. “Whenever the weather is humid and cloudy, the surface oxygen does not get dissolved in the water. We are regularly monitoring these levels in the water and there has been no incident reported after Sunday.” According to him, oxygen levels can also go down because of less circulation of water. “Since AMC uses water from Narmada canal, water from the Sabarmati is used only for

recreational and irrigation purposes, demand for which is low now,” he said. “Thus, the water is stagnant.” Incidentally, the tragedy coincided with the publication of a study by the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, establishing the presence of coronavirus in samples from Sabarmati and Kankaria and Chandola lakes between September and December 2020. The report, which has been widely quoted in social media, led to panic in Ahmedabad with residents fearing the worst. AMC officials asserted the fish deaths were “a natural annual phenomenon,” and that there is no study correlating transmission of coronavirus through water. Even the WHO has denied it, said a civic official.

Gujarat: Exporters resist China’s demand for virtual inspection of fish plants

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/exporters-resist-chinas-demand-for-virtual-inspection-of-fish-plants/articleshow/83552395.cms>

"China the biggest importer of frozen fish from India has demanded a virtual inspection of the Indian fish processing plants. However, this hasn't gone down well with the exporters here who are resisting the move and asking Indian agencies to act sympathetically. China last week suspended import from 10 Indian seafood companies including four companies of Veraval after they they found traces of Covid on the packaging. But the Indian exporters are disputed this allegation and have sought clarification. The export to China from Gujarat coast has dropped by over 30 percent in the last financial year and now, owing to the fresh dispute, exporters fear further drop in the current financial year too. China accounts for around 50 percent of total fish exports from the Veraval coast. Following the detection of Covid traces on the frozen fish together with the rising in Covid cases in Guangdong province, its Zhanjiang port has suspended import of frozen food from 11 countries including India from June 20 to July 15. According to Indian sea food exporters, after the detection of Covid traces on frozen fish packaging, testing protocol has been tightened further with the Chinese authority detaining containers that are being exported from India. Veraval sea food exporters are in a dilemma and seeking help from the Indian government.

President of Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI), Jagdish Fofandi said, “We don’t have any clear picture of what Chinese authorities want to test, what’s the finding of Covid test of fish. We follow all the guidelines for seafood exports issued by Indian government agencies for Covid while exporting.” Chinese authorities have allegedly found Covid traces on the outer carton of packaging, a claim which the exporters have refuted. “We freeze fish at minus 20 degrees and keep the packaging at minus 40 degrees. There is scientific evidence that Covid virus can’t survive in such subzero temperature,” Fofandi argued. According to the Indian exporters, the Chinese authority wants to inspect ‘suspected’ exporters’ plants and will prolong the suspension on import if they find even minor errors. This kind of inspection started in some of the plants of Andhra Pradesh. Generally, the Export Inspection Council of India (EICI)

inspects the seafood exporters' facilities, identify nonconformity and suggest changes based on which exporters modify or upgrade their plants. According to the exporters, if the stalemate continues they won't need to procure fish from the fishermen from the next season which starts from August 1, as they will have stock of frozen fish from the last season. Nearly Rs 50 crore dues of Indian exporters stuck. The Indian container clearance at Chinese ports takes two to three months. As a result, around Rs 50 crore amount of the Indian exporters are now stuck with the Chinese importers. All the containers are being tested before their release. Kenny Thomas, an exporter of Veraval said, "Around Rs 35 to 50 crore is stuck with Chinese importers. As per terms they have to pay us only after clearance of our containers from the Chinese authority and they dictate the terms."

Gujarat, Odisha and West Bengal: Managing risks from overlapping hazards

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/managing-risks-from-overlapping-hazards/lite/>

"Within a span of a week, first the Western Coast (Gujarat in particular) and then the eastern coast (Odisha and West Bengal) were battered with cyclones —Tauktae in the west and Yaas in the east. While cyclones and storms are not unusual on the Eastern coast (we have witnessed Aila, Bulbul, Amphan in the past), what was unique this time was that an environmental hazard happened in the middle of another mega hazard – the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, while the Yaas cyclone caused immediate damage, the flooding it induced took the adversity to a different scale altogether. We need to take cognisance of the fact that such overlapping hazards could be a recurrent phenomenon. Accordingly, the disaster risk reduction activities need to be geared towards first an interdisciplinary diagnosis of various risk drivers. This then needs to be followed by a sequence of interventions spread round-the-year — not a knee-jerk ex-post set of actions – with a focus on building resilience at the individual and community level. History – up to as recently as last year – shows that millions of hectares over the Ganga-Brahmaputra flood plains and the delta have been subjected to riverine and flash floods on clockwork regularity.

Further, the densely populated riverine areas, the sand bars that dot the river channels, and the deltas are continuously subjected to river bank erosion. Often these two phenomena coincide in the flood months. This year, with Covid already rampaging the countryside, the future looks ominous. Though already late, the ongoing adversities resulting from the Yaas cyclone and Yaas-induced flooding amidst the pandemic, need to be seen as early warning signals on the challenge that stares at our face. Any sustained change in reducing disaster risk would require a clinical understanding of the risk drivers. In disaster parlance, the risk is defined as a product of hazard and vulnerability. When overlapping hazards take place, with each hazard having their own character, the final shape of the hazard is often a product of these individual characters. In the recent case of Yaas and the flooding induced by it, the former was a single event, with high

magnitude, spread over a limited time duration (few hours), with moderate speed of onset (over days), and high arial and spatial dispersion (multiple districts over the three states of Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand).

The resultant flooding, in the coastal districts and in the Sunderbans delta, was of moderate magnitude, spread over a much longer duration of time, high frequency with the tidal surges continuing to inundate vast stretches of coastal areas and riverine deltas. So, finally, we have a situation where the overall hazard is much larger than the triggering cyclone. Vulnerability, or the propensity of loss, is itself an outcome of complicated processes. The proximate causes of vulnerability could be the recurrent exposure to hazards as people continue to live in unsafe conditions — whether on the riverine flood plains, the sinking deltas or the eroding sand bars. However, this understanding of vulnerability often equates it with exposure and biophysical factors. Hence limiting the exposure, either through zoning or planned retreat, becomes an important way of reducing this biophysical vulnerability. But vulnerability also emerges from underlying socio-economic-political conditions. Often the (socially, economically and politically) marginalised population have to reside in such precarious areas. They often lack access to various resources – land (due to salinity intrusion or erosion), safe housing, water and sanitation, stable livelihoods and markets. All this is both a cause and outcome of their social vulnerability. The delicate balance in their life, the subsistence nature of their livelihoods gets seriously disturbed with every event of a hazard. Every event of a hazard is hence followed by increasing outmigration of able-bodied men and women from the area.

As the geographer Susan Cutter has argued, this interaction of biophysical and social vulnerability jointly forms vulnerability-of-place. The densely populated flood plains, the sand bars, the delta and the coast are social and physical spaces where this vulnerability-of-place manifests. As an outcome of the cyclone Yass and the Yaas-induced flooding, we are currently witnessing such disruptions in the form of salinity intrusion, loss of agriculture and capture fisheries, decimation of the marine capture fishery supply chain in East Midnapore district, lack of access to safe water and a pitiable condition in the villages in Sunderbans delta, where rotting fish, plants and animals are resulting in severe stench and pollution are enhancing the possibility of water borne disease. All these when the state is in the middle of pandemic. The risk of escalation of water borne diseases and another wave of Covid cases in the affected stares at our face. It is important that lessons are drawn from such adversities and some short-term proactive planning is taken on war-footing in other areas/states to avoid similar sad state of events. But disaster risks cannot be managed by short-term reactive actions. Risk can only be managed and minimised through a plethora of year-round activities that combines certain defence strategies that reduce the probability of the occurrence of the hazards in the first instance, with preparation strategies like early warning, arrangement of adequate spaces for evacuation and prompt rescue and evacuation, and risk mitigation and adaptation strategies that could enhance the risk

absorptive capacity among the population through reduction in the consequences of such overlapping hazards by enhancing the (flood)risk-proof capacity among the exposed population.

An overwhelming focus only on flood defence strategy, that is inherently infrastructure heavy, often remains ill-implemented and is subjected to build-forget-rebuild syndrome. Components of this strategy creates a false sense of security and actually enhances vulnerability. The dismal state of embankments, their toppling and the resulting flooding witnessed now in the coastal districts of West Bengal and in the Sundarbans delta clearly indicates their limitations. Only through a combination of these strategies can the otherwise vulnerable population have the capacity to absorb, recover, adapt and transform even in the face of overlapping hazards. Only then will resilience be built. This would require a multidisciplinary approach to risk reduction, where each of the risk drivers is subject to interdisciplinary deliberation by a multiple set of institutions followed by a preparation of a plethora of thematic interventions planned round-the-year which would reduce the intensity of the risk drivers. These would build resilience among the otherwise exposed and vulnerable population. If such capacities are not possible to be built, then planned retreat of the population from those spaces would remain as the most prudent strategy.

Gujarat: Indian Meteorological Department issues warning for fishermen

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/surat/imd-issues-warning-for-fishermen-in-south-gujarat/articleshow/83379150.cms>

"Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a warning and advised fishermen in south Gujarat not to venture into sea till June 13. In the warning issued on Wednesday, the IMD has forecasted wind speed of 40-50 kmph from south-western direction. The warning also mentions that the wind speed may go up to 60 kmph and the sea will be rough to very rough with waves from south-western direction. "We have instructed fishermen through our local officers to follow the guidelines from IMD. Our teams are alert and there are no warnings of damage in coastal areas," said R R Rawal, district collector, Valsad.

Gujarat: Dumping Jetpur's effluents in deep sea worries fishermen

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/dumping-jetpurs-effluents-in-deep-sea-worries-fishermen/articleshow/83349166.cms>

"The fishing community along the Saurashtra coast and environment activists have expressed concern over the state government's plan to dump the effluent from industries in Jetpur, Rajkot into deep sea near Porbandar. The Gujarat government has proposed a Rs 700 crore pipeline project to transport treated water from the common effluent treatment plants (CETP) in Jetpur to Porbandar. The fishing community has raised concern over the impact of the

project on future of fishing industry that thrives on exports to Europe and US. They apprehend that dumping of effluent into deep sea will not only adversely impact the fish population but also contaminate the marine organisms. According to fishermen, the project will affect fishing activity in Porbandar, Veraval, Mangrol and Okha, where over 30,000 people are engaged directly with the fishing business. Fish production along Saurashtra coast is about 6 lakh tonnes per year, out of which 2 lakh tonnes is exported resulting in earning of Rs 5,000 crore annually. Shree Akhil Gujarat Macchimar Mahamandal (AGMM), representing the fishing community in the state, on Monday, wrote to chief minister Vijay Rupani demanding suspension of the effluent pipeline project.

“The fishermen community is already in financial distress due to Covid-induced lockdown worldwide and the recent cyclones that ravaged the fishing villages. Several factories having units on the coast are already polluting the sea. Many species of fish are already on the verge of extinction. If Jeptur’s polluted water is discharged into the sea, it will ruin the future fishing prospects.” Gopal Fofandi, president of AGMM told TOI, “This is a very serious issue as it will destroy the entire seafood industry. If our concerns are not heard, we are willing to fight it out.” President of Porbandar Fishermen’s Association, Bharat Modi said “The polluted water (from Jetpur) will kill the fish in area 15 nautical mile from the shore where the small fishermen do fishing. If the government wants to spend this much money they should make a plan to use treated water for irrigation or in the industry.” Environment activist Rohit Prajapati said that industries have already polluted water of Sabarmati water and Mahi rivers. “Here the government will be creating more problems than solving the pollution issue in Bhadar river. The polluted water in the sea will not only reduce the catch but it will contaminate the seafood which may affect human health and directly impact the revenue of the fishing community.”

Gujarat: Cyclone Tauktae: ‘Avicennia marina’ shielded Surat

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/surat/when-avicennia-marina-stood-like-a-wall-against-cyclone-tauktae/articleshow/83266692.cms>

"While Surat prepared to face the worst side of cyclone’s devastating impact on its coastline, nature itself worked in its own mysterious ways and tamed the wild Tauktae on its shores. People can thank the mini forests of mangrove on around 5,000-hectare land have worked as a wall preventing devastation from the strong wind and buffering the impact. But as someone had wisely said: ‘The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think.’ Population of 14, 200 in 14 villages are located on its 35 km long coastline were spared from the damages from cyclonic winds and tidal waves on that fateful night by these plantations. However, mangrove cover was sadly reduced to 1,000 hectare a decade ago by human destruction, according to forest department records. Thankfully, on time awareness and protection measures for the plantations has enabled

regrowing the cover to 5,000 hectares now.

Of the total area under mangrove cover forest department did plantations in 1,500 hectares, while private companies did their bit on 500-hectare plantation area. “In recent cyclones mangrove plantations have worked like a wall against the wind and tidal waves. A large area on Surat coast is under mangrove cover now and it is growing gradually creating an ecosystem that supports local residents,” said Puneet Nayyar, deputy conservator of forest. Mangrove cover was present in the coastal area of south Gujarat but it reduced drastically due to various reasons. “Mangroves help grow the flora and fauna of the area apart from reducing soil erosion. It has medicinal uses as well and it is an important chain-link of the environment,” said Mohini Gadhia, professor and former head of department of aquatic biology, VNSGU.

Gujarat: Govt announces Rs 105 crore relief package for Cyclone-hit fishermen

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/gujarat-govt-announces-rs-105-crore-relief-package-for-cyclone-tauktae-hit-fishermen-7340735/>

"More than two weeks after Cyclone Tauktae ravaged southern coast of Gujarat's Saurashtra region, the state government Wednesday announced a Rs 105 crore relief package for fishermen, whose 1,000 boats have been damaged, as well as for strengthening of the harbour infrastructure. Of the total, Rs 25 crore has been earmarked for paying ex-gratia compensation to fishermen for their damaged boats and fishing equipment while the remaining Rs 80 crore will be reserved to repair and strengthen infrastructure in Jafrabad, Shiyal Bet, Saiyad Rajapara and Nava Bandar fishing harbours. "The core committee, at its meeting chaired by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Tuesday, did a comprehensive review of damage caused to agriculture, horticulture as well as to sagarkhedu (fishermen) recently by Tauktae, and to help fishermen get back on their feet and to put the fishing industry back on track. The committee announced a generous relief-compensation package worth Rs105 crore," an official release said on Tuesday morning. Deputy chief minister Nitin Patel, Energy Minister Saurabh Patel, Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda, Gujarat chief secretary Anil Mukim, CM's chief principal secretary K Kailashnathan, additional chief secretary (revenue department); Nalin Upadhyay, secretary in the department of fisheries and animal husbandry and DP Desai, fisheries commissioner attended the meeting.

"Around 1,000 boats, small and large, have been damaged in the state due to cyclone Tauktae and the government will pay fishermen Rs 25 crore compensation as per rules contained in the relief package," the release quoted Rupani as saying. Fishermen try to salvage their damaged fishing boat in Jafrabad harbour, in Amreli district on Monday. (Express photo by Gopal Kateshiya) The package provides for paying ex-gratia compensation ranging from Rs 35,000 to Rs 5 lakh for damaged boats, up to Rs 35,000 for damaged fishing nets and other fishing gears as

well as provisional amount of Rs 2,000 per fishermen who have lost their source of livelihood due to damaged boats. As per the details of the package, the government will pay Rs 35,000 or 50 per cent of damage, whichever is low, in case of partially-damaged small fishing boats. In cases of completely damaged small fishing boats, the government would pay Rs 75000 or 50 per cent of the value of the boat, whichever is lower. In cases of partially damaged trawlers, dolnetters, gill netters, the government would pay 50 per cent of the amount of damage caused or up to Rs 2 lakh, whichever is lower.

The amount of compensation in completely damaged trawlers, dolnetter and gill netters would 50 per cent of the value of the boat or Rs 5 lakh, whichever is lower. The government would also give 10 per cent interest subvention for two years to fishermen who avail loans worth up to Rs 10 lakh for repairing their completely damaged large boats or Rs 5 lakh loan to repair their partially damaged large boats, the release further read. Aquaculture farmers will be paid Rs 82,000 subsidy per hectare towards input like fish seed, fish-feed and related equipment. The package also provides for expanding the existing jetty at Jafrabad and constructing a new 500-metre long jetty, to construct a wharf wall with parking facility in Lal Batti area of the harbour as well as to create parking area in T-jetty area of the harbour. In Shiyal Bet, Saiyad Rajapara and Nava Bandar, damaged harbour infrastructure will be repaired.

Gujarat and Daman & Diu: PM Modi undertakes aerial survey of areas hit by Cyclone Tauktae

<https://theprint.in/india/pm-modi-undertakes-aerial-survey-of-areas-in-gujarat-diu-hit-by-cyclone-tauktae/660928/>

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday undertook an aerial survey of affected areas in Gujarat and adjoining Union territory of Diu to assess the devastation caused by Cyclone Tauktae. Modi is in Gujarat to review the situation in the state in the aftermath of cyclone Tauktae. He landed at Bhavnagar from Delhi around noon and proceeded for the aerial survey of Una, Diu, Jafarabad and Mahuva, an official said. Modi boarded a helicopter for the aerial survey of cyclone-affected areas in Gir-Somnath, Bhavnagar and Amreli district of Gujarat along with Diu. The cyclone, which made landfall between Diu and Una town of Gir-Somnath district on Monday night, caused major property damage and also uprooted trees in that region. After the survey, the PM is scheduled to hold a review meeting at Ahmedabad. Thirteen people were killed in Gujarat as cyclone Tauktae pummelled parts of the state and left behind a trail of destruction along the coast, uprooting electric poles, trees and damaging thousands of houses and roads. In what was one of the worst cyclones faced by the state, Tauktae triggered heavy rains in many parts from Saurashtra coast to North Gujarat with 46 talukas receiving over 100 mm of downpour, while 12 of them recorded 150 mm to 175 mm of rains.

Tauktae, characterised as an extremely severe cyclonic storm on Monday, has now weakened into a depression and lay centred over south Rajasthan and adjoining Gujarat region on Wednesday morning, the India Meteorological Department said. Over 16,000 houses were damaged, more than 40,000 trees and over 70,000 electric poles uprooted, while 5,951 villages faced total power blackout due to the cyclonic storm in Gujarat, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said.

Gujarat: Cyclone Tauktae damages pegged at Rs 10,000 crore

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/tauktae-caused-damage-worth-rs-10000-crore-in-gujarat/articleshow/82987212.cms>

"According to a draft memorandum prepared by the state government — on the basis of inputs from various departments — Cyclone Tauktae inflicted damage assessed at Rs 10,000 crore in Gujarat. Various teams of the central government will be in Gujarat for a couple of days from Thursday, to assess the cyclone damage. Teams of the ministries of home affairs, agriculture, industry and others will visit the affected areas to assess the damage on the ground. After their field visit, officials of various central government departments will hold a meeting with the CM and top government officials. The Gujarat government is expected to submit a memorandum to the central teams, listing the damage to various sectors because of the cyclone. Key sources involved in preparing the memorandum said that various departments have submitted details of damage and a few departments are still in the process of compiling the information. "Losses are highest in the agriculture and co-operation, energy and housing departments. A few other departments are still compiling data, but we expect the total damage figure to be close to Rs 10,000 crore," one of the sources said. The government of India has already made an allocation Rs 1,000 crore in the form of immediate assistance, soon after the PM's visit. "After submission of the memorandum, we expect more financial assistance. The state government is also preparing a detailed scheme for assistance to cyclone-affected citizens. Within a week's time, the state government will announce a relief package for various sections of society," the source said. During and after the cyclone, a total of 64 deaths were reported. Several thousand animal deaths and major damage to personal and government property have also been reported.

Gujarat: Govt survey after Cyclone Tauktae: 900 boats damaged, minister says working on compensation

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/rajkot/govt-survey-after-cyclone-tauktae-900-boats-damaged-minister-says-working-on-compensation-7331964/>

"A week after Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced the government would compensate fishermen for damages due to cyclone Tauktae, an ongoing survey by the state

fisheries department has reported more than 900 damaged fishing boats even as uncertainty prevails over the amount of compensation. During his visit to Jafrabad harbour in Amreli district on May 20, Rupani had said the cyclone had caused extensive damage to boats of most of fishermen families and, in these difficult times, the government would pay them cash doles and extend all possible help to overcome losses on account of damages to their boats. Following the CM's announcement, the fisheries department had launched a survey to assess damages to boats and loss of lives in the 13 fishing harbours on southern Saurashtra coast, including Jafrabad, Shiyal Bet and Chanch harbours in Amreli district, and Ghogha, Sartanpar and Mahuva harbours in Bhavnagar districts. The survey scope also includes Veraval, Sutrapada, Madhvada, Kotda, Nava Bandar, Saiyad Rajapar and Simar harbours in Gir Somnath district.

“Around 80 per cent of survey work is over and, so far, 917 boats are reported to have been damaged by cyclone Tauktae. They include 534 in Amreli district, 352 in Gir Somnath and 31 in Bhavnagar,” a senior officer of fisheries department told *The Indian Express*. Under three heads Sources said the survey teams were recording damages under three heads — partially damaged fishing boats, fully damaged boats and deaths of fishermen. An officer said that scores of boats out of 917 identified, so far, were fully damaged. At least four fishermen reportedly have been killed in Jafrabad. “We have no guidance about what will be the scale of compensation. All we have been directed is to assess damage under three heads, compile a report and submit it to the government,” another officer of the fisheries department said. Tauktae had made landfall near Una in Gir Somnath on May 17 as an extremely severe cyclonic storm with wind speed gusting up to 185 kilometres per hour. The squally winds accompanied by torrential rain and tidal surge in the sea had caused large-scale damage on the southern Saurashtra coast, including in fishing harbours. Jafrabad harbour, in which around 700 fishing boats were anchored, had seen extensive damage with fishermen leaders pegging the number of partially damaged boats to 250 and that of fully damaged to 50.

After the weekly cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel told the media that survey was still ongoing. “The fisheries industry, too, has suffered extensive damage and survey is ongoing to assess damage caused to small and large boats. The government will pay appropriate compensation,” an official release quoted Patel as saying. Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda, however, said that government is taking time as paying compensation as per old rules may not be sufficient in present times. “Gujarat has not been hit by such a powerful cyclone in recent times and damage to fishermen, especially in Jafrabad, is huge. We are considering positively the demand for compensation by fishermen. But if we were to pay them under the existing schemes, the compensation could be paltry in the range of Rs 2,000 to Rs 4,000 which may not be sufficient in this case. Therefore, we are working on a new compensation scheme, hence we are taking some time before announcing the slabs of compensation,” the minister said. Chavda said he will visit Jafrabad on Friday and, after

following due process, an announcement would be made within a week. ‘Compensate us fairly’ However, the fishermen leaders apprehend their losses may not be compensated fairly. “The government compensates farmers for loss of their crops on account of natural causes. This time round, the government has proposed to compensate horticulture farmers also. We are glad about this. But we, fishermen, risk our lives every day to go to sea and do fishing. Fishing boats are central to our lives and we have been fighting with this government to be treated at par with farmers in respect of damages caused by natural causes.

But never in history has the government compensated fishermen against damage to their boats,” Tulsi Gohel, president of Gujarat chapter of Akhil Bharatiya Fishermen Association (ABFA), said. “While we do not have any official communication, messages are doing rounds that those whose boats have been damaged fully will get Rs 9,000 and Rs 2,300 for partially damaged. If this is true, it will be an insult to fishermen as a fishing trawler costs an average Rs 50 lakh,” he added. Gohel, who is also president of Samyukta Macchimar Boat Association of Veraval, said after the cyclone hit Saurashtra coast, he and other fishermen leaders had visited various harbours in Gir Somnath and Amreli districts. “The damage has been the largest scale in Jafrabad where around 250 boats have been partially damaged while 50 have been lost completely,” he said. Fishermen lost around three months of fishing to cyclones Vayu, Kyarr and Maha in 2020, he said. “Around 20 boats were damaged by Vayu in Veraval last year. We made repeated representations to the government for compensation but to no avail,” Gohel said. Veraval is the largest fishing harbour in Gujarat with more than 4,800 boats are registered. Gohel said Tauktae has damaged five boats fully and capsized three others.

Gujarat: 73k people compensated with Rs 3.5 cr in cyclone-hit districts

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/73k-people-compensated-with-rs-3-5-cr-in-cyclone-hit-districts-7330370/>

"MORE THAN 73,000 people affected by cyclone Tauktae were handed over Rs 3.5 crore in compensation by the state government in Amreli, Bhavnagar and Gir Somnath even as teams continue to survey the damage wreaked by the cyclone in the three coastal districts, officers said Tuesday. Over 85,000 houses in the three districts have been damaged due to the ‘extremely severe cyclone’. In Amreli, the worst-affected district among the three, a total of 25,616 individuals were paid Rs 1.26 crore cash doles until Monday evening. Amreli district collector Ayush Oak said the number of beneficiaries was expected to go up to 35,000 individuals by Tuesday evening. In Bhavnagar district, 29,754 individuals were handed out compensation worth Rs 1.74 crore, collector Gaurang Makwana said. In Gir Somnath, 8,500 people have been handed out cash doles, amounting to Rs 47.61 crore at Una, Gir Gadhada and Kodinar talukas. “According to our primary estimate, some 50,000 to 60,000 people in the district will be eligible for the cash doles and of them, around 35,000 eligible beneficiaries will

be handed out cash doles by Tuesday evening. These are people living three kilometres inside from the coast and who had been asked to evacuate to safer places on their own on May 16 and 17 as well as those who had to be shifted to cyclone shelters on May 18, immediately after the cyclone made landfall,” Oak told The Indian Express.

According to the Gujarat government resolution, people who had to evacuate from their homes on the seacoast on May 16 and 17 will be eligible to get cash doles at the rate of Rs 100 per day for seven days. Minors are eligible to get Rs 60 cash dole per day for a week. Those who had to be evacuated in the aftermath of the cyclone are eligible to get an equal amount of cash doles for three days, the resolution states. However, people who had been evacuated by the government from vulnerable areas and accommodated in institutional cyclone shelters are not eligible for cash doles. The work to hand out cash doles to the rest of beneficiaries would be completed within next two days, Oak said. Tauktae, the extremely severe cyclonic storm, had made landfall between Una in Gir Somnath and Rajula in Amreli district on May 17 evening, with the coastal areas experiencing winds gusting at 185 km per hour and torrential rain. The cyclone left a trail of destruction in its wake, damaging thousands of kuccha houses, uprooting orchards, killing thousands of livestock heads. It also left 26 people dead in Amreli, 14 in Gir Somnath and nine in Bhavnagar. Besides handing out cash doles to the affected people, the state government teams are also surveying damages to household goods, like ration, grocery, clothing, etc, besides houses, cattle sheds, livestock and loss of human lives.

The government has announced ex gratia compensation under seven heads — cash doles, gharvakkhari (household goods), partially damaged homes, fully damaged homes, damaged to cattle sheds, loss of livestock and loss of human life. The government will pay Rs 25,000 for partially damaged authorised or unauthorised homes and Rs 95,100 for fully damaged authorised homes. Owners of damaged huts will be eligible for Rs 10,000 ex gratia compensation. Owners of cattle sheds will get Rs 5,000 compensation. The state government had started surveying the damage caused by the cyclone from May 21 onwards after the Chief Minister visited the affected coastal areas. “As per our primary estimate, 64,899 houses have suffered damages due to the cyclone in Amreli district and of them, our teams have surveyed 43,000, so far. As per the government rule, houses which have suffered 15 per cent or more damage would be eligible for compensation. As per primary reports from the field, around 60 per cent of houses which have suffered damage due to cyclone will be eligible for ex gratia compensation in the district,” Oak said. The government would start crediting compensation amount to bank accounts of eligible beneficiaries from the next month, he said. Bhavnagar collector Gaurang Makwana said 8,611 houses have been damaged by the cyclone in Mahuva, Jesar, Talaja, Palitana, Sihor and Vallabhipur talukas of the district and 3,353 families have been identified as eligible beneficiaries for compensation against loss of gharvakhari. “Total 462 cattle heads have been lost to the cyclone. Horticulture crop in some 30,000 hectares has also been damaged,” he added.

Mahuva sub-divisional magistrate Pankaj Valvai said more than 50,000 chicken were killed after the roofs of four organised poultry farms had collapsed. In Gir Somnath, collector Ajay Prakash said the field survey of affected areas was nearing completion. Besides 8,500 individuals who have been paid cash doles, 7,500 families have been found eligible for gharvakhari compensation. "Additionally, 11,900 houses have been partially damaged while 51 houses have been fully damaged. The cyclone has also left 4,612 livestock heads dead," he said. Prakash added 300 fishing boats in Nava Bandar and Saiyad Rajapara harbours have suffered damages. Of them, 28 are fully damaged, he said.

Gujarat: Govt to provide help to cyclone Tauktae-hit fishermen

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/gujarat-govt-to-provide-help-to-cyclone-tauktae-hit-fishermen/articleshow/82807435.cms>

"Chief minister Vijay Rupani on Thursday visited coastal villages in Gujarat's Amreli, the worst hit district by cyclone Tauktae. The CM met the members of the fishermen community and took stock of the situation. Earlier in the morning, he carried out an aerial survey of villages in Gir Somnath and Amreli districts. Rupani assured the locals that the state government will provide them assistance in repairing their damaged boats and houses apart from the financial aid. He directed the officials concerned to provide building materials at reasonable prices to the affected people and to restore water and electricity supply and repair the damaged roads.

Maharashtra and Gujarat: 27 dead, over 100 missing as cyclone batters west coast

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/27-dead-over-100-missing-as-cyclone-batters-west-coast-101621387853127.html>

"At least two dozen people were dead and more than 100 missing on Tuesday after Cyclone Tauktae battered India's west coast and made landfall the previous night in Gujarat, where damage was reported in about 2,500 villages across the southern region of the state, leading to disruption in power and internet connectivity. In Maharashtra, 16 people were reported dead in four coastal districts. Close to a hundred roads were blocked, with thousands of trees being uprooted by gusty winds of up to 170km per hour, officials said. Maharashtra relocated close to 100,000 people to safety, they said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Gujarat and Diu on Wednesday to review the situation there and the damage by the cyclone, according to people aware of the developments. Tauktae crossed the Gujarat coast as an "extremely severe cyclonic storm" around midnight and gradually weakened into a "severe cyclonic storm", before further weakening to a "cyclonic storm", the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Tuesday. Seven fresh deaths took India's toll to at least 27, including a child crushed by a collapsing wall, an 80-year-old woman killed by a falling pole and a teenage girl by a crumbling roof. The cyclone, with wind speeds of up to 165 kmph, made landfall near

Porbandar in Gujarat, causing widespread rainfall across Gujarat and southern parts of Rajasthan on Tuesday.

The impact of the cyclone is expected to be seen in northern India on Wednesday, with IMD predicting widespread rainfall in north India and issuing orange alert for the region. The Indian Coast Guard on Tuesday said it rescued eight fishermen onboard a fishing boat that drifted into the sea off the coast of Veraval harbour in Gujarat due to the cyclone. Two Coast Guard Chetak helicopters, operating from an airbase in the Union Territory of Daman, rescued eight crew members of stranded ship Gal Constructor from the sea off the Satpati coast (in neighbouring Maharashtra) amid very rough and inclement weather conditions, a statement said. Battling extreme weather, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard have so far rescued 314 people on board two barges that went adrift in the Arabian Sea near Mumbai hours before Cyclone Tauktae made landfall on the Gujarat coast, an official said on Tuesday. Three barges and an oil rig with 707 personnel on board had gone adrift on Monday.

These included accommodation barge P305 with 273 persons, cargo barge GAL Constructor with 137 personnel on board, accommodation barge SS-3 with 196 personnel on board and the Sagar Bhushan oil rig with 101 personnel on board, a navy official said. While all the 137 people on board the cargo barge GAL Constructor have been rescued, 180 of the 273 onboard P305 have been rescued so far, the official said. In Maharashtra, district authorities in coastal areas reported 16 deaths and horticulture damage to 9,000 hectares of land. Chief minister Uddhav Thackeray urged Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday for financial assistance from the central government from National Disaster Relief Fund. Cyclone Tauktae impacted in 10 Maharashtra districts even though Ratnagiri, Raigad and Sindhudurg were worst hit. Around 30% of the villages in Raigad and Ratnagiri were still in the dark because of the electricity outage, an official said. According to the report received by the state government, 3,571 villages and 215,266 people were affected in the coastal districts. The report said 17,657 structures were partially or fully damaged. "Mango growers in Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri have sustained huge losses... The crop has been completely destroyed," said Sanjay Yadavrao of Konkan Bhoomi Pratisthan, a social group working for peasant rights.

Many areas of Ahmedabad city were inundated with knee-deep water following incessant downpour since the afternoon as the cyclone passed northward along the district's periphery. The city received a staggering 75.69mm of rain between 6am and 4pm, said municipal commissioner Mukesh Kumar. Traffic on several roads was hindered due to fallen trees and hoardings. Heavy rain also hit southern parts of Rajasthan late on Tuesday. The weather department has announced red alert in over half a dozen districts where heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected on Wednesday. "The cyclone will be entering Rajasthan by late Tuesday night. At present the system is in Gujarat. It will enter state as depression and will weaken by May 20," said climate

scientist Radhey Shyam.

Maharashtra and Gujarat: Cyclone Tauktae: 4526 fishing boats of Maharashtra, 2258 boats of Gujarat returned safely to harbour

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/cyclone-tauktae-4526-fishing-boats-of-maharashtra-2258-boats-of-gujarat-returned-safely-to-harbour/articleshow/82698156.cms>

"The Indian Coast Guard has informed that 4526 fishing boats of Maharashtra and 2258 boats of Gujarat which were out at sea, have safely returned to harbour, in view of Cyclone Tauktae. ""#CycloneTauktae through effective and constant liaison with Fisheries Department and timely weather alerts to fishermen by Indian Coast Guard, ships and aircraft, all 4526 fishing boats of #Maharashtra and 2258 boats of #Gujarat which were out at sea, have safely returned to harbour"", tweeted ICG yesterday. ""As the first indications of formation of a cyclone commenced streaming in from May 11, 2021 onwards, the Indian Coast Guard geared up its preparation towards the preventive and response measures on Western coast including Lakshadweep islands as well as the adjacent coastal state of Tamil Nadu"", informed an official release. All the ashore, afloat and aviation units were put on high alert and by the time 'Tauktae' as the storm was to be called, eventually formed in Lakshadweep seas, ICG Ships and aircraft had already alerted fishing boats as well as merchant vessels in the possible route of the storm. The massive deployment of ICG assets towards preventive measures for cyclone 'Tauktae' has translated into 37 ship days and 75 aircraft hours at sea to date ensuring safe return of more than 5600 boats, alerting/ safe routing of 335 merchant vessels, and timely rescue of 06 personnel. ICG Remote Operating Stations are incessantly relaying weather alert messages in vernacular languages on MMB radio for the seafarers and fishermen. Navtex warnings are being issued regularly and the International Safety Net (ISN) has been activated to alert the vessels in/ transiting through the area.

Ships at anchorage have also been advised to take shelter and necessary safety measures. Port authorities, Oil rig operators, Shipping, fisheries authorities and fishermen associations have been informed about the impending cyclone and a close liaison and coordination for the safety of boats, vessels and fixed platforms is being maintained. In addition, 40 Coast Guard Disaster Relief Teams (DRTs) with inflatable boats, Lifebuoys and lifejackets are on standby all along the western coast for undertaking Disaster response operations. Medical teams and ambulances have also been kept on standby for swift mobilization. The painstaking efforts put in by ICG paid dividends by resulting in no loss of fishermen's life at sea as the storm crossed the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa as well as Lakshadweep islands. The fisheries authorities of these states reported that all the boats were accounted for and safely tucked in harbour. Response operations for Tug Alliance and MV Coromandel, both off the coast of Karnataka are going on. The pre-emptive measures by ICG continue with full steam with a focus on the states of Maharashtra and

Gujarat as the Very Severe Cyclonic Storm 'Tauktae' travels northwards and predicted to make landfall at Gujarat coast on the morning of 18th May. State fisheries authorities have confirmed that all the boats have either returned harbour or taken shelter in nearby ports.

Maharashtra and Gujarat: Cyclone Tauktae: Rainfall intensity to increase in Mumbai to “extremely heavy”; Cyclone to hit Gujarat in 7 hours

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/cyclone-tauktae-live-updates-gujarat-kerala-diu-mumbai-rains-7316979/>

"Very Severe Cyclonic Storm “Tauktae” further intensified into an “Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm” on Monday morning, the India Meteorological Department said in its latest bulletin. A red alert, for cyclone warning and landslide lookout has been sounded in Gujarat and Diu. The Storm currently lays 120kms of Mumbai and is most likely to hit the Gujarat coast between Porbandar and Mahuva in Bhavnagar district on Monday night anytime between 8pm – 11pm as a Very Severe Cyclone (150 – 160 km/hr). As cyclone Tauktae inches closer to the Mumbai coast, the India Meteorological department has upgraded the rainfall warning to “Extremely heavy” in the city for next few hours. Gusty winds will continue and escalate upto 120 kmph. The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport suspended its operations from 11 am to 2 pm on May 17. A red alert has been sounded in Raigarh district and an orange alert has been declared in Mumbai. Meanwhile, gale-force winds, heavy rainfall and high tidal waves swept the coastal belt of Kerala, Karnataka and Goa as Cyclone Tauktae hurtled northwards towards Gujarat on Sunday. At least six people have died in cyclone-related incidents till now. The storms have damaged hundreds of houses, uprooted electricity poles and trees and forced evacuation at the time when India continues to grapple with a deadly Covid-19 wave. In Kerala, two people have died after torrential rains and high tidal waves wreaked havoc.

Widespread uprooting of trees, waterlogging, disruption of power has been a state-wide phenomenon since Friday night. The situation has forced the state government to shift hundreds of families to relief camps despite the risks associated with the ongoing pandemic. In terms of preparedness, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has increased the number of teams from 53 to 100. These teams are mobilised for Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Goa and Maharashtra. Out of these, 48 are being pre-deployed while 20 are being kept on standby. An additional 32 teams are being kept as backup. The Indian Air Force has kept 16 transport aircraft and 18 helicopters on standby. It has also announced to focus on Covid relief operations in the affected coastal areas. Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed the situation yesterday and asked concerning authorities to take every possible measure to ensure that people are safely evacuated. Mumbai gears up for heavy rain, 580 Covid patients shifted from jumbo units From shifting 580 patients from its jumbo Covid-19 facilities to contemplating a possible shut down of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in Mumbai on Saturday

worked on taking several precautionary measures in view of India Meteorological Department's (IMD) warning that Cyclone Tauktae is likely to pass close to the city on Sunday. The BMC on Saturday night shifted 580 patients from BKC (243), Dahisar (183) and Mulund (154) jumbo Covid-19 facilities to state and civic-run hospitals in Mumbai.

The civic body had on Friday alerted the hospitals to avoid last-minute confusion over beds and availability of oxygen devices. Torrential rains, heavy winds destroy houses in coastal areas, hundreds rush to relief camps. From Thiruvananthapuram in the south to Kasaragod in the north, hundreds of families living close to the sea have had to abandon their homes and rush to relief camps set up by the state government in the face of massive sea-incursions. The Met Department had warned of squally winds with speeds of 50-60 kmph gusting to 70 kmph along and off the Kerala-Karnataka coast along with rough sea conditions on Saturday. Several houses close to the sea in districts like Kasaragod, Kannur, Kozhikode, Thrissur, Ernakulam and Alappuzha have been partially or completely damaged by the impact of the cyclone.

Gujarat: Cyclone Tauktae now 'extremely severe', likely to hit coast tonight

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/tauktae-to-make-landfall-on-gujarat-coast-early-tuesday-morning-101621220349415.html>

"Very severe Cyclonic Storm Tauktae (pronounced as TauTe) has intensified into an extremely severe cyclonic storm centered about 160 km west-southwest of Mumbai, 290 km south-southeast of Veraval (Gujarat), 250 km south-southeast of Diu and 840 km south-southeast of Karachi (Pakistan). It presently has a wind speed of 180 to 190 kmph gusting to 210 kmph, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD). It is very likely to move north-northwestwards and reach Gujarat coast Monday evening between 2000 – 2300 hrs IST and cross Gujarat coast between Porbandar & Mahuva (Bhavnagar district) the same evening as a very severe cyclonic storm with a maximum sustained wind speed 155-165 kmph gusting to 185 kmph. Large-scale damage is expected over Porbandar, Amreli, Junagarh, Gir, Somnath, Botad, Bhavnagar and coastal areas of Ahmedabad.

There is likely to be total destruction of thatched houses and extensive damage to kutchha houses; some damage to pucca houses; potential threat from flying objects; bending or uprooting of power and communication poles; major damage to roads; flooding of escape routes; minor disruption of railways; overhead power lines and signalling systems; widespread damage to salt pans and standing crops; blowing down of bushy trees; small boats, country crafts may get detached from moorings; visibility may be severely affected. Some damage is also expected over Devbhoomi Dwarka, Kutch, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Morbi, Valsad, Surat, Vadodara, Bharuch, Navsari and Anand districts. IMD has recommended evacuation of people from vulnerable areas, total suspension of fishing operations, judicious regulation of rail and road traffic, people

in affected areas to remain indoors, movement in motor boats and small ships could be unsafe. “Tauktae will intensify further while on its track and cross the Gujarat coast with a speed of 155 to 165 kmph gusting to 185 kmph. We are not expecting it to become a super cyclone but it is a big and intense system,” said Sunitha Devi, in charge of cyclones at IMD. During the next 12 hours, Tauktae will continue to intensify drawing energy from the ocean. It is very likely to move north northwest wards and reach Gujarat coast by Monday evening. The system is being monitored by Doppler weather RADAR Goa. Tauktae intensified very rapidly from a depression to a cyclone on Friday. There was rapid intensification of the cyclone on Saturday also. “Tauktae intensified by 65 kmph during the past 24 hours fuelled by heat and energy from the ocean,” said Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology.

“With Cyclone Tauktae, this will be the fourth consecutive year of pre-monsoon cyclone over the Arabian Sea. This is also the third consecutive year when a cyclone has come very close to the west coast of India. Sea surface temperatures in Arabian Sea have increased rapidly during the past century and this has led to an increase in the frequency and intensity of cyclones in the Arabian Sea...global warming has presented us with new challenges such as rapid intensification of cyclones, which need to be closely monitored at higher resolution and accuracy using on-site platforms such as buoys and moorings. Improving the Indian Ocean Observing System (IndOOS) and incorporating the global warming signals in the weather models can help us tackle the challenges of intense cyclones in the future,” he added in a statement. Sea condition over northeasy Arabian Sea will be very high to phenomenal (up to 14 metres high) and wind speeds (up to 64 knots) on Monday and Tuesday. Sea condition will be very rough to high ((9-14 metres wave height/38-63 wind speed in kts) along and off north Maharashtra coast on Monday morning. It is very likely to be very rough to high along and off south Gujarat coast from Monday morning and very high to phenomenal from Monday.

Tidal wave above astronomical tide (of about 3 m over Junagarh, 1 to 2.5 m over Diu, Gir Somnath, Amreli, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad, Anand, Surat and 0.5-1m over Devbhoomi Dwarka, Jamnagar, Porbandar, Kutch) are likely to inundate the coastal areas of Gujarat during the time of landfall. Light to moderate rainfall is likely at most places with heavy to very heavy falls at a few places and extremely heavy rain (over 20 cm) at isolated places over south Konkan, north Konkan and Goa and adjoining Ghat areas on Sunday and Monday and heavy to very heavy falls at isolated places on Monday. Over Gujarat, light to moderate rainfall is likely to commence over coastal districts of Saurashtra from Sunday afternoon, with heavy to very heavy falls at isolated places over Saurashtra, Kutch, Diu and southern most Gujarat region with extremely heavy falls at isolated places on Monday and heavy to very heavy falls at a few places over Saurashtra, Kutch, Diu and south Gujarat region with extremely heavy falls (? 20 cm) at isolated places on Tuesday. Extremely heavy rainfall is also likely over south Rajasthan on Tuesday. Gale wind speed reaching 130–140 kmph gusting to 155 kmph is prevailing over

eastcentral Arabian Sea. It is likely to increase over eastcentral Arabian Sea becoming 145-155 kmph gusting to 170 kmph from Sunday midnight. Squally wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph likely over northeast Arabian Sea and along and off south Gujarat, Daman and Diu coasts from Sunday and gradually increase becoming gale winds speed reaching 150-160 kmph gusting to 175 kmph over northeast Arabian Sea and along and off Gujarat coast (Porbandar, Junagarh, Gir Somnath, Amreli, Bhavnagar) and 100 -120 kmph gusting to 135 kmph over Bharuch, Anand, south Ahmedabad, Botad, Surendranagar, 90 -100 kmph gusting to 120 kmph over Devbhoomi Dwarka, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Morbi districts of Gujarat from early hours of Tuesday. Gale winds speed reaching 70-90 kmph gusting to 100 kmph likely to prevail along and off Dadra, Nagar Haveli, Daman, Valsad, Navsari, Surat, Kheda districts from Monday midnight till Tuesday morning.

India's Gujarat state braces for strongest cyclone in more than 20 years

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/india-s-gujarat-state-braces-for-strongest-cyclone-in-more-than-20-years-1.1224245>

"Nearly 150,000 people were moved to safety from their homes in the Indian state of Gujarat on Monday and authorities closed ports and a main airport as the most intense cyclone in more than two decades roared up the west coast. Cyclone Tauktae has killed at least 12 people and left a trail of destruction as it brushed past the coastal states of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra, authorities said. It was expected to make landfall in Gujarat late on Monday. ""This will be the most severe cyclone to hit Gujarat in at least 20 years. This can be compared with the 1998 cyclone that hit Kandla and inflicted heavy damage,"" state revenue secretary Pankaj Kumar told Reuters. The cyclone increases pressure on local administrations already struggling with a high caseload of Covid-19 infections. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) categorised the storm, which formed in the Arabian Sea, as an ""extremely severe"" storm, upgrading it from the ""very severe"" category. The financial hub of Mumbai was lashed with heavy rain and strong winds as Cyclone Tauktae headed north. Strong winds forced authorities to suspend operations at Mumbai's airport, and close some main roads. The cyclone, with sustained surface wind speeds of 180-190 kilometres per hour and gusts up to 210kph that would put it on par with a Category 3 hurricane, is rated one level below the IMD's super cyclone category.

As well as the 12 deaths reported in Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka, 28 fishing boats were missing, a coastguard official said. Gujarat's state administration moved nearly 150,000 people from coastal communities and mobilised more than 50 disaster response teams. The Gujarat Maritime Board, the state's port regulator, ordered the hoisting of signals VIII to X, indicating great danger, at ports in the state. India's largest private port at Mundra suspended operations for the day, an official there said. Authorities are also concerned about the state's Asiatic lions, an

endangered species found only in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat where the cyclone is expected to inflict maximum damage. ""There are about 40 lions in some patches in coastal Saurashtra, and we are monitoring them. Some lions have already moved to higher grounds. We are keeping fingers crossed, and praying the lions will be safe,"" said Shyamal Tikadar, Gujarat's top forest officer. The 1998 cyclone that ravaged Gujarat killed at least 4,000 people and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage, media reported at the time. Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said all measures were being taken to deal with the situation. ""These are special circumstances. The administration is busy with the Covid-19 challenges, and is now gearing up to deal with the impact of the cyclone,"" Mr Rupani said.

Kerala, Lakshadweep Islands and Gujarat : Red alert braces for high intensity cyclone

<https://indianexpress.com/article/weather/cyclone-takutae-2021-live-updates-gujarat-kerala-lakshadweep-7314509/>

"A cyclonic disturbance will be formed over Lakshadweep and Arabian Sea in the next 36 hours, bringing heavy rains to the southern parts of the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday. Due to this, a "high intensity" cyclone will reach the Gujarat coast by May 18. After the cyclonic warning the National Disaster Response Force has deployed several teams on ground. At least 24 teams are pre-deployed and 29 teams are on standby for Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, NDRF DG, SN Pradhan told ANI. In a warning, IMD predicted intense showers in Gujarat starting May 17, with its intensity escalating in the subsequent days. The state will have extremely heavy rainfall at a few places like Saurashtra and Kutch on May 18 and 19. Due to the presence of the cyclone, Gujarat rains would be accompanied with gusty winds going ranging from 50 kmph to 80 kmph in the next 5-6 days. Owing to the cyclonic disturbance, heavy to very heavy rainfall is also expected over Lakshadweep in the next 24 hours. Kerala and Tamil Nadu will experience extremely heavy rainfalls till 16 May, IMD said in its latest bulletin. A red alert has been declared in three districts of Kerala and Lakshadweep on Friday, and five districts of Kerala on Saturday. Meanwhile, a different cyclonic disturbance lies over parts of North India, including Uttar Pradesh. Hailstorm and heavy rainfall can be expected here. Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh will see heavy rainfall in the next 24 hours too.

Gujarat: Died in Karachi jail on March 26: Pak hands over mortal remains of fisherman

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/died-in-karachi-jail-on-march-26-pak-hands-over-mortal-remains-of-gujarat-fisherman-7304855/>

"Pakistan authorities on Thursday handed over mortal remains of Gujarat fisherman Ramesh to Indian authorities at Wagah-Attari border crossing point on Indo-Pakistan international border in Punjab on Thursday. The fisherman had died in a Karachi jail on March

26 and officers of Gujarat government said that his body will be flown to Ahmedabad on Friday morning. “Our officers have just been handed over mortal remains of the fisherman. They will bring the mortal remains to Ahmedabad by air via Delhi tomorrow morning,” D P Desai, in-charge fisheries commissioner of Gujarat told The Indian Express on Thursday evening. A superintendent and an assistant superintendent of fisheries department of Gujarat had landed in Amritsar in Punjab on Thursday afternoon to receive the mortal remains.

Desai said that generally mortal remains from Pakistan are brought on board flights landing at Mumbai or Delhi. “But this is for the first time that we have received mortal remains of an individual at Wagah. Therefore, we are bringing them to Ahmedabad by air and from Ahmedabad, the body would be taken to the village of the fisherman by road and handed over to his family,” the commissioner further said, adding the flight carrying Ramesh’s mortal remains would land at Ahmedabad airport at 9 am on Friday. Ramesh was apprehended by Pakistan in May 2019 for allegedly violating territorial waters of Pakistan while fishing at the Arabian Sea off Kutch coast. A Pakistan court had convicted him and sentenced him to imprisonment. His prison sentence had ended in July 2019 but he had continued to languish in a Karachi jail as he was never granted consular access by Pakistan despite an agreement between India and Pakistan providing for such access within three months of arrest of each other’s nationals. As Ramesh was never granted consular access, he could never be repatriated and his nationality was verified only after his death. The delay in nationality verification also delayed repatriation of his mortal remains.

“Had he been released and repatriated upon completion of his sentence in July 2019, Ramesh would have been alive today. Incidents like this call for honouring in letter and spirit the Agreement on Consular Access,” Jatin Desai, former general secretary of Indian chapter of Pakistan-India People’s Forum for Peace and Justice (PIPFPD), said. Jatin Desai, the Mumbai-based journalist, had been making efforts to bring Ramesh’s mortal remains back to India. After Ramesh’s arrest by Pakistan, his mother died soon after. Last year, his father also died. Ramesh is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter, eldest of them being 13 years of age.

Gujarat: Pakistan to hand over Gujarat fisherman’s body at Wagah border today

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/rajkot/pak-to-hand-over-gujarat-fishermans-body-at-wagah-border-today-7303715/>

"Mortal remains of Gujarat fisherman Ramesh are likely to be handed over to Indian authorities by Pakistan at Wagah border in Punjab on Thursday, 40 days after his death in a Karachi jail. The fisherman had died on March 26 in a prison and his body has been lying in a morgue in Karachi since. The autopsy was completed on Wednesday. “Indian officials had reached Karachi on Tuesday to complete formalities of repatriation of Ramesh’s mortal remains.

As part of the procedure, Ramesh's autopsy was conducted in Karachi and Pakistan authorities are likely to hand over the fisherman's mortal remains to India at Wagah border in Punjab on Thursday," sources said. Officers of the fisheries department of Gujarat said they are anticipating to receive his mortal remains Thursday. "Our two officers are flying to Amritsar tomorrow to receive the body. Once the Punjab government completes formalities and hands the body to our officers, they would try to find a suitable air route to bring it to Gujarat," a senior officer of the fisheries department said. Ramesh was apprehended by Pakistan in May, 2019, for allegedly violating territorial waters of Pakistan while fishing.

Gujarat: Fishing island keeps coronavirus at bay

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/shiyalbet-island-keeps-ncov-virus-at-bay/articleshow/82415547.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

"Luxuries like electricity and potable Narmada water may have touched its shores as recently as in April 2018, but this tiny fishing island, 600 metres away from Pipavav port, didn't let the light of wisdom dim in all these 70 years of dark ages. Villagers knew what good practices will keep them healthy and has proven its worth time and again, including in this second wave of the killer pandemic. This village, surrounded by Arabian sea, has a population of ten thousand people and not a single case of Covid-19 till now. It's not just luck that's helping the fishermen and their families here stay safe at a time when the entire country is crumbling in the battle against pandemic, but their self preservation methods too. "The village is small and there is awareness among people. The panchayat is distributing kadha and Ayurveda medicines to boost immunity but the villagers themselves avoid meeting outsiders. This is why those who go out for fishing don't return with infection." explained Bhanuben Shiyal, Sarpanch of the village. Shiyalbet falls in Jafrabad taluka of Armeli district and is totally dependent on Jafrabad and Rajula for all its needs. Almost 99 percent population of the village is engaged in fishing activity, while their exposure to the world outside is very minimal as ration and medicines comes in boats to the village. The fishermen only go for fishing in the deep seas and contact with mainland is almost a luxury.

"We are also taking all the precautions since last year which have saved us till now," Shiyal added. Of the villages total population, 4,000 people go out to fish, while the rest including women and old people remain in the village. District development officer (DDO) of Amreli, Tejas Parmar said, "The village recorded only two positive cases last year, while there has been not a single case in the second wave. We have completed 52 percent vaccination of the first dose for people above 45 years of age in the village." Parmar further said that no outsiders come into the village and only those who go for fishing leave in their boats. All education institutes are also closed and students too don't need to go outside. Again, there is scant population of Amreli

people in Jafrabad and Rajula taluka and so chances of getting infected from people visiting from Surat too is almost nil. Female health workers from the sub primary health centre in the village are available to address any health related needs.

Gujarat: Repatriation of fisherman's body from Pakistan to be delayed: Centre

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/rajkot/repatriation-of-fishermans-body-from-pakistan-to-be-delayed-centre-7293136/>

"A day after intimating Gujarat government that Pakistan will repatriate on April 30 the mortal remains of Ramesh, a fisherman who had died in a Pakistan jail more than a month ago, the Central government on Wednesday informed the state government that the repatriation of the fisherman's body will be delayed. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had written to the Gujarat government on Tuesday that Pakistan will hand over mortal remains of Ramesh at Wagah/Attari border crossing on Friday. "Indian High Commission in Islamabad has confirmed that the repatriation of mortal remains of late Ramesh... is scheduled on 30 April 2021 through Wagah/Attari border..." a communication from MEA to Gujarat government on Tuesday stated. DP Desai, in-charge fisheries commissioner of Gujarat confirmed that his office had received the intimation from the MEA. "We have received a communication from the MEA intimating us that the fisherman's body would be handed over at Wagah on April 30. We will send our team there to receive the body. We are making arrangements to send his body from Wagah to his native place. We are exploring possibilities, including bring his body to Gujarat by air," Desai confirmed to The Indian Express on Wednesday afternoon. However, the officer later said that the repatriation of the fisherman's mortal remains would be delayed. "We just received a mail from MEA that it is going to be delayed," Desai said. "The latest communique from the MEA does not cite any reason for the delay. All it says that Ramesh's mortal remains would not be repatriated on April 30 and that a fresh date will be communicated later on," said an officer of fisheries department of Gujarat. Ramesh, who hails from a coastal village in Gujarat, was apprehended by Pakistan in May 2019 while fishing in the Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast. He had completed his prison sentence in July 2019 but was never granted consular access by Pakistan. Hence his nationality could not be ascertained till his death inside a Karachi jail on March 26.

Gujarat : Two weeks after his death in Pak jail, fisherman's body yet to be brought back

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/2-weeks-after-his-death-in-pak-jail-gujarat-fishermans-body-yet-to-be-brought-back-7268134/>

"TWO WEEKS after a 36-year-old Indian fisherman, Ramesh, died in a jail in Karachi, Pakistan, his relatives are trying all they can to keep the news from reaching his widow. After Ramesh's parents died since he was arrested in 2019, his widow and three children were left to fend for themselves. "After we got the news from fishermen leaders, I contacted Rajesh

Chudasama, our MP from Junagadh, and requested to get the news verified and try to bring Ramesh's body back at the earliest. Ramesh's teenage son has read the news about his father's death on his phone, but we have told him it's fake news. We can't break this news to Ramesh's wife and three young children as we don't know when his body would be repatriated. If we tell her, she could be weeping endlessly while Ramesh's body lies in a foreign country with no official word as to when it would be handed over to us," Ramesh's cousin told The Sunday Express. Ramesh died at Landhi prison hospital in Karachi on March 26, SAYS Jatin Desai, the former general secretary of Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPPF), an NGO working for friendly relationships between the two nations. The Indian government has since confirmed Ramesh's death and that he was an Indian citizen. Ramesh's wife, a homemaker, had dropped out of school after Class 9. The couple has two sons and a daughter. While the eldest son is 13 years old, the youngest is eight and the daughter is 10 years old. Ramesh was the lone son of a farmer with 2.5 bigha land in a coastal village in Gujarat's Saurashtra region.

But as the land is saline and their family expanded, Ramesh had to look for other work. SINCE working on a fishing boat pays around Rs 10,000 per month, Ramesh, like dozens of men from his village, opted for THIS work in 2017. But in his third fishing season, he was caught by Pakistan in May 2019 along with a group of other fishermen, for allegedly violating the territorial waters of Pakistan. His cousin brother, who is in his early 40s, was also among those arrested that day and is also languishing in a Pakistan jail despite having completed his sentence. The news of Ramesh's arrest was a rude shock to his family. "His mother was shocked by her son's arrest by Pakistan. She suffered a heart attack a few months later and died. His father also died around six months ago, leaving Ramesh's wife to fend for herself," the cousin brother, a farmer in the same village, said. Ramesh's younger sister is married and stays in a neighbouring village. The family says that Ramesh didn't have any medical history nor was he reported to be ill after his arrest. "My elder brother, who was fishing on another BOAT WAS also caught the same day. From Pakistan prison, he wrote to us a few months after his arrest and informed us about his well-being. But he didn't mention that Ramesh was ill or anything like that," the cousin added. Ramesh had completed his prison sentence in July 2019, Desai, the Mumbai-based activist, said, but he had continued to languish in Pakistan jail. "The most shocking part is that Ramesh was not given consular access till his death even through a bilateral agreement signed in 2008, India and Pakistan had agreed to grant consular access to national of each other within three months of their detention, arrest or imprisonment. Such agreements between sovereign nations are meant to be respected by each party and to be followed in letter and spirit. If they are not implemented, they have no meaning. Ramesh's cousin brother (REMOVE HAS) also completed his prison term in June last year and yet he is languishing in jail, with no consular access granted to him either till date," Desai said.

He demanded that all Indian fishermen lodged in Pakistani jails even after completing their sentences should be released immediately. “This issue needs to be seen from a human angle,” Desai, who is also a journalist, added. Jawahar Chavda, Fisheries Minister of Gujarat, said the state government was seized of the matter. “We are aware of the death of this fisherman. We completed the formality of verification of his nationality, as demanded by the Central government, on Thursday and have written back to the Union Home Ministry. The Union Home Ministry is expected to raise this matter with the Ministry of External Affairs of India. We are hopeful that the formal process of repatriating this fisherman’s body will be initiated in the next couple of days,” Chavda told The Sunday Express.

As a part of the process of verifying the nationality of Ramesh, a team of officers of the Gujarat fisheries department went to Ramesh’s village on Thursday. But the cousin said they had to guard Ramesh’s widow. “We told her and the children that officers have come to seek details as Ramesh is to be released from Pakistan,” said the cousin. As of January this year, 270 Indian fishermen, most of them from Gujarat were lodged in Pakistani jails after being arrested for allegedly violating its territorial water at the Arabian sea while around 70 Pakistani fishermen were lodged in jails in Gujarat. India and Pakistan have disputes over the alignment of the international maritime boundary line (IMBL), the notional maritime boundary line starting from the Kutch coast in the Arabian Sea and Pakistan apprehends dozens of Indian fishermen every year for allegedly crossing over to its side of the IMBL. “The state government does provide ex-gratia compensation to fishermen’s family but it can be argued that fishermen are getting caught because of the failure of the government to fix the water boundary,” a fisherman leader from Saurashtra said.

Gujarat: 345 fishermen from Gujarat lodged in Pak jails: Assembly told

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/345-fishermen-from-gujarat-lodged-in-pak-jails-assembly-told/2053279>

"The Gujarat government told the Legislative Assembly on Thursday that 345 fishermen from the state are languishing in Pakistani jails, of whom 248 were arrested by the neighbouring country in the last two years. State Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda said this in a written reply to a query over fishermen from Gujarat held in Pakistan. As on December 31, 2020, a total of 345 fishermen from Gujarat were in Pakistani jails, he said. Of these, 248 fishermen were arrested in the last two years - 85 in 2019 and 163 in 2020 - Chavda said in reply to a starred question by Congress MLA Shailesh Parmar. The minister said that the government is taking efforts to get these fishermen released, and submitted the required documentary proofs to the Ministry of Home Affairs for further action after verification of their nationality. In a related question, the minister said that the government has extended Rs 37.70 lakh financial assistance to the fishermen in Porbandar to install GPS in their fishing boats. Fishermen from Gujarat are on

several occasions held by Pakistan Maritime Security Agency after they cross the International Maritime Border Line (IMBL) while fishing deep into the Arabian sea. Fishermen from Gujarat districts, such as Porbandar, Gir Somnath and Devbhumi Dwarka, mistakenly cross the maritime border in the Arabian sea and end up in Pakistani jails. The state government has been conducting awareness programmes and also assisting fishermen in setting up GPS to alert them when they come near the IMBL, he said.

Gujarat: Fishermen observe bandh in protest of proposed phase-II of Porbandar harbor

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/rajkot/gujarat-fishermen-observe-bandh-in-protest-of-proposed-phase-ii-of-porbandar-harbour-7200248/>

"FISHERMEN IN Porbandar observed a bandh on Monday, forcing the suspension of activities at one of the biggest fishing harbours of the state, in protest of the government's plan to develop phase-II of Porbandar fishing harbour at Kuchhadi, 12 kilometres away from the existing harbour. However, Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda said that the government had already dropped the proposal of siting the phase-II at Kuchhadi and that the fishermen community would be informed about it in due course. Those involved in the unloading of fish from fishing boats, its auction and trading, retailing in local fish markets as well as employees at fish processing factories joined the bandh call given by the Shree Porbandar Samast Kharva Gnati (SPSKG), an organisation of the Porbandar fishermen community. Ice-factories, ice-crusher units and petrol pumps serving the fisheries industries of Porbandar also remained shut during the day, fishermen leaders claimed.

Ashwin Jungi, vice president of SPGKS, said the community is opposed to the government's plans for developing phase-II of Porbandar fishing harbour at Kuchhadi. "Porbandar is the safest harbour of the state in times of cyclones and other extreme weather events... Kuchhadi front faces the open sea and our boats will have no protection in such events. It is 12 kilometres away from Porbandar and there is no infrastructure for handling, trading and processing of fish," Jungi told The Indian Express. He claimed that there is scope of expansion of the existing Porbandar fishing harbour comprising Lakadi Bandar and Subhashnagar. "We do not want the Rs 400 crore phase-II harbour at Kuchhadi when there is feasibility of expanding the existing harbour... Expansion is possible here even without uprooting mangroves and merely dredging channels surrounding mangroves in the existing harbour," Jungi added. Around 3,000 fishing trawlers and around 2,500 smaller fibre-reinforced plastic (FRP) boats, locally called pilanas, operate from the Porbandar fishing harbour. Due to its comparatively narrower mouth at Asnavati Ghat, it is considered one of the safest harbours in the state. With an aim to decongest the existing harbour, the government was planning to develop phase-II.

The 1.15 lakh-strong fishermen community in Porbandar is considered politically influential.

Senior Congress leader and former Porbandar MLA Arjun Modhwadia extended his support to the fishermen's protests and tweeted, "I extend my support to call for 'Vyavsay bandh' given in protest of deciding the location of phase-II of fishing harbour without taking fishermen-Kharva community in confidence. It is high time the BJP, which has done nothing for fishermen community in the past 25 years, stopped playing political games with the fisherman every election." However, Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda said the protest was uncalled for. "There was a proposal to develop phase-II at Kuchhadi at the cost of Rs 395 crore, but it has been dropped. We will accept the demand of the fishermen community. We are now planning to use the backwaters of the existing port and process is on for getting requisite clearances. Kuchhadi was an old proposal which has been dropped, but apparently fishermen do not know about it," Chavda said. The minister added while simply dredging channels crisscrossing the mangroves in the existing harbour may not be the solution, he was "confident that the issue will be resolved."

Gujarat: 17 fishermen in Pakistan custody

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/17-srashtra-fishermen-in-pak-custody/articleshow/80912771.cms>

"Three India fishing boats along with 17 fishermen were apprehended by Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) from Arabian Sea on Saturday. Secretary of National Fishworkers' Forum, Manish Lodhari said that the boats from Porbandar and Gir Somnath districts had set sail more than a week ago carrying 17 fishermen onboard. But on Saturday, he received a message that they have been apprehended as boats allegedly trespassed into Pakistani waters. "Nearly 400 fishermen from Porbandar and Gir Somnath districts have been languishing in Pakistani jails for the past two years. There were talks that 271 of them will be released but there has been no concrete development towards that. Instead, more of our men are being taken away," alleged Lodhari. "Pakistan has 1,100 Indian fishing boats in their possession which they are not ready to release. We tried for a delegation visit, but no breakthrough so far," he added.

Gujarat: Fish that fetched Rs 12 lakh

<https://ahmedabadmirror.indiatimes.com/ahmedabad/others/fish-that-fetched-rs-12-lakh/articleshow/80778395.cms>

"A bunch of fishermen from Ghogha port recently struck it rich in high the seas miles away from the coast. Their prized catch consisted of expensive 'Khunt' fish, also called 'Goina' locally. Khunt, a rare fish weighing about 10 kg, is believed to have medicinal properties, and sells for thousands of rupees. Four fishermen belonging to Ghogha in Bhavnagar district were fishing far from their coast on Sunday when they netted the rare Khunt just miles off Bharuch-Dahej. After the first few were hauled on to their boats, the fishermen realised they were in for a

truly big catch. Soon, the other nets were pulled in, and out came a staggering haul of Khunt fish – numbering 232 in all. “The pricey Khunt were sold for more than Rs 12 lakh, which is an unusually rich catch,” said Gopal Fofandi, president of Akhil Gujarat Machhimar Mandal. Khunt is not found all year, making an appearance on Gujarat shores only in the late winter months of January-February. And in that brief spell, fisherfolk are usually not able to catch many – last season’s entire catch was not worth more than Rs 2 lakh to 3 lakh. That makes this latest catch special and fortuitous. Fishermen sell their catch of Khunt to fishing companies at the rate of about Rs 500-700 a kg, which then export them to foreign countries. While an average fish weighs 10 kg, the bigger ones are rare and fetch much more. “Some 2,000 fishermen operate 125 boats from Ghogha port,” said Mukesh Gohil, president of Sagarkhedu Matsyaudhyog Mandli. “Khunt fish are a rare find as they come to this region only once a year when the season is changing from winter to summer.”

Maharashtra: Huge no. of Maharashtra, Gujarat trawlers docked as China fish exports hit

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/huge-no-of-maharashtra-gujarat-trawlers-docked-as-china-fish-exports-hit/articleshow/80729407.cms>

"On most early mornings, Bhaucha Dhakka, or New Ferry Wharf, is usually packed as trawlers unload tons of mackerel, shrimp, and ribbon fish for export. But this week, the fishing dock was not that busy - less than half the usual number of boats had arrived. The pandemic has hit Maharashtra's trawl boats in an unexpected way. New Covid-19 safety rules in China, India's largest seafood destination, have delayed shipments and depressed fish prices. With payments stuck and rising diesel prices, multiday trips have become unviable for many. More than half of the state's 4,290-strong trawl fleet has been grounded since January, according to Ramdas Sandhe, chairman of the Maharashtra Rajya Macchimar Sahakari Sangh Limited. This has been the second bad year in a row for fishermen after the cyclone-hit 2019, he said. The state is not alone: most trawl boats in neighbouring Gujarat have been docked for the past few months for similar reasons. China accounts for 25% in volume of India's overall seafood exports but 50% of volume for west coast states, including Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, according to Jagdish Fofandi, the national president of the Seafood Exporters Association of India. ""The whole issue has boiled up because of Covid-19,"" he said.

Global lockdowns last year resulted in lower export prices at the beginning of the fishing season in August, he said. Then came China's new rules for testing seafood imports for Covid. The protocol delayed clearance at Chinese ports and other transit points, in turn delaying payments to Indian exporters. Normally, it takes 25 days from shipment to payment but the current turnaround is closer to 50 days, said Fofandi. Some are still waiting for dues from October,"" Jagdish Fofandi said. Exporters are now sitting on Rs 2,000 crore of stock in cold storage facilities on the west coast, he says, as they wait for pending dues. In turn, their payments to

fishing boat owners have been delayed. "Fishermen have taken the brunt of this crisis," he said. The ripple-down effect is evident at Mumbai's New Ferry Wharf. Less than a quarter of the 1,000-odd registered boats have gone to sea - an exceptionally low number even in this traditional lean season, said a local observer of the government export authority. Fish prices have plummeted.

Export rates for mackerel or bangda had fallen from Rs 400 a kilo last month to less than Rs 200. The price of ribbon fish, which has little domestic demand, has almost halved to Rs 35 a kilo. Boat owner Piyush Solanki said he was unlikely to make any money after covering the cost of food and salary for ten people, thousands of litres of fuel, and several tons of ice. With diesel prices now over Rs 80 a litre, he added, "There is no point in sending the boats out." Trawl boats are not the only ones affected by the export issue. Dolnet boats that catch pomfret, a high-value fish, saw a 35% drop in prices. The lag in payments from exporters hurt some fishermen in Vasai, said Anand Mastan, a boat owner. Usually, payments from the August-December season are cleared by early January. But this year, "the accounts are not yet settled," he said, adding, "That has never happened before." Some fishermen have gone to moneylenders to cover the cost of weddings this season," he said. Experts say the crisis highlights the importance of diversifying the export market and cultivating domestic ones. With so much stock to clear, exporters are looking to other markets, including in Africa, said Fofandi. The domestic market helped blunt the damage to Vasai's dolnetters. The decline in pomfret prices was partly offset by the high volume and quality of the August-December catch, said Mastan, which he attributes to last year's lockdown allowing fish to breed longer. But dolnet boats also catch a lot of small low-value fish for local consumption. "The local market has been good," said Mastan, "So we were saved."

Gujarat: Surat: Razing of illegal shrimp farms begins

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/surat/razing-of-illegal-shrimp-farms-begins/articleshow/80485681.cms>

"The district administration began razing illegal shrimp farms constructed on the government land in the coastal villages of Olpad taluka from Wednesday. The action was taken after the district collector ordered the demolition of the illegal shrimp farms which are hindering the free flow of the water from the Tena and Sena creeks into the Arabian sea. Sources said that the activity started from the Mandroi village where over 1,000 illegal shrimp ponds have been constructed on government land. A team of District Inspector of Land Record (DILR), fisheries department and the Olpaad mamlatdar visited the Mandroi village to supervise the demolition activity. Official sources said the shrimp farmers have illegally encroached upon about 1,900 hectares of land in 13 different coastal villages in Olpad taluka. The Saras village alone has 903 hectare government land illegally encroached by the shrimp farmers followed by 654 hectares in

Dandi village, 109 hectares in Mor village and 110 hectares in Thoba village. A senior DILR officer said, “The demolition work has already begun from the Mandroi village where there are about 1,000 illegal ponds. We will demolish illegal farms in other villages soon.”

Gujarat: Vijay Rupani lays foundation of modern fishing harbour in Gir Somnath

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/vijay-rupani-lays-foundation-of-modern-fishing-harbour-in-gir-somnath-7155089/>

"CHIEF MINISTER Vijay Rupani laid the foundation stone of a modern fishing harbour at Nava Bandar near Una in Gir Somnath district on Wednesday and said the fisheries production in the state had touched 8.58 lakh metric tonnes due to the friendly policies and incentives by the state government. Rupani flew to Nava Bandar and laid the ceremonial foundation stone of the modern fisheries harbour which will be developed at the cost of Rs 300 crore. Addressing a public meeting after laying the foundation stone, Rupani said that the proposed harbour would be a world-class facility for fishermen. “The government is committed to welfare of sagarkhedu (fishermen) of the state. Work is in progress for development of Veraval, Mangrol, Sutrapada and Modhwada harbours. Land allotted to GIDC (Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation) has been transferred to the fisheries department and clearances have been sought from environment department for further development,” he said. Thanks to favourable policy environment created by the state government, fisheries production in the state had touched 8.58 lakh metric tonnes in the year 2019-20 and that fisheries products worth Rs5000 crore were exported, the CM added.

“More than 29,000 fishing boats are registered in the state. The government has increased subsidy on kerosene from Rs15 per litre to Rs 25 per litre for fishermen. We have also helped fishermen by giving them concession in other cess. We have also ensured repatriation of 7100 fishing boats seized by Pakistan,” an official release quoted the CM as having stated while addressing the public meeting. Fisheries and Tourism Minister Jawahar Chavda said that the government was planning to make schemes like diesel and kerosene subsidy online and credit amount of subsidy directly into bank accounts of beneficiaries for speedier disposal of applications.

Gujarat: Three fishing boats gutted at Mangrol jetty

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/three-fishing-boats-gutted-at-mangrol-jetty/articleshow/80305660.cms>

"Three fishing trawlers were gutted and two were damaged beyond repair as a fire broke out at the new jetty in Mangrol town of Junagadh district on Friday night. One of the boats parked at the jetty suddenly caught fire which spread further to four more boats parked close by.

The fire was so massive that fire fighters from Chorwad, Keshod, Junagadh and Veraval had to be called in to douse the flames. Three boats were completely damaged while fire in two other boats were doused before they were gutted. Sources said that the salvaging activity continued till early Saturday morning. Fire officials are investigating the cause of fire.

Gujarat: Surat collector directs farm owners to demolish illegal shrimp ponds

<https://newsdeal.in/surat-collector-directs-farm-owners-to-demolish-illegal-shrimp-ponds/>

"Surat District Collector Dr Dhaval Patel on Friday directed farm owners to demolish illegal shrimp ponds at 14 villages of Olpad taluka. The district collector added that the farm owners might be booked underneath Gujarat Land Grabbing Act 2020 in the event that they fail to adjust to the order in 15 days. On August 24, the National Green Tribunal had issued notices to the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change and others on a petition filed by an NGO over illegal encroachment of shrimp ponds and salt pans on the flood plains of Tena creek and Kim river in Surat and Bharuch districts. The NGO, Brackish Water Research Centre (BWRC), in its criticism filed with NGT West Zone, had mentioned that the illegal encroachments lead to bottlenecks within the water movement into the ocean and harm to coastal ecology, and violated the Environment Protect Act, 1986, CRZ notifications of 2011 and 2019. The NGT bench had, on August 24, requested the Surat district collector and state authorities to file interim report in six week time. Collector Patel, within the interim report despatched to NGT and petitioner on November 9, had cited Covid-19 pandemic for the delay in figuring out illegal shrimp ponds within the district. Speaking to the Indian Express, Patel mentioned, "We have carried out surveys and issued notices to the owners of illegal shrimp farms at 14 villages in Olpad taluka to demolish their farms. If they fail to do so in the prescribed time of 15 days, we will take strict actions including registering offence under Land Grabbing Act against them." Brackish Water Research Centre's MSH Shaikh mentioned, "We are satisfied with the decision taken by the Surat district collector."

Gujarat: Seafood exporters in soup as payments held up in China

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/seafood-exporters-in-soup-as-payments-held-up-in-china/articleshow/79971505.cms>

"Faced with stricter scrutiny of shipments and subsequent blockage of payments in China, exporters in Veraval have been forced to halt seafood exports to that country, which is a major marine export market. The suspension of exports has hit the business in Veraval. The coastal town is one of the biggest regions for marine exports in India. With delays in clearance of shipments, the payments are being deferred by the importers in China. This has resulted in payments worth Rs 1,200 crore getting stuck with Chinese importers, say industry players. The Chinese authorities have tightened the container vigil after they found coronavirus traces in

export consignments of some Ecuadorian companies in July. ""The development has broken the routine export cycle,"" said an exporter, adding that the goods that were previously reaching buyers in 20 days, now take 45 days for the strict inspection. Hence, the payments which were getting released in 25 days are now taking around 55 days. ""The consignments shipped in October are being cleared now. Since the past one month, we have stopped exports to China because funds worth Rs 1,200 crore are currently held up,"" said Jagdish Fofandi, president, All India Seafood Exporters Association.

""Barely 1-2% exporters are sending consignments on their own risk because they have very old business relations with Chinese buyers,"" he added. The disruption in exports has come when seafood demand from across the world is severely affected amid Covid-19 pandemic. Sluggish demand coupled with suspension of shipments to China have seen stocks piled up across cold storages in Veraval. A rough industry estimate pegs the stocks in cold storages at 25,000 tonnes, worth Rs 1,500 crore. Exporters in return have stopped fresh procurement from fishermen. ""We have around 25,000 tonne stock worth Rs 1,500 crore piled up in cold storages across Veraval. We don't have more capacity to buy now. We are facing a tremendous liquidity crunch,"" said Kenny Thomas, a leading exporter from Veraval. Veraval exports marine products to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore annually and China alone accounts for exports worth Rs 3,000 crore. The coastal town houses about 120 fish processing units, which buy seafood from fishermen in Veraval, Mangrol, Okha, Porbandar, Diu and South Gujarat. The exporters fear that the marine exports from the region is expected to drop by 30-35% during April-December period. Muted demand from Europe has further added to the exporters' woes.

""Europe is the second largest market after China for seafood exports from Veraval. The closure of restaurants for several months following lockdown in several European countries hit the demand very hard,"" said another exporter. The lack of demand from exporters has slowed down fishing activity noticeably. Gopal Fofandi, president, Akhil Gujarat Macchimar Mahamandal, said, ""About 80% boats are not venturing into the sea currently as exporters demand goods on a credit of 3 months, which we cannot afford."" There are a total 10,000 boats registered on Veraval and Porbandar coasts. ""If we ask for cash payment from exporters, they demand a 40-50% discount in return,"" he added. Pointers: Export Jam - Exports to China halted following blockage of payments worth Rs 1,200 crore - Frozen seafood stock of 25,000 piled up across cold storages across Veraval - Exporters also faced with non-release of Rs 200 crore under the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) - 80% fishing currently remains anchored on shores Industry Snapshot: - Marine exports from Veraval: Rs 5,000 crore?? - Export to China: Rs 3,000 crore?? - Number of exporters from Veraval: 120 - Fish varieties exported to China: ribbon fish, croaker fish, pomfret and leather jacket fish Photo Quotes: Exporters are facing several problems. Rs 1,200 crore stuck with Chinese importers, Rs 200 crore not released under MEIS and huge stocks have piled up in cold storages: Jagdish Fofandi, president, All India

Seafood Exporters Association About 80% boats are not venturing into the sea currently as exporters demand goods on a credit of three months, which we cannot afford: Gopal Fofandi, president, Akhil Gujarat Macchimar Mahamandal

Gujarat: Fishermen, exporters concerned as China ‘delays’ imports payment

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/gujarat-fishermen-exporters-concerned-as-china-delays-imports-payment-7073311/>

"While state fishermen associations have expressed fears they may have to drop the anchor of their boats due to lack of payment from traders, seafood exporters have pointed out that extra checks put in place by China, the biggest importer of Indian seafood, in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, has stretched the payment cycle and led to a cash crunch in the market. On Friday, leaders and representatives from 16 major fishing harbours in Gujarat and Union Territory of Diu and state seafood traders and exporters held a meeting at Veraval and appealed to the Central government to intervene at diplomatic levels to persuade China to relax Covid-19 protocols for Indian seafood shipments, restore the business cycle and clear around Rs 200 crore due to exporters towards Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS). The scheme, introduced through the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), was launched by the Government of India to boost the export of notified goods that are produced or manufactured in the country. Velji Masani, president of Akhil Bharatiya Fishermen Association, an organisation working for fishermen, said fishing boat owners were running out of cash and unable to purchase diesel, ice and ration or clear salaries of fishermen since they have not been paid by traders and exporters for the last two to three months.

"A fishing trip of 15 to 20 days requires a boat owner to purchase inputs worth Rs.3.5-4 lakh. Many of them have run out of their working capital and savings now. As a result, around 25 per cent of the 25,000 fishing boats in the state have already dropped anchors for indefinite period, Masani said. This, he added, comes on the back of a disrupted season. "The previous fishing season was marred by three cyclonic storms and early closure due to lockdown post the outbreak of novel coronavirus in March. The government has announced that fishermen holding Kisan Credit Cards would get Rs 2 lakh bank loans. But actually, banks are not giving more than Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 as loan. Fishermen have run out of cash and if fish traders and exporters don't clear their dues, which are around Rs 700 crore, a majority of Gujarat fishermen may have to suspend fishing altogether, Masani said. He also represents the state at the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) of the Central government. Exporters, meanwhile, say they were going through a "liquidity crunch as Chinese importers have delayed payments. "Almost 65 per cent of seafood exports, especially fresh fish, from Gujarat goes to China. In normal times, Chinese exporters release payment within 21 days.

But checking and scanning of seafood containers have increased at Chinese ports. The government there is detaining containers for up to 20 days as a measure against Covid-19. Therefore, it is taking more than 60 days to get payment from Chinese importers. We have also exhausted our capacity to borrow from banks to pay to fishermen. Hence, there is a liquidity crunch in the market and we are unable to pay to fishermen, Jagdish Fofandi, president of Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI) told The Indian Express on Sunday. Fofandi said India exports Rs 7,000 crore worth seafood annually with China being the largest destination for Indian shipments. Gujarat, he added, ships around 70,000 metric tonnes seafood worth Rs 2,200 crore to China.

“This year, however, there is a dip of around 35 per cent as compared to three years ago, Fofandi said. He said if the Centre releases around Rs 200 crore MEIS dues to exporters, it could ease liquidity crunch to some extent. “Payments for shipments to China made in September have not been cleared till date. The only positive is that the European market has remained stable. Therefore, we are requesting fishermen to focus on the catch of shrimps, cuttlefish, and squids which are converted into value-added products and exported to EU, Fofandi said. China mainly imports ribbonfish, croaker, cuttlefish, pomfret among others from India. “It will help if the Central government intervenes and persuades China to relax its Covid-related protocols for seafood shipments and the turnaround time is reduced, the SEAI president added. Some fishermen leaders, however, accuse traders and exporters of manipulating the situation. “In the name of Covid-19, exporters are delaying payment to us while diverting the money to purchase fish from others at lower rates by making instant cash payments, a fishermen leader of Gujarat, who had attended the Friday's meeting, said.

Gujarat: Fish out of water

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/lifestyle/food/2020/nov/07/fish-out-of-water-2220518.html>

"There's been a curious source for fish in land-locked Gurugram for a while. A daily maid who went to one of her houses and was asked to devein some prawns had a simple query. “She told the family that other houses get their seafood cleaned and pan-ready from an online place. That home called the other, and it turned out that the latter were getting food from Jalongi. And that's one of the reasons we realised we're making real progress, says Dippankar S Halder, Founder at Jalongi.com, a company which did incidentally deliver pan-ready fish to said home. Founded in 2018, and now thriving even when others didn't, Gurugram-based Jalongi works, because of “largely four reasons: first, we have a range that far exceeds our competition, with a variety of between 50-70 kinds of seafood on a given day; second, because we source at least 70% of our items directly from fishermen in beach-side auctions so the quality is assured; thirdly, we offer custom cuts for each of our items depending on customers' requirement and as

per various recipes; finally, we do all the cleaning ourselves and retail the final product, elaborates Halder, without mentioning this is why maids, and homes, love the company. Halder, an IIM Ahmedabad alumnus and a retail veteran with experience of setting up multiple large-scale food retail chains including EasyDay stores with Bharti-Walmart venture, has over 27 years of work experience in retail, CPG and consumer technology. And, “as a Bengali living in Gurugram since 2007, I know the demand and need for fresh fish.

This is why his Gurugram-based company is about to launch its own app, as well as expand operations to south and west India. Apart from casually dropping facts like Haryana is now a major source of Tiger Prawns, Halder notes, “Sixty five per cent of our stock is freshwater fish, while the remaining is from the sea. Out of the freshwater fish we sell, about 70-80 per cent is farmed, while the rest is wild-caught. This is because, apart from the devastating effects of pollution, fish farms are largely more sustainable with tracking of numbers, no over-farming, and giving fish populations, schools if you will, time to expand their admissions. While Halder built up relationships with various fishermen from Surat to the Sunderbands (coastally) over the course of his previous organisations, he keeps building new ones. “When I'd gone up to Himachal and asked a local fisherman to give me his entire day's catch, while telling him I'd return the next day to discuss a business proposition, he was surprised that I did just that the next day. As he said, ‘log bolte hain toh zaroor, par waapis nahin aate hain (people say all kinds of things, but never actually return).

Halder had taken way more fish than he had needed for a single meal the previous day (“we gave the rest to the staff at the government tourist bungalow we were staying at), and then returned to take the rest of his catch. Acts like these that ensured fishermen trust him and his company and so consistently deliver quality products. “We do sometimes overstock, but that's to ensure the fishermen can rely on us to buy their catch. On our side, every delivery is marked with the source of origin, the day it was caught, and every other detail, explains Halder. Even during the pandemic, Jalongi ensured that none of their contracted fishermen were left with unsold stock. Given the dire circumstances for the informal economy, Halder ensured that the fishermen didn't lose out professionally, nor lose faith personally. By the scale Delhi-NCR contributes to 1/3rd of Jalongi's turnover, with over 30,000 customers. Repeat customers on a monthly basis are at 80 per cent plus. Best-selling products: Rohu, Katla, Sea Bass, Singhara, White Prawn, Hilsa, Pomfret and River Side. “Sixty five per cent of our stock is freshwater fish, while the rest is from the sea. Out of the freshwater fish we sell, about 70-80 per cent is farmed, while the rest is wild-caught.

Gujarat: Boat owners SoS PM on safety of fishermen

<https://www.socialnews.xyz/2020/09/29/gujarat-boat-owners-sos-pm-on-safety-of-fishermen/>

"Leading boat owners associations in Gujarat on Tuesday highlighted the challenges to their lives and livelihoods. The fisheries sector and fishing communities in the state and around the country are challenged by the lack of access to modern digital connectivity at sea. The Veraval's Boat Owners' Association, Shree Kharva Sanyukta Machhimar Boat Association, supporting Indian fishermen for technology adoption, have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to seek his direct intervention to address their concerns. They have highlighted need for adopting next-generation digital and satellite communications technologies to raise productivity of fishing harvests, create world-class competitiveness, ensure the safety of fishermen on the high seas, while accelerating the modernization and growth of the fisheries sector. Tulsibhai Gohel, President of Veraval's Boat Owners' Association, Kharva Sanyukta Machhimar Boat Association, elaborating on the community's challenges, said, ""There are perpetual issues that endanger our lives and our livelihoods, deeply impacting the well-being of our community and families. Fishermen are often trapped mid-sea and lose their lives due to a lack of timely information and lack of SoS data capability. Our vessels and fishermen are routinely apprehended by neighboring countries; Pakistan detaining 49 of Gujarat Fishermen on September 15 is only the latest such incident. We take great pride in our mission of feeding India, and risk our lives every day to do so -- we are in need of urgent Government intervention to keep us secure"".

""Even though highly advanced and affordable technology that can benefit us is available, we are not getting the benefit of it since it has not been implemented by either the Center or the respective States. For instance, we have tested BSNL's transponder, which has two-way data communication directly over satellite and works in the deep sea. The Hon'ble Prime Minister's visionary PMMSY reform promises us change -- ensuring the safety and security of fishermen at sea. In line with his vision, our request to the Government is to broadly deploy the latest technology immediately as any delay will lead to further loss of lives. Each week, we lose our brothers to the sea. We need a solution today,"" he added. Since COVID, it's imperative that fishermen feel safe to go out into the open waters to help feed the country of India and bring their hard-earned wages to their families. The Covid-19 lockdown had put the country's marine fishery sector in deep sea, inflicting a daily loss of Rs 24 crore as per a Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) report. With the advent of new satellite technology, India today has access to services that can ensure the safety of fishermen through ubiquitous coverage that allows fishermen to communicate anywhere, even through the worst of storms, cyclones or other natural calamities. Along with enhancing safety, technology can also help the fishermen raise

their productivity and enable e-commerce transactions at sea.

Through 2-way data systems, it is now becoming easier to send fish location data to fishermen at sea to ensure better supply and demand matching, while allowing fishermen to access markets and transact at sea to maximize the value of their catch. Despite being a sunrise sector, which engages over 2.8 crore fisherfolk with many more along the value chain, the fisheries sector continues to grapple with issues related to the growing loss of lives, with fishermen eagerly awaiting decisive action on behalf of the Government to reap the benefits of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). Indian Fishermen for Technology Adoption will continue to bring the numerous issues being faced by fishermen to the forefront. The focus will remain on the digital transformation of this important sector that can benefit fishermen directly and the country more broadly, especially emphasizing the need for prompt action to prevent further tragedies.

India: Small shrimp prices rebound in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh to follow once harvests end

<https://www.undercurrentnews.com/2020/09/17/indian-small-shrimp-prices-rebound-in-gujarat-andhra-pradesh-to-follow-once-harvests-end/>

"In contrast to the sharp drop seen in the chief Indian vannamei shrimp farming state of Andhra Pradesh this month, prices for smaller shrimp in the state of Gujarat have been continuing to rise since the start of September. As reported by Undercurrent News on Sept. 4, prices for smaller, 100-count shrimp had been falling rapidly in Andhra Pradesh as a result of mass early harvests caused by heavy rains and disease issues. This in turn led to a glut of small-sized animals on the market, an issue compounded by a relative lack of demand from processors.

Gujarat: August 1 fishing season notice irks fishermen

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/august-1-fishing-season-notice-irks-fishermen/articleshow/77681784.cms>

"While the state fisheries department issued a notification announcing that fishing season this year will commence from August 1, weather-beaten seamen in Gujarat are not upbeat about it. Looking at the rough seas owing to the prevalence of monsoon, they had urged extending this date to September 1 as venturing into deep sea is not advisable. The pattern of rain is changing in Gujarat and the sea remains rough till the end of August. According to fishermen's association, the sailors could not venture into the sea for the past 17 days owing to weather turbulences and one boat owner also had to bear Rs 2 lakh loss from the inclemencies. Gujarat fishermen, for the past couple of years, have been demanding extending ban on fishing for 15 more days till September 1. However, based on central government notification, the state fisheries department

issued a notification in May this year, banning fishing at Gujarat coast from June 1 to July 31, 2020.

President of Porbandar Machimar Boat Association, Bharat Modi said, “We believe that the central government revised the date of opening fishing season in the country to August 1 bowing to strong demand from south Indian states. Monsoon ends early in southern states, but the government should also consider that the monsoon pattern defers from state to state. They should decide accordingly. Fearing lesser catch owing to south Indian fishermen coming closer to Gujarat coasts, fishermen here started fishing from August 1 even amid the unfavourable weather conditions. However, it proved to hazardous adventure as not only they risked lives in the choppy waters, they also could not get good catch.

According to fisherman out of 20 days of August they could remain in sea for 3 days only. “We called our sailors from south Gujarat and other parts of the country and paid them salaries. We also spent money for fuel and after our boats went into the sea, we were asked to call them back because of rough weather. It had cost us a lot, alleged Gopal Fofandi, president of Akhil Gujarat Machimar Mahamandal, an apex body of all fishermen associations in state. According to Gujarat fishermen, the government should extend the fishing dates to September 1 every year and even if they want fishermen of south India to venture early, they should be banned from venturing off Gujarat coast till September 1.

Gujarat: Fishing season begins early: Little import demand, high diesel prices leave fishermen at unease

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/fishing-season-begins-early-little-import-demand-high-diesel-prices-leave-fishermen-at-unease-6541468/>

“While the fishing season in Gujarat has begun two weeks earlier than normal this year, fishermen apprehend it could be a season of uncertainties due to little import demand from China and increased prices of diesel. Abiding by the Central government directive for the west coast, the state government this year has changed fishing season from August 1 to May 31 instead of the traditional August 16 to June 10. This effectively means the season will have an early start. “This is important as first two months of the season are most important in terms of catch and since fishing season would begin late in Gujarat, fishermen from other states, where the season begins early, used to fish in coastal waters off Gujarat coast, said Jivan Jungi, president of Porbandar district unit of Sagar Party, an organisation working for rights of fishermen. But fishermen are staring at uncertainties. “On one hand, there is enthusiasm that the fishing season is starting early after a lost season last year due to multiple cyclones and coronavirus-related lockdown...

But fishermen are worried about high prices of fuel and a bleak market outlook for fish, said

Jadavji Posteria, secretary of Porbandar Jilla Machhimar Mahamandal, one of the associations of fishermen in Porbandar. But Posteria said that high prices of diesel which large fishing trawlers use as fuel as well as kerosene and petrol used by smaller boats is a matter of concern. He said that diesel prices have climbed to Rs 76.75 per litre against average Rs 55 to Rs 60 last season. Setting sail this season seems a big risk, says Kishor Kotiya, owner of fishing trawler Ratansagar in Porbandar. "...Fish traders are telling me that fish prices would be low this season as there is no import demand from China...", Kotiya said. Fisheries officers said that another 1,000 boats from Okha harbour in Devbhumi Dwarka district and 200 from Jakhau harbour in Kutch district have set sail for their maiden trips so far.

Exporters said China, the biggest market of seafood from Gujarat, has turned cold since the beginning of this calendar year due to Covid-19 pandemic. "Around 80 per cent of exports from Gujarat go to China where our fish is quite popular in restaurants. But restaurants are closed there due to the Covid-19 pandemic. If the situation persists, price of fish in local market will remain under pressure, said Karsan Salet, a leading seafood exporter of Porbandar and who is also a member of managing committee of Seafood Exporters Association of India. Salet said that Gujarat exports average 4,500 tonnes of seafood worth Rs 5,000 crore to China annually but the growing border tension between the two countries can affect this trade. But fisheries minister Jawahar Chavda said the state government was helping the fishermen in form of fuel subsidy. "We have Rs 200 crore annual subsidy budget. While our subsidy scheme may not cover all the fishermen, the government has to keep the subsidy bill under control.

Gujarat: Ordinance issued to stop fishermen from straying into Pakistan

<https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/law-and-order/guj-ordinance-issued-to-stop-fishermen-from-straying-into-pak.html>

"The Gujarat government on Thursday issued an ordinance to deter local fishermen from straying into Pakistani waters near the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast. The ordinance seeks to amend certain provisions of the Gujarat Fisheries Act of 2003. In a release issued here, Gujarat Minister of State for Home Pradeepsinh Jadeja said it was necessary to take strict action against erring fishermen and boat owners, who stray into Pakistani waters for Lalpari fish and eventually get caught by the authorities there. The release, however, did not specify the penalty that will be imposed on fishermen or boat owners who enter Pakistani waters. Apart from this, the ordinance also gives "search and seizure" powers to police sub-inspectors or officials above them at marine police stations, the minister said. As per the ordinance, a fine of Rs 1 lakh will be imposed on boats from other states that enter Gujarat's marine boundary, he said.

The present Act did not have any provision to penalise boats from other states that enter Gujarat

for fishing, Jadeja was quoted saying in the release. Apart from a fine of Rs 1 lakh, local authorities can also sell the catch recovered from the errant boats and impose another fine, which will be five times the amount recovered from selling the catch, he said. A bill to amend the Act was supposed to be presented in the last Budget session of the Assembly in March, but could not be taken up for discussion as the session was curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jadeja added.

Gujarat: Firsh exporters wary of Covid-19 traces

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/firsh-exporters-wary-of-covid-19-traces/articleshow/76988227.cms>

"The fish exporters of Gujarat are apprehensive about their future trade prospects with China following detection of Covid-19 traces in a frozen fish consignment from Ecuador that landed in the neighbouring country recently. Following this China has suspended import from few companies of Ecuador. To ensure that Gujarat exporters don't face similar situation, the All India Sea Food Exporters Association (AISFEA) has approached Marin Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) urging them to issue guidelines for fish exports before Beijing takes any adverse step against Indian exporters. Every year frozen fish worth Rs 5,000 crore is exported from Veraval out of which China's share is around Rs 3,000 crore. Jagdish Fofandi president of AISFEA told TOI, "If any traces of Covid-19 are found in our packaging China will reject the cargo and other countries will also follow the same. So, we have asked MPEDA to issue guidelines regarding this. A Veraval-based exporter Thomas Kenny said, "China is checking coronavirus traces on packaging however it's not proved yet that frozen fish is able to carry the pathogen. However if this suspicion spreads we are unsure how the new season of fishing in India will start from August. B G Chudasama head of department of harvest and post harvest technology of College of Fisheries set up by Junagadh Agriculture University (JAU) said, "There is very less possibility that the virus can survive in frozen fish. But even if these are rumours it can have big impact on fishing industry in Veraval. The fish exporters and fishermen are already reeling under recession since because of excessive rain last year followed by the conoravirus pandemic.

Gujarat: 233 fishermen stranded in Iran for over 3 months return to Valsad

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/gujarat-233-fishermen-stranded-in-iran-for-over-3-months-return-to-valsad/>

"A total of 233 fishermen from south Gujarat, who were stranded at Chiruyeh Port and Kish Island in Iran for over three months, returned back to their homes in Umargam taluka of Valsad district on June 18. Their family members thanked government authorities even as the fishermen claimed that each of them had paid 40 USD for their return to Porbandar in Gujarat,

and an additional amount of Rs 1,100 for their journey from Porbandar to Valsad. Clad in a yellow saree, Manisha Bariya (32) prepared fish curry on the occasion of her husband Surendra Bariya's return. She said, "I had received information about his return the same afternoon. Seeing him for the first time in ten months was like a dream come true. Tears rolled down my eyes as he hugged me... It was a pleasant moment for us. I am thankful to God and the government of India for safely bringing him home. Iran was one of the first countries to be affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. With local transport and airports shut, the stranded fishermen on February 27 had sent a video to their families in Umargam, requesting them to talk to political leaders so that they could be brought back to India.

Their family members made representations to BJP MLA of Umargam taluka Raman Patkar, who mailed the fishermen's details to the Ministry of External Affairs. Patkar also reached out to Chief Minister Vijay Rupani to request the Centre to make arrangements for bringing the stranded fishermen back home. On June 6, the 233 fishermen were taken to a hotel at Bandar Abbas Port and medically examined. The following day, they boarded an Indian Navy ship and reached Porbandar on June 11. They were then kept in a hostel for a week, where their Covid-19 tests were conducted. Local authorities had also made arrangements for buses to drop them off to Umargam taluka. On June 18, they reached the taluka where the Mamlatda, local leaders and others felicitated them. Health department officials carried out their medical examinations again and later allowed them to go back to their home to their families. Surendra Baraiya said, "Since the last 15 years, we have worked in Dubai. For the first time, the owner of the firm in Dubai took us to Iran for fishing work. We left India for Dubai on August 17, 2019. We stayed there for a week and were later taken to Iran at Chiruyeh Port.

We used to sail at sea for six days at a time and return with the catches. The firm owner would take the catch, sell it in Dubai and return after five days. Iran was one of the first countries to be infected by coronavirus, after China. Our fishing work stopped on February 24 and we had been stranded on the ship since then. Nobody was known to us in the new environment. It was difficult to spend three-and-a-half months there. " "Our area was in a green zone. We were in contact with Indian Embassy officials and they guided us regarding safety precautions. We did not allow fishermen to leave the ship; only a few people went outside to purchase food and other items. Local people also helped us a lot in terms of providing essentials, Surendra added. "We have decided that we will not go to Iran again...We are familiar with Arabic and people over there. If everything turns normal, we will go to Dubai. Another fisherman, Rohit Baraiya (50) said, "The Arabs had given us 600 dirhams each, which we used to pay for our journey back to India. Some locals had helped us to convert the currency into US dollars. Each of the fishermen paid 40 dollars to reach India and then Rs 1,100 to the bus driver. We are thankful to the Indian Navy and the government of India for bringing us back to our homeland.

Gujarat: Europe eateries shut, fish pile up in storages

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/europe-eateries-shut-fish-pile-up-in-storages/articleshow/76143663.cms>

"Fish of all varieties and sizes, estimated to be worth nearly Rs 1,000 crore, has piled up in cold storages of Gujarat, mostly the coastal town of Veraval, as restaurants and hotels in Covid-hit Europe yet to start fully-fledged. The storages are running out of space to store high-value fish such as cuttlefish, pomfret as well as lobsters and jumbo shrimps, which are highly savoured in the European countries. Even as countries like Spain, Italy and France have permitted restaurants and cafés to open, the exports have hit a roadblock with large number of orders getting cancelled. Kenny Thomas, an exporter from Veraval, said, "Many buyers cancelled their orders due to worldwide lockdown. A few consignments were shipped for sale in supermarkets of European countries, but as the restaurant and hotels are closed, exports have been hit. According to exporters, there are very few buyers in the domestic market for high-value fish varieties some of which cost as high as to Rs 2,000 per kg. Jagdish Fofandi, president of All India Sea Food Exporters Association said, "June is the end of fishing season and all the exporters clear their stock from the cold storages. However, this is the first time that such a massive stock is still lying in store. Cold storages can store up to 30% of the fish produce only. Meanwhile, China has started exploiting the situation by dictating all-time low prices on several fish varieties. China has been importing low-value fish which cost around Rs 400-Rs 500 per kg. "Knowing that exports to Europe have been stalled, Chinese importers are refusing to pay as per earlier rates, said Fofandi, who is also one of the big exporters in Veraval.

"The price of cuttlefish and croaker fish has been slashed to half by Chinese buyers, which has dealt a jolt to exporters. There are nearly 100 fish processing factories in Veraval which process fish from Porbandar, Jakhau, Rajpara (Una), Navabandar, Okha and Mangrol towns also. 30k fishermen return without advance pay Fishing activity at Gujarat's coast has been shut ever since the lockdown started. According to the fishermen association, nearly 30,000 migrant fishermen of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and south Gujarat have returned to their natives, a month before the season officially ended. Tulsi Gohil, president of Akhil Gujarat Machchimar Maha Mandal said, "We generally pay advance to the fishermen before the end of the season in June, but this year we don't have money to pay them. The maintenance of one boat costs Rs 3 to 4 lakh which is done during monsoon. We demand a relief package for small fishermen from the government.

Gujarat: Cyclone threat dashes fishermen's hope for a 'good catch' after long in Gujarat

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/cyclone-threat-dashes-fishermens-hope-for-a-good-catch-after-long-in-gujarat-6440001/>

"Dattatray Davne, 55, was out on the sea since Saturday, hoping to make up for the season lost during the lockdown. But the group he was part of was soon disappointed with the warning of cyclone Nisarga in the Arabian Sea and was forced to return to the shore. The fishing season ends on June 15 but now they have to wait for further advisories before venturing out into the sea. When The Indian Express met Davne, fishermen were anchoring their boats on the Nargol beach and covering them with plastic sheets. The sky was overcast and it had started drizzling. "This is end of season and we have been out on the sea for the past two days, hoping to get a good catch. We were around 13 nautical miles when we got information from other fishermen that a cyclone had developed and it might pass through south Gujarat. The Coast Guard officials in their boats also told us the same and we returned back. Had we waited for one more day, we might have got a good catch. Now we have to wait till we get further instructions from the authorities, says Davne, president of Nargol Fishermen Association, who was accompanied by his two sons.

The Gujarat government has evacuated close to 79,000 persons living in coastal districts of Bharuch, Surat, Navsari and Valsad on Tuesday, with 6,000 of them from Valsad alone. The famous black sand beach, Tithal, was closed for visitors and police were deployed. The high tide at Tithal were the only remaining signs of the cyclone, as moderate rainfall with high speed winds brought immense relief from the scorching heat. On Tuesday morning, two NDRF teams arrived in the district and took stock of the situation in the coastal villages and Tithal beach as people chose to stay indoors in Valsad town. Shops were open with no customers. In Valsad, 35 villages 18 in Valsad taluka, 13 in Umargam taluka and 4 in Pardi taluka were put on alert in view of the cyclone. "We shifted around 6,000 people from coastal villages to 35 shelter homes in nearby places, maximum number being in Umargam taluka where families staying in 145 kutchha houses were shifted. We are also maintaining Covid-19 protocol in the shelter homes where food and other facilities are provided.

Arrangements have been made in hospitals to deal with emergencies. We are well prepared, said Valsad District Collector RR Rawal, who took charge of the district on Monday. Hundreds of fishermen returned to Nargol village in Umargam taluka from the sea by Monday evening following the cyclone alert. The village is dominated by Mangela fishermen community though most of the residents of around 10,000 people, work in different factories in nearby Sarigam GIDC and Umargam GIDC. Many fishermen work as assistants in larger vessels in Diu, Okha and Porbander. "During the past two months, due to lockdown, our business went down by 60 per cent. My sons and I were going round villages to sell our catch of shrimps, pomphret,

lobsters, crabs, etc. We faced huge loss and are just surviving. I am planning to send my sons for some other work once the lockdown lifts. I will try to get them job in some industries in Vapi or Sarigam, says Davne.

Mumbai on red alert as Cyclone Nisarga to impact coastal Maharashtra and Gujarat

<https://www.skymetweather.com/content/weather-news-and-analysis/cyclone-nisarga-the-storm-of-the-century-heading-for-mumbai/>

"Cyclone Nisarga is likely to commence recurvature shortly and thereafter move NNE (North North Eastward). It is likely to speed up and move about 13-15 kmph. The distance from the coast is going to shrink rapidly. The thick band of peripheral clouds likely to reach Mumbai and neighborhood during the night/early morning. Incessant heavy rains along with high-velocity winds will run the risk of flooding, uprooting trees, and collapse of weak structures. Nisarga, which is currently brewing in the Arabian Sea, means ""nature"" and was termed by India's neighbouring country, Bangladesh. Thirty-three NDRF teams have been deployed in the coastal districts of Maharashtra and Gujarat in view of the impending Cyclone Nisarga, the chief of the federal contingency force said on Tuesday. 20,000 people from villages near Gujarat coast to be evacuated ahead of the cyclone, according to officials.

Gujarat: Over 150 WB fishermen stuck in Narmada

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vadodara/over-150-wb-fishermen-stuck-in-narmada/articleshow/75853470.cms>

"They arrived in the tribal belt of Gujarat in January this year with the hopes of earning good money. But these 150 fishermen from West Bengal never thought that they would get stuck for months on the banks of Tapi River in Sagbara taluka of Narmada district. They are not in regular touch with their families back home nor are they able to seek help from the West Bengal government. "Hundreds of fishermen arrive in the state every year and stay here for few months. They are hired by the local cooperative societies that are into fishing business. The societies get contract from the government for fishing in the river and hence they need labourers, said Kanti Kothari, general secretary, Sagbara Taluka Matysaudyog Sahakari Mandali Ltd. "We hire them to fish in Tapi River. This year, though, we didn't get the contract as water level in the dam was high. But the fishermen arrived in January and when they didn't get work, they decided to stay here for a couple of months to look for some other work.

Before they could return, the lockdown was announced, Kothari told TOI. Over last two months, the fishermen have been staying in hutments on the banks of Tapi River in Motidevrupan village. When they began running out of food, local villagers provided them groceries for a few days before the administration stepped in. "We have been providing them with food and some NGOs

too have supported these fishermen. We have made all the arrangements for their return to West Bengal but we have to wait till their state government gives permission to run the train, said H K Vyas, deputy collector, Narmada

Karnataka: Govt bans entry of people from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu till May 31

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/karnataka-govt-bans-entry-of-people-from-gujarat-maharashtra-kerala-tamil-nadu-till-may-31>

"The Karnataka government on Monday banned entry of people from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu till May 31. Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa while addressing media said, ""We have decided not to allow entry of people from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu till May 31."" This came after Yediyurappa held a meeting with state ministers and senior government officers to discuss the guidelines issued by the Centre regarding the fourth phase of nationwide lockdown. ""State road transport corporation buses in Karnataka and private buses will run. Strict lockdown measures in containment zones and economic activities will be permitted in other areas. Sundays will be total lockdown across the state. Home quarantine will be strengthened,"" he added. The Chief Minister further said that all shops will be allowed to open and all trains running within the state will be permitted. The central government on Sunday extended the ongoing COVID-19 induced nationwide lockdown till May 31, but with a set of new relaxations commencing from Monday. The Union Home Ministry has also given powers to States/UTs demarcate areas in Green, Orange and Red zones, which will allow them to start activities except in containment zones.

Gujarat: Wait of 153 fishermen from Bengal stranded in Narmada to end soon

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/gujarat-wait-of-153-fishermen-from-bengal-stranded-in-narmada-to-end-soon-6414832/>

"On the river bed of Tapi, in Moti Devrupan village of Sagrbara taluka in Narmada district, temporary shelters for fishermen is an annual sight as over 100 fishermen from as far as West Bengal come to Gujarat to work as contractual labourers for various fishing cooperatives. However, after the imposition of Covid-19 lockdown, almost 153 of them had been stranded in the district without money, food or mode of transport to go back to their villages. Their indefinite wait to return home has finally come to an end. The fishermen are expected to be sent back to their villages by Tuesday. The administration which had apprised both Gujarat and West Bengal governments of the stranded fishermen, had been waiting for a confirmation from the latter. "They have finally responded and now we are finalising to send them back.

They will be sent back by tomorrow or the day after, said MR Kothari, District Collector

Narmada. The fishermen arrive every year towards the end of January and return to their respective villages in April or May depending on the work. They however claim that this year, since their arrival, no work has come their way. “We arrived in January and around February we start getting work after tenders are passed. But this time the associations claimed that they were awaiting tenders to be passed. We thought we will wait too. But then the lockdown was imposed. We could not catch any fish, nor could we sell them. We have not earned a penny this year and now we have run out of all the money we had, said Sameer Biswas. 36, from Nadia district in West Bengal. Sameer claims that he is able to earn more in Gujarat in the limited months than what he earns back home. “I usually earn between 8000 -10000 in a month, said Sameer adding that now he just want to return home.

Every year the state government issues tenders for reservoir fishing under its Reservoir leasing policy. The cooperatives, however, claim that the tender amount was increased following which they were negotiating to reduce the amount which was hampered by the lockdown and the tendering was postponed indefinitely. “The rate of fish have dropped too. Earlier what we could sell for Rs 200/kg is being sold at Rs 25/kg. Since we do not have money how can we employ them, said Digambar Vasava, heading a fish cooperative in Sagbara. These fishermen live under makeshift trampoline tents erected by them, with cardboard sheets covered with a piece of cloth placed side by side to each other to sleep on. Without masks they use their ‘gamchas’ to cover their faces, even as social distancing inside their tents is difficult to maintain. Having exhausted their savings over food, the men had been awaiting a response from the administration to head back home. The villagers initially provided food but for how long will they feed us, said Sanjit Biswas (44), another fishermen from Shantipur village of West Bengal.

Gujarat: Covid-19 lockdown: 10,000 fisherfolk are stranded along Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka coasts

<https://scroll.in/article/960695/covid-19-lockdown-10000-fisherfolk-are-stranded-along-maharashtra-go-and-karnataka-coasts>

"For over five weeks, even as the government exhorted citizens to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds several times a day, Yarayan Somesh had avoided using water, except when absolutely necessary. Stranded on a trawler docked off the fishing port of Veraval in Gujarat, ever since the countrywide lockdown was announced on the evening of March 24, this 18-year-old fisherman from Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh told IndiaSpend that he had just eight litres of water per day for all his needs – even while being surrounded by water. Somesh is one of an estimated 15,000 fish-workers who had found themselves marooned near landing points and harbours on India's western coast, battling physical hardships and psychological trauma when the lockdown was announced. Two have died on boats, and at least two others are known to have been injured. On April 28, Somesh, along with 4,000 other fish-workers, was repatriated

to Andhra Pradesh in 54 private buses organised by the Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh governments. There are over 10,000 others who are stranded along the coasts of Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka and still need help, according to estimates by fishermen associations. These fishers represent the human face of the ongoing turmoil in the country's fisheries sector which contributes Rs 1.75 lakh crore – \$26.3 billion, nearly equivalent to the Centre's Covid-19 relief package for the poor – to India's gross value added. The sector is now staring at lost revenues and livelihoods.

Livelihoods affected The lockdown is inflicting a daily loss of Rs 224 crore on the sector, the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, the country's only national centre for research on fisheries and fish-processing, has estimated in a new report accessed by IndiaSpend, which is yet to be made public since government approval is pending. The bulk of the losses will be borne by the mechanised fishing sector. The report estimated that the mechanised sector will see daily losses in the range of Rs 197 crore while the small-scale, non-mechanised fishing sector will experience losses to the tune of Rs 27 crore a day. “Fishing has come to a halt, exports have been derailed because countries are refusing to import seafood, restaurants are shut and hence, local demand has also dipped, Ravishankar CN, director of Kochi-based Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, told IndiaSpend, explaining the cascading effect of the lockdown and the Covid-19 pandemic. The effect on livelihoods would be pronounced due to the nature of the sector in India, Ravishankar stressed.

“Unlike other countries, fisheries in India is still a livelihood sector, with most people working on daily wages. It is not corporatised. As a result, daily-wage earners as well as small fishermen will be badly hit due to this disruption, he said. Fishers' associations also emphasise the impact of the lockdown and the pandemic on a workforce dominated by casually employed migrants, many from below-poverty-line families. On the Western coast, where the fishing season lasts till May 31, followed by the annual monsoon fishing ban until July 31, two months of the season have been wiped off, with no fishing, and consequently, no sales. On the Eastern coast, the ban, meant to encourage fish breeding, is from April 15 to June 15. Many fish workers employed on the West coast are unlikely to be able to work until August 2020. No government relief The industry would face a crisis if the government does not reach out with relief measures, of which there have been none so far, said Pradip Chatterjee, convener of the National Platform for Small Scale Fishworkers, an association with 50,000 fisherpeople from 18 states.

“We demand that the government pay Rs 15,000 per month per family to fish-workers to sustain them during this period, and financial assistance to help offset losses for the small-scale fishermen who own boats but will not be able to absorb these losses, said Chatterjee. Somesh, who spoke to IndiaSpend over the phone from the fishing vessel on which he lived with nine others before they were repatriated, said he has heard that workers would be paid their wages

during the lockdown. “But till we get the money in our hands, no one is believing this. Chatterjee said that the association was receiving complaints from many fishworkers about unpaid wages. “As soon as fishing stopped due to the lockdown, many boat-owners stopped paying wages to their workers. This has had an immediate impact on the workers because they will be going back home empty-handed, he said. Stranded at sea “We were not given the option of returning to land when the lockdown was announced, Somesh told IndiaSpend. He and his co-workers had no choice but to remain on the 16-foot wide and 80-foot long fishing vessel, with a covered area the size of a small room and a lone toilet till the afternoon of April 28. The vessel's owner, based in Veraval, delivered food – rice, pulses, vegetables, oil and spices – once a week, along with some 500 litres of water, which was not sufficient for their needs, Somesh said. “We got 70-80 litres of water every day between the 10 of us.

Each of us had eight litres a day, with which we needed to bathe, clean and drink, he said. A person needs between 50 and 100 litres per day to meet their basic needs, a World Health Organisation estimate shows. There are no government figures for the number of stranded fishworkers. However, fishing associations and civil society actors estimated that at least 15,000 fishworkers had been living on vessels on the Western coast since the lockdown. While some media reports have said that 4,000 workers are stranded in vessels docked off Veraval, the Andhra Pradesh Traditional Fish Workers' Union, representing the predominantly Andhra workforce, said the number is over 5,000. Most of the stranded fisherfolk work on vessels that go to the sea for multi-day fishing expeditions, ranging between 15-20 days, said Velji Masani, a boat-owner, and president of the Akhil Bharatiya Fishermen's Association. Most were out on fishing expeditions when the lockdown was announced and had to be summoned back by owners. While vessels have toilets and space for the fish-workers to rest and sleep, workers are not used to staying in them for more than a fortnight at a stretch, Masani pointed out. Many workers themselves opted to stay on their boats, not realising how long the lockdown would stretch out, he said.

While stating that boat owners would pay workers for the duration of the lockdown, Masani pointed out that owners were also losing money, both because work had come to a standstill, and on the expenses they were incurring. “Each owner was spending approximately Rs 45,000-Rs 50,000 a month on getting food and water supplies to these workers. Owners are suffering tremendously too, he said. Not all boats have toilets, according to Somesh. “Some fish-workers either used the toilets on the vessels around them or went in the open, on the deck, he recalled, adding that workers were expressly forbidden from debarking when they dock at Veraval harbour, facing the landing point, to pick up their rations. When they stepped out on April 28, it was the first time in five weeks that any of these workers had stepped on land. Masani, whose association has been coordinating with about 800 boat owners whose boats and workers had been stranded along the Gujarat coastline at various landing points – from Porbandar to Mangrol,

Okha, to Diu and further south, in Navsari and Valsad – said he worries that physical hardships aside, the lockdown is now having a deep psychological impact on fish-workers.

Anxiety was a precipitating factor in the deaths of two fish-workers from Andhra Pradesh, stranded off the Veraval coast, according to Masani. Forty-five-year-old T Jagannathan, hailing from Gara Mandalam sub-district in Srikakulam, who had stopped eating, and had become increasingly anxious about contracting Covid-19, died on April 9, TK Rahman, head of the TKFU said. K Raju, also from Srikakulam, who was only 22 years old, reportedly died of a heart attack on April 22. “His wife had recently delivered a baby, said Masani. “His colleagues told us that he kept expecting to be rescued, and became worried when this did not happen.” Two others are reported to have fallen off their vessels and grievously injured themselves. “As days stretch into weeks, the workers are getting restless. Often, some stop eating, and others fight amongst themselves. The frustration is starting to show, Masani said. Since their mobile phones worked, the stranded workers were able to speak to their families. However, they had little else to do, as they huddled together, five to 15 in a vessel, in the only roofed area, housing the steering wheel as well as other electronic equipment, to shelter from daytime temperatures crossing 30 degrees Celsius.

State governments have neglected fish-workers during the lockdown, Chatterjee said. They had not adhered to the Union Health Ministry's directions to state governments asking them to ensure proper living conditions for migrant workers, house them in relief camps/shelter homes, and also arrange counselling for mental health problems. He said his organisation was planning to move the National Human Rights Commission to draw attention to the plight of fish workers. However, following the two deaths, political pressure started building on the Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat governments, asking them to repatriate these fishworkers. Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi had asked the government to move the fishworkers to a relief camp, whereas former Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu had urged the Gujarat government to rescue the workers. Initially, media reports last week had indicated the governments were likely to repatriate the stranded Andhra Pradesh fishers by cargo ships, after conversations between the chief ministers of the two states.

However, Masani said that local boat owners expressed their displeasure to the Gujarat government about this plan. “Cargo ships are expensive and they would take about eight days to reach, whereas buses would take about two days. Hence, we urged the government to consider buses instead of the ships, says Masani. Unorganised labour The fisheries sector is a major employer in India, providing a livelihood to over 16 million people. Over the past five years, the sector has seen a steady growth of over 6% in its production. In 2017-'18, it produced 12.59 million metric tonnes or MMT of fish, up from 9.40 MMT in 2012-'13, according to the Handbook on Fisheries Statistics, 2018, produced by the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal

Husband and Dairying. The report pegged the sector's contribution to the gross value added in 2017-'18 at Rs 1.75 lakh crore.

Andhra Pradesh: 4,500 fishermen stranded in Gujarat to reach home today

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/4500-fishermen-stranded-in-gujarat-to-reach-home-today/article31467286.ece>

"More than 4,500 fishermen from the Andhra Pradesh, who were stranded at Veraval port in Gujarat owing to the lockdown, are being brought home in 65 buses and they are expected to reach their native districts by Thursday afternoon, Minister for Marketing, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry Mopidevi Venkata Ramana Rao has said. "Bringing back the fishermen is an herculean task. The process began after Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy spoke to his Gujarat counterpart Vijay Rupani and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Mr. Ramana Rao told the media here on Wednesday. Initially, the government had thought of bringing the stranded fishermen through the sea route, but the plan was shelved due to logistical issues. Rs.3 crore allocated "Bringing the fishermen by road involved a lot of paperwork. Of the 65 buses, 57 have started their journey. As per the update, they have crossed the Gujarat border. A senior officer Satish Chandra has been deputed for the work. A sum of ₹3 crore has been allocated from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the task," Mr. Ramana Rao said. Most of these stranded fishermen are natives of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts. "As per the protocol, the fishermen will be shifted to quarantine facilities immediately after their arrival. If their samples test negative in RT-PCR tests, they will be allowed to go home and put under home quarantine, said the Minister. Fishermen from north coastal districts usually go to Veraval port in Gujarat and Mangalore for work during this season every year. Recently, 1,700 fishermen were brought back from Mangalore port.

Andhra Pradesh: COVID-19: Andhra Fishers Rescued From Gujarat The Human Face Of A Sector In Turmoil

<https://www.indiaspend.com/covid-19-andhra-fishers-rescued-from-gujarat-the-human-face-of-a-sector-in-turmoil/>

"For five weeks now, even as the government exhorted citizens to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds several times a day, Yarayan Somesh had avoided using water, except when absolutely necessary. Stranded on a trawler docked off the fishing port of Veraval in Gujarat, ever since the countrywide lockdown was announced on the evening of March 24, 2020, this 18-year-old fisherman from Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh told IndiaSpend this week that he had just eight litres of water per day for all his needs--even while being surrounded by water. Somesh is one of an estimated 15,000 fish-workers who had found themselves marooned near landing points and harbours on India's western coast, battling physical hardships and

psychological trauma when the lockdown was announced. Two have died on boats, and at least two others are known to have been injured. On April 28, 2020, Somesh and over 4,000 other fish-workers were repatriated to Andhra Pradesh in 54 private buses organised by the Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh governments. There are over 10,000 others who are stranded along the coasts of Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka and still need help, according to estimates by fishermen associations.

These fishers represent the human face of the ongoing turmoil in the country's fisheries sector which contributes Rs 1.75 lakh crore--\$26.3 billion, nearly equivalent to the Centre's COVID-19 relief package for the poor--to India's gross value added, and employs 16 million people. The sector is now staring at lost revenues and livelihoods. Mounting losses, derailed exports, jobs at risk The lockdown is inflicting a daily loss of Rs 224 crore on the sector, the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), the country's only national centre for research on fisheries and fish-processing, has estimated in a new report accessed by IndiaSpend, which is yet to be made public since government approval is pending. The bulk of the losses will be borne by the mechanised fishing sector: The report estimated that the mechanised sector will see daily losses in the range of Rs 197 crore while the small-scale, non-mechanised fishing sector will experience losses to the tune of Rs 27 crore a day. "Fishing has come to a halt, exports have been derailed because countries are refusing to import seafood, restaurants are shut and hence, local demand has also dipped, Ravishankar CN, director of the Kochi-based CIFT, told IndiaSpend, explaining the cascading effect of the lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic. The effect on livelihoods would be pronounced due to the nature of the sector in India, Ravishankar stressed. "Unlike other countries, fisheries in India is still a livelihood sector, with most people working on daily wages. It is not corporatised.

As a result, daily-wage earners as well as small fishermen will be badly hit due to this disruption, he said. Fishers' associations also emphasise the impact of the lockdown and the pandemic on a workforce dominated by casually employed migrants, many from below-poverty-line (BPL) families. On the western coast, where the fishing season lasts till May 31, followed by the annual monsoon fishing ban until July 31, two months of the season have been wiped off, with no fishing, and consequently, no sales. (On the eastern coast, the ban, meant to encourage fish breeding, is from April 15 to June 15.) Many fish workers employed on the west coast are unlikely to be able to work until August 2020. Government yet to announce relief The industry would face a crisis if the government does not reach out with relief measures, of which there have been none so far, said Pradip Chatterjee, convener of the National Platform for Small Scale Fishworkers (India), an association with 50,000 fisherpeople from 18 states.

"We demand that the government pay Rs 15,000 per month per family to fish-workers to sustain them during this period, and financial assistance to help offset losses for the small-scale

fishermen who own boats but will not be able to absorb these losses, said Chatterjee. Somesh, who spoke to IndiaSpend on his mobile phone from the fishing vessel on which he lived with nine others before they were repatriated, said he has heard that workers would be paid their wages during the lockdown. “But, till we get the money in our hands, no one is believing this. Chatterjee said that the association was receiving complaints from many fishworkers about unpaid wages. “As soon as fishing stopped due to the lockdown, many boat-owners stopped paying wages to their workers. This has had an immediate impact on the workers because they will be going back home empty-handed, he said. Cast away on water, not allowed to set foot on land “We were not given the option of returning to land when the lockdown was announced, Somesh told IndiaSpend. So he and his co-workers had no choice but to remain on the 16-foot wide and 80-foot long fishing vessel, with a covered area the size of a small room and a lone toilet till the afternoon of April 28, 2020.

The vessel's owner, based in Veraval, delivered food (rice, pulses, vegetables, oil and spices) once a week, along with some 500 litres of water, which was not sufficient for their needs, Somesh said. “We got 70-80 litres of water every day between the 10 of us. Each of us had 8 litres a day, with which we needed to bathe, clean and drink, he said. A person needs between 50 and 100 litres per day to meet their basic needs, a World Health Organization (WHO) estimate shows. There are no government figures for the number of stranded fish-workers. However, fishing associations and civil society actors estimated that at least 15,000 fishworkers had been living on vessels on the western coast since the lockdown. While some media reports have said that 4,000 workers are stranded in vessels docked off Veraval, the Andhra Pradesh Traditional Fish Workers' Union (TFWU), representing the predominantly Andhra workforce, said the number is over 5,000. Most of the stranded fisherfolk work on vessels that go to the sea for multi-day fishing expeditions, ranging between 15-20 days, said Velji Masani, a boat-owner, and president of the Akhil Bharatiya Fishermen's Association. Most were out on fishing expeditions when the lockdown was announced and had to be summoned back by owners.

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April 28, 2020, it was the first time in five weeks that any of these workers had stepped on land. Psychological trauma, death Masani, whose association has been coordinating with about 800 boat owners whose boats and workers had been stranded along the Gujarat coastline at various landing points--from Porbandar to Mangrol, Okha, to Diu and further south, in Navsari and Valsad--said he worries that physical hardships aside, the lockdown is now having a deep psychological impact on fish-workers.

Anxiety was a precipitating factor in the deaths of two fish-workers from Andhra Pradesh, stranded off the Veraval coast, according to Masani. Forty-five-year-old T Jagannathan, hailing from Gara Mandalam sub-district in Srikakulam, who had stopped eating, and had become increasingly anxious about contracting COVID-19, died on April 9, 2020, TK Rahman, head of the TKFU said. K Raju, also from Srikakulam, who was only 22 years old, reportedly died of a heart attack on April 22, 2020. "His wife had recently delivered a baby, said Masani. "His colleagues told us that he kept expecting to be rescued, and became worried when this did not happen." Two others are reported to have fallen off their vessels and grievously injured themselves. "As days stretch into weeks, the workers are getting restless. Often, some stop eating, and others fight amongst themselves. The frustration is starting to show, Masani said. Since their mobile phones worked, the stranded workers were able to speak to their families. However, they had little else to do, as they huddled together, five to 15 to a vessel, in the only roofed area, housing the steering wheel as well as other electronic equipment, to shelter from daytime temperatures crossing 30 degrees Celsius. State governments have neglected fish-workers during the lockdown, Chatterjee said.

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However, Masani said that local boat owners expressed their displeasure to the Gujarat government about this plan. "Cargo ships are expensive and they would take about eight days to reach, whereas buses would take about two days. Hence, we urged the government to consider buses instead of the ships, says Masani. A thriving sector, powered by unorganised migrant

workers The fisheries sector is a major employer in India, providing a livelihood to over 16 million people. Over the last five years, the sector has seen a steady growth of over 6% in its production. In 2017-18, it produced 12.59 million metric tonnes (MMT) of fish, up from 9.40 MMT in 2012-13, according to the Handbook on Fisheries Statistics, 2018, produced by the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husband and Dairying. The report pegged the sector's contribution to the gross value added in 2017-18 at Rs 1.75 lakh crore. The sector is a major export earner: In 2017-18, the country exported over 1.3 million metric tonnes of fish worth Rs 45,106 crore, according to the handbook. In 2018-19, this figure rose to an estimated Rs 46,600 crore, according to the CIFT report, which called fish “the most important agricultural commodity exported from India. The CIFT report has warned that the disruption caused by the lockdown, including the closure of seafood processing plants, has the potential to affect national and global food and nutritional security needs. While most other countries have halted imports, China has eased some import restrictions, the report said. “Seafood processing firms vary from simple processing targeting localised markets to high-end activities targeting the export market. Closure of these firms affects the market supply of processed and packed food products in the domestic and international markets.

As of July 2019, the ministry handbook said, there were over 269,000 registered fishing vessels across the country. Of these, 65,876 were non-motorised vessels operated mostly by small-scale fisherfolk. In addition, 136,000 vessels were motorised vessels, while 66,198 vessels were mechanised vessels, many of them taking multi-day fishing trips with anywhere between seven and 15 crew on board. Behind this sector's growing economic clout is migrant labour, both intra-state and inter-state, Marianne Manuel, assistant director at Dakshin, a non-profit focusing on advocacy on marine conservation, pointed out. “Mechanised fishing, almost exclusively, depends on migrant labour. In addition, even allied sectors like ice-factories, cold storage facilities, also extensively employ migrant labourers, Manuel told IndiaSpend. (Mechanised vessels, also called trawlers, use trawl nets as fishing gear and are fitted with stronger engines and a larger catch, alongwith cold-storage facilities on board. Motorised and non-motorised fishing, on the other hand, is done with smaller boats, meant largely for single-day trips.)

The Andhra-Gujarat nexus Gujarat, despite being the state with the longest coastline at 1,600 km, has only 64,395 traditional fishing families, as against 517,000 in Andhra Pradesh with a coastline of just 974 km, according to the handbook. As a result, workers from Andhra Pradesh, especially skilled fishing workers, as well as those from other fishing states such as Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, flock to Gujarat and find employment in its fishing industry. About 25,000 fishworkers from Andhra Pradesh migrate to Gujarat every season, from August to April, a 2016 research paper by Manas Roshan for the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, titled ‘A study of Migrant Fishers from Andhra Pradesh in the Gujarat Marine Fishing Industry,’ estimated. The migration is backed by a strong economic rationale--from higher pay to better

opportunities, the study said. Most fish-workers are paid anywhere between Rs 7,000 and Rs 25,000 per month, depending on their seniority and role. Most skilled workers spend their time on various tasks, from lowering fishing nets to repairing them to segregating the catch, according to the species. “In many fishing states, such as Andhra Pradesh, mechanised fishing is taking over areas where, earlier, small-scale, local fishing communities used to fish, said Chatterjee.

“The near-shore areas are now over-fished due to these mechanised boats, forcing the local fishing communities to migrate to other areas in search of livelihoods. “There is no collective bargaining by the workers because there are no exclusive unions or associations to represent them, pointed out Siddharth Chakravarty of The Research Collective, a New Delhi-based organisation focusing on development issues. (Most of the associations do not specifically represent migrant fish-workers.) As a result, the workers had been unable to demand better living conditions, and this impacted them during the lockdown, too, Chakravarty said. “Since the workers are not organised, the boat owners were liaising with government authorities after the lockdown. There was a sense that fishing might resume soon and hence, the boat owners were possibly not too keen on getting their workers to disembark, he said. As a result of their being unorganised, there are also few data on the migratory patterns among fishworkers. Impact of the lockdown and pandemic on women fish-workers The losses incurred as a result of the lockdown may have a disastrous impact on already struggling fish-workers and smaller boat-owners in the industry, experts have warned.

Over 600,000 of the 818,000 traditional fishing families in the country fall below the poverty line, according to the 2018 Fisheries Statistics of India. The bulk of these were in Tamil Nadu (183,000) and Andhra Pradesh (150,000). The social security net around these families is thin and inadequate, according to Dakshin's Marianne Manuel. “There is no sector-specific social security net. They cannot access the generic welfare benefits like the public distribution scheme because they are migrants, staying away from their families, she said. Many within the sector are also anxious about possible disruption that the COVID-19 pandemic will cause in the way the industry operates. There have already been glimpses of such changes. For example, in West Bengal, the government has been selling the fish produced in its farms through online orders taken via mobile applications. In Assam, the government has asked wholesalers to initiate door-to-door deliveries of fish, media reports indicated. Most of these models eliminate a very crucial and gendered component of the industry--fish-selling women. Of the 16 million people employed in fisheries activities, 5.5 million are women, according to government data. “Women form the bulk of the labour involved post-harvest and sale of fish, almost exclusively for motorised and non-motorised fishing vessels, as well as a big chunk of the mechanised fishing vessels.

They are a major stakeholder in the industry but they often go unnoticed, said Manuel. Thus,

disruptions in the way the industry organises these activities will affect these women first. “One of the big questions facing this industry, going ahead, is what the role of women is going to be like. No one seems to have the answer, yet, she said.

Andhra Pradesh: Fishermen start journey from Gujarat’s Veraval to Visakhapatnam in buses

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/andhra-fishermen-start-journey-from-gujarat-veraval-to-visakhapatnam-in-buses-6383446/>

"Over 3,800 fishermen from Andhra Pradesh, who were stranded in Gujarat over the last one month due to the coronavirus lockdown, will be sent back to Visakhapatnam in 67-odd buses, covering 2,200 kilometres, officials said. “The state government will be dispatching 3,862 fishermen from Andhra Pradesh today and tomorrow in 67-odd buses hired specially for this purpose. They will be undertaking a two day-long journey to Visakhapatnam, Manish Bharadwaj, Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department told The Indian Express. The first lot of fishermen left Veraval in 27 buses on Tuesday evening. A medical check-up of the fishermen was done before they boarded the buses, officials said. “Though we have issued 7,000 tokens to fishermen allowing them to venture into the sea for fishing, the fishermen from Andhra Pradesh wanted to go back home and resume fishing later on, Bharadwaj said adding that transportation was being undertaken in coordination with officials of Andhra Pradesh government. The official said that the fishermen from Andhra Pradesh who were in smaller numbers in other fishing harbours of the state like Mangrol were brought together at Veraval in Gir Somnath district for the transportation on Tuesday.

Officials said that these fishermen were working for the fishing boat owners in Gujarat. Officials said that some of the boat owners were also not willing to undertake fishing expeditions. “The fishing ban period will also start from June 1. So it made sense that they could go back to their villages, the IAS official said adding that the fishermen usually spend two months at their homes and the rest 10 months on their boats. The move came a week after Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy had called up Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani regarding the stranded fishermen. The Indian Express had reported that the fishermen from Andhra Pradesh were part of the larger group of 8000-odd fishermen who arrived at the Veraval fishing harbour between March 18-28, and got stranded due to the lockdown. The other fishermen were largely from Navsari and Valsad districts of South Gujarat. The state government had earlier sent back the stranded fishermen from Maharashtra, along with those from Valsad and Navsari, along with the boats. The district administration and the local boat owners' association had arranged for food for these stranded fishermen during their month-long stay in Gujarat during the lockdown.

Gujarat: We fear we'll die: AP fishermen stranded in Gujarat forced to remain on boats

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/we-fear-we-ll-die-ap-fishermen-stranded-gujarat-forced-remain-boats-123165>

"Twenty-two-year-old K Raju, a native of D Matchyalesam in Andhra Pradesh's Srikakulam district, left home in May last year. A fisherman by profession, he migrated to Gujarat to work along India's west coast. On April 22, he was found dead in his cabin by other crew members on his boat. Those who were staying with him said that he had a panic attack and was under severe stress ever since March 22 when a lockdown was announced to curb the spread of COVID-19. Raju is just one of the close to 6,000 fishermen who hail from different villages in Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts of Andhra Pradesh who have been stranded in Veraval along Gujarat's coast since the lockdown began. With their boats docked, they have no means of returning home and their future is uncertain. A video shared by the fishermen shows a large group of them gathered around Raju's body. "He died so young and he couldn't even see his new-born baby girl. For the last 18 days, we have been calling the administration daily to inform them about the problems of fishermen stranded here. We have been calling Chief Ministers, Ministers, Commissioner, Collector, state administrations but all of this has been of no use, says one of the men in the group. Now confined to their boats, many of the fishermen say that they have inadequate food supplies, coupled with poor hygiene and sanitation facilities, and non-payment of wages.

They also say that the government is yet to shift them to state-run shelters. Stranded at the fishing harbour In another video appeal, Gutu Kuppala Dhananjayarao, a fisherman also hailing from Srikakulam district, says, "We don't have any basic facilities here. Union leaders and local leaders keep saying that they're taking care and they're providing basic facilities, but we don't have water even for our toilets. We are forced to use dirty water instead. "We are given a can of drinking water and told to adjust for two to three days... we are five to six people in a boat and we are told to adjust with that. I'm asking the Gujarat government, how can we adjust with this one can of drinking water? But they're not listening, he adds, the frustration evident in his voice. Dhananjayarao further goes on to say, "We are asking the governments 'who will resolve our problems?' Please, help us resolve our problems. The fishermen say two people have already died, including Raju, seemingly out of panic and stress post the lockdown. On the intervening morning of April 9 and April 10, 45-year-old T Jagannathan, a native of Kalingapatnam town in Srikakulam, passed away. The fishermen say that he had not been eating properly for days as he was worried about what would happen.

There has also been an accident on board one of the boats in which a worker, D Korlaiya from Chintapalli village in Vizianagaram district, broke both his legs. Speaking to TNM, Lakshmi Kovvada, President of the Traditional Fish Workers Union, says, "We just want to leave the

fishing harbour and be shifted to a government shelter. “We are not able to bathe, there are no facilities. It is not fever or ill-health that is killing us, but a lack of access to potable water. We are ready to stay in quarantine, but continuing to live on the boats is downright dangerous, she adds. Andhra govt responds The Andhra Pradesh government on its part has said that it has taken note of the issue and is helping out the stranded fishermen. On Wednesday, it decided to extend a one-time financial assistance of Rs 2,000 each to about 6,000 fishermen from the state stranded at Veraval.

A release from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy spoke to his Gujarat counterpart Vijay Rupani and sought the latter's intervention to provide food and other facilities to the stranded fishermen from the north coastal Andhra region. The Gujarat government said that the fishermen were being taken good care of and even said that they could continue fishing activity in the state. At a review meeting on COVID-19 management measures in Amaravati on Wednesday, the Chief Minister asked the officials to coordinate with their Gujarat counterparts and ensure that the one-time financial assistance was delivered to the fishermen. However, Lakshmi says that the fishermen at Veraval are yet to receive any information about the financial assistance as of Thursday morning. “We are grateful for the assistance that has been offered but our main demand is to get off these boats. We can't live here. These boats are our workplace and not made for doubling up as a residence, she says. “It is becoming very difficult with each passing day. By the time the lockdown ends, we fear that all of us will be dead. The government can come and collect our bodies if it continues in this way, she adds.

Gujarat: To sail fishermen back to safety

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra-pradesh/2020/apr/24/op-gujarat-to-sail-fishermen-back-to-safety-2134511.html>

"The ordeal of the fishermen from north coastal Andhra, majority of them from Srikakulam, stranded in Gujarat, is likely to come to an end soon with the Andhra Pradesh government deciding to bring them back to the State by the sea. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday held talks with his Gujarat counterpart Vijay Rupani once again and sought cooperation from the latter for bringing them to Visakhapatnam through sea route. “The Gujarat Chief Minister has agreed to the proposal of the State government," Fisheries Minister Mopidevi Venkataramana Rao said on Thursday. About 5,000 fishermen from Srikakulam and other north coastal Andhra have been stranded in Veraval of Gujarat since the lockdown was announced across the country following the outbreak of Covid-19.

Earlier, the State government sent relief materials and financial assistance to the stranded fishermen and proposed to shift them once the lockdown is lifted. With the lockdown extended

till May 3 and the fishermen forced to live in boats without proper shelter and food, the government has decided to bring back to the State through sea in special boats. In Srikakulam, Roads and Buildings Minister Dharmana Krishna Das said the government would give Rs 2,000 to each fishermen as immediate relief on their arrival. "There was a plan to bring them back to Vizag after the lockdown was lifted but now the government decided to bring them back at the earliest," Krishna Das said adding that the stranded fishermen would be shifted to boats from Veraval probably on Friday and the boats would reach Visakhapatnam on Sunday. Krishna Das directed the district administration to set up quarantine centres with 1,500 beds for the fishermen.

Gujarat: Two stranded migrant fish workers from Andhra dead in Gujarat state governments get into action to rescue the others

<https://en.gaonconnection.com/two-stranded-migrant-fish-workers-from-andhra-dead-in-gujarat-state-governments-get-into-action-to-rescue-the-others/>

"Every year, thousands of fishers from coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh in east India Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari migrate more than 2,000 kilometres away to Gujarat in west India to labour as fish workers. They number anywhere between 4,000 and 6,000 and mostly travel to the Saurashtra region of the western state. Like every year, last year, D Raju, a fisher from Srikakulam district in Andhra (some claim he was 22-year-old, others say 29-year-old) migrated with fellow fishers to Veraval in the Gir Somnath district of Gujarat. He was to return home around this time of the year, but passed away in his sleep in the midnight of April 21-22, stranded in a boat in Veraval fishing harbour, Gujarat. His last rites were conducted there itself in the presence of other stranded fishers. Raju will now never be able to return home in D Matchilesam village in Srikakulam and meet his family. He is not the only unfortunate stranded dead migrant fisher.

According to the Traditional Fish Workers Union Andhra Pradesh, earlier this month on April 9, another fisher, 45-year-old T Jananathan from Sara Manalam village in Kalingapatnam area of Srikakulam died at Veraval, stranded in a boat. "There are around 4,000 migrant fishers from Andhra Pradesh living in the boats in Veraval fishing harbour. Because of the lockdown, for the last one month, they are unable to do fishing. They are idle and want to go back to their homes and families, Veljibhai Masani of the Boat Owners Association, Gujarat told Gaon Connection. "We are providing them ration, drinking water and all the facilities, but for how long can they remain idle stranded in the boats. We are unable to send them home because all transport is shut, he added. According to him, the deceased fisher Raja was in good health, but anxious because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). On April 21 evening, he went to sleep in the boat, but never woke up. Post-mortem shows he died due to cardiac arrest. "His last rites were performed the next morning, on April 22, away from his home and family, informed Masani. The death of two migrant fishers has angered fishers all along the Indian coastline. The country has a total of

16 million fishers and fish workers, almost half (5,570,217) of whom are women.

Yesterday, on April 22, the National Fishworkers' Forum, a federation of state-level trade unions in India, shot off a letter to the chief ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat highlighting the plight of stranded migrant fishers in the western state. "India's mechanised marine fishing fleet, which provides for 80% of the country's annual fish landings, is crewed and operated overwhelmingly by migrant workers. Since there is no official census on the number of workers in this sector, it is hard to estimate just how many workers are stranded under the lockdown; what is known though is that they are in conditions which are less than ideal ... the workers have been left to fend for themselves on board the fishing boats, relying largely on the boat owners to provision them with rations and everyday necessities, reads the Forum's letter informing "four thousand eight hundred fishworkers largely from Andhra Pradesh have been on board fishing boats in the [Veraval] harbour. The April 22 letter goes on to note "confined to their boats, which are designed as places of work and not residence, the workers have been stranded in overcrowded and cramped harbours.

There has been an absence in the state's extension of services, which has led to tremendous hardships and ultimately the deaths of the workers. Apart from two deaths, an accident on board the boat has left another migrant fisher with both broken legs, mentions the letter. "We are fisherfolk and have human rights. Fishers stranded in boats due to lockdown are living in unhygienic, cramped conditions with no basic facilities, T Peter, the general secretary of the National Fishworkers' Forum told Gaon Connection. "For the last one month, we are requesting both the Central government and the state governments to rescue the stranded fishers. But no help has come, so far, he added. The Forum has demanded a compensation of Rs 10 lakh each towards both the deceased migrant fishers, a job in fisheries department to a family member, and an action plan to help stranded fishers get back to their homes. Gaon Connection has been reporting on the plight of over one lakh migrant fish workers stranded in the boats along Maharashtra's coast, too. According to the Traditional Fish Workers Union, Andhra Pradesh, a week back, the union had informed the chief minister of Gujarat, Vijay Rupani, about the poor condition of migrant fishers from Andhra Pradesh in Veraval and asked for relief.

"After the first death of a migrant fisher in Veraval, we wrote to the Gujarat chief minister on April 16 informing him about the dense living conditions of fishers in Veraval and anxiety related to the coronavirus, which was affecting both their mental and physical health, Rehman, member of the Traditional Fish Workers Union, Andhra Pradesh told Gaon Connection. The letter was also copied to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the union minister of fisheries, and the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh. "We requested our fishermen to be sent back home by making special arrangements as the lockdown was further extended till May 3. However, no action was taken and now one more young fisher has died, he added. After the second death, on

April 22, the Traditional Fish Workers Union again wrote to the Andhra Pradesh chief minister, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, asking for immediate help. “The Andhra fishermen in Veraval fishing harbour are in deep trouble and are facing many problems because of poor food, lack of sanitation and hygiene and under great mental stress because of the deaths of their friends, notes the letter. It again asked for immediate arrangements to bring back the stranded fishers to their villages in Andhra Pradesh and quarantine them in local facilities to ensure there is no threat of spread of COVID-19. It seems the death of two migrant fishers has now geared both the state governments into action. As per the latest news reports, Reddy has discussed the matter with Rupani, and both the state governments are figuring out a way to transport the stranded fishers (possibly 5,000-6,000) through the sea route to Visakhapatnam port in Andhra Pradesh. “We also want migrant fishers to return home safe. They have been coming to Saurashtra region for the last 20-25 years to work as migrant fish workers, said Masani.

“There are large cruise boats in Goa. One such boat can accommodate 300-400 people. A couple of such cruise boats could be used to send the migrant fishers back to Andhra, he added. Meanwhile, the National Fishworkers' Forum has been demanding a special relief package for the fishers from the Central government since the day the lockdown was announced on March 24. “Because of the coronavirus and lockdown, fishers have lost out on more than a month's earning, said Peter. “On the east coast, 61-day fishing ban has already come into force. Within a month, the ban will also be enforced on the west coast. Thus, fishers can now resume fishing only in August month. The government must compensate us, said Peter. In its latest letter dated April 15 to the Union Fisheries Minister, Giriraj Singh, the Forum has asked to “immediately provide livelihood financial relief measure of Rs 15,000/month/fishing household across capture and allied sectors and include all workers, sorters, dryers, vendors [without the limiting condition of Aadhaar card]. It also asked to “immediately undertake measures to secure the health and safety of the migrant workers in the sector and arrange for their safe repatriation to their places of residence. “It's been a month we are pursuing with the Central government to offer a financial relief package to the fishers. So far, it has not offered anything. We are very unhappy with the Centre's attitude towards the fishing community, said Peter. “We are fishers and not beggars. Respect our livelihoods and contribution towards the country, he added.

Andhra Pradesh: Two AP fishermen stranded in Gujarat dead

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/two-ap-fishermen-stranded-in-gujarat-dead/article31410192.ece>

"Two of the fishermen from Andhra Pradesh, who were stranded at Veraval in Gujarat following the nation-wide lockdown, died, the National Fishworkers' Forum said on Wednesday. Forum executive member K. Lakshmi told The Hindu that K. Raju, a resident of D. Matchyapalem in Srikakulam district, allegedly died due to fear of contracting coronavirus.

Another fisherman, Jagannadham, of Gara mandal in the same district died due to lack of proper food while undergoing treatment, she said. The bodies of both the fishermen had been kept in a mortuary, she added. The fishermen were running short of provisions and being forced to stay in boats kept at the anchorage of Veraval, she said. Ms. Lakshmi said the forum had apprised the Chief Ministers of A.P. and Gujarat of the prevailing situation at Veraval and the plight the 4,800 fishermen, most of them from north Andhra, and sought their airlifting immediately on humanitarian grounds. She said that fishing would not resume at Veraval till August even if the lockdown was lifted on May 3 due to the economic impact of the pandemic on the boat owners. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy recently spoke with his Gujarat counterpart Vijay Rupani and sought his help in the issue.

Gujarat: After being refused entry at two Gujarat ports, thousands of fishermen were finally able to dock at Maharashtra's Dahanu jetty

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/covid-19-a-long-ordeal-at-sea/article31403303.ece>

"After being refused entry at two Gujarat ports, thousands of fishermen were finally able to dock at Maharashtra's Dahanu jetty after spending nearly a month at sea, on Friday, April 17. Starting April 13, nearly 9,500 fishermen have returned bit by bit in 80 trawlers. The fishermen, mostly adivasis from various regions of the State's Palghar district, were stranded since March 24, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19. Prashant Nakwe from Mumbai captures their ordeal. Hundreds of fishermen from Dahanu and Talasari were stranded at different jetties at Okha, Veraval, Porbunder in Gujarat after the nationwide lockdown was announced to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. After being refused entry at two ports, they were finally allowed to dock at Dahanu jetty with the help of local fishermen on Friday. Starting April 13, nearly 9,500 fishermen have returned bit by bit in 80 trawlers. Local fishermen and members of the Dahanu Machhimar Society served the stranded fishermen poha (flattened rice) for breakfast. "Bhau (brother), please give me some more pohe (flattened rice), I haven't eaten in two days, Soma Burkut, a fisherman from village Gholwad in Dahanu, makes an impassioned plea, shouting out to a local fisherman from his trawler. The fishermen were refused entry at two Gujarat ports Nargol and Umbergaon. At Nargoi, the local residents refused to let them disembark, fearing they were carrying the disease. In Umbergaon, the locals pelted stones at them, and "threatened to call the Navy, as if we are terrorists, said Jiva Lakhat, one the fishermen who sailed in from Veraval, Gujarat. After disembarking at Dahanu, the fishermen were taken to St. Mary's School in the vicinity for testing.

The local administration also got their respective village sarpanchs to take them home, after advising home quarantine for the next 14 days. The fishermen await their turn for testing at

Saint Mary's school. A government official said the situation has taken the authorities by surprise. "We are not trained to handle such a large influx of fishermen. We handle thousands of staffers during elections but this is something we never imagined. If Maharashtra is taking care of migrants why did the Gujarat government allow them to leave the State? he said. Health officials from Dahanu Nagar Parishad conduct thermal screening. Durgesh Mankar, from village Ambewadi, who worked at the Veraval jetty, asks: "If the government can make arrangements to send foreign tourist back then why not migrants like us? Officials put a 'Home Quarantine' stamp on fishermen's wrists during the course of testing at the school. Jitendra Marde, Secretary, Dahanu Machhimar Society, says: " If we had also refused them entry, they would have had no place to go to. Fishermen who have 'home quarantine' stamped on their wrists wait for vehicles bound for their respective villages. Vehicles were packed to the brim as they prepared to leave for different villages.

Andhra Pradesh: Announces one-time aid of Rs 2,000 to 6,000 fishermen struck in Gujarat due to lockdown

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/andhra-pradesh-announces-one-time-aid-of-rs-2000-to-6000-fishermen-struck-in-gujarat-due-to-lockdown/articleshow/75292848.cms>

"Andhra Pradesh government on Wednesday announced one-time financial assistance of Rs 2,000 each to over 6,000 fishermen stuck in Gujarat in view of COVID-19 lockdown. A decision in this regard was taken by chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy after reviewing the state's preparedness at large for combating COVID-19 disease amid rise in number of cases. ""The Chief Minister has directed the authorities to ensure that one-time financial assistance of Rs 2,000 is given to each of the fishermen stuck in Gujarat,"" an official statement said. He also said that Andhra Pradesh is ready to provide support to the Gujarat administration in improving facilities being provided to the stranded fishermen. On April 21, Jagan had called on his Gujarat counterpart seeking measures at the earliest to support 6,000 fishermen from Andhra Pradesh. After the review meeting, the state government said COVID-19 testing is being done on a war footing mode and about 5,757 tests have been conducted in the last 24 hours. ""AP leads the way in terms of testing and is ranked number 1 with respect to tests conducted per million in the country with the number standing at 830 at the moment,"" the statement said. The COVID-19 cases crossed 800 in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday.

Gujarat: Stranded fishermen in Gujarat cry for help

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/stranded-fishermen-in-guj-cry-for-help/articleshow/75258199.cms>

"Around 5,000 fishermen from Andhra Pradesh, who are stranded in Gujarat due to the lockdown, have written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking accommodation and quarantine facilities. All of them hail from the north coastal districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam. "We have been stranded for more than 20 days now without proper shelter or basic necessities. The district authorities in Somnath (in Gujarat state) are not providing any kind of help to migrant workers/fisherman, they wrote in the letter. Earlier this month, the AP government initiated measures to rescue stranded fishermen from Veraval in Somnath district. A team of officials from Srikakulam was given an advance of Rs 10 lakh. The team visited Veraval on April 7 and provided them rice, dal, vegetables, soaps, blankets, masks etc. "Around 3,500 fishermen from Maharashtra were recently taken back to their state by sea route. We have been staying in small fishing boats under the hot sun with no water. We appeal to the government to arrange quarantine facilities for us as an interim measure, they said in the letter, which has also been addressed to the chief ministers of AP and Gujarat, and the chief justices of AP, Gujarat and India, besides the Prime Minister. They urged the government to make arrangements to take them back to AP by sea route. "There is serious threat to our lives because of lack of food, water and extreme weather conditions at Veraval, they said.

India: Fishermen & Migrant Workers Stranded In Gujarat Writes To PM

<https://www.indialegallive.com/top-news-of-the-day/news/fishermen-migrant-workers-stranded-in-gujarat-writes-to-pm-96705>

"5000 migrant workers/ fishermen who are stranded in state of Gujarat on the shore of Arabian Sea at Veral, Somnath have written a letter to Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India, Home Minister, National Legal Service Authority, CM of Gujarat, CM of AP and Chief Justice of Gujarat. The Letter highlights that due to non- implementation of guidelines of Ministry of Home Affairs, migrant fishermen from State of Andhra Pradesh are facing pathetic conditions and are neglected by Gujarat Government officials. Fishermen have requested for providing quarantine, water facilities and transportation to their native places. The fishermen belonging to Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram and Vishakhapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh have been stranded for more than 20 days on the shore of Arabian sea as fishing activity has been stopped due to Covid-19.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs had issued following guidelines dated 29.3.2020 for poor and needy people including migrant labourers stranded due to lockdown:- "i. State/ Union Territory Governments shall ensure adequate arrangements of temporary shelters and provisions

of food etc. for the poor and needy people, including migrant labourers, stranded due to lockdown measures in their respective areas. ii. The Migrant people, who have moved out to reach their home states/home towns, must be kept in the nearest shelter by the respective State/Union Territory Government quarantine facilities after proper screening for a minimum period of 14 days as per standard health protocol. iii. All the employers, be it in the industry or in the shops and commercial establishments, shall make payments of wagers of their workers, at their work places, on the due date, without any deduction, for the period their establishments are under closure during the lockdown. Fishermen from Andhra Pradesh are not provided help by district authorities of Somnath District of Gujarat. Team of officials from Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh had visited the place and provided 5 KGs rice, one soap, one blanket, mask, half KG each of Onions, Dal, Potato. Except help from Andhra Pradesh government, no help came from Gujarat government because of which fishermen are living in pathetic conditions.

Local administration is not allowing them to enter into villages due to Covid 19 Lockdown and they are living with minimum provisions given by boat owners. Fishermen are staying in small fishing boats under Hot Sun/Heat wave and no water, electricity is available for drinking, bathing and washing of cloths. They submitted that 3500 Migrant fishermen from Maharashtra were taken back on sea route recently by the Maharashtra State government. They have requested for provision of quarantine, shelter, food, water as interim facilities and 7-8 Getty or 2-3 cargo ships for going back through sea route or buses/train to back through road/rail. There would be a very serious threat to lives of fishermen as per their letter because of lack of food, water and Hot Sun/Heat Wave.

Gujarat: CM ensures the welfare of fishermen amidst the lockdown

<https://indiaeducationdiary.in/gujarat-cm-ensures-the-welfare-of-fishermen-amidst-the-lockdown/>

"Chief Minister Mr. Vijay Rupani has taken a number of welfare decisions to ensure the ease of citizens amidst the lockdown, especially the farmers, labourers and the like. Adding one more to this, Mr. Rupani has taken a decision to benefit the fishermen of Gujarat. Providing details about the CM's decision, Secretary to the CM Mr. Ashwani Kumar said, "The nation wide lockdown amidst the COVID-19 crisis prevented the fishermen to go for fishing which affected their source of income. Chief Minister Mr. Rupani has provided the much needed relaxation to the fishermen in Gujarat by allowing them to fish during the lockdown. The government has started to issue tokens for the same. Further, all the associated units such as those related to the packaging of sea food, cold storages, maintenance and transport etc shall also be allowed to operate amidst the lockdown.

The CM has also taken a welfare oriented decision for 4.43 lakh BPL women and girls.

Government of India has announced an ex-gratia grant of Rs.500 per month for April and May. 97,474 women and girls will avail this assistance from GOI. The remaining 3 lakh 47 thousand 417 women and girls will receive the same grant from the state government. The state government will bear an additional burden of Rs. 34.64 crores for the same. The Secretary also added that the Chief Minister is keeping a strict watch on the distribution of essential items across Gujarat so that hoarding and black marketing can be avoided in such difficult times. Recently, it was brought to his attention that 7 people from Sabarkantha were involved in diverting the flow of food grains.

The CM directed the local administration to book them under PMB Act and put them in prison. 10,358 calls and more than 18,000 emails have been done from the district level to instruct factories and industrial units to pay wages to their employees and not fire them during the lockdown. 20,214 firms have paid Rs. 1,269 crore as salaries to 7.35 lakh workers in the state during lockdown. He also said that a committee of 3 senior officers headed by the ACS of Labour and Employment Department has been formed to ensure timely wages and continuation of employment for labourers. Providing details of essential items, he said, "45.94 lakh liters of milk has been distributed. 1 lakh 5 thousand 844 quintals of vegetables and 19365 quintals of fruits are available in the market. 89 lakh 69 thousand food packets have been distributed for the aged, helpless and needy living alone. Around 231 calls have been received on the state's helpline number 1070 for assistance related to provision of essential items and 1555 calls at the district helpline number 1077.

Gujarat; Covid-19 lockdown: Lifts restrictions for fishing and marine industry

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/covid-19-lockdown-gujarat-lifts-restrictions-for-fishing-and-marine-industry/article31318898.ece>

"A day after the Union Home Ministry issued an addendum giving exemption to marine fishing activities from the lockdown restrictions, Gujarat government on Saturday lifted the restrictions for the fishing community and allowed them to venture into the sea for the catch. Making an announcement, Secretary to the Chief Minister, Ashwini Kumar stated that Gujarat government has lifted the restrictions for fishing and allied activities amid nation-wide lockdown due to coronavirus outbreak. ""Fishermen in Gujarat can now venture into the sea for their regular business activities. We are starting to issue them tokens for the purpose,"" he said. This also opens up the businesses connected with fisheries including processing, packaging, cold chain maintenance and transportation. On Friday, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs had issued an addendum to the consolidated guidelines regarding the nationwide lockdown to fight Covid-19 virus. ""The 5th addendum exempts from lockdown restrictions the operations of the Fishing (Marine)/Aquaculture Industry, including feeding and maintenance, harvesting, processing, packaging, cold chain, sale and marketing; hatcheries, feed plants, commercial

aquaria, movement of fish/ shrimp and fish products, fish seed/feed and workers for all these activities," it had stated. Gujarat, which covers about 1/5th of country's coastline with its 1,600 kms of coastline, contributes about 20% of the country's total marine production. The state has about 8.42 lakh tonnes of fish production annually worth about Rs.7,005 crore (2018-19)

Gujarat: Allows Fishing, Allied Activities From Saturday Amid Lockdown

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/coronavirus-gujarat-government-allows-fishing-allied-activities-from-saturday-amid-lockdown-2210244>

"Amid the lockdown for the novel coronavirus outbreak, the Gujarat government on Saturday allowed fishing and allied activities of processing, packaging, maintenance of cold chains and transportation, in the process bringing relief to those employed in the sector, a senior official said. From Saturday, fishermen can go out in the Arabian Sea, said Ashwani Kumar, secretary to the chief minister. "Related activities of processing, packaging, maintenance of cold chains, and transportation of fish and prawns have also been allowed from today," he said. "The state government has also decided to extend the benefit of Rs 1000 ex-gratia payment to widow pensioners, that is Rs 500 each in the months of April and May, as relief during the lockdown to non-BPL beneficiaries," he added. The Gujarat government will pay Rs 35 crore to around 3.46 lakh such beneficiaries, and the centre will contribute Rs 9.74 crore to give Rs 1000 each to 97,474 widows from the BPL category, Mr Kumar said. Mr Kumar also informed that seven people were arrested under the Prevention of Black Marketing Act for diverting food grains meant for distribution among the poor in Prantij in Sabarkantha district. He said around 3.10 lakh passes have been issued for movement of essential commodities.

Gujarat: Stranded off Gujarat coast, 2,100 fishermen left with 21 kg of food

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/coronavirus-india-lockdown-stranded-off-gujarat-coast-2100-fishermen-left-with-21-kg-of-food-6357175/>

"More than 2,000 fishermen from Maharashtra, stuck off the Gujarat coast near Veraval in 40 boats, have sent out an SOS to their families that they are running out of ration and that arrangement be made for their return home. "My son has reached Nargol bay (in Gujarat) on April 4. The Gujarat government took only the Gujarat residents off the boat, but didn't allow Maharashtra fishermen to get down at the bay. Now, my son is suffering without food and water, said Ishwati Sakharam Vadkar, mother of Mahendra Vadkar, a 19-year-old fisherman among those stranded at sea. Ishwati (37), resident of Sutrakar village in Talashari taluka of Palghar, said her son went to Veraval last August to work on a fishing boat. His contract was for 11 months. But since March 22, when the Janata Curfew was imposed, there has been no work. "The contractor said that they could all go back home, as he would not be able to pay them, Ishwati said. On April 2, Mahendra reached Umergaoun where local residents attacked the boats,

as they tried to dock. The boats moved on to Nargole bay. On April 4, the Gujarat government allowed 600 fishermen from the state in 23 boats to get off and sent them to their villages for 14-day home quarantine.

Speaking to The Indian Express from his boat, Mahendra said, “In Nargol, we were asked to pay Rs 1,500 for ration supplies by the Gujarat Police. He added that there were 2,100 men like him from different parts of Maharashtra, and they were eating one meal a day of dal and rice, and the other was noodles cooked in sea water. In all 21 kg of dal and rice are left, said Mahendra, the only earning member in his family. His mother and three sisters are dependent on his earnings of Rs 8,000 per month. Like Mahendra, four brothers of a family are also stranded in Veraval. Mukesh, Munna, Mahendra and Kiran Rajad belong to Patil Padha village in Talashari. Their father, Madhu Rajad, said that since the lockdown, they were trying to return but the government isn't allowing them. When contacted, Mukesh said, “We have not been affected by coronavirus, and we are not the ones who brought it into the country. Those who came from abroad, they brought the virus to India and the Indian government spent lakhs to bring them back. Here, we are suffering for water and food. Palghar district collector Kailash Shinde said: We are in talks with the Gujarat administration and within two or three days, they will be taken to their respective villages. When contacted, Palghar MP Rajendra Gavit added, “I have taken the matter to the Maharashtra chief minister and also speaking to the Gujarat fishing ministry and collector to find a solution... Within a day or two, all fishermen will be home.

Indian state of Gujarat permits fishermen, fish processing industry to function in lockdown

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/gujarat-permits-fishermen-fish-processing-industry-to-function-in-lockdown-6357974/>

"Permitting fishing boats to venture out into the sea, the government of the Indian state of Gujarat said that fishermen from the state will be allowed to fish from Saturday and will also permit the fish processing industry to function. “It has been decided that from today, fishermen will be allowed to venture into the seas. We will start issuing tokens to them from today itself, said Ashwini Kumar, secretary to chief minister while addressing media persons at Gandhinagar. “The ban on fishing industry which includes processing, packaging and operations of cold chain has been removed. A huge community that lives on the state's coast and depends on the sea for their livelihoods will benefit from this decision of the chief minister, he said adding that permissions have also been given for transportation of fishes from one place to another. The fishing industry in the state came to a standstill despite the Union Home ministry exempting shops selling meat and fish from the 21-day lockdown.

Marine fish production constitutes over 85 percent of the total fish production in Gujarat which is over 8.1 lakh tonne. Fishermen and the fish processing industry in the state – which is among

the top five fish producing states in India – had come to a halt due to the restrictions imposed during the lockdown. Meanwhile, the Gujarat government also said that it has received 337 complaints from workers related to salaries and jobs between April 4-10, 2020. The state government had warned industries in the state not to cut salaries or lay off people during the lockdown. “216 complaints have been resolved, Kumar said, while adding that the rest will be resolved in a couple of days.

Andhra Pradesh: Special train sought to bring back over 5,000 Andhra Pradesh fishermen stranded along the Gujarat coast

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/special-train-sought-to-bring-back-stranded-fishermen/article31262426.ece>

"A majority of the fishermen were forced to stay at the coast of Veraval of Gir Somnath district, and are facing multiple health problems due to lack of food and shelter. Srikakulam District Fishermen Community Welfare Association convener Duda Sudhakar, and Fishermen Cooperative Association President Konada Narasinga Rao urged both the Union and State governments to arrange a special train to bring back over 5,000 fishermen stranded at various places along the Gujarat coast. Ignored by owners Addressing a media conference here on Sunday, Mr. Sudhakar said the fishermen who had migrated to Gujarat had been facing untold miseries with lack of basic facilities and shelter in Gujarat for the last two weeks. “The owners who engaged them in various works had forgotten their welfare. A majority fishermen were forced to stay at the sea coast of Veraval of Gir Somnath district. Many of them are facing multiple health problems due to with the lack of food and shelter. The government should bring them to here in a special train and put them in quarantine if necessary, he added. Mugi Gurumurthy, M.Sriramulu and Mylapalli Polisu, leaders of various associations urged the government to construct fishing jetties immediately in Rallapeta, Budagatlalalem and other places so that the migrated fishermen would get livelihood in Srikakulam district itself.

Gujarat: 75,000 fishermen stay safe off the coast

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/75k-fishermen-stay-safe-off-the-coast/articleshow/74957456.cms>

"Gujarat's fishermen could be the most shielded against the Covid-19 pandemic. About 75,000 fishermen are staying put in the sea after the lockdown was announced following the coronavirus outbreak. Leaders of the fishing community decided that the safest option for fishermen is to stay in their trawlers within a few kilometres of the coast. Accordingly, about 15,000 fishing trawlers connected to Okha, Jakhau, Porbandar, Mangrol, Veraval, Kotda, Wanakbara, Diu, Jaffrabad, Dholai and Umargam ports have been anchored between one and four kilometres of the coastline. The fishermen are being supplied essentials like water, groceries

and other items by boat owners. The fishermen call up the owners on the coast, who send in required supplies.

Fishing activity though, has been completely suspended due to the lockdown. “Keeping the fishermen on land would have multiplied issues. Leaders of the fishermen community got together and decided that the fishermen will be safer in the sea. In fact, those who are now in the sea are much safer than people on land, said Veljibhai Masani, president, Akhil Bharatiya Fishermen Association. “Basic necessities like water, groceries and other requirements which will last for a fortnight are sent by the boat owners to the fishermen through boats, Masani stated. He said none of the fishermen have shown any flu-like symptoms. Raju Sukhadia of Mangrol in Junagadh district owns ten fishing trawlers. “All my boats each with seven fishermen aboard are anchored about three kilometres off the Mangrol coast. I have provided the fishermen will all basic requirements and they are connected with me through phones if they require any supplies, Sukhadia said. Fishermen observing “mid-sea quarantine seem to be a happy lot, saying that while they are accustomed , they keep themselves occupied by watching videos and listening to music on their phones and radios .

Gujarat: Nearly 25,000 fishermen are stranded in boats anchored in the port areas

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/25k-fishermen-stranded-in-boats-in-gujarat-coasts/articleshow/74938000.cms>

"Nearly 25,000 fishermen are stranded in boats anchored in the port areas of Porbandar, Veraval and Mangrol for the past one week owing to the lockdown. While fishing activity has stopped, these fishermen are not allowed to leave the port and it becoming increasingly difficult for the boat owners and the fishermen association to provide them with food and water. While nearly 15,000 fishermen are stranded at Porbandar port, another 10,000 are stranded at Veraval and Mangrol coasts. These fishermen are mostly natives of south Gujarat from districts like Valsad and Vapi, Una, Delvada, Wanakbori. Some of them also belong to Andhra Pradesh. Talking to TOI, president of Porbandar Machimar Boat Association, Bharat Modi said, “There is no sanitation facility in the boats and we are worried that in this situation the fishermen trapped in boats may get infected with some other diseases. It's very difficult to provide food and drinking water for so many people. According to a rough estimate more than 2,000 boats are anchored at the Porbandar port.

After the association made a representation to the district collector, they were asked to prepare a list of the fishermen with their Aadhaar numbers and addresses. However, even after submitting the list, the district administration refused to provide GSRTC buses to transport them home, Modi alleged. Veraval and Mangrol coasts are also facing the same problem. President of Akhil Gujarat Machimar Mahamandal, Gopal Fofandi told TOI: “We are representing our situation

before the district administration every single day asking them help to send these people to their native, but every entreaty is falling on deaf ears. We, at the association level, are making arrangements for food and water. Porbandar district collector D N Modi said: “The number of fishermen that have been projected by the association is exaggerated. We had a meeting with the employers of these fishermen and given them responsibility to provide them food. The fishermen community is the worst hit from the lockdown as the fishing season will end on June 10 and they get 70 percent of their annual catch during the period from March to June. They venture into the deep seas for 15 to 21 days and come back to the coasts with big catch. They use ice to keep the catch fresh inside the boat. However, with ice factories closed for the lockdown, there is no ice available to keep the fish fresh. Even the fish processing factories are closed now and so there are no buyers too. The fishermen anchors the boats at Porbandar and Veraval coast as the boat owners stay there.

Gujarat: Disruptions in labour and trading – fishing industry comes to a halt

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/gujarat-vadodara-trading-fishing-industry-coronavirus-6331643/>

"The multi-billion fishing industry, which employs around 3.5 lakh people in the state of Gujarat, has come to a grinding halt as traders and processors are facing labour shortage and transportation issues, following restrictions imposed due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Gujarat has the longest coastline in the country at 1650 kilometre. Fishing is also an important contributor to the state's GDP and Rs 7,000 crore worth of seafood is annually exported. “Fish has been included in the list of daily essentials whose movement and sale has been exempted from restrictions. It has to be treated at par with vegetables but somehow, a message has spread or people have assumed that the movement of fish is also prohibited. Therefore, traders and processors have stopped buying from fishermen and seafood processing units are suspending their operations, President of Akhil Bharatiya Fishermen Association, Velji Masani told The Indian Express on Wednesday. The last fishing trawler arrived on shore at Jakhau in Kutch on Tuesday, but there has been no business on account of the lockdown. Masani said that Veraval Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC), the hub of seafood processing industry in Gujarat, is deserted with hardly any vehicles plying and labourers not leaving their homes, either.

“There are no takers for fish being unloaded on fishing harbours. Police are intensively checking all trucks transporting goods, therefore traders are not taking any risks. On Tuesday, 22 fishing trawlers landed at Jakhau fishing harbour with their catch. But effectively, there was no auction as only two traders turned up to buy the fish, said Usmangani Sherasiya, Secretary of National Fishworker's Forum (NFF), a national forum of Indian fishermen organisations. Masani, who is also a member of the NFF, said that there are 35,000 active fishing boats in the state. “Each boat

supports the employment of around a 100 persons. Around 3.5 lakh fishermen and their families depend on this industry...The government must do something soon to ensure that the industry continues to function...Otherwise, all boats would come to shore and the huge number of fishermen who are confined to their boats in fishing harbours would swell, Masani further said. People from states like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka and Assam are known to come to Gujarat to work as crew on fishing boats, fish-handling or processing firms along the coast. Sherasiya said that hundreds of such fishermen were stuck up in Jakhau, Okha, Mangrol, Porbandar and Veraval as public transport is not available and the movement of people has been restricted by the government. Kanji Baraiya, who runs a fish trading firm called RK Enterprise in Jakhau, said that he stopped trading on Tuesday.

“Seafood processing firms of Veraval stopped loading fish from Jakhau citing transportation issues. So, after getting a letter of permission from fisheries, I dispatched the last consignment of around 20 tonne fish in six trucks on Tuesday. Now, there is a curfew in Jakhau, said Baraiya. He added that as road transport was highly restricted, traders were unable to supply fish to Karnataka and other states in the northern and northeastern part of the country. Processors and exporters said that the restrictions announced by the government forced them to suspend operations. “Labourers are not turning up for work and are instead preferring to stay indoors. Police presence on roads is also dissuading them to step out...Clearing and forwarding agents at ports are also not working. Therefore, shipment of fish for export has by and large halted. Therefore, we have no option but to shut down, said Karshan Salet, Vice-President of the Gujarat chapter of Seafood Exporters Association. The disruption in trading, transport and processing has meant fishermen are either stranded in harbours and forced to return if they are at sea. “Police and Fisheries department had been asking us to dispose of our catch for a week. Therefore, we stopped fishing operations, Abdullasha Pirjada, President of Jakhau Bandar Machhimar ane Boat Association, an organisation of fishermen and boat owners in Jakhau. Pirjada said that 1,231 fishing boats had returned to the harbour, but a few of them could not sell their catch due to the lockdown.

President of Porbandar Machhimar Boat Association, Jadavaji Posteria said that anchoring space in Porbandar is also an issue. “Since there are no takers for fish, fishing boats are returning from sea but there is issue of anchoring space in Porbandar harbour. Around 1,200 boats have already arrived. Another 400 are at sea and waiting for their turn to enter the harbour, said Posteria. However, Masani said that the government has instructed fishermen to not beach their boats. Instead, they should either anchor their craft in harbours or the anchorage. “Usually, fishermen do not have homes in the port they operate from and there is fear that a large number of fishermen will congregate at harbours, he said. Gujarat Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda said that he is aware of the issue. “We issued a circular to all district collectors on Wednesday morning, asking them to ensure that movement of fish, processed seafood and fish feed is not

affected. These instructions will be followed and the supply of fish will not be allowed to be affected, said the Minister. Meanwhile, 104 fishermen from returned to Navsari district in south Gujarat from Bhavcha Dhakka in Mumbai via the sea route. They were medically screened and later advised by health officers to quarantine themselves at their homes for 14 days. These fishermen from Navsari and Valsad had landed at Bhavcha Dhakka in Mumbai for selling their catch, but returned to Dholai port at Billimora in Navsari district on Wednesday.

How AI is helping 4200+ fish and shrimp farmers in Andhra, Tamil Nadu & Gujarat

<https://www.expresscomputer.in/startup/how-ai-is-helping-4200-fish-and-shrimp-farmers-in-andhra-tamil-nadu-gujarat/49914/>

"Aquaconnect promotes sustainable aquaculture (growing fish and shrimp) through technology intervention. The Chennai based startup is focused on using of artificial intelligence, IoT and satellite remote sensing to improve Indian aquaculture productivity and make India the world's aquaculture hub. The startup was started in 2017 by IITK alumnus Rajamanohar Somasundaram, who is the Co-Founder & CEO, with Shanmuga Sudararaj and Sanjai Kumar, to become a global full-stack aquaculture technology venture to offer data-driven farm advisory solutions and market place solutions to shrimp and fish farmers. In India, shrimp and fish farming is the popular livelihood activities for millions of farmers in the coastal and rural regions, where traditional farming practices prevent them in achieving production efficiency and diseases prediction.

"We sensed a need for automating farm management, disease prediction through data sciences. Aquaconnect improves the aquaculture industry through an ecosystem-based approach by first digitalising data produced and consumed along the entire value chain throughout the lifecycle of the aquatic animals for analytics-driven data-informed decisions. Secondly, improving farmers' livelihoods through enhanced access to knowledge, input, finance, and market leveraging players on the value chain, says Somasundaram. The startup set out to disrupt and simplify this process. "We built FarmMOJO, an AI-driven advisory solution that helps farmers improve productivity, predict disease and ultimately achieve higher farm income (up to 5-10 per cent). Our AI advisor records production data such as water quality parameters, feed inputs, health status, and biomass conversion, states Somasundaram. "Our AI-driven approach continuously monitors the farm operations and favours real-time analysis of culture. It helps farmers in the daily management of culture growth, such as optimise feeding, disease prediction and management, and advice farmers from time to time. FarmMOJO helps rural farmers and coastal communities by reducing the dependency on technicians in daily culture operations, he informs. The target customers are aquaculture farmers in India and SEA countries.

The startup has a network has about 4200+ farmers in Andhra, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat. "Now,

1350+ farms have been made smart farms with the Farm MOJO implementation. FarmMOJO offers complete AI assistance to farmers throughout the culture, from stocking to harvest, remarks Somasundaram. Pointing out that it lowers the cost of production by efficient feed usage, he explains, “The growth of the animal depends on the right feed usage. Optimising the usage of feed and other farm inputs bring the efficiency in farming and help farmers to have better returns from the farms. FarmMOJO's AI models “Opti-Febicon, and “Morby-Mass helps farmers to reduce 20-30 per cent feed cost through its feed efficiency model. “Through our data intelligence, we connected farmers directly to the market place and helped them sell 1000MT+ of shrimp to importers. The traceability data of the shrimp has improved their commodity value up to 5 per cent in the processors, he adds.

FarmMOJO facilitates traceability from point of production to point of consumption. Adding that, FarmMOJO is location-aware, context-aware, it can offer relevant products at the right time and right intervention, Somasundaram remarks, “FarmMOJO also effectively connects farmers with upstreams (hatcheries, feed and healthcare producers) and downstream (processors, certifying bodies, BFSI – Banking, Financial Services, and Insurers) of the aquaculture supply chain. Aquaculture in India has evolved as a viable commercial farming practice and has been showing an impressive annual growth rate of 10-15 per cent every year. “India's seafood exports are valued at around US\$ 7 billion in 2018. India stands top on shrimp production and it contributes 70 per cent of Indian aquaculture export value. India ranks second in aquaculture production and third in marine fisheries, mentions Somasundaram, reminding that though it is a multibillion-dollar industry, it still lacks the technology adoption and efficiency it is expected to have. With FarmMOJO data, the company connects farmers with formal financial institutions to offer financial assistance and crop insurance. Processors and certifying bodies could leverage this data for sustainable procurement and certification.

The introduction of AI brings increase predictability and efficiency in the production of fish and shrimp. Stakeholders like banks, financial services and insurance providers can use the data intelligence to create risk management strategies/risk assessment to facilitate loans and insurance products to the farmers. For Aquaconnect, plans for the future in terms of new technologies and strategic expansion, include the following: - Remote sensing technology for risk management: Partnering with satellite firms for biomass evaluation and credit risk assessment. Satellite enabled remote sensing solutions to complement the FarmMOJO data intelligence. “Remote sensing shall help us scale rapidly into new markets in South East Asia such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand. We are looking at exploring blockchain technologies to enable complete traceability support and increase transparency into the aquaculture value chain, says Somasundaram. - Disease prediction: AquaConnect is working with IDH – the Sustainable Trade Initiative and Prof. Kenton Morgan, University of Liverpool to improve the accuracy of its disease prediction model “Morby-Mass to predict diseases well in advance. - Creation of risk

assessment models: To evaluate the creditworthiness of farmers based on the historical data to enable access to financial institutions for crop loans and insurance. - FarmMOJO for other species: Extending FarmMOJO capabilities to cater various aquatic species to increase the customer base progressively. Speaking about revolution 2.0, Somasundaram says, "The Government of India is ramping up support for the aquaculture sector, carving out a separate Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying as well as launching the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). Also, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for 500 fisheries FPOs to be formed in five years period from 2019-20 to 2023-24 to ensure economies of scale for fish farmers. "We are actively discussing with National Fisheries Development Board and state agencies to promote FarmMOJO as a software platform for the FPOs to adopt data drive farming, affirms Somasundaram.

300 fishermen from Gujarat, other states stuck in Iran: Coronavirus scare

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/surat/300-fishermen-from-gujarat-other-states-stuck-in-iran/articleshow/74345022.cms>

"Over 300 fishermen from India are trapped at Bandar-e-Chiru, Chiruyeh, Hormozgan province in Iran as nearby airports have been sealed by local authorities following coronavirus scare. The fishermen belonging to Gujarat and other states sought help from their family members over phone and also shared videos. On receiving information MoS forest and tribal development, Ramanlal Patkar, wrote a letter to ministry of external affairs seeking its intervention to bring around 340 fishermen from Gujarat and other southern states back home. The fishermen from Gujarat include those from Maroli, Bhatkhadi, Kalgam, Dandi, Nargol and few other villages in Valsad. "I was informed by family members and community leaders of those stuck in Chiru. Their flights have been cancelled due to coronavirus scare as the airports are sealed, Patkar told TOI over phone. ""I have shared the details of the fishermen from Gujarat and other southern states with external affairs ministry. The officials are working on it and the fishermen will be brought back soon,"" added Patkar. Chiruyeh is a port town of Hormozgan province. The fishermen went to Iran around seven months ago by flight. Forming small groups they hire fishing boats and share 50 percent profit with the owner. They continue fishing for seven to eight months and return to India once the fishing season ends, informed family members of those stuck in Iran. ""I am worried and I don't know what to do now. I wish that my husband returns home safely,"" said Bharti, whose husband Jayesh is stuck in Iran currently.

""My uncle and few other relatives are stuck in Chiru. The fishing season is over and they have no work since last 15 days. They are trying to return but there are no flights,"" said Harish Bari, president of Bari Bariya Community in Valsad. ""From our community around 150 fishermen are trapped in Chiru,"" he added. ""The fisherman do not have direct connecting flight to India.

They used to take flight to Sarjah and then to Mumbai,"" said a family member. ""From my village many fishermen went to Iran for fishing. The fishermen have contacted their family members for help,"" said Lata Marolika, sarpanch of Maroli village.

Gujarat govt to bring Bill to stop misuse of boats captured by Pakistan

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/guj-govt-to-bring-bill-to-stop-misuse-of-boats-captured-by-pak/1745363>

"The Gujarat government will bring a Bill during the ongoing Budget session of the Assembly that seeks to stop the misuse of fishing boats captured by Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) near the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) off Gujarat coast. Chief Minister Vijay Rupani made this announcement in the House on Wednesday. Referring to the Gujarat-registered fishing boat "MV Kuber", which was hijacked by Pakistani terrorists who carried out the 26/11 Mumbai attacks in 2008, Rupani said a law is required to stop such misuse of fishing boats once it was captured by Pakistan. The chief minister said this while taking part in a discussion on a recent incident wherein 63 fishermen on board 11 boats from Gujarat were captured by the PMSA between February 13 and 18 off Gujarat coast. The issue was raised by senior Congress MLA, Punja Vansh, as a matter of ""urgent public importance"" under rule 116 of the Gujarat Assembly on the first day of the Budget session here on Wednesday. Vansh said although fishermen are eventually handed over to the Indian authorities by Pakistan, their boats are never returned.

""It is the Central government and the Ministry of External Affairs which deal with Pakistan on this matter. The Gujarat government regularly makes representation to the Centre about the issue of boats,"" Rupani said. He objected to the use of word "abduction by Pakistan", as he told Vansh that fishermen from Gujarat are captured by the Pak agency mid-sea only after they cross the IMBL and go to the other side. The chief minister added that the PMSA does not enter the Indian side and abduct fishermen. ""We are bringing a bill to stop the misuse of such boats. The state government is vigilant and want to make sure that boats in the custody of Pakistan are not misused, just like Kuber was misused,"" Rupani said. Responding to Vansh, state Fisheries Minister Jawahar Chavda said as against the 1,625 fishermen captured by Pakistan in the last five years, the Gujarat government was able to bring back 1,750 fishermen with the help of Centre, as some of the fishermen were captured before 2014-15. He added that the state government pays a compensation of Rs 4 lakh each to the kin of fishermen, who die in a jail in the neighbouring country. Chavda added that till the fisherman does not return to India, his family gets Rs 300 daily allowance from the government.

Gujarat: 63 fishermen and 11 boats caught by Pakistan in a week

<https://in.news.yahoo.com/gujarat-63-fishermen-11-boats-205544838.html>

"The highest number of fishermen (23) caught in a single day was on February 13. Admitting that a total of 63 fishermen and 11 boats from Gujarat have been apprehended by the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency within a week's time this February, the state government on Friday told the Gujarat Assembly that these fishermen were caught after they crossed over the international maritime boundary that Gujarat shares with its western neighbour. The issue was raised by Punja Vansh, a Congress MLA from Una, under Rule 116 of the state legislature as he pointed out that within a week, an estimated figure of 76 fishermen from Okha and Porbandar were "kidnapped along with their boats at the Arabian Sea by the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency. "This issue has repeatedly been raised in this House and this government has been giving a similar reply every time. You have been in power for the last 22 years. What effective steps have you taken? asked Vansh who wanted to know whether the state government would provide financial assistance to fishermen who died in Pakistani jails. In a statement tabled in the House, state minister for Fisheries, Jawahar Chavda pointed out that 63 fishermen and 11 boats were seized by Pakistan in four separate incidents between February 13 and 18, 2020. The highest number of fishermen (23) caught in a single day was on February 13.

The minister's reply also named the owners of the seized boats, the names and registration numbers of the boats and the names of the fishermen who were apprehended. "If the last 5-6 years are considered since 2014-'15, then 1,623 Indian fishermen were taken by Pakistan. During this period, 1,750 of the arrested fishermen have been brought back from Pakistan. In short, we have brought more than they have taken. The Government of India has done a lot of hard work, the minister said. Chavada said only 231 fishermen were "missing as of now and the rest of the apprehended fishermen have returned home. Intervening on the issue, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said that there were over 28,000 fishing boats in the state. "It is not kidnapping as it is being claimed. We share a maritime boundary with Pakistan and our fishermen cross the boundary and go into Pakistan, and then they are caught there. It is not as if someone comes into our territory and kidnaps them. Similarly, Pakistan's fishermen are caught when they enter our boundary, Rupani remarked. He said that the state government along with the Centre was trying to arm these fishermen with necessary technology to ensure that they don't cross the international boundary. "We are giving families of fishermen (caught by Pakistan) Rs 300 as daily assistance, Rupani said. He added that the Centre is trying its best to get Pakistan to return the seized boats. "The way the (terrorist) attack on Mumbai happened, the boat Kuber of our own fishermen was used to get into our territory. We have discussed this recently, these seized boats should not be misused, the CM said.

Brackishwater Aquaculture Farmers' Conclave – 2020 Held in Gujarat

<https://krishijagran.com/agriculture-world/brackishwater-aquaculture-farmers-conclave-2020-held-in-gujarat/>

"The ICAR-Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture, Chennai in collaboration with the Society of Coastal Aquaculture and Fisheries (SCAFi) and Navsari Agricultural University (NAU), Gujarat organized the "Brackishwater Aquaculture Farmers' Conclave - 2020 (BAFAC-2020) at Surat, Gujarat from 19th to 20th February, 2020. The Chief Guest, Anup Kumar, I.A.S., Secretary, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Agricultural Marketing, Government of Maharashtra lauded the ICAR-CIBA's efforts to organize the Farmer's Conclave in the West Coast. In his address, N.F. Patel, Department of Fisheries, Government of Gujarat recalled the decision of the Gujarat Fisheries Minister for allocating 7.5 ha of farm land at Matwad, Navsari to the NGRC of ICAR-CIBA to conduct the research and trials for the development of technologies suitable for the West Coast. Dr. Joykrushna Jena, Deputy Director General (Fisheries Science), ICAR highlighted the brackishwater aquaculture's potential in the country and benefits the farmers can reap in on a sustainable mode. He outlined the sector's remarkable growth, where the farmers' income in brackishwater sector has been multiplied over 3 times since 2010. Dr. Jena also stressed on the need of a sustainable approach to keep the growth trajectory.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Dr. K.K. Vijayan, Director, ICAR-CIBA and President, SCAFi & Convener, BAFAC-2020 articulated the significance of BAFAC-2020 and its main purpose. He also outlined the development of brackishwater aquaculture sector with special reference to the shrimp farming and the way forward for its sustainability. Dr. Vijayan also assured the stakeholders about the extending of the technological and capacity building support on "partnership mode by the Institute to the programmes initiated on the west coast by the respective state governments for developing the brackishwater aquaculture. The various farmer-friendly publications by ICAR-CIBA in the vernacular languages were released during the occasion. Around 70 farmers of the region were distributed the Soil and Water Health Cards based on respective farm samples. Dr. Jena also handed-over a cheque for Rs. 5,00,000; an income generated by the Om Sai Women Self Help Group, Matwad, Navsari, Gujarat by taking up the Nursery rearing of fin fishes with the facilitation of Navsari Gujarat Research Center of ICAR-CIBA. About 900 brackishwater farmers representing all the coastal states covering both East and West coasts of India from West Bengal to Gujarat and Inland states like Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan attended the programme.

Gujarat: Government seeks Rs 1,355 crore for new fishing harbours

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/gujarat-government-seeks-rs-1355-crore-for-new-fishing-harbours/articleshow/74057823.cms>

"The Gujarat government has sought a sum of Rs 1,355 crore in grants or soft loan under the PM's blue revolution scheme meant for enhancing fishing production. The state government expects a sizeable increase in fish production by investing in fishing infrastructure. In a proposal sent to the government of India (GOI), the state fisheries department, while demanding Rs 1,355 crore said, "Due to inadequate facilities, fishermen are experiencing difficulties in unloading their catch during fishing season. Moreover, lack of infrastructure facilities results into landing of fish catch in unhygienic conditions. This leads to deterioration of overall quality of fish products and increase of waste, affecting the price realisation and export, which ultimately leads to monetary loss to the fishermen." The state government has proposed to construct five new fishing harbours at Navabandar, Madhwad, Veraval, Porbandar and Sutrapada. The proposal states that the Gujarat fisheries department has established five fishing harbours and 18 fish landing centres (FLCs) for fisheries activities.

There are about 24,720 mechanised fishing boats which operate in Gujarat. Present fishing harbours and fish landing centres are sufficient only to accommodate about 12% of these fishing boats. Sources in the government said, "Fishermen suffer monetary losses due to non-availability of berthing space in fishing harbours. One such experience was faced by the state during the cyclone in the year 2019. Therefore, it is necessary to develop additional fishing harbours and to strengthen the existing infrastructure facilities. For this purpose, the state government has submitted proposals for development of fishing harbours." Gujarat is the highest marine fish producing state in India, contributing about 20% of the country's total marine fish production. Development of new fishing harbours will help in providing adequate landing, berthing and unloading facilities, officials said.

Gujarat: Boat catches fire mid-sea; 6 fishermen rescued, one missing

<https://in.news.yahoo.com/boat-catches-fire-mid-sea-152723100.html>

"A fisherman went missing, while six others were rescued after their boat caught fire and sank mid-sea off the Porbandar coast in Gujarat in the wee hours of Wednesday, an association said. The incident took place when the fishing boat, Dhananjay, from Vanakbara in the Union Territory of Daman and Diu, caught fire and sank in the Arabian Sea around 25 nautical miles off the Porbandar coast, said the Porbandar Fishing Boat Association in a release here. All seven fishermen on the boat jumped into the sea for safety after they failed to control the blaze that

started in the engine and spread rapidly due to diesel stored in there, the release said. While six fishermen were rescued, one is feared drowned and could not be located, it said. The missing fisherman was identified by the association as Avinash Soman (17). The six fishermen were rescued by a boat named Shagun, while a search for the missing fisherman was underway, the release said.

Gujarat: CM talks to fishermen as part of 'Mokla Mahe' interactive session

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/india/gujarat-cm-talks-to-fishermen-as-part-of----mokla-mahe----interactive-session.html>

"In his attempt to reach out to the communities across Gujarat, Minister Vijay Rupani has started meeting people to understand their genuine grievances and also understand their expectations from the Government. Keeping with his initiative, Rupani met 65 fishermen from 15 coastal districts, extending from Saurashtra & Kutch to south Gujarat, as part of the State Government's 'Mokla Mane' interactive session at his official residence. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that a Rs 1,200-crore project to build nine new harbours in the State has been started in consultation with the Central Government. The State will take steps needed to develop inland and marine fishery in sync with Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi's call for total revolution. "Fishermen's children will live so long fishlings live, he said. Talking to The Pioneer, the Chief Minister said, "Gujarat Government considers fishermen as 'Sagar Khedut, meaning 'farmers of the sea'. They have requested me to issue Kisan Credit Cards to them on the lines of farmers, I have directed concerned department to do it for them. We have also started to provide big trawlers to small fishermen for their survival he said. The State Government is also mulling issuing permits to fishermen of neighbouring states for fishing in the Gujarat's territorial waters.

"This is imperative since others States do not allow fishermen from Gujarat to fish in their waters since the coastal areas are well defined. A problem typical to Gujarat's fishermen is the State's territorial water bordering that of Pakistan, inadvertently entering one another's territory or being forcibly captured – a sensitive international issue. Gujarat has asked the Central Government to ensure early release of such Gujarati fishermen from Pakistan's detention, the Chief Minister added. " We are providing subsistence allowance of Rs 300 per day to the families of each of such detainee. As far as fishermen declared missing in high sea during storms or cyclone, the State Government provides ex-gratia compensation as compassion towards the kin of such fishermen who do not return for five years, Rupani said. During interaction, a farmers' representatives from Devbhumi-Dwarka suggested that Chief Minister should inaugurate the new harbour at Okha. It may be noted that Rupani had earlier held 'Mokla Mane' interactive session with representatives of slum-dwellers, teachers, differently abled and nomadic tribes. "After every interactive session, officials of the concerned departments work on the feedback

and petitions that are received from people.

This initiative has gone a long way in ameliorating the condition of the underprivileged class. I hold this session with the representatives of various sections of the society on the fourth or fifth of every month the chief minister said. A senior official of the chief minister's office said that participants are mostly from the underprivileged and disadvantaged classes of society and they are called to meet the Chief Minister irrespective of religion, caste or sex to be a part of the programme. These informal interactions help in solving problems as they provide instant feedback, the official added.

Gujarat: Mulling law against fishing boats from outside Gujarat: CM

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/mulling-law-against-fishing-boats-from-outside-guj-cm/articleshow/73103573.cms>

"Chief minister Vijay Rupani on Saturday said his government was thinking of bringing a legislation to prevent "unauthorized, unregistered boats of other states from fishing in the Arabian Sea along the coast here. Rupani was talking to reporters after interacting with a group of fishermen in Gandhinagar under his Mann ni Moklaash (speaking from your heart) programme. He said he had received representation from the state's fishermen on this and he had assured them of safeguarding their interests. "One of the concerns of the fishermen is that unauthorized, unregistered boats from other states should be stopped (from fishing in the sea along Gujarat coast). Gujarat government has made a decision regarding this. If required, we will go ahead to make an Act on this," he said. "We will prevent unauthorized fishermen (from other states) coming here for fishing activities and will take legal action against them," he said. Rupani further said, "During the interaction with the fishermen, they said that they be considered at par with farmers as their activities are like farming.

The farmers grow food grains in farms while fishermen take it from sea. So they also wanted credit card benefits like the farmers, under the state's Sagar Khedu scheme. "We are positive over their demand. We have assured them that we will talk to the central government on this," Rupani said. Rupani said his government pays Rs 300 per day as compensation to fishermen from Gujarat who end up in Pakistan jails in case they inadvertently cross the international maritime border and are nabbed by agencies of the neighbouring country. He said the government had also decided to pay Rs 2 lakh to the kin of fisherman missing in the Arabian sea, after lapse of a year.

Gujarat: Marine exports hit by foreign regulations, weather, competition

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/gujarats-marine-exports-hit-by-foreign-regulations-weather-competition/articleshow/73103913.cms>

"After growing for three consecutive years, Gujarat's marine exports in value terms declined by 5.33% in 2018-19. Stricter regulations in traditional markets like US and the European Union (EU), changing consumer requirements and evolving trade scenario have resulted in lower exports. Gujarat's marine exports dipped to \$798 million (approximately Rs 5,666 crore) in 2018-19 from \$843 million in 2017-18, according to a report by Drip Capital, a US-based trade finance company. According to the Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA) under the Union ministry of commerce and industry, Gujarat's marine exports in volume terms plunged from 3,12,568 tonnes in 2017-18 to 3,05,326 tonnes in 2018-19. The exports are likely to be lower in 2019-20 as extended monsoon and multiple cyclone warnings shortened the fishing season and led to a 40% decline in annual fish catch. "The EU and the US are major markets for Indian marine products. However, their regulations and import guidelines are very stringent. If one consignment is rejected, other buyers shy away from placing their orders, said Rajan Kumar, a scientist at Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Veraval. Increase in countervailing duty by developed countries from time to time also affects Indian exports. Industry players opine that stiff competition from Vietnam and Thailand in shrimp exports has also affected marine exports from Gujarat.

"Pollution has adversely affected our catch and led to lower exports. The industrial units on the coast of South Gujarat and Porbandar release untreated water into the sea causing a decline in fish catch, added Bharat Modi, president, Porbandar Machimar Boat Association. According to the Directorate-General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) India exported nearly \$6.3 billion (around Rs 45,000 crore) worth of marine products in FY19. Shrimp, frozen fish and mollusks are major export commodities, with shrimp contributing 71% of the exports. Gujarat ranks first and second in exports of fish and mollusks, respectively. The US market alone accounts for 50% of Gujarat's fish exports. Coastal towns of Veraval and Porbandar are the two major centres of marine trade in Gujarat. Ribbon fish, cuttlefish, croaker fish, squid and shrimps are some of the popular varieties exported from here. However, the marine exports have grown at a compounded annual growth of rate 10% since fiscal 2015-16. Stating that much of the slowdown stems from EU and to an extent the US, the Drip Capital further recommends that Indian exporters should look at new and alternative markets for their shipments. Buoyed by a resurgent economy, China is likely to be the single largest market to tap into in the coming months. Additionally, other Asian markets like Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea and Taiwan will also become increasingly important in the time to come. A fresh market is potentially opening for India in China in wake of the US-China trade war.

