Puducherry News Articles compilation
by ICSF
Puducherry: Ban on fishing for 61 days announced in Pondy


The Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department of the territorial administration has announced a ban on fishing for 61 days here. Official sources said on Wednesday, the ban will come into effect from April 15 to June 14, during which the mechanized vessels are prohibited from fishing in the sea.

Puducherry: LG visits Fisheries Department to review support system


Governor Kiran Bedi on Wednesday visited the Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department here to review the support system. According to a Raj Nivas release, Ms Bedi observed that out of the budget allocation of about Rs 48 crore, Rs 32 crore is allocated for fishermen welfare in the form of relief assistance, old age pension and assistance to fishermen cooperative societies and therefore the department should ensure that the welfare services are delivered speedily to the needy through better managed IT initiatives and grievances resolved immediately.

Perusing the proposal for upgradation/renovation of the fishing harbour under Swachh Bharat mission for an estimate of Rs 15 crore, the Lt Governor said that the department may draw out an action plan to maintain the existing infrastructure with available resource and create new infrastructure as phase -11 of the project, so as to prudently expend the financial resources. She also suggested the computerization of the department with the help of NIC (National Informatic Centre).

Puducherry: Govt releases Rs 10 Crore to Karaikal towards interim relief measures: CM


The government has released a sum of Rs Ten crore to Karaikal towards interim relief measures for those affected in the Gaja Cyclone, Chief Minister V Narayanasamy said on Sunday. Talking to news persons here, Mr Narayanasamy said that the fishermen will get Rs 5000 as (cyclone relief and Rs 2500 plus relief during fishing ban period). As many as 9500 hut dwellers would be given Rs 2000 each, Rs 4,100 for totally damaged huts and Rs 3,200 to partially damaged huts. He gave a list on the quantum of assistance to be given to milch animals, goats, hens, fishing boats and nets. The Chief Minister said the Central team would visit Karaikal on Monday to assess the damages following which it would meet him here and hold discussions.
Puducherry: Regional meet on fisheries held

https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/regional-review-meet-on-fisheries-held/article25328993.ece

The regional review meeting of the east coast States and Union Territories on fisheries was held in Puducherry recently. P. Parthiban, Secretary (Fisheries), chaired the meeting. A press release said, the meeting reviewed the implementation of Centre-sponsored schemes like ‘Conversion of trawlers into resource specific deep-sea vessels’, physical and financial progress on the Blue Revolution scheme for 2016-17 and 2017-18. Rathinavel, Executive Director, National Fisheries Development Board, Hyderabad, B. Dhanunjaya Rao, Deputy Director of Fisheries, Andhra Pradesh, Reena Selvi, Joint Director of Fisheries (Research), Tamil Nadu and R. Mounissamy, Director of Fisheries attended. They discussed the progress of various schemes like — implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme, collection of Aadhaar and bank details for seeding the database of marine fisheries and fish production.

Puducherry: Fishermen picket Fisheries Department


Mechanised fishing vessel owners on Monday picketed the Fisheries and fishermen Development Department to press their demands. The fishermen could not venture into the sea since September 10 since, the estuary became shallow due to sand accumulation affecting the movement of fishing vessels. In spite of several requests, the Puducherry administration failed to take steps to dredge the estuary to ensure the movement of vessels. The fishermen resorted to a series of agitation including dharna after hoisting black flags on their vessels. As part of the agitation, they resorted to a picketing at the Thengaithittu fishing harbour.

Puducherry: Fishermen hoist black flags on boats; hold demo


More than 100 mechanized fishing vessel owners on Thursday hoisted black flags on their boats and held a demonstration to press their demands. They were demanding the immediate dredging of the estuary which is frequently getting shallow due to sand accumulation hindering the movement of the fishing vessels. The fishermen who were on strike for the last ten days tied black flags on their boats and 100 of them held a demonstration at Thengaithittu Fishing Harbour. Mechanized fishing vessel owners association president Vadivelu told news persons that inspite of representing to Lt. Governor Kiran Bedi and Chief Minister V Narayanasamy, no action was taken to dredge the estuary forcing them to strike work for the last ten days.
Puducherry: Artificial reef helps restore lost Pondy beach


The construction of the 900 tonne reef, measuring 125x100 metres, was immersed 2.5 metres below sea level on the northern side of the coast. The project to restore the lost beach in Puducherry town limits has yielded fruitful results with the successful immersion of an artificial reef structure, made of steel caisson with rock bottom, on the northern side. The construction of the 900 tonne reef, measuring 125x100 metres, was immersed 2.5 metres below sea level on the northern side of the coast. The Chennai-based National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), an autonomous body under the ministry of earth sciences, constructed and immersed India’s first wedge-shaped near shore artificial reef, at Puducherry coast. The pilot project is estimated to cost Rs 65 crore and is jointly funded by the Puducherry government the ministry of earth sciences and NIOT. How Puducherry lost its sandy beach Puducherry lost its sandy beaches, including the most visible stretch of bay down the historic Goubert Avenue, with the construction of the port.

Almost within a decade of the construction, in 1989, of its ‘under-performing’ port, which is used more as a fishing harbour, erosion of sand started. With the absence of naturally occurring sand barriers, wave action erodes the coastline drastically. The local authorities then put up rock walls and groynes that hold back the sea in much the same way a port’s breakwater does, pushing the unresolved issue of erosion further up and down the coast. Puducherry government constructed a seawall from the northern side of the harbour to a distance of about 6km after the city began witnessing coastal erosion due to natural disasters and exploitation. The sandy beach to a distance of about 200m was lost. The government attempted to restore the beach with dredged sand, but dropped the project midway. Later in March 2017 the government started beach nourishment project with Sanctuary Beach, a Singapore-based consultant, which was selected for the nourishment plan for the promenade stretch starting from the northern side of the harbour.

Disappearing beaches In a 14-minute documentary titled “India’s Disappearing Beaches - A Wake Up Call” by wildlife and conservation filmmaker Shekar Dattatri Puducherry’s fading beaches are representative of the effect of human intervention along India's coastline. “Within four years of the construction of the harbour in 1986, the coastal town found its beach had vanished. To protect against erosion, an “ugly sea wall” was built to hold the coastline, but they also obstructed the free flow of sand drift,” the documentary says. The documentary was made in public interest for the Pondy Citizens’ Action Network (PondyCAN). Beach nourishment project As part of the Shoreline Management Plan for Puducherry, the ministry of earth sciences,
NIOT, and the Puducherry government have designed a project estimated at Rs 65 crore. The project has two parts - beach restoration and shoreline stabilisation.

As part of beach restoration, the sand which is stuck in and around the harbour will be removed, while a submerged reef will be built as part of the stabilisation process. The pilot project will feature one artificial four metre-high, 28,540 sq. mt. ‘nearshore wedge reef’ opposite the Chief Secretariat, which will serve as a ‘mild barrier’ to sediment losses and enable sand to move naturally to the north. A similar 4,200 sq. mt. offshore reef placed at the southern end will create the effect of a tombolo (a sand bar) to hold sand on the city’s foreshore, a report of NIOT said.

Dredging is being undertaken by the Dredging Corporation of India and Puducherry Public Works Department is supervising the project. “Around 0.3 million cubic metres of sand will be required for the beach nourishment. The sand which was dredged from the sea mouth will be put alongside the promenade beach,” an NIOT report says.

NIOT is also planning to launch the submerged structure to reduce wave activity into the shore. While answering to the question on the sustainability of the project Mr Schiavina said, “Beaches are our primary concern and they have to be protected. We have been pushing the government for the past 15 years and something has been materialised now. We have no options left other than the beach nourishment project to save the coastline”. PondyCan has been actively involved in initiating and facilitating the beach restoration project. What is artificial reef and how it will prevent erosion An artificial reef is a man-made, underwater structure, typically built for the purpose of promoting marine life in areas of generally featureless bottom. Artificial reefs may also serve to improve hydrodynamics for surfing or to control beach erosion.

“A wedge-shaped reef, which will be made of steel caisson with rock bottom, is a submerged soft structure that allows the sand to bypass, thereby helping beach formation on the either side. On the other hand, hard shoreline protection structures like breakwaters and groynes bring relief at one end while shifting erosion further up the shoreline. Coastal erosion in the fishing village of Chinna Mudaliyar Chavady near here worsened when groynes were constructed in Thandirayankuppam to its south,” said Aurofilio Schiavina, co-founder of PondyCAN, an advocacy group working on coastal erosion. The submerged structure will reduce wave activity and allow sand to freely move towards the north and prevent erosion along the coastline. Artificial reefs are one among a range of engineering solutions to uplift the deteriorating life below water. Since fish are attracted to any kind of structure; they aggregate at reefs, thereby multiplying rapidly and thus a valuable experiment in terms of conserving marine life. “Artificial reefs are thus going to support the fishermen community equally,” he said.

Beach nourishment, a boost to tourism Tourists as well as residents are excited that sand will replace the rocks in the promenade and there won't be any rocks to prevent them from entering the sea. “I used to walk along the sandy beach and when I was young and we used to play here in the sand. Everything has changed over years. Now I am happy that we are getting our beaches
back,” said 60-year-old Arulselvan, who came to visit the beach along with his family. Ishan and Arav from Bangalore also shared their excitement over the sandy beach. “We used to visit Puducherry on our weekends and it is one of the best places to hang out with friends. But one thing that we were not happy about the beach is that we cannot enter the sea or play with the water. Now, we are happy to know that things are changing. Puducherry will now beat Goa in the number of international tourists if the government is maintaining things well,” Ishan said.

The tourism department also hopes that the beach nourishment programme will attract more tourists to the Union Territory. “We will get more tourists after the successful implementation of the project and we have no doubt in that. The pilot project will boost the number of domestic as well as international tourists. Along with this we will also take action to develop our airport. These developments will have surely a positive change in the economy and financial status of the state,” said a senior official of tourism department.

**Puducherry: Three more fish-landing facilities to come up in Puducherry**


The inclusion of the Union Territory under the Centre’s Blue Revolution Programme — which aims to increase fisheries’ production from the existing 10 million tonnes a year to 15 million tonnes by 2020 — will pave the way for the setting up of fish landing facilities, a maritime museum and the modernisation of harbours in Puducherry, Karaikal and Yanam regions. The major beneficiaries will be the fishermen in Puducherry, as under the programme, the Centre has given in-principle approval to set up fish landing facilities at Nallavadu, Periyakalapet and one on the side of Veerampattinam, opposite the Thengaithittu harbour. The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries has given approval to a detailed report prepared by the Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fishery, Bengaluru, for establishing fish landing centres in three places in Puducherry, along with one in Yanam and Karaikal, at a cost of Rs. 140 crore, a senior official from the Fisheries Department told The Hindu.

The setting up of fish landing facilities here, will help decongest the Thengaithittu and Uppalam harbours, where mechanised fishing boats are berthed. As many as 320 registered boats operate from the harbours. Besides the setting up of landing facilities, the Centre has given in-principle approval to revitalise the existing facilities at the Thengaithittu harbour, at a cost of Rs.20 crore. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, the facilities at the harbour will be augmented, with the purpose of making it a hygienic hub for the storage and transportation of fish. The department also plans to utilise the fund to construct an additional auction hall, a maritime museum and a recreational park, the official said. In addition to this, the department has submitted a proposal to construct more berthing facilities at the harbour. “However, this will take more time, as more studies need to be conducted,” said the official.
The Ministry had also given approval for the development of fresh water aquaculture in 10 hectares at a cost of Rs.70 lakh, development of brackish water aquaculture in 5 hectares for Rs.26 lakh, and procuring of 20 deep sea fishing boats for Rs.8 crore. Under another component of the Blue Revolution Programme, the Centre has increased financial assistance given to fishermen during lean and trawling ban periods from Rs.1500 to Rs.3000. The fishermen will get a total sum of Rs.4500, including their own monthly contribution of around Rs.1500, during the period. It will be a huge relief to as many as 25,766 fishermen in the U.T., the official said. “The inclusion of the U.T. in the Blue Revolution programme is a major relief, considering our financial constraints in taking development and welfare measures in various sectors,” he said.

**Tamil Nadu and Puducherry: Dire times for coastal fisheries?**

https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/dire-times-for-coastal-fisheries/article24603690.ece

The fishing industry along a portion of India’s east coast could be on the brink of a collapse. This dire warning comes as scientists find that fisheries in coastal Tamil Nadu and Puducherry use destructive methods and do not comply with existing regulations, which could stress the already over-exploited fish resources here. Regulations are crucial in India, the world's second largest fish producer, where large scale motorisation of traditional fishing crafts began since the 1950s. Different categories of crafts – traditional catamarans, fibreglass boats, trawlers – have specifications, from the fishing gear they should employ to the distance they should head out into the sea. But are these rules followed? GPS data To generate baseline information on who fishes where in the sea, scientists from the Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy and Learning mapped and quantified fish catch, fishing gear, craft and crew details along 120 kilometres of the coasts of Puducherry, Villupuram and Cuddalore districts of Tamil Nadu.

They attached global positioning systems to vessels; these, as well as field teams gathered information of over 3,427 fishing trips over 7,945 square kilometres of fishing grounds between June 2012 and June 2013. Their results, published in PLOS ONE on July 11 this year, reveal that there are distinct high-pressure fishing zones and overlapping fishing territories between traditional, motorised and mechanised crafts. Violations of the Marine Fisheries Regulations Act (including not adhering to fishing limits and using illegal fishing gear) are also frequent. The team also presented these results to the fishing community leaders of each village. “We wanted to initiate discussions among the fishing communities regarding their role in fisheries management, for they adhere to decisions made by their community leaders,” said Tara Lawrence, lead author of the study.

Some of the recommendations made by these communities are listed in the study – such as suggesting that boats stick to their nautical mile limits – and can be achieved with enforcement and could potentially help the marine ecosystem recover, she adds. According to marine biologist Divya Karnad who was not involved in this study, this work is a critical contribution to
the study of small-scale fisheries in India. However, the data is a bit dated; since fisheries are ever-changing, comparisons with the present could offer better insight into change and adaptation in these fisheries, she wrote in an email. “We need many more such systematic studies that collect long-term data,” she added.

Puducherry: Demands spending installments for fisheries "saving and relief scheme"


Puducherry Minister for Fisheries and Tourism Malladi Krishna Rao on Tuesday met the Joint Commissioner and Director of Fisheries, of Government of India and requested to expedite the sanctioning of pending installment of Rs. 4 crore for “Savings and Relief Scheme” for the year 2015-16. According to an official release on Wednesday, he also requested the Joint Commissioner to sanction the scheme for current year and to sanction Phase-II of Fishing Harbour in Karaikal and Yanam and 2 Jetties for Puducherry, 1 for Karaikal and 1 for Yanam.

The officials have in-principal agreed and asked to submit the report at the earliest for consideration. Mr Rao also met the Joint Secretary and Deputy Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and briefed about the ongoing works sanctioned under Coastal, Spiritual and Heritage Circuit and requested for release of additional funds. Also he submitted the preliminary report for developing thematic tourist circuits in the UT of Puducherry.

Puducherry: Government announces a slew of schemes for fishermen


The Puducherry government has announced a slew of welfare measures for the fisherfolk community. Tourism and Fisheries Minister Malladi Krishna Rao told the Assembly on Tuesday that the government would provide a lump sum compensation to fishermen from Puducherry who were stranded in Kerala and Gujarat during the Cyclone Ockhi. The compensation would be provided after a detailed enquiry and would be on par with the relief announced by the Tamil Nadu government. Mr. Rao said the Centre and the Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fishery (CICEF) had inspected the Karaikal fishing harbour for the second phase expansion. A detailed project report (DPR) would be prepared by the Public Works Department and submitted to the Centre by November 2018.

The first phase of the Yanam fishing harbour would become operational in August 2018. Enumeration of vendors The government would rope in a private agency for the enumeration of fish vendors. A special welfare package would be prepared based on the daily needs of the fish
vendors. The Pondicherry Union Territory Fisheries and Fisheries Development Corporation (Puffdco) would be established on August 15, he said. The government announced an increase in financial assistance to the kin of fishermen who die while at sea. The ex gratia to the kin of fishermen had been increased to Rs.10 lakh from Rs.2 lakh. Similarly, the government would provide Rs.5 lakh for accidental death of fishermen.

Puducherry: Fishermen warned against use of purse seine nets


Despite a ban on fishing using purse seine nets, fishermen in Puducherry continue to use them posing a threat to marine life. Fishermen in several coastal hamlets in Puducherry have opted for this net, while some others have been using regular nets. The purse seine nets cost around ?20 lakh and the fibre glass boats using these nets require at least 15 to 20 fishermen. After the net is cast, it is manually hauled by around 15 fishermen. Purse seine nets not only catch fully grown fishes but also the fishlings, adversely impacting fish population. A fisherman at the Thengaithittu fishing harbour said that a majority of fishermen from Tamil Nadu used the purse seine nets. “So if we abstain from using these nets, the Tamil Nadu fishermen will have a big catch.

Adding insult to injury, the fishes trapped through these nets are transported in iceboxes to the local markets in Karnataka and Kerala.” “The office of the Department of Fisheries located at the Thengaithittu fishing harbour has failed to take any effective steps to enforce the ban. The officials from the Department of Fisheries on the one hand have banned the use of the nets while on the other have been issuing tokens to fish loading vans from Kerala and Karnataka to transport the fish,” he said. A section of fishermen here who are against the use of the banned nets are sceptical about the availability of fish for the future generations in view of the massive catch being made every day through the use of these nets. “Continuous purse seine fishing would wipe out the marine life in the next few years,” said another fisherman.

Continuing practice A visit to the fishing harbour also brought to the fore shrimp and fish waste dumped to the west of the boat repair yard near the office of the Department of Fisheries raising a stink. Fish laden vans which arrive at the harbour early in the morning dump the waste and leave. This has been brought to the notice of the department on several occasions, but to no avail. A senior official of the Fisheries Department conceded that fish waste should not be dumped into the water and instead it should be properly disposed off. “We have warned them against dumping the waste,” he said. The department has already banned the use of purse seine nets and warned fishermen about the suspension of subsidy and registration of fishing vessels. But fishermen
continue to use the banned nets. The fishermen will be sensitised to the ills of use of these nets and frequent raids would be conducted, he said.

**Puducherry: Do not use purse seine net: Fishermen Welfare Department**


The Puducherry administration on Tuesday urged the fishermen not to use the banned purse seine net (surukku valai) for fishing here. According to a release issued by the Puducherry Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department, the particular net was banned to ensure the growth of fish resource and welfare of the fishermen. But it was reported that a few fishermen are now using the banned net which will affect fish resource. Reiterating that the purse seine net was a banned one, the department cautioned that since using the same is a crime, it would be seized and the subsidy to such fishermen would be cancelled.

**Puducherry: Former MP wants more support for fisheries sector**


The existing approach and procedures of plan spending by the Government of Puducherry needs to be radically restructured in the backdrop of the need for the optimal utilisation of scarce financial and real resource to maximise growth, former MP M. Ramadass said here on Friday. “The ongoing arithmetic exercise of adding or subtracting 10% of previous year’s outlay to determine this year’s outlay has to be abandoned and in its place real requirement based methodology has to be substituted. Plan sectors contributing directly to productivity, production, employment generation, purchasing power and State Domestic Product should be properly identified and prioritised for plan spending after scientifically assessing their requirement of funds,” he said in a statement. According to Mr. Ramadass, keeping these parameters in mind, the government can easily choose a dozen productive sectors which can catalyse the overall growth of Puducherry economy.

Fishing was one such sector which had a high untapped potential for growth but grossly neglected in plan financing over the years. “Given the right financial support, fishing can emerge as a money spinner for the economy,” he said. All the four regions of the territory were maritime and they had a coast line of 45 km, with 675 km of inshore water and fresh water area of about 2,000 hectares. The fishermen community engaged in fishing in these resources constitutes the third largest community of the territory (about 9% of the territory’s population), Mr. Ramadass said. The fishery work force forming 8.6% of the labour force of the territory produce fishery output which was 53,808 tonnes in 2015-16 and 55,191 tonnes in 2016-17. Consequently, the
contribution of fishery sector to State Domestic Product (SDP) was ₹247 crore in 2014-15; ₹294 crore in 2015-16; ₹298 crore in 2016-17 and ₹313 crore in 2017-18.

Fisheries alone produced 17.2% of the output of the primary sector including agriculture and animal husbandry in the last four years. Besides, fishery sector supplements the food availability and ensures food security to the people, stimulates export growth and development of ancillary industries such as net making, boat building and so on. Such a significant sector should have been considered as a priority and realising its present and future prospects, the Government of Puducherry should have earmarked sufficient plan outlay for its development. However, unfortunately, this predominant productive sector had been receiving a raw deal from the government in the last 30 years, Mr. Ramadass said. Without any just and scientific basis, the government had been allocating meagre funds to fisheries disproportionate to its requirements.

The annual plan expenditure of the Department of Fisheries was just ₹46 crore in 2014-15; ₹43 crore in 2015-16; ₹45 crore in 2016-17 and ₹47 crore in 2017-18. Inadequate support During the period under review (2014-17), the government spent only ₹181 crore on fisheries while the aggregate plan expenditure of the government was ₹7,777 crore which implied that the Fisheries Department had just received only a paltry 2.3% of the expenditure. In the last four years, the fishery sector had contributed ₹1,152 crore to the State Domestic Product but the government had given back only a fraction to this sector. “Can a government unleash this exploitation, injustice and neglect on the third largest community of the territory? When the annual plan expenditure of ₹45 crore is insufficient to provide even the normal relief to fishermen what funds would be available to implement productive schemes to enhance output?”, he wondered.

The government had been unable to provide sufficient mechanised and other boats and create infrastructure such as fish landing jetties, fish curing yards, ice plant cum cold storage units, fish farms or vans for fish transport. Deep sea fishing, which is emphasised by the Government of India in recent times, had not been given any recognition so far by the Government of Puducherry. In the absence of these facilities, the full potential of the sea had not been tapped. It is quite possible to enhance the present fish output of 55,199 tonnes to 1 lakh tonnes in the future provided sufficient funding was made by the government. According to the former MP, two options could be considered by the government to enhance the plan expenditure of the Department of Fisheries. On the lines of Special Component Plan for the Scheduled Castes people, the government should introduce a new scheme titled State Special Component Plan (SSCP) for Fishermen and decide outlay for the fisheries sector in proportion to the population (9%).

When the Plan outlay is ₹2,750 crore, 9% of it , or ₹248 crore, should be the outlay for the Department of Fisheries. The second option is that the government allocates 60% of what the Fisheries Sector contributes to the State Domestic Product, that is ₹188 crore out of ₹313 crore. At any rate, the annual plan expenditure should be stepped up from the present ₹47 crore and it
should range from ₹188 crore to ₹248 crore. “The increased expenditure alone would ensure economic and social justice to the predominant productive community which is now considered for the status of Scheduled Tribe by the Government of India besides hastening the process of ‘blue revolution’ in the Union Territory of Puducherry as a component of Prosperous Puducherry,” Mr. Ramadass said.

**Puducherry: Fishermen organise agitation in Pondy**


Fishermen organized an agitation in front of the Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department here on Monday. The owners of the mechanised fishing vessels and other fishermen were on a series of agitations demanding the provision of Rs. 75,000 to all fishermen for the period which they could not venture into the sea due to sand accumulation in the estuary and provision of 300 liters of diesel on subsidy among other things. As part of the agitation, the fishermen held a demonstration in front of the fisheries and fishermen development department and came to the office to submit a memorandum to the director. However, since the director or staffs were not available, they resorted to another agitation stating that they do not need such a department and threw Xerox copies of the diesel subsidy right book in front of the department and continued their agitation.

**Puducherry: Fishermen in troubled waters**


With the 61 day ban on fishing, which came into force on the East Coast from April 15, bringing to a halt the fishing activities in the Union Territory, fishermen in Puducherry and Karaikal regions are virtually in troubled waters without being able to get any alternative source of income during the ban period. Over 21,000 fishermen families are residing in the Union Territory. The government had announced a compensation of Rs.5,500 per month to each of the families to enable them to get out of penury as their income would get dry. This would entail an expenditure of Rs.13 crore. ‘Paid only Rs.183 per day’ But the list of woes for fishermen seems endless with the community charging the government with late disbursement of the compensation amount. By itself the amount of compensation is paltry for the fishermen families since they would not be able to meet their commitments during the ban period.

“The government is paying Rs. 286 per day as minimum wages for workers engaged under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGA) while the assistance to fishermen works out to a paltry Rs.183 per day. Fishing is the main source of our livelihood. How is it possible for us to keep the pot boiling with the meagre compensation given to us. Even the disbursement of compensation is delayed adding insult to injury,” M. Ilango,
Chairperson of National Fisherfolk Forum told The Hindu. The delayed payment has become a norm over the last few years. The government should ensure that the payment is disbursed on time to the families, Mr. Ilango said. Unfulfilled promises Many promises such as disbursement of assistance for damaged fishing boats, revival of Puducherry Fishermen Development Corporation, and old age pension for new applicants remain unfulfilled. Fishermen have also demanded the government to change the period of annual fishing ban from April-June to January-February to help facilitate better breeding.

The annual fishing ban has been extended from 45 to 61 days. However, fishermen from the coastal States on the East Coast feel that the ban period should be changed. The Centre should consult the stakeholders particularly the fishing community on deciding the ban period since they possess the ground knowledge on the dynamics of the sea. NFF has also demanded the Centre to form a separate Ministry for Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare by bifurcating the Ministry of Agriculture. NFF has sought greater allocation of funds for fishermen. A major portion of the fund allocation in 2017-18 went to training and research institutions leaving a meagre sum for fishermen welfare, Mr. Ilango said.

Puducherry: Noisy scenes at public hearing on coastal regulations


The public hearing organised by the Puducherry government to discuss the Puducherry Coastal Zone Management Plan (PCZMP) got off to a stormy start here on Wednesday with representatives from fishermen panchayats and non-governmental organisations registering their protest against irregular approach on the part of the authorities. As an official from the Department of Science, Technology and Environment (DSTE) began presenting the Puducherry Coastal Zone Management Plan, fishermen from several coastal hamlets raised slogans demanding that the public hearing be cancelled. They alleged that the authorities did not give them proper notification. Moreover, the pamphlets were not issued in Tamil. The draft PCZMP was only a move to disturb the environment and affect the livelihood of scores of fishermen, they said, before staging a walkout.

C.H. Balamohan of Alliance for Good Governance (AGG), a coalition of various non-governmental organisations in Puducherry, pointed out that the 2011 Central notification had not been strictly complied with and the public consultation had been organised in a haphazard manner. The Coastal Zone Management Plan maps prepared in 1996 under the Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) notification 1991, which were supposed to be presented and compared, was not done. The hazard line and other related information such as contour maps, which are crucial for planning, were not provided, he added. The draft plan does not have any details on fishermen settlements/villages, extension of the settlements/villages, boat parking areas, and fish
drying areas. Pre-plan preparatory meetings with the fishermen had not been conducted, which was an important step to understand their issues and demarcate the relevant areas such as sand dunes. Selvamanikandan, a representative of Vaithikuppam panchayat, said there was a strict ban on any construction within 50 metres from the coastline as per CRZ-1 classification.

But the government itself had gone ahead with the development of the Puducherry port in violation of this ban. Collector Satyendra Singh Dursawat, who chaired the meeting, clarified that the objective of the meeting was to elicit the suggestions and objections of the stakeholders. The public consultation was quasi judicial authority and hence interruption would not be allowed. A senior official of DSTE explained the highlights of the draft PCZMP. But the stakeholders and representatives from fishermen panchayats, kept telling the authorities that Vaithikuppam and other coastal hamlets had started bearing the brunt of sea erosion because of rampant construction activities in the CRZ from Kalapet to Moorthykuppam. Ashok, a fisherman of Solai Nagar, pointed out that there was a ban on construction of groynes along the coast and the work had been suspended since 2008 on the directions of the National Green Tribunal.

But the government, under the guise of beach nourishment, had been doing the same by dumping boulders in front of the Chief Secretariat. He said the authorities defended the move stating that they were promoting tourism by the beach nourishment plan. This was a weak and unacceptable argument, he said. Raja, another fisherman of Thengaithittu, said the coast had been converted into a dumping ground for plastics and solid waste. Dredging had not been done properly and fishermen were facing the brunt all along, he said. The fishermen settlements/villages, extension of the settlements/villages, boat parking areas, and fish drying areas, had not been marked. Pre-plan preparatory meetings with the fishermen had not been conducted, which was an important step to understand their issues and demarcate the relevant areas, geomorphologic features like sand dunes, beaches, and spits.

**Puducherry: Govt. to hold consultation on coastal zone plan**


The Government of Puducherry has convened a public consultation on Wednesday to discuss the Puducherry Coastal Zone Management Plan (PCZIVIP) as per the CRZ Notification 2011. The public hearing is proposed at 11 a.m. in Kamban Kalai Arangam under the chairmanship of District Magistrate-cum-District Collector of Puducherry. It is part of the procedure for finalising the PCZMP, a pressnote from the Member-Secretary Puducherry Pollution Control Committee said. The PCZMP demarcates the areas falling under the Coastal Regulation Zone and all the development activities in the CRZ areas will be regulated under the provisions of CRZ Notification, 2011. Hence it is requested that the local communities and general public participate in the hearing and provide their views and suggestions, the note added.