

# **Maharashtra News Articles**

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**Maharashtra: Fishermen suffer financial loss due to stormy weather, ask assistance from govt**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-fishermen-suffer-financial-loss-due-to-stormy-weather-ask-assistance-from-govt>

The fishing community returned to the sea from August 1 after end of monsoon ban on India's west coast. But the community did not get a good catch, mostly because of the heavy rains and stormy weather that city witnessed in the past couple of weeks.

The tumultuous weather resulted in the fishing community losing out on bounty. According to reports, the fishermen, who depend on natural conditions, have suffered losses due to the same. A report in Lokmat stated that in order to ensure the survival of Koli community, the representatives has asked for a study on weather, fish prices, costs of marketing and other elements to compensate the fishermen.

Reportedly, general secretary of Koli Federation Rajhans Tapke, has asked that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde to form a study group consisting experts, administrative officials and fishermen. The report stated that because of the climate change, heavy rains, stormy waves and strong winds have become regular which has affected the Koli community who depend on natural resources to fish.

With rising prices of diesel, fishing gear and lesser time to sail into sea for catch, the fishing community has borne financial loss, stated Tapke. He added that fishermen, boat-owning families, and others who depend on the business have suffered huge losses.

**Maharashtra: Vadhavan Port to impact 20,809 fisherfolk in 16 villages**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/vadhavan-port-to-impact-20-809-fisherfolk-in-16-villages-survey-101663693110362.html>

A previously undisclosed survey by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), to assess the impact of the proposed Vadhawan Port on coastal fisheries in Palghar district's eco-sensitive Dahanu taluka, shows that the project will impact livelihoods of at least 20,809 fisherfolk, comprising 5,333 families and living in 16 fishing villages within a 10km radius of the port. These include Agar, Narpad, Dahanu, Dhakti-Dahanu, Gungwada, Tarapur, Varor, Dandepada, Chinchani, Ghivali, Kambode, Tadiyale, Dhumket, Abram, Asangaon and Matgaon.

Fishing is the main occupation of people in the 16 coastal villages as mentioned, states the report, which was obtained last week under the Right to Information (RTI) Act by Devendra Tandel, president of the Akhil Maharashtra Machimaar Kruti Samiti (AMMKS), and shared with Hindustan Times.

The report identifies five villages in particular (which lie within the port premises), where fishing activities would be impacted the most, including Tadiyale, Gungwada, Dhakti-Dahanu, Vadhavan and Varore. Notably, these account for at least 8,296 affected fisherfolk.

In all, the port will render approximately 72 sq kms of current fishing area inaccessible to fisherfolk once operations are underway, and during the construction phase as well. This is equivalent to about 17,791 acres in area. The area outside the harbour of the port (58 sq. km. approx.) may be available for fishing subject to regulation by the port authority and security, the report notes.

These fishers ply a broad gamut of fishing and allied trades, from working on boats to net mending, fish marketing and distribution, supplying of ice, fish transportation, fish drying, peeling and sorting, aquaculture, and subsistence fishing (such as collection of crabs and shellfish from intertidal areas). They employ a variety of methods, from using bag-nets, shore-seine nets, dragnets, gillnets and crab traps, targeting a diverse variety of high-value fish, from pomfret to rawas, lobsters, prawns, Bombay duck, mackerel, mullets, croakers, snappers, seerfish and anchovies. In 2018-19, the total value of fish caught in the Dahanu fishing zone was estimated to be 1,74,05,90,981.

Tandel, and other experts, emphasised that this figure (of 20,809 project affected fishers) is likely a gross underestimation of the port's impact on coastal livelihoods. The report -- 'Impact Study on Proposed Vadhavan Port on Coastal Fisheries' -- was commissioned by the project administrator, the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) as part of the process to obtain environment clearance (EC) for the project. JNPA is yet to apply for EC from the Union environment ministry.

Notably, the Union ministry of environment, forests and climate change (MoEFCC) has recently reclassified the list of permissible regulated activities in the Dahanu taluka eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) to allow the construction of ports and harbours. The ministry issued an office memorandum (OM) in this regard on May 26 this year, drawing the ire of environmentalists.

In 1998, the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority had clearly prohibited the

construction of the project on ecological grounds. This order has not been challenged by any party before any court, and that stands final. This attempt at reviving the project clearly violates it, said Debi Goenka, executive trustee, Conservation Action Trust, a city-based environment non-profit.

As for the matter of this report on impact of coastal fisheries, it was not provided to us despite requests before the DTEPA, or under the RTI. It begs the question of why the JNPA has not been forthcoming about it. This project is going to completely wipe out extremely productive fishing grounds for at least the next 20 years. Fisherfolk in Uran, who were displaced by the JNPA's port at Nhava Sheva in the 1980s, are still awaiting compensation and rehabilitation. Unless better sense prevails, the same human rights violations are about to be repeated at Vadhavan, Goenka added.

Notably, the report also mentions that the project site serves as a nursery for several commercially viable fish. The proposed port area and surroundings do not act as a breeding or spawning ground... but can act as nursery ground of several commercially important fishes... Due to the productivity of that region and presence of creeks, juveniles and adult fishes are seasonally abundant in near shore waters, the report states, noting that most of the fishes observed were juveniles during June and July, while dominantly mature fishes were observed from November to May.

This makes the area a golden belt for fishers from Palghar, Thane and Mumbai, especially since the catch closer to Mumbai city has declined severely in recent decades. It is not just fishers from the 16 villages who go there to fish. The productivity of the Dahanu fishing zone is essentially for the fishing economy right from Zai, which is the northernmost fishing village in Maharashtra, to Colaba in Mumbai, said Tandel.

Bernard D'Mello, a fisherman from Uttan in Mira-Bhayander taluka in Thane, added, Over the past few years, fishermen from as south as Madh and Gorai have been visiting the area. And fishers from Uttan and Vasai have been frequenting the location for the last three decades at least. It is completely wrong to say that we will not be affected by the development of the port.

Commenting on the findings of the CMFRI report, Unmesh Wagh, deputy chairman, JNPA, conceded that the port will have some impact on coastal fisheries in the region. There will be some impact on fisheries, but it is important to note that not a single person will be displaced from their place of residence, and will in fact be compensated for their loss. Vadhavan Port is a mega-port of extreme strategic importance to the country. It will circumvent the need to set up

many smaller ports instead, which in the long-run would be more damaging to the environment and livelihoods, he said.

**Maharashtra: Construction of MTHL affecting fishing community in Navi Mumbai**

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/other/construction-of-mthl-affecting-fishing-community-in-navi-mumbai-activists/ar-AA11WK9q?rc=1&ocid=winp1taskbar&cvid=04fd9addcd4c4b2aadb3bdecddc8223e>

Fisherman Sandeep Koli had been at sea for almost nine hours when we visit him at Gavhan Koliwada in Navi Mumbai. He reached there when the water was still cold at around 5 am, as has been his routine for the past several decades. But even after an arduous work day that ended at 4 pm, Koli had managed to catch less than three dozen crabs. Disappointed, he told us that half of the catch will be set aside for his family, while the other half will be sold at Bhaucha Dhakka. It will fetch him a few hundred bucks only. The catch has been depleting with every passing day, he says. Just about 45 km from Mumbai, on the coastline of Gavhan Koliwada and neighbouring coastal areas in Ulwe and Panvel taluka, the fishermen community is mourning two deaths. That of their livelihood due to the construction of the Mumbai Trans Harbour Sea Link (MTHL), which has affected the marine flora and fauna, and the unceremonious cutting of mangroves and handing over of 10 acres of mangrove land for construction of a Balaji temple.

Mangroves visible on both sides of the Mumbai Trans Harbour Sea Link (MTHL), towards Nhava Sheva end at Chirner, Ulwe. With construction work of MTHL nearly complete, local fishermen were hoping that debris would be removed from the site, so that natural tidal waters were allowed to come into the fishing area. That hasn't happened yet, claim locals. Pics/Sameer Markande

According to locals, construction of the 21.8 km-long MTHL, which is expected to connect Sewri and Nhava Sheva, has set a chain reaction, with many construction projects mushrooming around the coastal stretch. Activist Nandkumar Pawar, 62, who is an environmentalist and Head Coastal Projects of NGO Sagar Shakti, breaks it down for us. The entire Uran taluka and Panvel taluka are essentially low lying areas surrounded by mangroves, where a number of infrastructure and real estate projects are coming up near the coastal area.

He explains further, Mangroves play an important role in protecting the coast as natural barriers against tidal attacks, storms, tsunamis apart from serving as carbon sinks and effective rain forests. They are also breeding grounds for varieties of fish and crabs. Any construction activity is bound to affect the fishing community.

Experts say that because the fishing community enjoys no land rights, unlike farmers who get certified as land owners in revenue records, when the sea is encroached, they do not get compensatory benefits. Pawar, who is also a fisherman, visited these areas prior to the commencement of construction activities, witnessing transformation of the coastline across Ulwe, Uran and Panvel taluka nodes first-hand.

The problem started four years ago, when the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) took up construction of the MTHL. The entire construction area has been under tight security since and was kept out of the local fishing community's reach, Director of the not-for-profit NatConnect Foundation, BN Kumar says. With the project nearing completion, they were expecting that the area would be free from all encumbrances, so that they could restart fishing, he adds.

But, the villagers learnt that 10 acres of mangrove land had been handed over for construction of the replica of Lord Venkateshwara Balaji temple by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). The Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government through the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) had allotted land to TTD for construction the temple, in April 2022. The registration of the alienated land was done on August 17, 2022, just three days before the scheduled Bhoomi Pujan on August 21. The Bhoomi Pujan was, however, cancelled abruptly.

The blue coloured shed that was erected for the proposed Bhoomi Pujan of Balaji temple on August 21, 2022, which was cancelled at the last minute

Mallikarjuna, who is the special officer of TTD's estate wing tells mid-day, At the allotted land, MTHL casting work is still underway, but it will end in another two months. Out of the total 10 acres, nearly 60 per cent of the land will be used for construction of the main Balaji temple and temple subsidiaries, which will have a pushkarini (holy pond), priests' quarters and kitchen for making prasadam etc. The remaining portion of the land will be used for gardening and for growing specific flowers and tulsi, which will be used for daily pooja of the deity. He adds that the estimated cost of construction for the temple in Ulwe will be between R50-R70 crore, funded by devotees. Construction work will be completed within a year's time after Bhumi Pujan.

Mid-day in its article (How did Aaditya hand over mangrove land for a temple?) dated September 13, had stated that green activists would be reaching out to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde to call off the Bhoomi Pujan at the site. We are not against the temple or its construction, as we believe that God is the creator of the universe, but we need to protect our natural resources.

CIDCO or the state government can provide an alternative location for the temple in non-fishing areas and protect the original habitants of the coastline, says Pawar.

The project has also caused damage to many fishermen's boats anchored on the coast. Inflation and loss of livelihood has added to their fears of taking a loan for a new boat. A small fibre boat costs around Rs 80,000 and can cross over to somewhere between Rs 3-Rs 4 lakh, which we cannot afford, said Hitesh Koli, a graduate from the village who works as an autorickshaw driver to make ends meet.

Fishing was our only occupation. The tidal waters would almost touch our coastline and we would get varieties of fish—tiger prawns, prawns, lobster, king fish (surmai), crabs, Bombay ducks (bombils), etc in large quantities, but after the construction activities started and the ecology of our coastline got affected, most of the fish varieties have vanished, he adds.

Ecological change has also brought about a change in traditional domestic roles at home. Fisherman Bharat Koli says, Earlier, our women would stay home, while men would go out for the day's catch. Today, our women, due to the lack of options, have to work as domestic helps supporting the family by a few thousands of rupees. He adds, unlike older times, even after venturing deep inside the water, the catch is not sufficient enough to feed the family.

While this reporter and photographer Sameer Markande were at Gavhan Koliwada, an open tempo sans any number plate, laden with dry waste and packing material, illegally dumped its load on the affected land. On spotting the camera, the driver drove away. Fishermen say this illegal activity has become the order of the day and that the origin of these dumpsters is unknown to the community.

Pawar, however, knew the functioning a little too well. This is the modus operandi adopted by land grabbers and encroachers, who start with dumping waste on coastal land and then suddenly stake claim as rightful owners. Such activities cannot happen without the knowhow of local administration and political connections.

Pawar says the proposed 10 acres of land allotted to TTD is also regulated within the CRZ-1 norms. These norms protect areas along the 7,500 km stretch of the Indian coastline from development of buildings, tourism facilities and other infrastructure. The shed erected for the Bhoomi Pujan [still extant] is on the coastline and within the mangrove area. After these constructions, we fear that this area, along with the remainder belt along MTHL might be declared as CRZ-2. CRZ-2 zone constitutes of areas developed up to the shoreline which fall

within the existing municipal limits.

Meanwhile, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Control (MOEFCC) have responded to a complaint filed by NGOs Sagar Shakti and NatConnect Foundation asking the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) to probe further. Kumar says, Dr H Kharkwal, Scientist 'E' (CRZ) at MOEFCC, asked the Environment Principal Secretary Manisha Patankar and MCZMA member secretary Narendra Toke to 'examine the nature and extent of alleged representations in respect of all issues,' while also asking for action as per law if grievances are found to be true. Kumar believes the way forward should be restoration of occupied coastlines, rather than encroachment of more such lands. When we are flooded with international research reports which say that rising sea levels would drown the coasts, these kinds of coastal projects on mangrove zones shouldn't be given a go ahead.

Experts speak: Advocate Shreepasad Parab says that the right to fishing is the customary right of fishermen, which is protected under Articles 13 and 14 of the Indian Constitution. The Supreme Court has held that the Right to Livelihood is an integral part of Right to Life under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Thus, the fishing community has the right to fishing as their fundamental right. He also added that Article 48A of the Constitution makes it the state's duty to protect and improve the environment and also safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country. This includes the coastline and marine animals. Parab adds, Article 51A (g) of the Constitution puts the onus of duty on all Indians to protect and improve the natural environment including forest, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures. So, it's a shared responsibility of the state and all citizens.

Former chief scientist at CSIR-National institute of Oceanography, Mumbai and an expert IN marine studies, Dr Jiyalal Jaiswar says that the development of the Sewri-Nhava Sheva link is bound to alter the natural topography of the creeks and estuary, affecting tidal currents. This alteration may hamper the flow of water resulting in flood during monsoon, associated with high tide. Mangroves protect the shore from erosion and break down the strong tsunami waves. They are also a source of producing nutrients facilitating a nursing and breeding ground for fisheries and other aquatic animals. In addition, mangroves provide ample oxygen and consume carbon dioxide from the atmosphere on a large scale. Being ecologically sensitive and protected under CRZ-1 category, any damage to the mangroves is a violation of CRZ norms.

**Maharashtra: Climate change: 55 ha coastal area in Raigad submerged**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/climate-change-55-ha-coastal-area-in-raigad-submerged-finds-study/articleshow/94233365.cms?from=mdr>



In significant evidence of how climate change is affecting the coastal ecosystem just 200km from Mumbai, researchers, using satellite images, have identified the submergence of an 55 hectare (ha) area-nearly 10 times the size of Wankhede Stadium which covers 5.4ha-near Devghar in Raigad district. This clearly indicates a worrying sign of coastal inundation and extreme shoreline erosion.

Srushti Conservation Foundation (SCF), a non-profit organisation in Pune, conducted the study close to the mouth of Bankot Creek, which has a 1.5km beach. Preliminary data show that between 1990 and 2022, there was a total loss of around 55ha of coastal ecosystems, including mangrove, creeklets, mudflats, and sandy coasts; almost 300m of shore area was eroded.

The lesson is that the shoreline is already changing steadily in several parts of the state and there is a need for a systematic assessment, the study suggested. A study of the coastal erosion in Devghar, about 200km from Mumbai, by non-profit Srushti Conservation Foundation (SCF) has highlighted the need for a long-term plan to protect and preserve the state's coastline. For example, in many areas, mangroves are expanding in agriculture lands due to saltwater ingress, while in many areas, loss of sediment is causing large-scale erosion. Climate change-related sea-level rise will further worsen the situation. The government should commission a study to seek solutions to deal with the changing seascape, said Deepak Apte, managing director, SCF.

The promotion of kharland bunds, which essentially kill mangroves, is an ill-conceived remedy...It will not only erode our natural barrier, but also facilitate erosion in the long run. It was observed that the satellite-derived shoreline (unsupervised classification-based waterbody boundary) [in Devghar] had now shifted 300-500m towards land. Apart from this, it was clear that mangrove and Casuarina plantation was also not able to withstand the loss of sediment and got uprooted, said Apte. The study was prompted by information shared by Devghar residents on how this beach had been steadily eroding since the 1990s.

Researchers ran a preliminary analysis to determine the degree of erosion since the 1990s and assembled Landsat (satellite) datasets using Google Earth engine to look into the claim. The satellite images showed that mangroves were distributed unevenly in this patch. In the central part of this patch, dead mangroves were observed on a large scale. In the peripheral areas, mangroves were dominated by the bushy and sparsely distributed *Avicennia marina* (gray mangrove), and the inner areas were dominated by *Rhizophora mucronata* (Asiatic mangrove).

In exceptional cases, *Aegiceras corniculatum* (black mangrove) could be observed along with *Acanthus ilicifolius* (Sea Holly), the research showed. Casuarina plantation currently extends

along the north- south belt on Devghar beach. But the beach-side plantation was found to be getting destroyed due to continuous loss of sediment resulting in the erosion of the shore and also change in sediment profile from a clay-silty seascape to coarse sand dominated, the analysis found. In 2020, the land- fall of Cyclone Nisarga close to the coast of Devghar saw the death of trees, shrubs, and 5ha of mangrove species like Avicennia marina. Some of the- se patches are now recovering, but large tracts of mangrove are on the verge of death, most probably due to a shift in sediment structure from muddy to sandy nature, the study said.

### **Maharashtra: BMC to give mall-like design to vegetable and fish markets in Mumbai**

[https://www.timesnownews.com/mumbai/mumbais-markets-to-get-mall-like-facelift-bmcs-redesign-starts-with-borivali-and-jogeshwari-article-94193833/amp?utm\\_campaign=fullarticle&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_source=inshorts](https://www.timesnownews.com/mumbai/mumbais-markets-to-get-mall-like-facelift-bmcs-redesign-starts-with-borivali-and-jogeshwari-article-94193833/amp?utm_campaign=fullarticle&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=inshorts)

The Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is planning a stellar redevelopment of its vegetable and fish markets to upgrade them to mall-like facilities with all the latest amenities. The civic authorities have directed its architect to redesign the two upcoming markets in Borivali and Nawalkar Market in Jogeshwari in the first phase.

According to civic authorities, the facelifted markets will have specific areas for different products. A separate floor will be given exclusively for vegetables and fruits.

The fish and meat sections and grocery will also get dedicated floors. The BMC has suggested the engineers to keep the fish section on the ground floor with a separate entrance. A 10 feet-corridor will also be given on each floor for the convenience of the public and vendors. The market will be equipped with security systems and CCTVs will have escalators and parking spaces. There are more than 90 vegetable markets under BMC in Mumbai which are operated by 17164 licensed vendors. They have been demanding a development of the markets for a long as the current facilities have become obsolete. Some of the markets like Crawford Market and Shirodkar Market in Parel are already undergoing development.

To address the licensed vendors' demands for the bifurcation of goods in the market, the authorities asked the BMC's architect to change the design of the market building in Borivali and Nawalkar Market in Jogeshwari West, Additional Municipal Commissioner, Ashish Sharma, told reporters. The market committees and sellers welcomed the move.

We are glad that the BMC has considered our demand. The existing markets needed an urgent redevelopment to facilitate hassle-free trading. With the new design, it is the public who benefits more than the sellers, a licenced vendor said.

**Maharashtra: Poor catch due to choppy weather: Uttan fishing community urges govt to declare 'wet famine**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/poor-catch-due-to-choppy-weather-uttan-fishing-community-urges-govt-to-declare-wet-famine>

After sincerely following the customary 60-day conservation period (annual fishing ban), fishermen have started venturing into the Arabian Sea for the new fishing season that began on 1 August. However, owing to heavy rains coupled with choppy weather and stormy waves, which are averse to sailing, netting of good catch during this peak season has dashed the hopes for the fishing community not only in the coastal areas of Uttan near Bhayandar but the entire Konkan belt.

Staring at huge losses due to the rough sea and unpredictable weather conditions, the fishing community of Uttan has urged the state government authorities to declare a wet famine and grant a relief package as a part of financial assistance to bail out the affected fishermen. The quaint fishing villages including Uttan, Pali, Dongri, Bhatte Bunder and Chowk are home to more than 750 fishing boats in the region. While most of the fishermen had to pre-maturely abort their operations mid-way and beat a hasty retreat to the shores empty-handed, a few who braved the weather, could not cast their nets as the boats remained unstable due to the choppy waters.

The fisherfolk have suffered losses as a major part of essential commodities, diesel and other supplies they took for multiple voyages got wasted and that too amidst the peak fishing season, said municipal corporator Sharmila Bagaji.

Already reeling under an acute financial crisis due to low catch, the government should compensate the fishermen. As they do in the case of farmers. What land is to farmers, the sea is the only means for survival for fishermen, said fishing community leader Bernard D'mello. As per the size and capacity of the boat, around 8 to 18 crew members including the khalasi's (helpers) and tandel (captain) set out on a fishing voyage of a boat which lasts for a week to ten days with expenses averaging around Rs. 1 lakh. A large fleet of fishing boats has been anchored at the local harbour's.

## **Maharashtra: The ‘forgotten’ water ecosystems of Mumbai**

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/environment/the-forgotten-water-ecosystems-of-mumbai-84732>

Most of Mumbai’s youth seems oblivious to the ecological challenges faced by their city — especially its water bodies. However, these need urgent attention for resilience against climate-related uncertainties. The devastating Mumbai floods of 2005 brought the long-forgotten Mithi River back to public attention. Stream systems play an important role in the hydrological cycle, transporting water off the landscape and back to the estuaries and oceans. data-preserve-spaces the role of rivers and creeks, however, is far greater than simple drainage since they provide crucial habitat for many of Mumbai’s aquatic flora and fauna.

Dahisar, Mithi, Oshiwara, and Poisar are Mumbai’s four rivers, which flow into the Arabian Sea through the Malad, Mahim, Marve, and Thane creeks, respectively. We refer to the city’s water bodies as which is an indicator of our casual attitude towards their environmental degradation.

The term environmental generational amnesia was coined by PH Kahn, a professor at the Department of Psychology and director of the Human Interaction with Nature and Technological Systems (HINTS) Lab University of Washington. Kahn interviewed youth who knew in abstract that pollution is bad for the environment; many did not take notice of the polluted settings around them. Over time, environmentally degraded settings had become the new normal. The possibility that they might reverse environmental harm seemed not to be within the youths’ purview, theorised Kahn.

This phrase is incredibly pertinent today for the youth of Mumbai. There is a sense of normalcy towards our damaged surroundings since it is something that has always been around. Water bodies like rivers and creeks are called sewage nullahs (drains), oblivious to the fact that the city’s natural ecology was formed by these water networks, which has deteriorated over time.

The Portuguese took over the original seven islands of the Mumbai region in 1530 from the Sultan of Ahmedabad. They gave it the name bom Bahia or excellent harbour to reflect the region’s diverse coastline ecologies. The city was made up of many island clusters inhabited by various tribes. The Kolis — native fishers — were already well-established on the islands in 1138 CE, when Pratap Bimba, king of Champaner, conquered the area, according to records. The indigenous communities of Bombay were intimately familiar with the water systems and

how the mangroves were interdependent on them for survival. Over time, the settlements saw intense urbanisation as the lands were reclaimed. A few of the settlements even succumbed to the pressure of urbanisation and vanished from maps.

Generations of Kolis thrived on vibrant water channels and a healthy environment, which have now been reduced to thick sludge as a result of the city's neglect and pollution. It is ironic how the Kolis catch more plastic than fish in their nets today. Coastal ecosystems and wetlands such as mangrove forests and biodiversity creeks have been systematically appropriated for commercial and infrastructure development purposes in Mumbai by state and private entities.

Climate change-related uncertainties such as rising sea levels, extreme rainfall events, heat island effects and changes in ocean surface temperature are likely to have an impact on the city. These, combined with environmental degradation, have created significant risks for coastal regions and their populations, particularly Kolis and tribals (Warlis). These coastal environments nurtured by the Kolis once brought them rewards but have today increasingly deteriorated. Fishing is currently a precarious livelihood due to factors like climate change, development demands, ecological degradation, and shifting ambitions.

Fish once bred in the creeks where freshwater from rivers met saltwater from the sea. These seas' worrying pollution levels have caused a decline in marine life. It has compelled fishermen to venture further out into the open seas, which is costly and unsustainable in the long run. The loss of mangrove cover due to urbanisation projects has increased the frequency of flooding and wiped out once-thriving wildlife breeding grounds.

Koli culture and traditions are inextricably linked to their occupation. Their deities, folklore, festivals, and songs are all centred on their relationship with nature. The multiple threats are raising concerns about the future of the younger generations, where changing community aspirations may lead to the loss of traditional knowledge and skills.

Thus, issues such as loss of livelihood, contested rights over commons, deteriorating environment, and changing aspirations of the youth are critical for the sustenance and well-being of these communities. The Maharashtra government announced the Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP) in March 2022, an initiative to address the city's increasing climate change threats and make several recommendations on adaptation and mitigation strategies.

According to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II, community stakeholder involvement is crucial to risk, adaptation, and vulnerability assessments. This is because the community is at the frontiers of climate change and will be most affected (Burton et al., 2002; Renn, 2004; UNDP, 2005). IPCC is a United Nations body for climate change knowledge.

The MCAP recognises the disproportionate impact of climate change-induced hazards on vulnerable communities such as the Kolis and discusses ways to strengthen their resilience. This action plan should be expanded to include the direct impact of polluting creeks on the sustenance and livelihood of the Koli community, as well as the solutions they have to offer to address the city's livability concerns.

Examples of community-led adaptations that were initiated by incorporating indigenous knowledge systems to bring about transformation include the crab culture in Daravali, New Catch in Town in Versova and the prawn culture in Dharavi. New Catch in Town is a pilot project jointly led by thinktank Bombay61 Studio, the Ministry of Mumbai's Magic collective and research entity TAPESTRY. There is an urgent need to restore the city's water systems in order to build resilience against climate-related uncertainties and sustain indigenous communities' livelihoods. It is also critical to recognise the role of communities, particularly the youth, in reversing environmental amnesia and making the city more livable for all. The transformation begins with acknowledging the city's ecosystems and facilitating collective action at the grassroots by recognising indigenous communities' role as guardians of these coastal environments.

#### **Maharashtra: State govt to continue ban on new licences for purse seine fishing**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/state-govt-to-continue-ban-on-new-licences-for-purse-seine-fishing-8135236/>

The Maharashtra government has reaffirmed that no new licences for purse seine/ring seine (including mini-purse seine) fishing shall be issued in a bid to protect the interest of different sections engaged in fishing, particularly traditional fishing, and to conserve fish stock. The government aims to reduce the number of existing/operational purse seine/ring seine fishing licences to 262 gradually, and finally to only 182.

The state government had issued a notification to this effect in February 2016, which was challenged in court by purse seine operators. After five years of court battle, the Bombay High Court had asked the state Fisheries department in October 2021 to review the notifications and check its need.

On August 10 this year, the state government issued a notification confirming that no new licences for purse seine fishing will be issued. It said the decision was important to apply precautionary approach to restrict purse seine fishing, so as to avoid catching huge quantities of

juveniles of oil sardines, mackerel and other targeted species, as most of the fish are caught before reaching the minimum size of maturity and don't even have the opportunity to reproduce once during their lifetime, thereby affecting next year's production. The purse seine operation in shallow water, and in breeding season, has an adverse ecological impact due to disturbance of bottom benthic flora and fauna which affects the Maximum Sustainable Yield level of fishing, stated the notification. Parrag Jain-Nainuttia, principal secretary of Fisheries department, said the decision was taken after consulting with all stakeholders. As per the notification, the purse seine/ring seine gear shall be operated by any mechanized vessel, during the period September to December only, and within Zones II, III and IV.

In order to conserve existing fishery, purse seine fishing shall be regulated in four zones. In Zone (I) — Zai (in Palghar district) to Murud (Raigad district) — the area from the shore to 12 NM (nautical miles) will be reserved for traditional fishing. Purse seine/ring seine (including mini-purse seine) fishing will be prohibited in this zone.

### **Maharashtra: One of the oldest fishing communities face an uncertain future**

<https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/in-pics-life-of-koli-community-in-mumbai-578252.html>

Mumbai, where many different kinds of people from so many different places, races and communities have been living together and many of them call this place home. However, the Koli fishing community must surely hold the strongest right to the title of Mumbai's original residents. The recorded history of the Koli people in Mumbai dates back to the 12th century, who for generations lived on the coasts, and sustained themselves from the sea and the creeks. The Koli community is an integral part of Mumbai and it holds a rich history and heritage.

#### Traditional fishing community

The Kolis, a traditional fishing community in Maharashtra. A part of their community also resides in certain pockets of Rajasthan and southern Gujarat.

#### Archipelago of seven small islands

Until the 1800s, what is Mumbai today was an archipelago of seven small islands, mostly inhabited by indigenous fisherfolk communities.

#### Mumbai's seven islands

All of these seven islands are now areas in Mumbai but the names of some of them have changed. Colaba was 'Kolbhat', while Apollo Bunder was 'Palva Bunder'. The other names given by the Kolis, Worli, Dongri, Mazagaon, and Naigum, have managed to stick around over the years.

Lived in 'Koliwadas'

Traditionally, the Kolis lived in 'Koliwadas' or 'homes that open to the sea'. It is typical to find a huge fish market right at the entrance of these settlements.

Holds rich culture and history

This community holds rich culture and history, every year the Koli community celebrates the festival on a large scale in Versova. With a weekend seafood festival, they invite the whole city to taste their traditional dishes and get acquainted with their culture.

Uncertain future

But in the last few years, the life of the traditional fishing community of Mumbai is now changing due to climate change and pollution.

Major concern

The increase in the number and intensity of cyclones, in Mumbai every year is a major concern for the Kholi community.

Bhoomiputra Foundation

Vikas, who also runs an NGO, Bhoomiputra Foundation which is focused on improving the lives of the indigenous people said he is hopeful that their traditional knowledge can help in reducing the pollution in the creeks and rejuvenate the entire ecology once again.

Sculpture of Koli fishermen

As a part of the public art initiative, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) installed an 11-foot tall, 1500-kg sculpture of Koli fishermen and their boat near the Mahim fishermen's



colony.

Critical time for the survival

There is no doubt that this is a critical time for the survival of the Koli fishing community. How it adapts to, and evolves from, both the macro and micro factors affecting it in the dramatically changing environment of today will determine its success going forward.

**Maharashtra: Koliwadas redevelopment gets green signal from state**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/koliwadas-redevelopment-gets-green-signal-from-state-101661348972584.html>

In a boost to the development of the koliwadas in Mumbai, the state government has green signalled the cluster redevelopment of these settlements in the city. The koliwadas are the settlements of the Koli or fishermen community, who are the original inhabitants of Mumbai along with indigenous groups like the Agaris, Bhandaris and Pathare Prabhus. They are spread across areas like Colaba, Worli, Sion, Dharavi and Versova.

Deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis told the state legislature that a special set of development control regulations (DCR) had been formulated to develop the koliwadas by giving incentives like extra floor space index (FSI). This is because the residents of these koliwadas were unable to expand their houses due to the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules. The koliwadas, which had been demarcated and identified as such, will not be redeveloped as slum rehabilitation authority (SRA) projects, he assured.

We are considering the cluster approach. This will give them benefits like SRA development... Apart from this, we will also approve self-redevelopment in cluster mode in the koliwadas, Fadnavis told the state legislative council on Wednesday. He was replying to a starred question by Ramesh Patil. The koliwadas are our heritage and must be conserved, added Fadnavis. He stated that where koliwadas had been demarcated, the difference between koliwada and non-koliwada lands was clear. There are no issues if SRA projects come up in non koliwada areas... but no new SRA projects will not be approved in areas where (the koliwadas) have not been demarcated, Fadnavis stressed.

A total of around 32 koliwadas in Mumbai have been demarcated, and work on the rest is underway. A DCR for the development of koliwadas has been prepared as a special dispensation, but is yet to be finalised. The new DCR will give extra FSI to the koliwadas to accommodate

them... The amount (of FSI) depends on issues like environmental norms. But we will remain positive about giving extra FSI, said Fadnavis.

### **Maharashtra: Worli fishers on hunger strike to protest delay in registration**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/worli-fishers-on-hunger-strike-to-protest-delay-in-registration-101661281235116.html>

Mumbai Five fishermen operating from Lotus Jetty in Worli began an indefinite hunger strike at Azad Maidan, on Monday, to protest a three-year-long delay by the fisheries department in registering their fish workers' cooperative, Vanchit Machhimar Haji Ali Sahkari Sangathana Maryadit (VMHASSM). Twenty-five fishers from the area have been attempting to organise themselves under the banner since at June 2019. They allege that the fisheries department has not formally recognised them, despite all requisite paperwork being completed.

Sanjay Baikar, resident of Worli Koliwada, founder and secretary of the VMHASSM -- and one of the five members participating in the ongoing hunger strike -- claimed that after initially submitting their proposal to the fisheries department in June 2019, it took 15 months of repeated follow-ups for the latter to close out the requisite paperwork, though the process to register new co-ops as per the Maharashtra Co-Operative Societies Act should not extend beyond six months.

We are a group of poor fishermen whose livelihoods have been badly hit by the coastal road project. By registering ourselves as a society, we will be able to request the fisheries department for certain facilities at Lotus Jetty, like running water, lights and a shed to mend our boats. This will improve our daily lives. We will also be protected in the case of natural disasters. Three boats from Lotus Jetty were completely destroyed during Cyclone Tauktae but we didn't receive any compensation because there is no society to represent us, Baikar said. Alahuddin Sheikh, another founding member of the VMHASSM, also explained that fishers at Lotus Jetty currently are not able to avail of diesel subsidies given by the fisheries department.

Most of us have individual ID cards and licences to fish, but without being part of a registered society, we have to pay full price for diesel. Society members get subsidies of up to ₹9 per litre, on at least 300 litres every month. This could make a huge improvement to our earnings. I have made at least 200 visits to the department in the last three years but to no avail. Despite efforts by HT, Mahesh Devre, additional commissioner of fisheries, Mumbai, could not be contacted for

a comment.

An officer working at the district level in Mumbai city, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that there have been repeated changes in the department's administrative structure over the last year-and-a-half, which could have led to the prolonged delay. There have been two changes in the assistant commissioner's position, and one change in the additional commissioner's position since March 2021. All proposals seeking to register new fisher societies need to go through them, the official said.

### **Maharashtra: Members of fishing community celebrate Narali Purnima in Mumbai**

[https://newsband.in/?p=33509&utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=fishermen-pray-to-sea-god-on-narali-purnima-for-safe-return-of-their-fellow-men](https://newsband.in/?p=33509&utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=fishermen-pray-to-sea-god-on-narali-purnima-for-safe-return-of-their-fellow-men)

The Koli community which is celebrating Narali Purnima today, 11th August, with a hope to have a good catch this season, is facing cyclonic wind conditions which have been prevailing at Mumbai and Navi Mumbai coast since last week. Fishermen are praying to Sea God for the safe return of their fellow men who have already ventured into the sea for their livelihood. Yesterday evening a boat was damaged and another was drowned at Karanja jetty, Uran due to gusty wind. The boats were somehow brought back to the jetty and are now under reconstruction, informed a fisherman.

From the day of Narali Purnima fishermen of the Koli community start new ventures with their boats with a hope of good catch and good return commencing a new fishing season. Many of them had already ventured into the deep sea on the first day of August hoping for a good catch and returned yesterday to observe Narali Purnima.

Chandrakant Koli from Jaimeri Panvel Koli Samaj shared, On July 30th, the Indian Meteorological Department had issued a red alert for a deep-sea cyclone and August 1st onwards cyclonic wind condition prevailed at Mumbai coastline. After two months' halt of fishing activities, many Koli people sailed their boats in deep sea since August 3 with a hope for good catch. They could not return due to cyclonic wind conditions in the sea. But it is good to know that most fishing boats have taken shelter at Jaigad port, near Goa border since 8th of this month. Today 11th August is the coconut Purnima festival of fishermen. We, all are praying wholeheartedly to the sea God for a safe return and no mishap while fishing.

The Panvel Koli community has been practicing Narali Purnima festival since ages and today they all prayed together to Sea God by offering sacred coconut for a safe and sound fishing year

ahead.

The fishing community celebrated Narali Purnima with glitz and glitterati today on 11th August at various locations along the Thane Creek and extended jetties. Thousands of fishermen along with their family members thronged at the venues like Sarsole junction, Airoli-Diva jetty and Belapur jetty, Diwale jetty, Vashi coast to join in the celebration which was conducted through cultural programmes all through the day.

### **Maharashtra: Heavy rain throws life out of gear for fisherfolks in Uttan**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/heavy-rain-throws-life-out-of-gear-for-fisherfolks-in-uttan-101660071372531.html>

Following heavy rains through the night and early morning on Tuesday, fisherfolk and their families in Mira-Bhayandar, Vasai, Palghar and Mumbai were caught in a bind. Several fishers were stuck at sea amid rough weather. Four boats which initially left from Mumbai's Colaba area earlier this month, after the annual monsoon fishing ban ended on August 1, drifted off to reach Sindhudurg all the way at the southern end of the coast, while others found themselves at Dighi Port in Ratnagiri. There were also reports of fishers from Daman and Diu being stranded in Palghar and Vasai. However, for fishers in Mira-Bhayandar's Uttan area, the scare was much worse, with the lives of at least 200 fisherfolk being on the line. Fishers were finally located by Tuesday evening after calmer weather prevailed.

The weather has improved but we are unable to contact our family members, remarks Allson Nigrel, a resident of Uttan, a fishing village in Bhayander taluka, Thane district. At 5 pm Tuesday, around 20 boats from Nigrel's neighbourhood -- comprising five East Indian fishing hamlets at Pali, Dongri, Uttan, Chowk and Bhatebandar -- had not yet returned to shore.

There are at least 10 people on each boat. Probably more. The boats are all registered with fishing societies in Pali-Uttan. It's common for vessels to get lost or delayed in August and September, just after the fishing season starts, but it's never happened that so many boats from our area have been missing at the same time, said Bernard D'Mello, president of the Pali Uttan Machimaar Society, with worry painted on his face.

More than two decades ago, D'Mello recalls, he was lost at sea for 18 days after a storm, surviving on small meals of rice kanji, and was tense that so many of his colleagues and relatives might be facing a similar predicament, or worse. His grand-nephew, Sachin Miranda, was out on a trawler as well. Suvarna Miranda, his wife, was unable to speak clearly through her worries.

Austin Bavigar (55), whose two sons (Velasree, 35, and Olympic, 25) had been out at sea since Saturday night, spent the entire day on the beach, staring into the ocean hoping to see their boat pass by on its way to Chowk Bandar, the safest harbour in the area where thousands of boats had already congregated during the night, to seek shelter from the rains and driving winds.

The beach was crowded with similar faces. 45-year-old Christopher N was waiting for his younger brother, who works as khalashi (labourer) on a trawler that operates more than 35 nautical miles from the coast.

We can't even get through on their satellite phone, he said worriedly. A young girl, Delina Patil, was worried sick for her elder brother Denzil. She had been up since 4:30 am when she heard the rain getting intense and, and had not had anything to eat since. It was only between 6:30 pm and 7:30 pm that all the boats finally managed to contact their respective society offices, either through the Coast Guard or via satellite phones.

Anklesh Kartan, secretary of the Dongri Fisherfolk Sarvoday Sahakari Society, said, Sixteen of our boats, with at least 100 people on them, were not contactable throughout the night and the day. We heard from them around 7 pm, and they said they would reach back sometime after midnight. We had been trying to reach them via satellite phones every ten minutes. It is a huge relief. By 8 pm, every single boat from Uttan had been accounted for, with the airwaves clearing up and the Coast Guard helping shepherd them back home.

A senior official at the Coast Guard's headquarters in Mumbai, seeking anonymity, said, The entire fishing belt between Uttan, Vasai, Arnala and Palghar, extending up to Daman and Diu, has seen very heavy rain offshore during the night. It was too rough for choppers to fly, so we deployed two Dornier fixed-wing aircraft in addition to several rescue boats and one larger patrol vessel to shepherd the fishermen back to the nearest harbour. Fortunately, we have not had to rescue anyone today, and there have been no casualties reported. We will continue patrolling tomorrow, just in case.

The Coast Guard has done a tremendous job in ferrying fishing vessels safely. Right now they are positioned at 50 nautical miles and have assured our community that they will remain there till every single fisher is brought home safely. Today's coordination between the Coast Guard and fisheries department was exemplary and helped avoid loss of life, thus far, said Devendra Tandel, president, Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti.

### **Maharashtra: Coastal road threatens livelihood of Mumbai's traditional fishermen**

<https://indiejournal.in/article/coastal-road-threatens-livelihoods-of-mumbai-s-traditional-fishermen>

The coastal road will be the death of us, it will starve us to death, says Dashant Shivdikar, a fisherman from Mumbai's Worli Koliwada. As recently as two years ago, Mumbai's fishermen did not have to venture any deep into the sea to find lobsters, an expensive fish, a prominent delicacy served at high-end restaurants. However, since last year, fishermen have noticed that the lobster catch near the coast has dwindled significantly. This year, come August, the fishermen at Mumbai's Worli Koliwada say they have barely been able to find any lobsters yet.

This was the period usually, just before we could resume fishing that is halted every year due to monsoon, when we would find lobsters in abundance, right by the coast. We would not have to go deep into the sea. This year, some of us tried but could not find any catch, Shivdikar reminisces with his eyes staring into the sea, sitting at the Cleaveland Bunder in Worli Koliwada. The jetty is one of the major spots of protest against Mumbai's coastal road.

As Mumbai expands more and more into the sea, the livelihood of the fishermen community living in Koliwadadas (fishermen's colonies) along the city's coastline and depending on the waters for their living, continues to be affected adversely. The coastal road project has been the last straw in the series of miseries that have come their way. With the reclamation of the sea and the construction activity along the coast, their catch near the coast has dwindled. Moreover, the pillars of the coastal road, the fishermen say, would also threaten their boats while venturing into and returning from the sea, and in turn, their lives.

Not every fisherman in the coastal area undertakes fishing in the deep sea waters all the time. Many do not even have the boats needed to enter the deep fish to catch fish. They mostly catch fish near the coasts, in intertidal zones.

Many of our fishermen relied on the rocks by the coast, the shallow waters there for their livelihood. The rocks near the shoreline at Worli seaface was a fishing spot for many fishermen and women. The fishermen would also lay their nets here during low tides, so that big fish that came near the shore during the high tide would enter the net. This is known as method of fishing. The fishermen would get them out when the tides turned. If you visit Worli seaface now, you will see that all these rocks, the waters have disappeared now. They have been reclaimed for the coastal road. There is no place left to fish near the shoreline now, says Nitesh Patil, a fisherman from Worli Koliwada.

The intertidal zone is defined as the area starting at the maximum high-water mark to a point

where the water is 2 metres deep at any time. Several fishermen carry out fishing in the intertidal zone using the method.

Many also cast a net or use a fishing hook. The fishermen recall that the rocks off the shore from the Worli-Bandra Sea Link to Dairy served as an Oyster bed. Many from the Koliwad, especially women, could fetch oysters, shellfish from this area. The muddy waters ahead were a hotspot for Chimbori (crabs). Fishing like this is not possible anymore with the reclamation and construction activity on the shoreline, Patil says. Patil is also one of the main petitioners who has been fighting against the coastal road project. A friend of mine now had to take a loan and buy a boat as he could no longer sustain by trying to fish near the shore. There is no alternative but to buy a boat now, he adds.

If we do not get access to the sea, we will not be able to carry out fishing, our future generations will not be able to do it. They are reclaiming land on the shorelines. We would find lobsters on the coastline from Priyadarshani Park to Mahalakshmi every year, at the beginning of the fishing season post-monsoon. We have not caught sight of any lobster yet this year. This is the first time this has happened. Our boats are just sitting in the waters in search of some catch, Patil says. Around Diwali, we could catch large lobsters near the coast very easily. It's the period when several valuable fish could be caught at the shore by hand, just by standing in the knee-deep water. Now there is no such place left, he adds.

The fishermen say that the catch had decreased significantly last year, as the land reclamation in the area had already begun then. This year, they say, the situation has worsened. We could find quality fish in the rocky waters. These fish also helped us earn better. Now that the rocky part has been reclaimed, we will not be able to find these fish in the muddy waters. Ghol fish (black-spotted croaker fish), Khajra, Rawal, Pomfret, Khapri Pomfret, Taam were some of the valuable fish we found in this area, Patil says.

Ghol fish is one of the rarest and most expensive varieties of fish found in the Arabian Sea that gets auctioned for a high price due to its high demand in East Asia. Earlier this year, a fisherman in Palghar sold a Ghol fish for Rs 1.33 Crore! The Ghol fish gets sold for lakhs of rupees at times. Our fishermen would often find them on these shores, says Ashok Dharmaraj Koli, a resident of Worli Koliwada who makes a living by knitting and selling fishing nets.

But finding these fish near shore is going to be next to impossible now. We don't have access to the sea like that anymore. So there is no way for us to fish like we did before, Patil says. Most of the people in the Koliwada have continued the traditional occupation of fishing. Not many of the

youngsters here are educated enough to find well-paying jobs, fishing is their sole occupation, Koli adds.

The traditional fishermen also pride themselves upon the sustainability of their fishing practices. We are not greedy like the big trawlers out in the sea. If sometimes we catch more than our boat can hold, we release it back into the sea so that the next fisherman can find it. We do not bring it to the jetty for it to get wasted. We understand the sea and its ecosystem, fisherman Vijay Patil says.

While the intertidal fishing is almost over, thanks to the land reclamation due to the coastal road project, the fishermen say that entering deep into the sea is going to become a risky business, once the construction is completed. The discussion here comes down to the debate around the length of navigation span to be allowed between two pillars of the coastal road.

We have been demanding that the span should be 200 metres, or at least 160 metres, to ensure a safe passage to the fishermen and their boats in the open sea. However, the government is hell-bent on keeping the span 60 metres, as they say, is approved by the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO). So they will kill us first by not letting us find any fish on the shore, and then not letting us fish in the deep waters without any danger to our lives, Patil exasperates.

The design by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) allowed for 60 metres between the pillars for the fishermen to navigate their boats for the extended section of the bridge at Cleveland Bunder. The fishermen fear that the distance between the pillars could lead to accidents and endanger the lives of the fishermen.

It's already challenging to navigate between the pillars of the sea-link. We cannot even imagine when the pillars of the coastal road are added. A boat does not travel straight in the sea, as a car does on the road. It moves according to the direction and intensity of the wind. The span of 60 metres is alright at a harbour, but would it not be risky to have such a narrow span to navigate through the pillars in the open sea, where winds and waves can be unpredictable in harsh weather? Patil questions. When we approached the government with our demand to increase the span, they rejected it saying who were we to propose the length of the span, whether we were any experts in the field. In a video conference meeting on January 6, with the then state environment minister and Worli MLA Aditya Thackeray, we were told that the government will follow the 60 metres span that was allowed as per the NIO report. They said that if we wished to challenge it, we should make and submit an expert report, Patil says.



However, he says that when such a report was submitted, which said that the span should be at least 160 metres, the government said that the report was created by an unauthorized organisation, and that's why could not be approved. The fishermen say that in other parts, especially in sitting MLA Ashish Shelar's constituency, the fishermen's demands were heard and the span was expanded to at least some extent. O

ur MLA Aditya Thackeray never seemed interested in hearing our demands, he never even came to meet us, Shivdikar says. The fishermen continue to fight for their demand to increase the navigation span of the coastal road pillars. However, they wonder what more will they have to lose, paying the price of development in India's financial capital.

### **Maharashtra: MPCB registers FIR for releasing industrial waste in creek in Uran**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/navi-mumbai-mpcb-registers-fir-for-releasing-industrial-waste-in-creek-in-uran>

The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) has registered an FIR with reference to the chemical pollution of Bhendkhal Creek in Uran leading to the death of several fish and crabs. Local fishing communities and environmentalists have raised an alarm against some chemical tankers being washed with the creek water at Bhendkhal.

MPCB Sub Regional Officer Sachin Adkar confirmed that an FIR against unidentified persons has been filed with the Uran police. There are complaints from locals that they saw industrial wastewater being released from tankers. Now, police will investigate the matter, said Adkar.

Earlier, the MPCB officials visited the creek and collected samples from the creek on July 26, 2022 that showed some chemicals. The tests are being further analysed. Even the water colour was yellowish. Based on that, the MPCB official registered a police complaint. As per the FIR, the MPCB officials received a number of complaints in the form of videos and photos from villagers. Even the Bhandkhal Gram Panchayat had given a written complaint.

B N Kumar, Director of NatConnect Foundation said that Tahsildar Bhausheb Andhare also forwarded the pictures of some tankers being washed to the police as well as RTO and requested the police to keep an eye on the culprits and take necessary action. The officials examined the mangroves in the area and found that no damage has been done to them, so far.

As it is, the fishing community has been hit hard due to the burial of a series of wetlands and blocking of intertidal flow by various ongoing projects, NatConnect Foundation director B N Kumar said and pointed out that the chemical pollution menace kills whatever little catch the

fishermen get.

This is not the first time that the chemical tanker menace has come to notice. Even the railway tankers were seen getting cleaned in the creek water near the Container Terminal-IV recently. Authorities must take strict action, said Nandkumar Pawar, Head of Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan. The ongoing construction of infrastructure projects has had a deadly impact on the fishing community, Pawar said and decried that even the fishing channels through which the boats go into the sea have been blocked illegally by various infrastructure operators such as JNPA.

### **Maharashtra: HC slams government over road project in Raigad**

<https://www.constructionworld.in/transport-infrastructure/highways-and-roads-infrastructure/hc-slams-maharashtra-govt-over-road-project-in-raidad/35666>

The Bombay High Court has come down hard on the departments of the Maharashtra government plan and execute infrastructure projects, saying, This entire approach of the State Government towards planning prima facie appears to us to be faulty. ..

The bench of Justices G S Patel and Gauri Godse was hearing a petition filed by 134 traditional fishermen (Kolis) from the village of Uran Koliwada in Raigad District. The principal concern was that the proposed Uran Bypass Road at Uran Koliwada would materially affect the petitioners' traditional fishing rights.

During earlier hearings, every time the court sought a response from the Maharashtra government, it only got a request for an adjournment. The government also claimed the fishermen would not be impacted.

However, now the state government through its pleader told the bench that the Fisheries Department will make a survey. Then there will be a report. Then there will be an assessment of compensation.

This response shocked the bench. This is not what we expect to be told. We do not see how the project alignment could have been decided before doing a survey and before assessing the possible impact on persons such as the petitioners. It surely stands to reason that any such survey would have had to be done first ... further, if the statement is that the petitioners will be given 'compensation', then that necessarily implies that there is in fact an adverse impact on the petitioners as a result of the project. The state government cannot simultaneously say that there is no impact and also say that compensation will be given, the bench observed.

## **Maharashtra: Fisherfolk first: Work on Uran bypass road stayed by Bombay HC**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/legal/fisherfolk-first-work-on-uran-bypass-road-stayed-by-bombay-hc>

The Bombay High Court has stayed the construction of the proposed 11-metre wide Uran Bypass Road at Uran Koliwada. Considering it would affect the livelihood of fishermen from the village, the HC came down heavily on the Maharashtra government for failing to conduct a proper survey before undertaking the project. A division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Gauri Godse, on July 29, stayed the construction while hearing a petition filed by 134 fishermen (kolis) who have been using the site as fish landing and boat maintenance area.

The petition, filed through advocate Zaman Ali, contends that the bypass will affect the petitioners' traditional fishing rights. The government neither conducted a survey before implementing the project with regard to relocation of fishermen nor awarded any compensation.

Criticising the government stand, the HC said it was astonishing that no thought was given to the plight of persons directly affected by this project, even though their livelihoods would be adversely affected permanently. Simply throwing money at people is not an answer to what is evidently a displacement problem, a question involving the livelihood of the poor and the marginalised, and essentially a question about the human condition of persons who depend on fishing for their daily earnings, said the judges.

On July 5, the HC had asked the government and City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) to inform their policy regarding compensation and providing an alternative location to the fishermen. However, during the hearing on July 29, additional government pleader KS Thorat informed the HC that the fisheries department will conduct a survey and submit a report, followed by an assessment of compensation. Meanwhile, counsel for CIDCO said that it's only executing or implementing the bypass project required by the government.

Expressing surprise, the HC asked as to how the project alignment could have been decided before a survey and before assessing the possible impact. The HC said, it surely stands to reason that any such survey would have had to be done first. Irked by the government's attitude, the HC observed, they (fishermen) are simply supposed to quietly accept a complete eradication of their centuries-old traditional fishing landing sites and are supposed to somehow manage for the rest of their lives and through future generations. No principle of development planning or environmental law allows us to accept such a stand.

The construction work has been awarded to JM Mhatre Infra Private Limited, the lowest bidder. The court noted that this created additional complication as the stay on the work would escalate the costs and the result will be a second level impact of an increased cost per kilometre and that will have to be borne from the public exchequer.

### **Maharashtra: Godavari dams reduce sediment load, study warns of spike in coastal erosion**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/maharashtra-godavari-dams-reduce-sediment-load-study-warns-of-spike-in-coastal-erosion/articleshow/93243317.cms>

Godavari, the most important river in peninsular India, has seen a dramatic decline in its sediment load over the past five decades, aggravating coastal erosion along the Bay of Bengal where it empties, a Savitribai Phule Pune University study published in the international journal Science of the Total Environment shows.

A river carries sediment load in a dissolved form, in suspension or as bed load. In the case of Godavari River, this load dropped at an average annual rate of 2 million tonnes per year reducing the sediment transport to the Bay of Bengal, thus causing extensive delta erosion by sea waves. Lead researcher Sumit Das said coastal erosion and loss of land in the Godavari delta may further intensify into an irreversible destruction phase as more reservoirs are built under a warming and wetter climate with the increasing intensity of tropical cyclones and sea-level rise.

In the Godavari basin, a significant reduction in sediment load after 1995 was closely associated with the construction of dams and, as a result, entrapment of sediments in their reservoirs, he added. Since 1970, as many as 650 dams have been constructed in the Godavari basin, the highest in peninsular India. The current environmental deterioration of the Godavari basin due to deforestation and land-use changes, increased agricultural activities, extreme rainfall events in central India may heighten human-induced sediment erosion at certain places, he added.

Das said many Asian rivers have experienced such decline primarily due to sediment accumulation within dams in recent times. These rivers include Krishna, Cauvery and Narmada. The downward shift of sediment load collectively in dams has resulted in increased erosion of coastlines and deltas due to sediment starvation in many rivers of the world, he added.

Researchers quantitatively assessed sediment loads of the Godavari's catchment area by collating daily discharge and suspended sediment concentration data extending over five decades from 25 gauging stations. The data source for the study was Central Water Commission, New Delhi which monitors the discharge and sediment load in Indian rivers. Over the past 40 years, all outlet gauging stations in the Godavari and its major tributaries experienced decreasing trends in sediment load from the 1970s to 2019 with a mean annual reduction rate of 1.11 million tonne per year in Pranhita, a tributary, and 2.06 million tonne per year in the Godavari, Das said.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen hit by cancellation of tax free diesel quota**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/fishermen-hit-by-cancellation-of-tax-free-diesel-quota-fishing-community-seeks-cm-eknath-shindes-intervention>

After the 61-day ban, fishing activities in the state are all set to resume on 1, August. However, the fishing community is in trouble due to the decision taken by the fisheries department to cancel the subsidized diesel quota for mechanised fishing boats with an engine capacity of more than 120 horsepower.

Based on the audit done by the accountant general, the fisheries department objected to the approval of diesel quota and tax refund for boats with a capacity of 120 horsepower six cylinders. As a result, more than 80 percent of boats operating on the western coast and nearly 25 percent of boats owned by fishermen in the coastal belt of Uttan near Bhayandar will have no other option but to purchase fuel at the existing market rates.

Stung by the orders, the Akhil Maharashtra Machimar Kriti Samiti (AMMKS) led by Devendra Damodar Tandel has sought the intervention of chief minister- Eknath Shinde, to roll back the cancellation order and revive the fuel quota before the resumption of the upcoming fishing season. Already reeling under losses due to low catch and natural calamities, purchasing fuel at market prices is bound to add more burden to the logistical expenses of fishermen. This will further push them to the brink. Moreover, these boats are the basic support system for fisheries cooperative societies who disburse the diesel at tax-free cost, said former municipal corporator and fishing community leader- Bernard D'mello.

Following a request by members of the AMMKS, former state fisheries minister Aslam Shaikh directed the officials of the fisheries department to remove the limit of 120 horsepower for diesel quota and refunds. However, the Thackeray led-Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) was toppled and the Shinde-led government came into power and the directions remained on the backburner. The BJP-supported Shinde government in the state is without a cabinet even after 25 days.

## **Maharashtra: ‘Green Panel’ recommends CRZ clearance for 8,100-km India-Singapore Submarine Cable System**

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/green-panel-recommends-crz-clearance-for-8100-km-india-singapore-submarine-cable-system/articleshow/93022478.cms>

The Expert Appraisal Committee under the Ministry of Forests has recommended Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) clearance for the 8,100-KM long Myanmar/Malaysia-India-Singapore Transit (MIST) Submarine Cable System connecting Mumbai and Chennai in India. MIST is an international submarine cable communication network. Cable will traverse undersea to connect India with other Asian countries such as Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

MIST cable system will provide secure reliable, robust and affordable telecom facilities in Asia. The main trunk route is from Tuas (Singapore) to Mumbai (India), the EAC said in its minutes of meeting held on July 6. The Committee after detailed deliberations and considering the submissions made by the project proponent recommended the proposal for CRZ clearance, subject to the following conditions..., it said, separately for Chennai and Mumbai.

The EAC recommended the CRZ clearance at Mumbai and also Chennai with some conditions. In case of Mumbai, the Committee cautioned the project proponent, NTT Communications India Network Services Pvt Ltd, that the cable laying and associated facilities shall not hinder fishing activity in the area and necessary precautions and awareness shall be made.

The EAC also suggested that considering increasing number of international cables landing in the Chennai coast, the government shall make appropriate corridor for laying of such cables in the coastal area for better management and to avoid conflict with other stakeholders. In a press release in December 2019, NTT said the total cost of the MIST project was pegged at USD 400 million.

## **Maharashtra: MoEFCC seeks state's comments on JNPA's compliance with NGT judgement**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/moefcc-seeks-state-s-comments-on-jnpa-s-compliance-with-ngt-judgement-101657716714225.html>

The fourth container terminal's Phase-1 expansion of 90 hectares was completed in December 2017, and the facility was commissioned in February 2018. Mumbai The union environment ministry has sought the state government's comments on compliance of a National Green Tribunal (NGT) order by the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA), regarding expansion of its fourth container terminal at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Uran, which is the country's largest cargo port. The comments have been sought from the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA).

The fourth container terminal's Phase-1 expansion of 90 hectares was completed in December 2017, and the facility was commissioned in February 2018. The balance work of reclaiming another 110 hectares of intertidal land for the terminal's expansion commenced on April 17 this year and has been challenged by local fisherfolk. They allege that the ongoing reclamation in Uran, opposite Mora Jetty, is destroying fishing commons in the absence of safeguards to protect local livelihoods. This is despite the same being mandated by an NGT-appointed expert committee in June 2021.

In February this year, the NGT said, With regard to the impact on traditional fisheries by the local fisherfolks, we accept the view of the Committee that free tidal water into the creek has to be ensured to enable navigation of boats to sustain fishing practices...we direct the project proponent to ensure that free flow of tidal wave be maintained and the project be designed and operated in a manner so as not to adversely affect such free flow and fishing practices.

However, locals said that these conditions have not been met by the JNPA. The port has since dumped thousands of tonnes of mud and gravel into the intertidal area where we would earlier find crabs, tiger prawns and lobsters in good quantity. It is a shallow place, where the sunlight reaches the ocean bed and promotes growth of vegetation, attracting fish to breed there. Now, because of sedimentation from the reclaimed area, even the surrounding mudflats are seeing a decline in catch, said Dilip Koli, an artisan fisherman from Uran and spokesperson of the Paaramparik Machhimar Bachao Kruti Samiti, a petitioner in the matter.

Despite having granted JNPA an amendment in the project's environmental and CRZ clearances in October last year, the MoEFCC's expert appraisal committee on ports and harbours has now

directed that JNPA apply at MCZMA in view of the orders of the Hon'ble NGT. The necessary amendments shall be made once recommendations from MCZMA are received.

A senior JNPA official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said, this is a procedural matter. Not only have we complied with all regulations, we have also disbursed 66 crore in compensation to affected fishers in a related matter. The MCZMA will convey the same to the ministry. The amended CRZ clearance from October 2021 is still valid.

### **Maharashtra: Vasai gets Pearlsport fish hatchery for Palghar tribals' livelihood**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/vasai-gets-pearlsport-fish-hatchery-for-palghar-tribals-livelihood>

ICAR-Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA), Chennai has developed Pearlsport (the famous Karimeen fish of Kerala) hatchery and seed production unit at Bhuigaon, Vasai as a livelihood activity under the Mangrove Conservation and Livelihood Development scheme in collaboration with Mangrove Foundation, Mumbai.

On average Pearlsport fish weighs around 200 gm and is a delicacy in Kerala and its seed have good demand on the West Coast of India. Hence, CIBA has introduced the same technology to the Mangrove SHG of Vasai.

In due course, the CIBA has also selected coastal villages in Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg districts and Vasai is the first in the State for the livelihood development for farmers said Pankaj Patil, Scientist and Project Incharge, CIBA, Navsari Research Centre.

Under this project, Palghar district is the first Pearlsport hatchery and seed production unit and is allotted to Swami Self-Help Group (SHG) of Bhuigaon on 90% subsidy and within a short period and in its first attempt, the SHG produced and sold 3900 Pearlsport seed with a modest income of Rs. 60,000, said, Patil. The Swami SHG hatchery has the capacity of production of more than 50,000 Pearlsport seeds per year with an estimated income generation of around Rs 6 lakhs, said the official. Due to this hatchery development, the Pearlsport seed requirement of Palghar district will be met with livelihood support to local tribal fish farmers.

Virendra Tiwary, Executive Director, Mangrove Foundation, Mumbai have allocated the project funding to CIBA for the scientific implementation and development of Pearlsport hatchery units in Maharashtra and the required cost, project material, training and guidance to Swami SHG were provided by the CIBA.



The Swami SHG comprises five men and two women and during the Covid-19 pandemic, adhering to the scientific training and guidance of the scientific team, Swami SHG obtained success in Pearlsport seed production and also got employment opportunities, said Patil.

The Mangrove Foundation is mainly established to protect the mangroves as well as to provide different livelihood opportunities to the villagers staying in mangrove areas said Tiwary and stressed that the scientific demonstration on seed production and farming of Pearlsport fish in Maharashtra will help in boosting the livelihood development of fish farmers of the State. He also said that Pearlsport seeds have huge demand in coastal villages and in future, such hatchery projects with the participation of SHGs will be established in different coastal villages of Maharashtra.

Kerala is known to produce the Pearlsport fish(called Karimeen in Malayalam) and has a big demand in Kerala. The CIBA has developed the technology of pair breeding of the Pearlsport fish that would help set up hatcheries and produce quality seeds for fish farming in required quantities.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai's fisherfolk struggle to survive extreme weather and dwindling catch**

<https://mumbai.citizenmatters.in/extreme-weather-a-financial-hazard-for-mumbai-fisherfolk-34036>

When 36-year-old Rupesh Patil started fishing 20 years ago, taking over the reins of the business from his father, he used to catch a boat full of fresh Surmai (seer fish) or Javla (shrimp) regularly. But the income in this business is not like before, he says. Patil is a fisher from Worli Koliwada in Mumbai, where other fisherfolk like him who fish at the nearby Cleaveland Bunder have been complaining of a falling catch for the past few years.

Adding to their woes are the rising fuel prices and the destruction that was left behind by Cyclone Tauktae in May 2021. Fisherfolk families are now either burning through their savings or are trapped in a constant debt cycle.

### **Fishing boats and nets damaged by cyclones**

Almost all fishermen who work on the banks suffered some damage to their boats due to the cyclone. Such a cyclone perhaps occurs once in 100 years. Even our nets were destroyed, says

Sanjay Baikar, president of the Vanchit Machchimar Haji Ali Sahakari Sanghathan. Cyclone Tauktae damaged at least 1,215 fishing boats and 21,836 fishing nets in Maharashtra, as per a report by the Central government constituted Inter-Ministerial Central Teams. In the aftermath of the destruction, the Maharashtra government announced Rs 25,000 as compensation for fully damaged boats and Rs 10,000 for partially damaged ones.

However, the amount was insufficient as a boat can cost lakhs of rupees. How do you expect someone to restart their business in this amount? I do not know a lot of people who have even received their share of the compensation, says Devendra Tandel, president of the All India Machchimar Kruti Samiti. Sanjay Wategaonkar, who was the Assistant Commissioner of Fisheries (Mumbai city) till January this year, says around Rs 14 lakh were distributed as compensation when he was in charge. The latest figure is around Rs 36 lakh and the process is still on, his says. Compensation for cyclone damages not easy to avail

A 51-year-old fisher from Colaba's Koliwada, Dilip Koli attempted to avail compensation but was later told by the fisheries department that he was ineligible. One of my boats got completely ruined in the cyclone, officials even documented it and the money was sanctioned but the fisheries department kept it held up. They told me that when the cyclone happened, the paperwork on my boat was not completed and it did not have insurance or a permit, he says.

On the plight of those like Koli, Wategaonkar says there are conditions to be met to receive compensation. It is mandatory to possess an updated licence and insurance. If one does not meet the required eligibility criteria, they do not get the money, he says. He added that he had requested higher authorities to relax the eligibility criteria, but that has not happened yet. Another fisherman living in Worli Koliwada, Samir Chandu (34) has two fibre boats but only one is used by him and his brother, they have named it Geetanjali. About 28 feet long and 9 feet wide, Geetanjali suffered damages worth Rs 10,000 in the cyclone. He says he spent on the repairs from his pocket and had no idea that the government offered compensation for the partially damaged boats. We have insurance but that only covers the entirely damaged boat and not repair costs, Chandu says.

### **Unseasonal cyclones disrupt plans**

In India, there is an annual ban on fishing for two months. The country's eastern coastal states impose a fishing ban from April 15th to June 14th, and the western coastal states like Maharashtra impose a ban from June 1st to July 31st. One rationale behind the annual ban is to protect fisherfolk from loss of life and damage to their boats, says Tandel. As June begins,

fisherfolk in Mumbai pick up their boats using cranes and get them to safety.

However, last year's cyclone hit the coastal city before the annual ban kicked in. This meant the boats were still anchored in water and exposed to the wild winds at the time. We were intimidated by the authorities before the cyclone came but none of us thought it would be so bad, Baiker says.

### **Investments fail, with dwindling fish catch**

Some like Patil saw an opportunity in the post-cyclone destruction and bought a damaged boat, which is 30 feet long and 7 feet wide, much bigger than the 23 feet long and 7 feet wide boat he already owned. The small boat doesn't allow good business, I bought the second-hand boat for 1 lakh 60 thousand. Along with the repairs, I spent 5 to 6 lakh on it, Patil says. He had managed to pull in the money for the boat after keeping his family's jewellery as collateral, hoping to catch fish in abundance using his new boat once the annual ban ended.

September, October and November is the season of Kolambi (prawns). But only one day in September was my net full of tiny Kolambi. There was nothing in the winters either, he says. The fisherfolk look forward to the days after Holi, from the end of March to the end of May, as that is when they can catch a lot of shrimp.

### **Selling off the family gold**

This year there was no catch. It was only by the five to six days towards the end of May that we caught a lot of javla. The annual ban has begun and there is no more fishing now till August. How much did Rupesh Patil make in the last fishing season? He has Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 left with him, after deducting other costs. I held myself back from venturing into the sea often in the last season. The fuel is more expensive than ever, if I am not catching much then I am just spending more. I would rather stay home. Patil has two old parents, a wife and a 5-year-old son to take care of. With all expenses mostly on his head, he can't be dependent on fishing anymore. Sometimes he works on someone else's boat and gets petty cash in return, other times he is on the lookout for work as a short-term private driver.

More than making a living from fishing, my life has become all about paying Rs 20,000 monthly installment for the loan that I took on the boat, he says. He pays off as much as possible from his pocket and borrows the remaining amount from his friends and relatives, the debt cycle continues for him.

Like Patil, Chandu also has Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 left in his hand after the last fishing season. He lives in a joint family of ten and takes temporary security or packing jobs at a mall to get by. What comes to the rescue of many fisherfolks like Patil and Chandu is traditional family jewellery. They say fishers tend to show off a lot of jewellery but this is exactly why we invest in gold. When an adverse situation arrives, we sell off gold or keep it as collateral, Chandu says.

However, all the gold in Chandu's family is vanishing little by little before his eyes. In the last few years, all we have done is sell off our traditional gold. If our income is so low, what are we going to save? All the money I make goes into the maintenance of the boat, he says. He has a 2-year-old daughter and believes his parents' generation was the last to catch fish in abundance, so much so that they could build enough savings. I regret dropping out of college and joining this business. At least I could have had a stable job by now and saved some money for my daughter.

Why is there such a low catch?

The rationale behind the annual ban is also to allow various species of fish to breed so that there is a bigger catch after that, Tandel says. Until 2012, the annual ban started on June 1st and ended on August 15th, putting a halt on fishing activity for a total of 75-days instead of the present 60-day ban. Some fish breed during these 60 days but that is not the same for all species. Many fishermen are demanding the extension of the annual ban period to three months so that more varieties of fish could breed, Tandel says.

He vouched for a four-month annual ban, two months starting from January and two months starting from June. Contrary to the claims of dwindling catch, a recent report by the Central government's fisheries department shows an upward trend in the number of fish caught from the sea.

The catch was 28.11 lakh tonnes in the year 2000, it went up to 32.5 lakh tonnes in 2010, and in 2020 it was 37.27 lakh tonnes. However, Tandel urges a more nuanced analysis of the data. He says this data reflects the period post the nationwide lockdowns, where there was no fishing activity and more time for the fish to breed.

Another factor is that they are not counting the size or type of fish, he says. The bigger the size of a fish, the higher its value. When the fish comes on the shore, we want it to be grown in age. But all we get are small fish which have low market value, he says. Tandel insists that instead of looking at the annual figure, analysis of monthly data would give a clearer picture. All fish that

come on the dock are included in the data. So even the fish caught illegally during the annual ban period are also a part of this data, he says.

### **Coastal projects add to the woes of fisherfolk**

Fisherfolk and environmentalists strongly believe that infrastructural projects along the sea line, like the Maha Vikas Agahadi's flagship coastal road project, also lead to a drop in fish catches. With the formation of the Eknath Shinde-led BJP government in the state, BMC officials told the media that the project will continue to progress with ease as it was never a subject of a political controversy .

### **Clear impact of climate change**

Then there are extreme weather patterns, like the heat waves and the cyclones the country experienced in recent times that impact the livelihood of fishing communities. A recent study conducted by a senior scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) Roxy Koll shows a 52 per cent rise in cyclones over the Arabian Sea in the last two decades along with a 1.2 degrees Celsius to 1.4 degrees Celsius rise in the sea surface temperature.

One impact of rising sea temperature is on phytoplankton — known as plants of the sea that serve as food for a wide range of aquatic life. Another study by Koll shows that the Arabian Sea has seen an alarming decrease in phytoplankton due to rising sea temperature.

While talking to this reporter, Koll also warned of more extremely severe cyclones like Tauktae in the future. He explained that cyclones and monsoons derive their energy, the heat and moisture supply, from the warm tropical waters of the Indian Ocean. Now, the Indian Ocean is the fastest-warming tropical ocean basin. As the Indian Ocean warms, it supplies more heat and moisture for weather systems to intensify. Cyclones form and intensify rapidly. Monsoons result in heavy rains and floods, Koll says.

### **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/m<sup>3</sup> and 637.9ug/m<sup>3</sup> (Patel Pada being worst hit)—a range that is between two and 10.6 times more than the 60ug/m<sup>3</sup> 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/m<sup>3</sup>), 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...

### **Maharashtra: NFF, other fishing outfits to oppose Vadhavan Port construction**

<https://www.outlookindia.com/national/maharashtra-nff-other-fishing-outfits-to-oppose-vadhavan-port-construction-news-204850>

A meeting of national-level fishing associations has resolved to oppose the construction of the Vadhavan Port in Maharashtra's Palghar district.

The meeting was held in the Satpati area in Palghar on Saturday, a fishing union functionary said. National Fishworkers' Forum's Leo Colaco said the livelihoods of over 1.4 crore fisherfolk nationwide were in danger due to corporate moves of the Centre, which include bringing in anti-fisherfolk and resource grab initiatives like Blue Economy Policy 2021, National Fisheries Policy 2020, Coastal Regulation Zone 2019 Notification and 2021 Amendment, Indian Marine Fisheries Bill 2021, Major Ports Authority Act 2021, Sagarmala program, etc.

The NFF has launched an 'All India Machimaar Sangarsh Yatra' to protest against the grabbing of coastal and marine resources away from the people and will oppose the construction of Vadhavan Port as part of this movement, Colaco added.

### **Maharashtra: TISS survey finds 1,637 fisherfolk residing in 'zone of influence' around BVSL**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/tiss-survey-finds-1-637-fisherfolk-residing-in-zone-of-influence-around-bvsl-101655404880787.html>

As many as 1,637 fisherfolk living across six fishing hamlets in the city are in the 'zone of influence' of the upcoming Bandra-Versova Sea Link (BVSL), revealed a socio-economic survey, conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). 'Zone of influence' refers to the geographic area around BVSL, where there may be positive and negative effects, owing to the project.

Many fisherfolk emphasised that the construction of the bridge will not allow them to fish for a prolonged period of time, impact the productivity of their customary fishing grounds, and force



boats to take precarious detours around the structure and burn more diesel while doing so. This is besides causing further disruption to the ecology that is already under stress from pollution and overfishing.

The largest denomination of fishworkers, at around 864, were found to reside in Khar Danda, while the remaining are spread across smaller settlements at Kadeshwari Mandir near Bandra Fort, Chimbai Village, Carter Road, Juhu Koliwada and Mora Gaon near Rizvi College.

A small group of Kathiyawadi Kolis, operating a small boat yard on Carter Road under the name Sarothiya Koli Samaj Matsyavyavsay Sahakari Sanstha, also say that they are vulnerable to the BVSL project.

Delayed on account of Covid-19, and other administrative hurdles, substantial construction work for the project is scheduled to begin this October, after the monsoon season, when it is safe to venture out into the open sea. An official from the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), which is implementing the project shared that they met the TISS team on June 15 and took stock of the data they have been gathering since September last year.

A draft report will be submitted this week. We have asked them to do a concrete bifurcation of people whose livelihoods will be directly affected by the project, as not all 1,637 people would be doing fishing in the area. Some are also conducting their business from Bhaucha Dhakka in Mazagaon, said the official, seeking anonymity.

Once we have a truer sense of which individuals can be classified as ‘project-affected persons’, the report will be examined by a committee headed by the managing director of MSRDC, Radheshyam Mopalwar, and compensation will be disbursed in line with an upcoming compensation policy for fisherfolk in Maharashtra, which is being drafted by a committee under the fisheries department, the official added.

The Supreme Court (SC) in May had directed the Maharashtra government to expedite the framing of a policy to compensate fisherfolk affected by state-funded development projects. This is the third committee to be formed in the matter, after initial instructions from the Bombay High Court in August 2021, in response to a petition filed by the Mariaayi Machhimaar Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit – a registered fishworkers cooperative based in Vashi – on behalf of the fishing community from Vashi, Juhu, Koparkhairane, Ghansoli and Diva villages, whose livelihoods have been allegedly disrupted due to construction of the MSRDC’s Thane Creek Bridge-III project.

Shankar Jagtap, executive engineer (MSRDC), who is overseeing the project, declined to comment. Researchers from TISS's Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice (CODP), who conducted the survey, also declined to speak citing confidentiality. Citing the example of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link, construction of which has allegedly depleted fish reserves, changed navigation routes and made tidal action around Dadar and Mahim Koliwada more intense, fishworkers operating further north in the suburbs expect to face similar predicaments.

The MSRDC's own environment impact assessment report (EIA) reveals more in this regard. Page 34 of the EIA report reads, Construction of offshore structure modifies the relationships of benthic communities, changing the existing biodiversity in the area and creating a new local ecosystem... The construction work phase would temporarily increase the water turbidity. This could affect marine flora (phytoplankton especially) because of a decrease in the possible received light. There may be a temporary decrease or change in the faunal population due to disturbance caused by construction activities.

Officials in the MSRDC maintained that they do not anticipate much disruption to small-scale fishers, as the BVSL will be situated 900 metres from the coast. As for issues with navigation, we are providing three or four dedicated navigation channels under the BVSL which will be 100 metres wide, in Bandra, Juhu and Versova. Everywhere else, the piers will be 50 metres apart. That is enough room for the boats to pass safely through, said the official quoted above.

Vesave Koliwada, which is over 2km away from the end of the proposed BVSL alignment, has been excluded from the scope of the TISS study, and will be considered under a future socio-economic assessment planned for the Versova-Virar Sea Link Project.

### **Maharashtra: We spend hours at sea, but there's no fish**

<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/maharashtra-rising-sea-temperatures-hit-231827352.html>

Rising sea temperatures are directly affecting the livelihoods of fishermen and fish sellers along India's western coast who now have to make do with a diminishing catch. We spent hours at sea, but couldn't catch a single fish. Nothing in all five of our nets, Darshan Kini, a fisherman in the coastal city of Mumbai, said in frustration one morning last month.

The 36-year-old had just returned with his fellow fisherman to the harbour at Marve beach in the city's Malad suburb. He has been going out to fish in this part of the Arabian Sea along the

western coast of India with family elders since he was three or four years old. But things have changed dramatically since Mr Kini's childhood. My grandfather used to tell me how big fish like sharks, sting-rays, and dolphins would roam here. Even as a child, we would put out any net and get a bucket of fish. But we haven't got a single fish today.

This summer, marked by extreme heat, fish seem to have almost disappeared from this creek. Mumbai fishermen - or Kolis as they are called - could once find an abundance of fish just 2-3km (1.2-1.8 miles) out to sea. Now they must travel 30-40km to get the same variety.

But the increase in fuel prices makes this unaffordable for traditional fishermen like Mr Kini who must also deal with competition from big trawlers that overfish. Further down the coast, in the southern state of Kerala, Baiju PB says his business has suffered due to frequent cyclones, particularly since 2017's Cyclone Ockhi - one of the worst to hit India's western coast. Mr Baiju, who owns a couple of fishing boats, says tarli or mathi - the famous sardines from the state - have nearly vanished from its coastal waters.

Between 1951 and 2015, the surface temperature of the Indian Ocean increased by 1C (33.8F) in the equatorial region at a rate of 0.15C per decade, a report by India's Ministry of Earth Sciences said. This has led to an increase in the frequency of very severe cyclones along the western coast. Marine heat waves have also been on the rise in this region. And as the water heats up, fish migrate to new places.

Just as we live in buildings, fish need a habitat to live in and corals provide this. But the changes in temperature are destroying the corals, marine biologist Vardhan Patankar explains. The rise in temperature also affects the fertility of fish, he says. Many species of fish rely on different chemical signals for reproduction. Under certain conditions, males and females release their gametes at the same time, and new organisms are formed.

But the increase in temperature changes the chemical composition of the ocean water. They can't release their gametes synchronously and the fish population depletes, he says. The heat also kills phytoplankton, the food that fish survive on.

A 2020 report by the government's fisheries department said that the number of fish caught from the sea had increased in the past 10 years - from 3.2 million tonnes in 2010 to 3.7 million tonnes in 2020. But these figures do not show the true picture, says Devendra Damodar Tandel of the All Maharashtra Fishermen's Action Committee. Instead of the total number for the year, we have to look at the months during which much of the fish has been caught, he says.

Traditionally, fishing activities would stop for three months in monsoon because of their breeding season. But now fishing is banned for only two months. And yet, some boats still go to restricted areas to fish illegally. Mr Tandel fears that this, coupled with changes in the sea, could make fish along the coast of Maharashtra extinct in two or three years.

People are not taking changes in the sea seriously yet, he says. The trees are in front of us, so we care for them. But we don't see what's going on in the ocean. The rise in sea temperatures is already having a direct impact on the livelihoods of fish sellers, particularly women, who are the backbone of this business. There are 2.8 million people working in the fishing industry across India, with women accounting for nearly 70% of post-fishing activities such as cleaning and selling fish. The decline in catch directly affects their financial independence.

Nayana Bhandari, who has been selling fish in suburban Mumbai's Charkop market for several years, says that earlier they could live off her husband's earnings and whatever she made would go towards their savings. But now we can't save anything. The decrease in fish has also put one of the main food sources of the coastal region in crisis.

Prices of staple fish like pomfret are at a record high, says Manisha, a buyer at Mumbai's Malad fish market. A pair of pomfret now sell for 2,500 rupees (\$32; £26) in Malad's wholesale fish market, up 1,400 rupees from last year. In the past, we used to have different types of fish and it was bigger in size. We would eat fish three to four days a week. Now we can only afford it once or twice, she says.

Meanwhile, Mr Kini's family has started selling his catch on What Sapp to make ends meet. The monsoon reached the western coast of India in the last week of May, a few days earlier than usual. When fishing resumes after the rains, Mr Kini hopes the fish will return.

### **Maharashtra: Urbanisation and coastal development can co-exist**

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/urbanisation-and-coastal-development/>

Thirty-seven percent of the world's population lives within 100 km of the coast. The World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2019 sheds light on the issues concerning rising seas, with 90 percent of the world's coastal areas facing high risk by 2050, including 570 cities and 800 million people. Whilst we deal with climate change and threats to landed properties, coastal cities worldwide have expanded urban coastal infrastructure development. Rapid urbanisation and coastal tourism have been globally marred by contestations, calling for serious mediation. Although protests provide scope for discussion of discounted issues,

interventions can pave the way to learn and emerge from coastal confrontations for reframing ideas of sustainable urban development and environmental justice. Such initiatives will lead the way for building an international community towards a sustainable world.

Urban and peri-urban development that focuses on the coastal areas places acute pressure on coastal peoples. For instance, the initial Draft Development Plan for Greater Mumbai 2034 released by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority did not include boundaries indicating where Mumbai's coastal Koliwadadas (villages) were located. This led to the understandable anxiety amongst Koliwada residents that Koliwadadas did not exist in the plans to develop the city. Similarly, a plan-stage community involvement could have addressed the concerns of Mumbai's coastal fishers, who are resisting the city's Coastal Road Project design as they believe it will directly impact their traditional livelihood and ancestral spaces. The initial Draft Development Plan for Greater Mumbai 2034 released by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority did not include boundaries indicating where Mumbai's coastal Koliwadadas (villages) were located.

Likewise, trawling policies against mechanised industrial trawlers worsened the struggles of the Mukkuvar fishers from coastal villages near Kanyakumari. In response, the Mukkuvar fishers approached the State to direct their issues, while defying local power politics and the church, their religious authority. In a similar example, the pleas of the fishers in anti-nuclear protests against the Kudankulam project were altogether dismissed, leading up to a larger organised resistance and late-stage administrative intervention. In all these cases, timely intervention by giving agency to the community at the formulation stage could have significantly shortened the project development curve and halted unrequired expenditure.

Coastal settlers, especially the fisher communities, have lived near the coast for generations and have an emotional, cultural, religious, and spiritual attachment to conserving marine ecosystems. Despite a decline in fishing, these relationships form an essential part of their community identity, memories, rituals, and myths. At the non-sacral level, common fisher areas are used for community activities and drying and marketing fish, repairing nets and boats, fish auctions, and storing nets, boats, engines, spare parts, and ice.

Neoliberal urban coastal development demands constant amendments to coastal regulation norms. In addition to the degradation of marine ecologies, depletion of natural resources, loss of land rights, commercial fishing, and overfishing, these adjustments often inadvertently disregard indigenous fisher knowledge and socio-cultural bonds with the seas. This marginalisation is heightened due to the oversight of the planners who frequently employ a unidimensional approach to development. While being vulnerable to the discourse of 'development', coastal

communities are susceptible to pressures from environmental groups and political interests. The increasing agitations by coastal settlers are indicative of communities mobilising themselves to lay claim to rightful spaces and their environment, and planners must take note. The pressures on coastal inhabitants are evident in their recent collaborations with diverse support groups outside their communities to make their voices heard. The increasing agitations by coastal settlers are indicative of communities mobilising themselves to lay claim to rightful spaces and their environment, and planners must take note.

A factor often overlooked by urban planners in socio-economic transformation is that coastal communities have not necessarily remained homogenous. People within a single community may be characterised by different needs depending on their current occupation, ambitions, and preferences. Such differences also lead to internal disagreements and divided political aspirations. Thus, a uniform standardised policy for negotiations such as compensation for loss of primary livelihood, skill development programmes, or forced rehabilitation becomes unfair and redundant. Whilst investments in large-scale coastal infrastructure projects have become inevitable for the future of cities, institutions must play a crucial role in re-engaging with ‘development’ through more humanitarian and sustainable strategies in response.

The imperatives for coastal development and the global stress on boosting the blue economy mean that policies have to be redesigned to initiate dialogues with communities at the level of inception. It needs to be factored in that coastal communities are rarely against development. In fact, as traditional inhabitants, these communities hold economic interests and also possess deep native knowledge of their ecosystems. They are keen to integrate that into the coastal development discourse. Today, these self-governed groups feel relegated to dominant discourses and seek participation, representation, and collaboration in the decision-making and implementation of projects that directly impact them. Socially inclusive and locally mediated approaches to coastal development mandate a need for a profound change of mindset at the research and policy level, both nationally and globally.

Furthermore, the complexities of cultural relationships with marine ecologies and increasing heterogeneities amongst traditional coastal peoples are often left out of development discussions. The current situation places special and immediate emphasis on the serious evaluation of and investment in the cultural and social consequences of development—both positive and negative. This calls for engaging with specialist organisations such as the International Association for Impact Assessment to devise exclusive and in-depth Social Impact Assessment (SIA) strategies to understand the concerns of coastal communities beyond environmental assessments. Given the urban fascination with the coast, a lack of omission of SIA essentially denies the advantages of

social change to the already marginalised coastal peoples. Though integrated approaches have been developed and applied to integrate environmental and social impacts, it is also critical to consider that information was collected for evaluation. Given the urban fascination with the coast, a lack of omission of SIA essentially denies the advantages of social change to the already marginalised coastal peoples.

As a prerequisite to development, the outcomes of SIA can help mitigate socio-economic-environmental adversities and help better design innovative techniques to measure the cost-to-benefit ratio for all stakeholders. Understanding that development is essential, more regional and contextual definitions can be considered in the modified Sustainability Livelihoods Framework (SLF) to identify the needs of the coastal poor and artisanal fishers for better livelihoods. Subsequently, SLF could provide the structure for developing tailored sustainable, and equitable solutions.

Disproportionate consequences of development necessitate intensified SIA planning to counter the inadequacies of development plans. Integrating SIA within urban coastal planning will make itself intrinsic to the development narrative. Constructs such as the European Commission's emphasis on social impact, Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act that includes cultural aspects of the environment, or Hong Kong's Urban Renewal Strategy for a district-based community approach offer templates for framing more comprehensive concepts for public participation. However, a periodic review of the overall accountability and local relevance of such procedures is essential. The Coastal 500, which globally unites 500 mayors and local governments for action on coastal fisheries, provides an alternate framework to reach out to fisher communities.

Coastal community-led development can set the course of action for participatory methodologies for which some frameworks have already emerged. For instance, The Coastal 500, which globally unites 500 mayors and local governments for action on coastal fisheries, provides an alternate framework to reach out to fisher communities. Likewise, the model of the Soufriere Marine Management Association in Saint Lucia creates interlinkages between local resource users and stakeholder institutions. Similarly, the participatory model pioneered by indigenous groups in northern British Columbia, who received a 10 percent ownership stake in the US \$6.7-billion Coastal GasLink pipeline, provides valuable insights into exploring collaborative possibilities. Viable models have emerged within India as well, such as the one co-created with Puducherry fishers to outline local adaptation methods for risks from climate change. These mediation efforts inspire social impact leadership and investment.

In keeping with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, SIA must emphasise high-quality responses and best practices as win-win resolutions—for communities and stakeholders. One of the preferred frameworks could be the prototype for the sustainable management of coastal areas implemented in West Africa and designed by the UN-Habitat. Specially devised for urban Côte d'Ivoire's adaptation to climate change, this model provides a regional paradigm for examining potential risks and impacts through both environmental and social impact assessment. Another instance that includes local consultation as an integral part is the Community-based Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Management Project in Benin by Global Environment Facility and the World Bank. The project was implemented to work with communities and local governments in Ramsar sites. Several ecologically fragile locations are globally inhabited by coastal groups presenting opportunities for more dynamic SIA templates. Yet, for SIA to be truly meaningful and inclusive, it must go beyond dominant actors to include the community's most affected and marginalised voices; else, community participation can become counter-productive to development.

**Maharashtra: The Mumbai coastal road project: Development at the cost of the environment and the marginalised**

<https://feminisminindia.com/2022/06/01/the-mumbai-coastal-road-project-development-at-the-cost-of-the-environment-and-the-marginalised/>

Mumbai is currently undertaking an ambitious coastal road project, which, once completed, will add an 8.5 km long and 20-metre wide sea promenade to the city between Priyadarshini Park at Napean Sea Road, and the Worli side of the Bandra Worli Sea Link. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) stated that in March 2022 that the project would be completed by the predicted deadline of November 2023.

The project involves the reclamation of 111 hectares of land – 63.6 per cent of the space or about 70 hectares are meant to be used as recreation spaces and amenities. 13.6 per cent will be used for the construction of the sea wall to protect the area from sea waves, and 23.88 per cent will be used for the construction of interchanges for the project. Gardens will be developed on the land, as well as seating for tourists, cycle paths, public toilets, a butterfly garden, and a biodiversity park to the city, along with an underground parking lot with a capacity to accommodate 1,864



vehicles.

However, while the project claims to revitalise green spaces and divert the pressure of the traffic in the city, architects, urban planners, and environmentalists have questioned the viability of this revitalisation plan for the economy of Mumbai's western coastline. They have expressed concerns that this project would restrict access to the seafront, as well as act as a visual barrier for people looking out at the sea.

Most importantly, serious environmental concerns have been raised as well. The project ignores the eco-sensitive nature of the intertidal zones. The construction activities, and land refilling, all damage fragile coastal ecosystems. Coral reefs and crucial fish spawning sites are feared to be destroyed, and marine food chains are likely to be disrupted. Mumbai is already prone to flooding during the monsoons, and the project creates a dam and threatens existing natural storm water drainage patterns, increasing the risks of flooding.

The project aims to decongest Mumbai's roads and reduce commute time. However, there might be fundamental issues with this line of reasoning. Research has observed correlations between increase in road capacity and traffic. This is related to the concept of induced demand in economics, where increasing the supply of a product can make people want it even more. The building of new roads incentivises people to use personal vehicles more and increases their commute time. Moreover, this emphasis on roads to support the use of private transport, makes more people reliant on them. New roads create new drivers and the intensity of traffic goes up

Land reclamation is especially concerning, considering rapid climate change across the world and rising sea levels, threatening the already vulnerable infrastructure of the city. The rapid changes in the seashore risk the safety of the entire city to the vagaries of climate change, contributing to greater environmental damage.

The disruption in the marine environment adversely affects the local fishing communities and their livelihood. Even now, the vibrations from the drilling and land refill have driven fish away, forcing fisherfolk to seek deeper waters. Their commute time increases and rising fuel prices deepen the economic strains they face. Moreover, the pillars constructed present as hazardous to their safety, obstructing their fishing route.

It was on September 25, 2018, that the project was given approval by the BMC's standing committee. The work commenced almost immediately, and would have progressed considerably. But a court stay in 2019, and the pandemic have delayed execution, according to officials. Wind

and water patterns determine navigation, risking the possibility of crashing into the pillars, especially during storms. Fisherfolk, facing the loss of their livelihood, have been forced to seek other alternative sources of income, such as daily wage labour or domestic work. Currently, no concrete plan to address the concerns and disruptions of employment of fishing communities has been announced or implemented...

**Maharashtra: Pay 74 remaining fisherfolks affected by Thane Creek Bridge project Rs 1 lakh each ad-hoc payout: SC to MSRDC**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/pay-74-remaining-fisherfolks-affected-by-thane-creek-bridge-project-rs-1-lakh-each-ad-hoc-payout-sc-to-msrdc/articleshow/91818275.cms>

The Supreme Court recently declined to interfere with an order passed by the Bombay High Court to give Rs 1 lakh ad-hoc interim compensation to affected fisherfolk families of the Thane Creek Bridge III (TCB III) project.

The SC also directed that the Maharashtra government should try to frame within three months its policy to compensate the community affected by state-funded development infrastructure projects.

The SC bench of justice MR Shah and justice BV Nagarathna in a May 13 order saw no reason to accept a challenge made by Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) to the HC's interim orders of February 25, 2022.

The SC directed payment of Rs 1 lakh each be released in favour of the remaining 74 alleged affected persons adding, However, it goes without saying that any amount paid will always be subject to the ultimate outcome of the main writ petition.

The MSRDC had filed a special leave petition for permission to appeal the HC order passed in a petition filed by Mariyayi Macchhimar sahakari sanstha Maryadit — a society of traditional fisherfolk seeking compensation for loss of livelihood due to construction of a TB.

Feeling aggrieved and dissatisfied with orders passed by the HC including directions to the MSRDC to deposit a sum of Rs.10 Crores, to be distributed among the members fishermen's Society, the MSRDC approached the SC.

It was reported to the SC that, out of total 948 beneficiaries among the fishermen, who can be said to be Project Affected Persons, 874 beneficiaries were already given the benefit of Rs 1 lakh

each and only 74 fishermen are remaining.

Anitha Shenoy, counsel appearing on behalf of the society, submitted that the payments have been made to only those fishermen whose names were cleared by the officers of the Department of Fisheries who have verified the credentials.

The MSRDC counsel Ranjit Kumar submitted that all those paid may or may not be the project affected persons.

The SC said the MSRDC can raise such an issue before the HC where the matter is pending.

The SC noted that the HC has also protected MSRDC's interest by asking Society to file undertaking through its office bearers to ensure that any excess amount of ad hoc compensation will be brought back to the court.

Since the fishermen's society is also put to certain terms by the HC order the SC said we see no reason to interfere with the ... orders passed by the high court.

Rahul Chitnis, the state counsel said that the Maharashtra government is already considering a state-wide compensation policy for the project affected fisher folk affected by the government infrastructure projects and meetings are going on.

Considering the fact that, at present more than 7-8 such projects are under progress, we direct the State to expedite the framing of the compensation policy at the earliest but not later than 3 months from today, said the SC bench in its order while disposing of the SLP.

### **Maharashtra: Ban fishing near coast between June 1 and July 31**

<https://theprint.in/india/maha-bans-fishing-near-coast-between-june-1-and-july-31-in-view-of-breeding-periodmumbai/964105/>

The Maharashtra government has imposed a ban on fishing between June 1 and July 31 as standard procedure to minimize the capture of marine life that comes near the shore for breeding.

The decision was announced recently under the Maharashtra Marine Fishing Regulation Act 1981, which prohibits machined fishing within 12 nautical miles from the state's coast.

Every year, the Maharashtra government imposes such a ban, which if violated attracts a fine. Earlier, the fine amount was significantly low, which led to many trawler operators openly violating the ban. From June, a hefty fine amount will be levied on violators, an official from the state fisheries department.

During June and July, the sea tends to be rough and is the breeding period for a lot of fish. Fishing during this period may affect the food chain adversely. Moreover, fishing in the seas at this time is also dangerous, he said.

He said traditional fishermen whose boats do not have engines, or those who do not deploy mechanized nets are exempt from the ban, he added.

### **Maharashtra: BMC tweaks coastal road project to placate fisherfolk**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/sena-ruled-bmc-tweaks-coastal-road-project-to-placate-fisherfolk/article65426713.ece>

To dilute the opposition by Mumbai's fisherfolk to the under-construction coastal road in Mumbai, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Wednesday said that state-of-the-art fenders will be installed on sea-bridge pillars to avoid any collision of fishing boats. The BMC also promised insurance in case of any accident for which it would pay premium installments for the next 20 years. The BMC has said that it will do the valuation of possible loss of fishing income and was willing to pay the interim compensation initially. After conducting a detailed valuation through Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), The BMC said it would pay the remaining compensation.

The Mumbai Coastal Road Project — from Marine Drive to the Worli end of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link — is a dream project of the Shiv Sena, which is ruling the BMC at present. The 9.98km road also includes a state-of-the-art underwater tunnel below Malabar Hill in south Mumbai. Worli is also the Assembly constituency of State Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray, son of Sena president and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. With the latest move, the BMC body wants to ensure that opposition to the project does not escalate, especially ahead of civic elections due later this year.

The fisherfolk in Worli's Cleaveland Jetty had demanded an increase in the distance between two pillars (navigation span) of the sea bridge connecting Worli to Bandra to 200 meter from the existing 60 meters. They had claimed that the proposed 60 meter would affect their business and may cause accidents. They had also taken their boats in the sea as a sign of protest, bringing the

ongoing work at halt. To prove their point, their organisation had referred to a report by the Head of the Geography department of Ratnagiri's Gogate-Joglekar College Dr. Surendra Thakurdesai, which had said that the minimum distance should be 160 meters. However, Chakradhar Kandalkar, chief engineer of the coastal road project, said, We had sent the report for remarks to National Institute of Oceanography.

It has said that the proposed 60 meter width of the navigation span is adequate . The BMC has said it would work on sorting out problems faced by the fisherfolk and has announced several incentives, the key ones being installation of fenders and payment of premium installments for next 20 years for provision of accident insurance in case of collision. The civic body has also said that navigation spans will be equipped with CCTVs and along with renovation of the existing jetty, a new additional jetty will be constructed.

**Maharashtra: At Jawaharlal Nehru Port, fishing commons being reclaimed without safeguards to protect livelihoods**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/at-jawaharlal-nehru-port-fishing-commons-being-reclaimed-without-safeguards-to-protect-livelihoods-101652812610471.html>

Mumbai The ongoing reclamation over 110 hectares of intertidal land in Uran, opposite Mora Jetty in Nhava Sheva for expansion of the Jawaharlal Nehru Port, are allegedly destroying fishing commons in the absence of safeguards to protect local livelihoods. This is despite the same being mandated by a National Green Tribunal-appointed expert committee in June 2021.

The area in question is a low-lying expanse of mudflats, frequented by traditional fishers from Mora Gaon, Gavan Koliwada, Belpada Gaon, Uran Koliwada and Hanuman Koliwada among others. Responding to a petition filed by Dilip Koli, an artisan fisherman from Uran and spokesperson of the Paaramparik Machhimar Bachao Kruti Samiti, the court-appointed committee had last year instructed JNPT to proactively obtain the suggestions of the Commissioner, Fisheries for safeguarding the local traditional fishing in the area and other related measures with view to safeguard the livelihood of the local fisherfolks.

This condition, locals say, has not been met by JNPA, though reclamation work at the project site is on in full swing. The NGT-appointed committee had noted that work to expand the fourth container terminal at JNP would impact the traditional fishing which is the main livelihood of the local fisherfolks , and instructed the port authority to ensure that traditional fishing practices of local fisherfolks is not hampered due to the project. JNPA acquired environmental and coastal

regulation zone clearance for the project in October 2019, while reclamation activities began on April 17 this year.

The port has since dumped thousands of tonnes of mud and gravel into the intertidal area where we would earlier find crabs, tiger prawns and lobsters in good quantity. It is a shallow place, where the sunlight reaches the ocean bed and promotes growth of vegetation, attracting fish to breed there. Now because of sedimentation from the reclaimed area, even the surrounding mudflats are seeing a decline in catch, said Koli, who challenged the October 2019 EC in the NGT, leading to a June 2021 order constituting the expert committee to look into their grievances.

However, JNPA officials refuted the claim that no safeguards have been taken pursuant to the NGT-appointed committee's report. A senior official, who did not wish to be identified, confirmed that JNPA held a meeting with Atul Patne, fisheries commissioner, Maharashtra, after the expert committee's report came out on September 9, in which the latter found JNPA's compliance with directions to be sufficient. The minutes of the meeting (dated September 16) have been obtained by Hindustan Times, in addition to an internal JNPA document detailing the status of litigation regarding the fourth container terminal.

The latter, undated document notes that JNPT has decided to withdraw an appeal filed in the Supreme Court regarding an amount of 66 crore, which it deposited as compensation for 1,630 families in Uran who were displaced by the fourth container terminal's Phase-1 expansion of 90 hectares, which was completed in December 2017, and commissioned in February 2018. The balance work to reclaim another 110 hectares commenced on April 17 this year, and has been challenged in a separate petition by local fishers.

Despite our initial objection, we have agreed to the compensation amount due to the project's impact on fishers. We have also deposited 35 lakhs with the Mangrove Foundation so that the area can be restored. In view of this, the fisheries commissioner agreed that we do not require any NOC or further compliance to proceed with the balance 110 hectares reclamation for container terminal number four. It is incorrect to say that we have not done our bit, the official said.

Unmesh Wagh, deputy chairman, JNPA, confirmed these developments when contacted for a comment on Tuesday. We have met with the fisheries department and they suggested that our appeal against the 66 crore compensation in the Supreme Court be withdrawn as a way forward. We have done what we can for the fisherfolk. After they have received the compensation

amount, any other grievances can be examined by the expert committee.

Fishers and environmentalists, however, maintained that this response is misplaced. Nandakumar Pawar, who runs the environment NGO Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishthan, said, the compensation has been deposited in the Supreme Court since 2015, but not a single family has actually received any money yet. Besides, that is a separate petition relating to the initial work which displaced families. By agreeing to withdraw their objections in that matter, JNPA cannot now say that they have done enough to comply with the NGT committee's directions in response to balance reclamation work of 110 hectares. That is another legal matter altogether.

Moreover, local fishers added that a one-time compensation is not enough to ensure their security in perpetuity. Having enough money for one lifetime is not our goal. We want to ensure that future generations can also carry out this trade. Even the NGT-appointed committee has asked JNPT to ensure that our livelihoods are not impacted. This crucial aspect has been completely ignored by both JNPA and the fisheries department, said Koli.

### **Maharashtra: Ice shortage due to power cuts hits fishermen hard in peak season**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/fpj-exclusive-ice-shortage-due-to-power-cuts-hits-fishermen-hard-in-peak-season>

Although the twin-city is so far free from power cuts, the fishing community from the coastal areas of Uttan near Bhayandar is facing a tough time due to an acute shortage of ice amidst load shedding in other districts.

The quaint fishing villages including Uttan, Pali and Chowk are home to around 750 fishing boats in the region. Each of these traditional and mechanised boats needs at least three tonnes of ice depending upon the quantity of catch and days spent for their voyage. There is one ice manufacturing unit in Uttan, but it can cater to only 25 per cent of the current demand. The rest is sourced from other manufacturing units located in Taloja, Kaman, Vashi and other parts of Thane, Palghar and Raigad districts. However, these areas are facing power interruptions leading to a shortfall in ice production in the manufacturing units which are unable to fulfil the demands.

Ice is a very crucial ingredient to preserve fish during the voyage and its shortage is taking a heavy toll on the fishing business. The government should tackle the power crisis and also make arrangements to ensure regular supply of ice for the fishing community which is also reeling under a crisis, said local municipal corporation Sharmila Bagaji.

Apart from Uttan, other nearby coastal areas including Manori, Gorai and Vasai are facing a similar situation. The fisherfolk are already worried that the ice shortage will push up the prices of fish owing to a significant rise in logistical expenses. This at a time when the catch is much better this year due to the existing weather conditions. Usually, it takes around 36 to 48 hours for the formation of ice blocks in the conventionally manufactured plants. However, due to frequent power interruptions, the process time doubles or even triples up leading to an acute shortage. Not only does ice affect fishermen, the quality of ice also takes a hit due to the power cuts, said a fisherman.

### **Maharashtra: From farm to sea: Conserving mangroves to protect local livelihoods and the planet**

<https://www.apple.com/newsroom/2022/04/conserving-mangroves-to-protect-local-livelihoods-and-the-planet/>

Just 60 miles south of the vibrant coastal Indian city of Mumbai in Maharashtra, two distinct worlds emerge. The bustling city — full of skyscrapers, restaurants, hotels, shopping districts, countless tuk-tuks, and modern cars — falls away as unpaved roads, palm trees, goats, cows pulling carts, and small open-air markets and restaurants come into view.

In the Raigad district, Alibaug connects Mumbai to a network of rivers branching off of the Arabian Sea. The coastal area is home to 21,000 hectares of mangrove forests, one of Earth's most natural protectors against the impacts of climate change, which include unpredictable monsoons, rising tides, cyclones — or hurricanes — and even tsunamis, while also acting as carbon sinks that absorb CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and store it in their soil, plants, and other sediment, known as blue carbon.

Applied Environmental Research Foundation (AERF) — awarded a grant by Apple in 2021 — is exploring the area with a plan to safeguard the future of these mangroves by creating alternative, sustainable industries in the local communities that cultivate and benefit from the biodiversity and resilience of the mangrove ecosystems. Conservation agreements will provide sustained support to village members in exchange for conserving the land and transitioning the local economy to one that relies on keeping the mangroves intact and healthy.

AERF will also apply learnings from Conservation International's pilot blue carbon project in Cispatá, Colombia, launched in 2018. The fight against climate change is a fight for the communities around the world whose lives and livelihoods are most threatened by the crisis, and that's where we've focused our work — from Colombia to Kenya to the Philippines, says Lisa Jackson, Apple's vice president of Environment, Policy, and Social Initiatives. Our new



partnership in India continues this momentum, helping a community benefit economically from the restoration of the mangrove forests that protect against the worst impacts of climate change.

Archana Godbole, director of AERF, has loved nature since her childhood. Plants are a representation of age and time, she says. And trees represent patience. They are silent spectators of time — the more I studied them and understood them, the more they humbled me. My experiences instilled in me that I want to work for conservation and save trees and forests. Godbole, a trained plant taxonomist, has specialized in community-based conservation for the last 30 years. In Raigad, AERF is pursuing conservation agreements with communities that have lost their crops and fertile agricultural fields due to saltwater intrusion and the destruction of human-made dykes.

People here and their forefathers were farmers, and suddenly the ocean came to their doorstep, Godbole says. But people learned new skills and coped with their new situation. Now that we all know mangroves are important for climate change and sequestering carbon, we're very happy to have reached this place and are trying to collaborate with the people here to see how mangroves will bring more benefits to them. We're hopeful that deep connection with the land and mangroves will be established in their minds. Below are the faces of these villages, and a glimpse of resilience in the face of increasing climate calamities in the communities many call home.

Karanjveera is a small inland village home to many farmers and fishermen — whose catch typically includes crabs and small shrimp — and their families. Namdev Waitaram More is a village elder and expert on traditional fishing methods. At 75 years old, he has lived peacefully alongside mangroves his entire life, and respects their protective qualities that have kept salt water from entering their paddy fields. More and his cousin are now helping connect other community members with AERF to discuss salt marsh and mangrove conservation in the village. Mangroves act like a sponge, he says. The people are connected with the mangroves here. If they are gone, our dykes will go, and our paddy fields will also go. Because we're connected through our food, our dykes, and our mangroves, we are surviving.

Usha and her son, Tushar Thakur, are farmers from Hashiware, a village along the Amba River whose agricultural land has been submerged in salt water since the local dyke broke in 1990. The land is now its own mangrove forest, but remnants of the past sprinkle the area, as abandoned homes spring out of the muddy waters a few meters from the river's bank. Thakur was one of the first village members to sign a conservation agreement with AERF to protect the mangroves. Since 1996, mangroves have covered the agricultural land that once belonged to farmers in Hashiware. With our work and awareness around the importance of mangroves, AERF's Godbole explains, and opportunities to create sustainable income-generating activities, we've provided hope to the coastal communities in Raigad...

## **Maharashtra: Amid demarcation row, SRA halts its projects at koliwadass**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/amid-demarcation-row-sra-halts-its-projects-at-koliwadass/articleshow/90989795.cms>

Amid opposition to koliwadass being notified as slums and being redeveloped under Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) schemes, the authority has issued an order to stop all such projects and related activities till the demarcation of fishing villages in the city is complete.

Last month, state revenue minister Balasaheb Thorat had informed the legislative council that 31 of the 41 koliwadass had been demarcated in Mumbai, but in some cases, the demarcation had not taken place owing to local opposition. Thorat had further said that the collectors in Konkan region have also been instructed to demarcate koliwadass.

Koliwadass or fishing villages are located on prime seafacing lands in the city and the government is struggling to demarcate their boundaries. It is noticed that there is opposition for survey and implementation of SRA schemes in koliwada/koliwada gaothans from locals and demarcation is the main issue raised...It is hereby directed that the activities mentioned above should not be carried out by the SRA until the issues are resolved, SRA CEO Satish Lokhande stated in the recent circular.

According to officials, SRA projects are under way in several koliwadass, including Sewri, Sion, Worli and Deonar, and are facing resistance from the local fisherfolk. Ujwalla Patil, chairperson of Koliwada Gaathan Vistar Kruti Samiti, said, we welcome this, but this is only a temporary circular...at many locations, like Sewri, builders are not following the order.

In 2017, the officials had pitched for special Development Control Rules (DCR) to pave the way for the redevelopment of gaothans and koliwadass in the city. When the demarcation is final, we will get the property card for the land. The special DCR should be implemented so that kolis can opt for the self-redevelopment model wherein private builders won't be allowed to construct free-sale components and flats will be sold only to local residents, Patil said, adding that they have already carried out the self-development model at Mahim koliwada. We will ask the government to give us finance to redevelop. We are also looking at other revenue generation models. Each gaathan and koliwada will have to pass a resolution and decide if they want to sell the flats only to residents, Patil said.

## **Maharashtra: Supreme Court stays Bombay HC order on compensation to fishermen families**

<https://www.indialegallive.com/constitutional-law-news/supreme-court-news/supreme-court-stays-bombay-hc-order-on-compensation-to-fishermen-families/>

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the Bombay High Court order, directing interim compensation of Rs 10 crore to be paid to the families of fishermen, whose livelihood has been affected due to the ongoing construction of the third Thane creek bridge near Vash.

A Bench comprising Justice M.R. Shah and Justice B.V. Nagarathna stayed the High Court verdict, which had directed the Registrar, Judicial to pay Rs 10 crore deposited by the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation Ltd (MSRDC) to the Mariyayi Machhimaar Sahkari Sansthya Maryadit within two weeks from the order dated March 23, 2022, which shall be distributed to the members in the sum of Rs one lakh per family of fishermen.

On February 26, 2022, the High Court had noted that the determination of the exact amount payable as compensation to the affected fishermen was likely to take time, but as an interim measure, their families should be provided an interim compensation of Rs one lakh to every affected fisherman by MSRDC and have directed that a sum of Rs 10 crore be deposited in Court towards the said interim compensation.

Respondent No 1/Mariyayi Machhimaar Sahkari Sansthya Maryadit (MMSSM) had moved the High Court, seeking direction against petitioner MSRDC to provide appropriate compensation to the Project Affected Fishermen for loss of mangroves, mudflats and creeklets on account of construction of TCB III, all of which qualitatively and quantitatively impact on their means of livelihood through fishing; and a direction against the Respondents to frame a compensation scheme to protect socio-ecological interests of traditional fishermen in the state of Maharashtra on account of reclamation/damage/destruction of fishing areas for infrastructure projects.

The High Court had framed various issues for determination & dealt with them accordingly:-

(i) Whether the Petitioner can prove that the Project Affected Fishermen have a customary right to fish for a living in Thane Creek?

High Court observed that

a. The Project Affected Fishermen have inhabited Thane creek and practiced fishing as their main source of livelihood for at least the last 100 years, likely more. This qualifies as an activity being practiced since time immemorial;

b. Various documents have recorded from time to time that the Project Affected Fishermen have inhabited Thane creek, and practiced fishing thereon. Therefore it is also regular and continuous

c. the Project Affected Fishermen's use of the creek has uniformly been for the purpose of fishing, thereby making the usage certain and not varied;

d. Finally, their use for the purposes of fishing has been for their own livelihood, and not on some industrial scale which makes the exploitation of their right unreasonable. It is not even the case of Respondent No. 8 or the Petitioner & Respondent No. 2 that the activity of fishing carried out by the fisherfolk is unreasonable.

➤ Therefore, following establish with sufficient clarity that the Project Affected Fishermen have a customary right to do fishing for a living in Thane creek.

(Most importantly, the Affidavits in Reply of Petitioner (herein) also appears to accept this position.)

(ii) Whether TCB III is likely to detrimentally impact the practice of such customary rights?

High Court was of the view that TCB III is likely to impact the Project Affected Fishermen's customary right to fish for a living, and therefore answer Issue (ii) in the affirmative.

(iii) Whether a state-wide policy for all categories of persons whose customary rights are affected by infrastructure projects is required? If yes, what is the framework for such a policy that can be recommended to the appropriate authorities?

High Court was of the view that a state-wide compensation policy for communities affected by government infrastructure projects needs to be framed.

High Court discussed the framework of MTHL Compensation Policy to illustrate how the policy framework can and has been implemented in an infrastructure project. It is in the same manner that it should be adopted for other projects going forward. And additionally a grievance redressal mechanism may be considered by the appropriate authorities while framing a compensation policy.

And further directed Petitioner to frame such a policy though not bound in regards to context of MTHL Compensation Policy.

(iv) If the answer to Issue (i), Issue (ii) and Issue (iii) is yes, what should be the contours of a policy compensating those affected by TCB III?

Petitioner recommended Constitution of a TCB Compensation Committee to determine the type of loss that each of the Project Affected Fishermen will encounter as a result of construction of TCB III, as well as the amount of compensation due to each Project Affected Fisherman. Respondent No. 1 & 8 has recommended which members should be made to be a part of the TCB Compensation Committee.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai heat wave leaves fewer fish in the sea for women sellers**

<https://news.trust.org/item/20220408150056-1upax/>

On a sweltering Mumbai afternoon, fish seller Nayana Patil grabbed an unsold pomfret from her counter, noting the price per kilo had tripled in the last fortnight. Now who will buy it for 1,500 rupees (\$19.79)? she asked indignantly, holding the silver fish up by its tail.

As a few customers eyed the fish on display like exhibits in a museum, Patil blamed a sudden spike in Mumbai temperatures for a drop in fish-catch volumes, arguing she should be compensated for her falling income due to the erratic weather. Fishermen get government handouts after storms cause them losses or harm their boats, while farmers receive aid for crop damage from droughts and floods, Patil, 55, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Earlier, women (here) could raise 10 children on their earnings. Now we have no money. My mother couldn't send us to school but she taught us fishing so we could be self-reliant. What do we do now if there are no fish in the sea? She added. Mumbai recorded severe heatwave conditions in March, with temperatures 6-7 degrees Celsius above normal on at least 10 days, according to weather officials. Located on the Arabian Sea, a particularly fast-warming part of the Indian Ocean, the city has experienced unseasonal rains, cyclones and extreme heat in the past five years. The impact of these climate shifts on fish catch volumes is now casting a long shadow on the social status enjoyed for generations by Mumbai's female fish vendors, who are known as fiercely independent, witty and financially suave.

Last month's heat was the latest - and the harshest - in a string of challenges they have faced in recent times, from losses owing to fewer fishing days amid fiercer cyclones, to competition from online seafood delivery portals. The federal government offers insurance to fishers against death and disability, with nearly 280,000 covered so far, data from the National Fisheries Development

Board (NFDB) shows.

Fish-worker unions say similar insurance against losses to erratic weather is also needed. Data compiled by the NFDB shows a 52% rise in cyclones over the Arabian Sea in the last two decades, fuelled by a 1.2-1.4C rise in the sea surface temperature. The sea is our farm - and we too are climate victims, said vendor Patil.

India has about 28 million workers in fisheries and related activities, with 70% of all post-fishing activity handled by women, government data shows. In Mumbai, an estimated 40,000 women fish vendors from the Koli community, the city's original inhabitants, and buy stock from fish traders, then sort, pack and sell it in markets.

In 2020, the total fish catch from India's seas was about 3.7 million tonnes, up from 3.2 million tonnes in 2012, while that from rivers and estuaries doubled to 10 million tonnes. Nonetheless, Pradip Chatterjee, who heads the West Bengal- based National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers, said its members were struggling because their traditional knowledge and calculations are no longer effective due to abrupt weather shifts.

As well as the ocean warming that has pushed fish to migrate from their native zones to colder waters, stocks have also been depleted by excessive fishing, scientists said. Over-fishing even during the breeding season or the use of small mesh nets that catch juvenile fish have compounded the impact of climate change on the fishing community, said Sunil Mohamed, secretary of the Kerala-based Sustainable Seafood Network of India. Oil sardines, for example, were once abundant on the southern coasts of Kerala and Karnataka, but are now found slightly north along the shores of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Similarly, the 'bombil' fish - also known by its colonial name, Bombay Duck - was earlier caught along the Mumbai coast but is now found further north in neighbouring districts, said local fishermen. As a result, they must use more fuel to go out into the deep sea amid soaring diesel prices and for a smaller catch.

Devendra Damodar Tandel of Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti, a fish-workers' union, said his organisation is mapping losses incurred during the heatwave last month, enlisting a marine researcher and young community members. Ad-hoc compensation in the wake of cyclones is provided to active fishermen, based on losses of catch and work days and the size of trawler engines, and is a recurring financial burden on state treasuries in the absence of insurance, he noted.

But tens of thousands of women - many of them working informally - get no financial help. Tandel said the only compensation they receive when a cyclone hits is a storage box for fish. What purpose would that serve? Asked Tandel, who wrote to the local government this week highlighting the injustice?

Looking around the empty bamboo fish-drying racks at Versova harbour in suburban Mumbai, retired marine scientist and fisherman Sadashiv Raje recalled childhood fishing trips with his father, when they returned with baskets full of 'bombil'. Bombil is as versatile for cooking - crisp-fried or in a tamarind-coconut curry - as for generating employment, he said. Fresh, it sells briskly at fish markets while harbour workers dry it to be stocked and sold throughout the year.

Earlier, I had work through the month of March but I got seven days last month, said Malamma Randhi Konalu, who earns 200 rupees a day for hanging up fish on bamboo rods, where they flutter like ribbons in the sea breeze. The government in March acknowledged the impacts of global warming on India's marine catch volume, while union leaders said it was time to protect the fishing community from climate-linked losses.

Maharashtra fisheries minister Aslam Shaikh did not respond to requests for comment. Suvarna Chandrappagari, chief executive of the NFDB, which oversees fish-workers' insurance, said a policy to cover climate-linked losses for aquaculture-bred fish and shrimp would be tested soon.

But a decision on insurance against weather disasters on inland waters or at sea was yet to be made, she added. Other loss-limiting initiatives include sea cages to breed commercially viable fish species and artificial propagation of seaweed, as well as protecting marine harbours from wind gusts by improving infrastructure, she noted.

Campaigner Chatterjee said climate resilience needed to be built across the whole fishing sector, or small-scale and marginalised operators would suffer the most. Shrinking fish catches are already changing how Mumbai's women fish vendors perceive their income, with some considering quitting the uncertain business or deterring the next generation from taking it up.

Researcher Pranita Harad, who has studied Mumbai's Koli community, described fish as their *laxmi* (Hindu goddess of wealth). For them, fish is not just their main livelihood, but a symbol of their existence, she said. If this drop in catch continues, the women will have to move to another profession.

## **Maharashtra: State govt forms new committee to look into fisherfolk's objections on draft compensation policy**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/state-govt-forms-new-committee-to-look-into-fisherfolk-s-objections-on-draft-compensation-policy-101649088640407.html>

The Maharashtra government, via a general resolution dated March 22, constituted a committee to look into the grievances raised by fisherfolk organisations with respect to the Draft Fisherfolk Compensation Policy, released in November last year.

This is the second committee to be formed pursuant to the August 2021 order of the Bombay High Court (HC), in response to a petition filed by the Mariaayi Machhimaar Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit – a registered fishworkers cooperative based in Vashi – on behalf of the fishing community from Vashi, Juhu, Koparkhairane, Ghansoli and Diva villages.

The petitioner had claimed compensation for the fishermen, contending that they were inhabitants of the Thane creek area and their customary right to fish in the creek was adversely affected by the construction of the third Thane Creek bridge (TCB-3), a proposed six-lane bridge on the Sion-Panvel highway which will connect Mumbai with the mainland at Navi Mumbai.

After the HC in August directed the state government to draft a policy to compensate fishers affected by development projects, the Maharashtra government in October comprised a committee to oversee the formulation of the document. Despite clear instructions from the HC, the committee did not feature any members from the fishing community. Multiple fisherfolk groups have objected to this move, both before and after the publication of the draft policy.

One of these is the Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan, a fisherfolk organisation based in Bhandup, which filed an interim application before the HC earlier this year. The HC noted the submissions made by us and felt that there was a need to revisit the Draft Policy. In February, the HC directed that suggestions made by the public regarding the draft be forwarded to the fisheries department and to the state cabinet. Our main contention is that no fisherfolk were on the committee. A policy that is drawn without due representation is not valid, said Nandakumar Pawar, founder, SEAP.

At the time, the court observed. It would be desirable if the state cabinet, to whom the draft policy is sent for consideration, take into account this court's detailed order from August 12, 2021, in all respects, when finalising any policy for compensation for affected fishermen.



Now the government has drawn up a new committee to look into the faults of the old one. However, once again, in total disregard of HC orders and our previous representations, no representative of the fisherfolk community has been included here too. Instead, parties like CIDCO and JNPT, whose destructive practices toward fisherfolk have been well documented in the 2013 NGT judgement in the case of Ramdas Janardhan Koli v. JNPT & Ors., have been given a place at the table, Pawar added.

We, therefore, once again reiterate our demand, that any Committee constituted for the purpose of formulating a policy for compensating fisherfolk within the State or for any other matter related thereto, must include the representatives of fisherfolk communities and the representatives of JNPT, CIDCO and ONGC must be excluded from this Committee, as they have demonstrated in the past that they do not favour recognizing the rights of fishing communities, Pawar wrote in a letter to the state commissioner of fisheries, Atul Patne, on March 28.

### **Maharashtra: Fishing, tourism, chemicals and petroleum get big boost at Mumbai port**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/fishing-tourism-chemicals-and-petroleum-get-big-boost-at-mumbai-airport/articleshow/90574510.cms>

The freshness of the fish on your platter may get even better at a cheaper cost in a couple of years from now. The mallet bundar, next to Ferry Wharf in MbPT will see a major jetty expansion at a cost of Rs 100 crore from the central government which will reduce the waiting, berthing time for the fishing vessels.

Against a capacity of 300, over 1300 vessels come to the jetty. At a time presently 50 boats can be berthed which will become 150 after the expansion, revealed MbPT officials. The port witnesses a turnover of Rs 1500 crore every year. As a result fisherman's quality catch will get quickly offloaded which presently consumes a lot of ice for freezing on the boat itself ultimately affecting the quality as per market requirements.

If all goes well the MbPT has plans to start the construction work in October this year and complete in 18 months, officials said. The project being the centre's initiative under the prime minister's scheme, the environment clearance is expected soon. Soon after the tenders will be floated, they added. The approach bridge to the fish jetty will be refurbished.

Also, a chemical berth costing Rs 161 crore to create additional offloading capacity of 2 million tonnes of chemicals, petroleum products and LPG will be built. To be completed by March 2024, 50% of the project cost is being funded by the central government. It will reduce the logistical costs by around Rs 150 crore a year for the importers as presently they have to pay extra charges to shipping companies due to longer waiting periods and higher logistical cost. At the existing

chemical berth, the present capacity is 4 million tonnes but occupancy is 78%. Thus saving on turnaround and logistical costs eventually may result in saving for consumers on their petroleum products such as LPG.

### **Maharashtra: Diwale in Belapur becomes first smart village in Navi Mumbai**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/diwale-in-belapur-becomes-first-smart-village-in-navi-mumbai-101648735149795.html>

Diwale, a small fishing village in Navi Mumbai, is now recognised as the first smart village in this city. No longer are fish being sold in the open. The fisherfolk have a fully equipped market for the same.

The village boasts of a modern jetty, ample parking space, gardens and markets. Apart from this, the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) will also develop a community centre, library, gardens, office spaces, jogging tracks and wedding hall in this village. The work on this will be completed in six months, the authorities claimed.

The cost of development of Diwale is around 15Cr and is funded by NMMC, the Centre, the State and MLA funds. The smart village concept was envisioned by PM Narendra Modi, who had asked for adoption of villages by people's representatives. Accordingly, Manda Mhatre adopted Diwale village. The initiative will ensure that the villages have modern facilities on par with the nodal areas and also generate livelihood for the locals.

On Tuesday, the State opposition leader, Devendra Fadnavis, inaugurated the projects completed in Diwale under the smart village project.

NMMC city engineer, Sanjay Desai, said, The objective of this concept is to ensure all quality civic services in the villages by providing requisite infrastructure and also facilities of bank, education, computers, digital services, WiFi etc. Projects to provide livelihood to the locals are also an integral part.

Manda Mhatre, who founded the project partly, added, Around 100 womenfolk had to sit in the open earlier with their fish. Now, they have a safe and fully equipped space of their own. The various developments are intended to provide education, employment, health, hygiene and other facilities to uplift the quality of life of the villagers.

The residents have welcomed the change. Vaijanti Koli, 45, a local resident, said, We had been

asking for a fish market as it was not easy to sit in the open all through the year surrounded by a host of people. Our menfolk now have a modern jetty that has made their life so much easier. Our kids will have library, computers and also jobs here in the village itself.

Another resident Vikas Koli, 55, added, For years, we have languished in our village without much development. Now, the transformation is huge and unbelievable. Our village has become so beautiful. Our kids will have a great time in the village itself. The jetty and fish market mean so much to us. The encroachments were removed to make way for parking space. The projects coming up will provide us space for our weddings, social programmes and so many other amenities. We are finally getting justice.

### **Maharashtra: Pay Rs 10 crore relief to fishermen hit by construction: Bombay HC**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/pay-10cr-relief-to-fishermen-hit-by-construction-hc/articleshow/90406950.cms>

The Bombay HC on Wednesday directed interim compensation of Rs 10 crore to be paid by MSRDC to over 900 fisherfolk affected by the construction of the third Thane creek bridge near Vashi. Each family will be paid Rs 1 lakh.

Ad hoc compensation is not a substitute for final compensation, clarified Justices Shahrugh Kathawalla and Milind Jadhav, noting that after the HC's August 12, 2021, order directing determination of compensation, there had been no progress.

Mariyayi Machimaar Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit, a society of fishermen from Vashigaon, Juhugaon, Koparkhairane, Ghansoli and Diva koliwadadas, had moved the HC last year fearing their livelihood would be affected.

Fisherfolk can't wait a year with no livelihood Advocate Zaman Ali, appearing for the fisherfolk organisation, Mariyayi Machimaar Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit, had told the Bombay high court in February that the deadline to pay compensation to affected fisherfolk for the third bridge across the Thane Creek near Vashi, had expired on January 31, 2022, and fish catch is nil . The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation submitted that the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) wanted a year to determine compensation. On February 25, MSRDC was told to deposit Rs 10 crore in court towards interim compensation.

Senior advocate Milind Sathe, for MSRDC, opposed its disbursement to the Sanstha and its members until the impact study. CMFRI told the HC it is not a competent authority and can assist any agency entrusted to determine the compensation with technical data. Thus seven months later there is still no clarity as to how the final compensation will be quantified or by whom. We

cannot expect these fisherfolk to wait one more year without any livelihood or compensation, said the judges.

The court found merit in submissions of Ali and senior advocate Sharan Jagtiani, acting as amicus curiae (adviser), that since the project will take over three years, the final compensation is likely to exceed the Rs 1 lakh interim compensation. Jagtiani had referred to the National Green Tribunal's February 2015 order awarding ad hoc compensation in a case and where it arrived at a formula.

The judges said if ad hoc compensation is paid to the Sanstha, there will be more accountability. If the compensation panel finds the final compensation is lesser or not payable, it would be the Sanstha's duty to return the funds to MSRDC. They directed the HC registrar to pay Rs 10 crore within 2 weeks to the Sanstha. MSRDC must, either with CMFRI or any other agency, determine the final compensation within three months.

When Ali said the order will empower the fishing community, Justice Jadhav said: It is going to affect other sectors too. Ali told TOI the Sanstha will disburse Rs 1 lakh each to 953 families.

### **Maharashtra: Fisherfolk can't wait a year with a livelihood**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/hc-fisherfolk-cant-wait-a-year-with-no-livelihood/articleshow/90406978.cms>

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### **Maharashtra: MCAP silent on project's impact on coast**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/mcap-silent-on-projects-impact-on-coast-environmentalists-7830385/lite/>

While the BMC recently unveiled Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP) warned about flood risks to the city due to rise in the sea level, the civic body has not mentioned the Coastal Road project that was termed 'maladaptive' in latest assessment report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Last month, the IPCC's sixth assessment report on climate change impacts, risks and vulnerabilities, and adaptation options was released. It had called the coastal road project 'maladaptive' (not adjusting adequately to the environment or situation) stating that the project aimed at reducing flood risk and protecting against sea-level rise will potentially cause damages to intertidal fauna and flora and local fishing livelihoods.

A pet project of the Sena-led state government and the BMC, the coastal road project that is being constructed on reclaimed land from the sea has been criticised by experts and environmentalists for possible damage to the coastal ecosystem.

However, the MCAP is silent on the project's impact on the city's coastline and mitigation measures. The corporation is constructing a 10.58-km coastal road starting from Princess Street Flyover at Marine Lines to the Worli end of Bandra-Worli Sea Link for easing out the traffic on south to north Mumbai on the west coast.

The project has been in question as the BMC had acknowledged earlier reports of rising sea levels, which could lead to the submergence of 80 per cent of south Mumbai by 2050. In August 2021, during the launch of MCAP, Municipal Commissioner I S Chahal had said that about 80 per cent area of Nariman Point, Mantralaya and about 70 per cent area of Churchgate, Girgaon, Charni Road will be submerged due to the rise in sea level.

The city's climate action document that was released on March 13 that set an ambitious target of achieving 'net zero' status by 2050, states that the city faces three distinct risks — increasing heat and heat island effect, increasing flood risk because of sea-level rise and due to extreme rainfall events, tropical cyclones and storm surges and increasing air pollution affecting human health. Architect Shweta Wagh said that the MCAP failed to consider the IPCC report's comment on the coastal road.

In MCAP, there is not even a mention of a coastal road project. I think there seems to be a serious kind of disconnect between the objectives of the plan and what they are trying to do. Also, Environment Minister (Aaditya Thackeray) has repackaged or reframed the whole coastal road project as a climate-resilient project. With this somehow, he is trying to conceal the real impact of the project, said Wagh, who has been fighting for fishermen that are affected due to the coastal road work.

Environmentalist Debi Goenka said that due to coastal road project, south Mumbai is already facing flood during the monsoon. The municipal commissioner is on record saying that 80 per cent of south Mumbai will be submerged by 2050. Because of the coastal road, south Mumbai started witnessing flooding, which was not the case earlier. It is making matters worse in terms of climate change, said Goenka.

Anthropologist and professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Nikhil Anand praised the MCAP but warned about the impact of coastal road impact. The MCAP has some excellent suggestions for adapting the city for extreme rain events that are the new normal. These include making the city more permeable, protecting the existing green, blue cover, and expanding green transport infrastructure. The coastal road supports none of these priorities. It makes extant intertidal regions less permeable to provide additional space for cars at great expense, said Anand.

Last week, during the unveiling of MCAP Commissioner Chahal, said that the coastal road project will help in reducing carbon footprint. Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray did not respond to messages. However, on the day of the unveiling of the MCAP, Thackeray had said

that the IPCC report had said that they did not consider the works done in last two years for the mitigations and the project will help in reducing carbon emission.

### **Maharashtra: Worli fishers halt Coastal Road work again, demand answers from BMC**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/worli-fishers-halt-coastal-road-work-again-demand-answers-from-bmc-101647867400215.html>

Mumbai For the twelfth time in the last seven months, fisherfolk from Worli Koliwada stopped the construction work of the upcoming Coastal Road-Bandra Worli Sea Link interchange on Monday.

In the latest protest, several boats from Worli Koliwada occupied the construction site at 11:30 am, disrupting the operations of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) contractor. They refused to let them work on the navigation channel until the dispute was resolved. This protest comes three weeks after an independent assessment of their demands was submitted to the BMC and state environment minister and Worli MLA Aaditya Thackeray.

The assessment, carried out by coastal geomorphologist Sudhakar Thakurdesai at the behest of the Worli Koliwada Nakhava Matsyavyavsay Sahakari Society (WKNMSS), states that the fishers require at least 160 metres under the interchange to ensure safe passage for boats venturing out to the open sea from Cleveland Bunder, a centuries-old artisan fishing port in Worli. In its current design specifications, the BMC has proposed a 60 metres span.

Nitesh Patil of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsyavevsay Sahakari Society, said, We have not received any response from the BMC after Thakurdesai's report was submitted to them, despite promises that they would accommodate our demands if a competent authority was able to validate the same. We will not allow the contractors to resume work until our demands for a redesign are met. In his assessment, Thakurdesai concluded that the construction of pillars will increase the turbulence in the area, particularly in the shallow, precarious navigation route leading from Cleveland Bunder into the sea.

The vessels need a minimum span of 160 metres looking at the storm surge recorded on Mumbai coast for safe passage, he said. The report also suggested that routine monitoring of the sandy beaches and shoreline should be carried out before, during and after the project, to get a comparative picture of the change in the shoreline.

Chandhar Kandalkar, chief engineer in the BMC's Coastal Roads department, however, said, the

fisherfolk's report has been sent to the National Institute of Oceanography for their remarks. A decision on the span will be taken only after they verify the contents of the report.

BMC commissioner Iqbal Chahal did not respond to requests for comment on Monday. Chandhar Kandalkar, chief engineer in the BMC's Coastal Roads department, also did not respond to requests for comment. But speaking to Hindustan Times in November last year, Chahal had said that the municipal corporation is not opposed to redesigning the interchange, provided that fisherfolk's demands were first properly reviewed.

We suggest that an independent, qualified institute be appointed to review the situation. The fisherfolk can choose the organisation they feel is best for the task...the demand for redesigning needs to be substantiated through a proper assessment, Chahal had said. According to the Marine Fisheries Statistics of 2016, the Worli fishing village has 800 fishing families and a population of 3,055. The two fishermen societies, namely the Worli Macchimaar Sarvodaya Co-op Society Ltd and the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Fisheries Coop Society Ltd have 190 boats. The Worli landing centre recorded a production of 2,575 tonnes in the year 2017-18.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen threaten protest if sea bridge built between Nariman Point, Cuffe Parade**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/fishermen-threaten-protest-if-sea-bridge-built-between-nariman-point-cuffe-parade-7817258/>

The All Maharashtra Fishermen's Action Committee (AMFAC) has threatened to launch an agitation against the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MMRDA) if it goes ahead and builds a sea bridge between Nariman Point and Cuffe Parade. The MMRDA plans to construct the 1.3 km of sea bridge to decongest the interior roads of south Mumbai and connect it to the under-construction coastal road from Nariman Point.

The fishermen have claimed that the project would affect their fishing activity and small fishermen would have to be rehabilitated. They have also protested against the coastal road project earlier, as they think it would affect their profession. The project is estimated to cost Rs 350 crore. Last week, the MMRDA had floated a tender for design and construction of the four-lane bridge.

The MMRDA believes the sea bridge would be a crucial infrastructure project for south Mumbai and also help vehicular traffic movement at World Trade Center, Cuffe Parade, Colaba and Mantralaya during peak hours by cutting travel time.



Devendra Damodar Tandel, the AMFAC president, said, There is a resentment among the fishermen community as they say the project has been planned arbitrarily and is being implemented without consulting them. The connector will hamper fishing business and deprive the fishermen of their traditional occupation.

Tandel, along with other AMFAC committee members, had met MMRDA officials and Mumbai Guardian Minister Aslam Shaikh to register their protest on Thursday.

Questioning if the project is really needed, Tandel said that traffic congestion on Captain Prakash Pethe Marg is caused by the ongoing Metro corridor construction work. ...connecting Nariman Point from Electric House will help solve this traffic problem, he added. Almost 90 per cent of the corporate offices at Cuffe Parade have been relocated to Navi Mumbai and Parel... it is imperative to find out whether this sea link is really needed once the Metro work gets over, said Tandel.

Section 41 of the National Green Tribunal order, dated 2015, acknowledges that the land under the sea belongs to the fishermen... If MMRDA insists on trespassing on marine land of fishermen, a case will be filed against it under Contempt of Court Act, 1971, he added. The MMRDA, however, claimed that it will rehabilitate the fishermen who would be affected by the project. It has said that a new jetty will be built and longer spans would be used on the bridge to provide navigational channel for movement of fishing boats.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai's Coastal Road Project will potentially cause damages**

<https://mumbai.citizenmatters.in/mumbai-coastal-road-project-will-potentially-cause-damages-new-ipcc-report-30040>

The 6th report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), titled, 'IPCC 6th Assessment Report Working Group II (AR6)' was released globally on February 28th. Analyzing environments of 195 member countries, the report has, this year, revealed that the global climate crisis is possibly much worse than we had thought. It states clearly that around 40% of the world's population is highly vulnerable to climate change. The IPCC report refers to Mumbai multiple times and says the city has new challenges ahead as it grapples with coastal degradation and temperature changes.

Mumbai is home to nearly 20 million people, in the same list as Cairo, Beijing and Dhaka. The report adds that, given migration patterns, rural poverty is being replaced by urban poverty, at the backdrop of growing income inequality. The report asserts that income disparity and housing crisis could make several populations more susceptible to the climate crisis.

As the climate crisis worsens, Mumbai's deeply vulnerable coast may not be able to protect its people, a majority of whom live in slum settlements. Mumbai's inability to house its population has led to severe congestion and socio-economic divide, particularly in Dharavi, Asia's largest slum, and a direct consequence of urban planning gone wrong. About 42% of the city's residents live in slum settlements, in decrepit, often temporary shelters providing a weak resistance to severe weather events. What's more, as the IPCC report states, Mumbai is worsening its climate resilience with new developmental projects and a general denial of climate emergency.

The report finds Asia the most vulnerable to Sea Level Rise (SLR), in terms of the number of people living in low-elevation coastal zones and the number of people exposed to flooding from 1-in-100 year storm surge events. India is one of twelve countries most exposed to SLR and flood events. In analyzing flood losses to different cities, IPCC found Mumbai's SLR damages to amount to USD 49-50 billion annually by 2050, with a possibility of an increase by a factor of 2.9 by 2070. (1 billion USD works out to around Rs 7600 crores, so the cost of the damages could work to almost 10 times BMC's annual budget!). A 2020 study by McKinsey Global Institute found potential damages could cost \$920 billion by 2050, up from \$580 billion until that year. Additionally, floodwater levels could rise to 82 cm, up from less than 50 cm that year, and the affected area in the city could go from 46% to 60%.

Almost 3 million people in Mumbai live within a kilometre of the coastline (high-tide line) and are under severe threat, the report states. On the connection(s) between environmental sustainability and economic poverty, the IPCC stated how, in Mumbai, houses of poorer families require repeated repairs to secure them in face of flood damage. The cumulative costs of which acquire a greater amount of their income, when compared to wealthier families in the city.

Rampant construction in the city is reducing Mumbai's mangroves, which are responsible for carrying flood water out of the city. It is not that the city's administration lacks the knowledge of flood prevention, but that they turn a blind eye, actively or not. Excessive constructions in low-lying areas that are prone to waterlogging continue to cause severe infrastructural damages, perhaps confirming predictions from the IPCC and McKinsey. The IPCC report further found that Mumbai is one of the cities in Asia incurring losses worth more than \$1520 million due to coastal flooding, in 2005 alone. This number is estimated to increase to approximately \$32 billion.

The flood risk to Mumbai has potentially been made worse by the infamous Coastal Road Project, which was set in motion in 2021 by Maharashtra Environment Minister Aaditya

Thackeray to decongest the city and redirect traffic. Currently, it is expected to be complete by 2023, and since its inception, has been subject to criticisms from various stakeholders, namely the Koli fishing community whose livelihood depends on Mumbai's coast. The IPCC report finds that the project will potentially cause damages to intertidal fauna and flora and local fishing livelihoods .

In August 2021, Minister Aaditya Thackeray unveiled the Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP), jointly developed by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the World Resources Institute India (WRI).

The plan was to work in two ways. Mitigation, with a concentration on the sectors of energy and buildings, sustainable mobility and waste management (given their significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions). Adaptation, to tackle urban flooding and water management, urban greening and biodiversity and air quality. The ultimate aim of the Plan was to establish a holistic, long-term response to impending climate change adversities. While citizens await its concretisation, the IPCC in the meanwhile stated Mumbai as one of the cities where businesses adopt temporary and reactive responses rather than long-term, anticipatory adaptation measures .

Criticism towards the MCAP has stated its failure to set achievable emission cuts, which, if not addressed, would not target the climate crisis at its foundation. Among adaptation measures suggested by the IPCC is the installation of climate resilient power infrastructure. Thermal power in India constitutes about 62% of the total power generated, marking a greater need for resilient technology, especially in coastal and flood-prone cities like Mumbai.

At its launch last year, MCAP was due to be rolled out by the end of the year, after incorporating suggestions from citizens, activists and experts. It is now expected to be in place before the BMC elections, likely to be held in April. While the MCAP could potentially fill the gap highlighted by the IPCC, it is yet to be seen how it eventually materialises.

### **Maharashtra: Diwale to be Navi Mumbai's first smart village**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/navi-mumbai/diwale-to-be-navi-mums-first-smart-village/articleshow/90063539.cms>

The Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation has zeroed in on Diwale village under Belapur ward to develop it into a smart village within the smart city of Navi Mumbai. Work on the project has already begun in full swing and the village is being given a facelift on the lines of developed nodes of the city.

So far, a modern fish market has been built while work on the fishing jetty and a platform for drying the fish is underway at the Diwale village, which is predominantly comprised of the fishing community. Encroachment on a 2,500 square metre area in the village has also been cleared where a parking lot will be created.

The total cost of the project is pegged at around Rs 13 crore, of which NMMC will spend Rs 3 crore and the government will contribute the remaining Rs 10 crore under its smart village scheme through special local MLA fund. In fact, it was Belapur MLA Manda Mhatre who initiated the smart village concept for Diwale. The project includes overall beautification of the village by developing gardens, community centre, multipurpose hall, toilets, recreation centre for the elderly, open gym, play arena for kids and vegetable market, among other facilities.

The smart village is the brainchild of local MLA Manda Mhatre. She has adopted Diwale under her constituency to be the first smart village of the satellite city. She managed to get Rs 10 crore sanctioned from the government under the special MLA fund, and rest will be spent by the civic body. Work is underway for road concretisation, footpaths, drainage and parking lots, and most of it is likely to be completed in six months, said NMMC city engineer Sanjay Desai. He further added that a modern fish market is almost ready, and as many as 87 beneficiaries will be allotted shops in the next fortnight.

Besides the fish market, a vegetable market will also be created. Through this smart village initiative, 200 to 300 locals, mostly from the fishing community, will get employment opportunities as security personnel, conservancy workers and caretakers at gardens, markets, jetty and multipurpose centres. The jetty will be thrown open in a few days. The multipurpose centre will come up on an 8, 000 square feet area and will have shops on the ground floor; the first floor will be able to accommodate at least 4, 000 people for socio-cultural activities. I thank NMMC commissioner Abhijit Bangar for supporting my smart village idea, said Mhatre.

**Maharashtra: Fisherfolk need a span of 160 metres under Coastal Road-Sea Link interchange**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/fisherfolk-need-160-metres-under-coastal-road-sea-link-interchange-101646075503261.html>

Fisherfolk had earlier demanded a span of 200 metres, and have refused to allow the BMC's contractors to proceed with construction work in their navigation channel until this dispute is resolved. Mumbai An independent assessment of claims by protesting fisherfolk from Cleveland

Bunder in Worli Koliwada -- who maintain that the construction of an interchange between the Coastal Road and the southern end of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link will cut them off from their traditional fishing grounds -- was submitted to environment minister Aaditya Thackeray and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Monday. BMC commissioner Iqbal Chahal had, in November last year, agreed to an independent review of the fishers' claims before taking a decision on increasing the navigation span.

The assessment was carried out by coastal geomorphologist Sudhakar Thakurdesai at the behest of the Worli Koliwada Nakhava Matsyavyavsay Sahakari Society (WKNMSS) and states that the fishers require a span of at least 160 metres under the interchange to ensure safe passage for their boats, as opposed to the 60 metres which have been proposed by the BMC in their current design specifications.

Fisherfolk had earlier demanded a span of 200 metres, and have refused to allow the BMC's contractors to proceed with construction work in their navigation channel until this dispute is resolved.

Thakurdesai in his assessments notes that the overall changes in the bed morphology due to the proposed coastal road... can be crucial in shallow parts like the navigation channel. Such changes due to temporary construction activities would eventually be stabilized but they will nevertheless cause a permanent change in the area. The difference in near-shore morphology changes that will occur after the Coastal Road is completed is observed to be significant as the area is shallow. Thakurdesai concludes that the construction of pillars will increase the turbulence in the area, particularly in the shallow, precarious navigation route leading from Cleveland Bunder into the sea.

The vessels need a minimum span of 160 meters looking at the storm surge recorded on Mumbai coast for safe passage, he said. The report also suggests that routine monitoring of the sandy beaches and shoreline should be carried out before, during and after the project, to get a comparative picture of the change in the shoreline due to the project.

According to the Marine Fisheries Statistics of 2016, the Worli fishing village has 800 fishing families and a population of 3055 the two fishermen societies, namely the Worli Macchimaar Sarvoday Co-op Society Ltd and the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Fisheries Coop Society Ltd, have 190 boats in total. The Worli landing centre recorded production of 2,575 tonnes in the year 2017-18.

Officials in the BMC did not respond to requests for comment on Monday. However, speaking to Hindustan Times in November last year, commissioner Iqbal Chahal had said that the BMC is not opposed to redesigning the interchange, provided that fisherfolk's demands were first properly reviewed.

We suggest that an independent, qualified institute be appointed to review the situation. The fisherfolk can choose the organisation they feel is best for the task. After an independent review, if it is found that we need to leave a larger span for their boats to pass through, it will be done. It may involve an additional couple of hundred crores [of rupees], but we are open to it. The demand for redesigning needs to be substantiated through a proper assessment, Chahal had said.

### **Maharashtra: HC asks authorities to give interim relief to fisherfolk hit by Thane Creek Bridge-III**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/bombay-high-court-interim-compensation-thane-creek-bridge-7781627/>

The Bombay High Court recently said that fisherfolk located in and around Thane Creek have not been provided with any compensation despite six months having passed since its verdict on the issue, and that the concerned fisherfolk are not expected to starve for another year until the authority concerned decides the quantum of compensation payable to them. Making the observation, the court directed the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) to submit an interim report by February 23 informing it about the quantum of interim compensation required to be paid to the fisherfolk at the earliest, that is, not later than two weeks from the date of order. On August 12, last year, a division bench of Justice S J Kathawalla and Justice Milind Jadhav had passed the judgment on a writ petition by Mariyayi Macchimaar Sahkari Sanstha Maryadit, a cooperative society of fisherfolk from Vashigaon, Juhugaon, Koparkhairane, Ghansoli and Diva, raising welfare concerns of members of their community located in and around Thane creek.

The HC, while clearing way for construction of the six-lane Thane Creek Bridge (TCB) – III on Sion-Panvel Highway, had held that the construction will impact the customary right of fisherfolk inhabited around the creek. The bench directed the formation of a TCB compensation committee to determine compensation to the project-affected fisherfolk. It had also directed the state government to frame a policy for compensation to fisherfolk or members of any other community whose right to livelihood is impacted by government infrastructure projects. As per the implementing agency, Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), TCB III is being constructed as an addition to the existing Thane Creek Bridge near Vashi in Navi Mumbai. The MSRDC said the Thane Creek Bridge is built across the creek, connecting

Mumbai to the mainland at Navi Mumbai, and is one of the four entry points into the state capital– the other three being Airoli Bridge, Mulund Check Naka and Dahisar Check Naka. The TCB was constructed in 1973 and TCB II was opened to traffic in 1997.

On February 16, the bench was informed by advocate Zaman Ali representing the petitioner society that the aggrieved fisherfolk are unable to carry out any fishing activities and are still deprived of the compensation to be provided as per HC order. The court was told that it will take at least a year to finally decide the issue of compensation by the authority concerned. The bench directed CMFRI to decide interim compensation to be paid at the earliest and said that even if its determination may be an ad-hoc exercise, the institute may take a decision as per the principles and guidelines laid down in the previous HC order. The MSRDC stated that after CMFRI recommends the quantum of interim compensation, it shall disburse the same to the eligible fishermen. The bench also found merit in submissions by Senior Advocate Sharan Jagtiani, who has been appointed as Amicus Curiae to assist the court in the case, that recommendation in the draft policy for determining compensation, which is based on the policy laid down in the National Green Tribunal (NGT) order of February 27, 2015 that does not contain any guidelines, is not in keeping with HC order. He said that instead, the previous HC order contains exhaustive suggestions and ought to be considered for formulating any policy for establishing customary rights of persons affected and the methodology for compensation for future, which the court prima facie accepted. The bench said that it would be desirable for the state cabinet to consider the HC verdict of August 2021 for finalising any policy for compensation for affected fisherfolk. Directing presence of CMFRI officers, the bench posted further hearing to February 23.

### **Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu: Integrated flood warning system developed for Mumbai, Chennai**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/integrated-flood-warning-system-developed-for-mumbai-chennai>

Integrated Flood Warning System (I-Flows) has been developed for two coastal cities (Chennai and Mumbai) to disseminate information on flood vulnerability in the event of heavy rains to the state government through India Meteorological Department (IMD) for mitigation actions, the Parliament was told on Thursday. The National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), an attached office of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, has also undertaken vulnerability studies due to sea erosion at selected locations along the Indian coast, Earth Sciences Minister Dr Jitendra Singh told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply, adding that extreme rainfall and associated flooding pose a threat to the coastal communities including fishermen. Along with the I-Flows, the NCCR has also developed a mobile application viz. 'Thoondil', along with Tamil Nadu's Department of Fisheries to disseminate information to the coastal fishermen in the event

of hazards. In addition, the information on shoreline vulnerability due to erosion has been made available by NCCR to all coastal states for devising the appropriate mitigating measures to protect the coastline, he said. The Ministry had successfully demonstrated the coastal erosion mitigation measures at Puducherry and Kadalur Periyakuppam village in Tamil Nadu. Coastal stakeholders like fishermen and local administration/government bodies were consulted during the development of tools like flood warning system and Android-based app for fishing community while implementing preventive measures, the Minister added.

### **Maharashtra: New ward boundaries will dent our votes, says fishing community**

<https://www.mid-day.com/mumbai/mumbai-news/article/bmc-polls-new-ward-boundaries-will-dent-our-votes-says-fishing-community-23212689>

The decision of increasing three electoral wards each in Mumbai, western and eastern suburbs has not gone down well with the fishing community—one of the early inhabitants of the island city. Earlier this week, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation released the first draft list of 236 electoral ward boundaries for the upcoming polls by adding nine new wards to the existing 227. A total of 94 fishing settlements are located in and around the city limits and 31 of these are koliwadass while the remaining 63 are gaothans. The BMC's strategy to announce and redraw the new electoral map is skewed. This will severely hamper our prospects of getting representation and dent our votes. We are asking for representation on the basis of our community's population in Mumbai.

This is an attempt to break the votes and unity of the fisherfolk. This divide-and-rule policy is not healthy. Cuffe Parade and Colaba have approximately 4,500 and 6,500 voters, respectively. Worli Koliwada too has now been split in wards 199 and 200, said Devendra Tandel, president of Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti. Colaba fishing village was part of Cuffe Parade Machhimar Nagar and fell under ward no. 235. As per the redrawn map, the Colaba settlement, which is across the road from Cuffe Parade, is now in ward no. 234 in Fort. Earlier, a combined ward-cum-cluster was guaranteeing us votes and representation. We have been split up because of opposition to their policies, especially the Coastal Road project. The Worli Koliwada community had seething anger against the Shiv Sena and their anti-fisherfolk policies. Because of our opposition, they were scared and wanted to pass decisions that do not favour our community. Now they are getting back at us by splitting us, said Tandel. Even the BMC has clarified that the move to redraw the electoral map will impact the ward boundaries of around 70 per cent seats in the city. The fisherfolk believe fishing villages must not be broken as it destroys the culture and erodes the activity from its roots. Tandel said, Let these hamlets remain together. With the new wards, we have only two representatives from the community as



compared to the 40 earlier. Pradip Tapke, a leader and resident of Versova Koliwada, said Authorities should have kept in mind the population of the fishing community.

Votes will be split in several wards and the community members are upset at not getting enough representation. However, our unity means a stronger voting power and the numbers will speak for themselves when the results are declared. Around 90 per cent of koliwadass prefer Shiv Sena candidates, and this fact was clearly ignored by them. This demarcation will lead to their loss. Sena corporators deflect Hemangi Worlikar, former deputy mayor and Shiv Sena corporator from Worli Koliwada, said, I am still studying the new demarcation and doing my own research so that I can raise an objection and ask them why they introduced this new system. Milind Vaidya, a Sena corporator from ward 182, said I am a fisherman from the Koli community and my ward remains unaffected by the demarcation. I cannot speak about other wards and the problems they are facing, but I am getting the support of our community because I do the work.

### **Maharashtra: Thousands of fishermen protest against new amendment in Maharashtra Marine Fishing Regulation Act**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/ratanagiri-thousands-of-fishermen-protest-against-new-amendment-in-maharashtra-marine-fishing-regulation-act>

Thousands of fishermen from Ratnagiri district have been staging a chain protest from last more than 25 days and raised black flag on Republic day against the new amendment of Maharashtra Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1981,. The state cabinet approved the amendments to protect rights and the livelihood of traditional fisherfolk. However, the fisherman from the district claims that it has too many restrictions over fishing and will affect their business and they will suffer losses. A chain protest has been going on since January 3 outside the office of assistant commissioner of fisheries Ratnagiri. Where, 20 to 25 fishermen and their employees have been protesting day and night against the new law. Mazhar Mukadam, secretary of Ratnagiri Jilla Purse Seine Net (PSN) association. Who also has a purse seine net license says 95 percent of the fisherman in Ratnagiri are dependent on purse seine net fishing. Mukadam claimed that this protest is being carried out by the owners, employees and workers working with the PSN holders.

Usually before implementation or any amendment of act, the concern department should hold a meeting with the district advisory committee to know the ground report. But in this case no discussion has been carried out at the district advisory committee level, which is mandatory. The clause in amendment stating such discussion was removed. They did what they wanted and brought the amendment, he said. Mukadam states a protest by showing black flag was held on the Republic day at three places: Mirkarwada jetty, the district collector office and the Assistant

Commissioner of Fisheries, Ratnagiri. Mukadam claims the complete day the work was stopped to raise the voice of the fisherman. Ismail Darve, another fisherman who owns an PSN license says, In a year the complete west coast has a ban of 61 days i.e. June and July months. We would go fishing from 1 August to May 31. But with the amendment we are just allowed to go fishing for four months i.e. September to December.

It's not like every time fishing is good and it's a risky job. How can we earn or look after the family in four months of work. Also, what about the employees and workers. How will we manage them. Will they be available to work for four months? It will be another task, added Darve. Mukadam further added that are the government trying to turn the situation of fisherman like farmers who were committing suicide over losses. In the four months period too we the PSN fishermen are allowed to do fishing in a particular area. In the 720 kilometer belt of Maharashtra they have made four zones and have imposed many such restrictions where they are not allowed in particular zones. We are not allowed to do fishing in the central and international area giving restrictions. While the trolling and dol net fisherman are allowed at the same place, then why restriction on us, he added. Mukadam said the protest will keep going as it's the only livelihood we are dependent on. The authorities have increased the fine of Rs 5,000 to Rs lakhs. Earlier if any violation was caught the fine and case used to go on at the particular district Tehsil office. But now it has been handed over to the Maharashtra Department of fisheries. How will we get justice as they will do all the job as per the rights. Usually a case or fine should be done if the particular fisherman is caught red handed in the sea. But this department catches people at the jetty, which is against the law, added Mukadam stating the cabinet minister of the shipping department should look into the matter

**Maharashtra: What will we eat, ask fisherfolk as deadlock with BMC stalls Mumbai coastal road**

<https://theprint.in/india/what-will-we-eat-ask-fisherfolk-as-deadlock-with-bmc-stalls-mumbai-coastal-road/813379/>

A part of the construction work on the ambitious coastal road project in Mumbai has been stalled for over three months now, after fisherfolk and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) got locked in a tussle over the proposed distance between pillars. Around 200 fishermen in the Worli Koliwada area, a traditional fisherfolk colony, are protesting the construction of pillars over the sea near Cleveland Bunder in Worli. They have only one demand — the navigation span between two proposed pillars should be around 200 metres. However, according to the BMC, a span of around 60 metres is enough. The protest started a couple of months ago, but since then, the BMC has formed a panel to interact with the fisherfolk. The

panel has held three meetings — on 1 November and 7 December last year and 7 January this year — and has expressed difficulty in changing the design plans at this stage.

The Print has accessed minutes of the panel's meetings. Several Maharashtra cabinet ministers including CM Uddhav Thackeray's son and Worli MLA Aaditya Thackeray and fisheries minister Aslam Shiekh, as well as BMC officials also held meetings with Worli fisherfolk between October and January. So far, however, there has been no resolution. The coastal road project, a 10.5-km stretch of freeway from Princess Street at Marine Drive in south Mumbai to the Worli end of the Bandra-Worli sea link, built on reclaimed land, is expected to ease traffic woes for Mumbaikars. However, the Worli-end connector is the flash point between the fisherfolk and BMC and other governmental bodies. The coastal road project is about 50 per cent completed and if this issue is resolved on time, then the project will be completed by December 2023, according to the BMC. ThePrint reached Aaditya Thackeray through text messages for a comment but there was no reply until the time of publishing this report.

The plan and the protest Cleveland Bunder is a century-old fisherfolk village that is home to nearly 200 families. Its bunder (pier) is known for shallow water fishing. The fisherfolk venture out in shallow waters, which they claim is a good catchment area. This is what Nitesh Patil, a fourth-generation fisherman in the village, fears losing. Because the sea is reclaimed, we are already losing out on fishing, and after the pillars come on the navigation route, then we will completely lose out, he told ThePrint. We know how the sea is. During storms or rough seas, our boats can crash into the pillars. Patil is the secretary of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Vyavsay Sahakari Society, which is spearheading the protest, along with the Worli Koliwada Sarvodaya Society. The BMC's plan is to construct an interchange that will connect the coastal road with the existing Bandra-Worli sea link. The fisherfolk say the sea near Cleveland Bunder is rocky and shallow and that is where they navigate their small boats. But with the upcoming pillars, their route can get disrupted. Instead of going straight, they will have to manoeuvre their boats around the pillars and for that, the navigation span should be more than the proposed 60 m. It is not like driving on the road.

Out in the sea, the wind and water currents decide the navigation and wave pattern, said Ritesh Shivlekar, a fifth-generation fisherman from the village. According to him, nobody has given a thought about the locals here. We are not against development but what is our gain. Who is thinking about it? he said. Even during the construction of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link nearly a decade and a half ago, there were protests in the area. At the time, the sea link pillars were erected around 30 m apart. They did the same with the Sea Link and we were under Section 144 (unlawful assembly) for 45 days at that time, said Patil. But the new pillars are coming up in the way of their navigation route, the fishermen said, adding that the existing Sea Link pillars

have already slowed them down, and if more pillars come up on their route, it will destroy their livelihood. We are already at 50 per cent loss because of the Sea Link. With this, we will go down further. What will we eat then? Shivlekar asked.

‘Difficult to change plan’ Speaking to ThePrint on the condition of anonymity, a BMC official who is part of the panel holding meetings with the fisherfolk said the municipal corporation has told the community that experts have gone through the design of the project and it is difficult to change the plan now. According to minutes of the meeting in January, the BMC said the clear span between the two pillars of the existing Bandra-Worli Sea Link for fishermen is 17 metres (net distance, less than the gross distance of around 30 m) and boats can pass through only one place, while the Mumbai coastal road project will allow boats to pass through three spans and the net distance between them is 56 metres. Moreover, there will be three such spans available for navigation. The corporation also said that according to the norms of the Inland Waterways Authority of India and Maharashtra Maritime Board, the maximum span requirement is only 32 metres. However, the fisherfolk are not convinced.

We are the original sons of the sea here. We have practical knowledge and experience of navigation, something any BMC or government engineer won’t have from a book. So how can they say they have studied it? Patil asked. In the January meeting, the fisherfolk were asked to send a proposal in the form of a report within 15 days by appointing relevant experts. Till date, we haven’t received any proposal from their side but we will wait, said the BMC officer in-charge, who didn’t wish to be named. Patil called this an unreasonable expectation. When BMC can take months to appoint a contractor, how can they expect us to submit a report in two weeks? This is unreasonable, he said. After the BMC wrote a letter on 11 January saying the fisherfolk had agreed to the construction of some pillars, the community responded with a letter on 20 January, saying no such agreement was reached and work shouldn’t begin until the issue is resolved...

**Maharashtra: Uttan fishing community demand hike in compensation after losing mechanized boats due to natural disaster**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/bhayander-uttan-fishing-community-demand-hike-in-compensation-after-losing-mechanized-boats-due-to-natural-disaster>

The fishing community of Uttan has demanded a hike in compensation from the government for damaged boats due to natural disasters. The demands followed after gusty winds and huge tidal waves amid the inclement weather in the Arabian Sea unleashing its wrath on the coastline of Uttan near Bhayandar late on Saturday night. While one mechanized fishing boat-Jeevan Shakti was completely damaged, the other seven to eight paddle boats toppled in the

water despite being anchored at Bhatodi Bunder coast. Four helpers (khalasis) who were sleeping in the boat had a miraculous escape as they jumped out just in time. The owner of the Jeevan Shakti boat Sebastian Chinchak and his family have been left devastated as the boat was the only source of their livelihood. Battered by the waves and gusty wind, the boat drifted away and shattered after smashing into the rocks.

Apart from the boat, other fishing equipments such as nets, tumblers and hooks have been washed away, the hulls, radars, pumps and engines of the Jeevan Shakti boat have been damaged beyond repair. Fire brigade personnel from the Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation (MBMC) reached the spot and assisted in retrieving the parts of the boat. At a loss to make out the mechanism formulated for fixing compensation, fishing community leader Leo Collazo said, Compensation paid for damaged boats is too meagre for the fishermen to resume operations. The government should hike budgetary allocations and increase compensations to justified levels. The fishermen were caught totally unawares. Officials from the fisheries department inspected the boats to assess the losses, but the government should act fast and compensate the affected as soon as possible. Said local municipal corporator Sharmila Bagaji. A mechanized boat itself is worth around Rs. 40 lakh and other fishing gear cost a few more lakhs. The quaint fishing villages including Uttan, Pali and Chowk are home to over 650 fishing boats in the region.

### **Maharashtra: Midnight storm snatches livelihood of many in Uttan**

<https://www.mid-day.com/amp/mumbai/mumbai-news/article/midnight-storm-snatches-livelihood-of-many-in-uttan-23211034>

Towering waves driven by strong winds and untimely rain wreaked havoc at Bhatodi Bunder in Uttan, Bhayandar, late Saturday night, dealing a massive blow to the fishing community. While officials said the fishing community was alerted beforehand, boat owners claimed that they were in the dark. We would have anchored our boats near high cliffs had we received any alerts, they said. Dozens of fishing boats were anchored on Uttan beach, and the storm destroyed one - Jeevanshakti, and damaged two others - Prajakta and Ishwar Doot. The strong winds snapped the ropes of many boats, which hit stones at the breakwater jetty and got damaged. Prajakta and Ishwar Doot, which got stuck at breakwater jetty, were pulled by cranes on Sunday morning. Philomina Chinchak, 72, and her eight children, residents of Bhatodi Bunder village, mourned the loss of Jeevanshakti. She said she struggled to get a loan for her boat. My husband passed away many years ago, leaving behind eight children. I had to raise them on my own, so I took out a bank loan to build a fishing boat in 1998. Jeevanshakti was a god to me, but I have lost everything today, Philomina said. Recalling the midnight havoc, her son Vinod Chinchak said there were three workers on the boat. I heard the commotion and rushed towards the sea. There were towering waves and I couldn't see anything. The wind was

strong... I tried to contact my workers on the boat but they were not reachable. Later, I learnt that they lost their mobile phones.

They all survived, but sustained injuries. One of them was admitted to a hospital, but was stable. The fishing boat was the only source of income for the Chinchaks. We have to repay a loan of Rs 20 lakh. I don't know how we will survive, said Vinod's wife Snehal. Philomina has requested the chief minister for financial help. CM sir, please help us. We are completely destroyed. Our source of income was snatched overnight. We have to run our house, repay loans, and educate our children. Snehal said, we have incurred a loss of over Rs 40 lakh, excluding the cost of fishing nets, which we bought recently. Gregory Sankul, 40, had bought Prajakta about four years ago for Rs 7 lakh. The repair of the boat will cost Rs 2 lakh. The fishermen helped each other rescue their boats, and in the process, many sustained minor injuries. Government officials conducted a panchnama of the damage. While Jeevanshakti was completely destroyed, Ishwar Doot and Prajakta can be repaired. We will submit our report to higher ups after evaluating the total damage, said an official, Talathi Ramesh Phapale.

**Maharashtra: 38 fishermen get? 5.35 lakh compensation for releasing protected species into sea**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/38-fishermen-get-rs-5-35-lakh-compensation-for-releasing-protected-species-into-sea-101642601844790.html>

Mumbai the state forest department has paid? 5.35 lakh to 38 fishermen from Thane and Palghar districts in compensation for releasing protected marine species back into the sea. The pending claims were resolved last week during a meeting between the forest department's mangrove cell and the fisheries department. As many as 26 Olive Ridley turtles, six whale sharks, two guitarfish, one green sea turtle, one Hawksbill turtle and one finless porpoise were released into the sea after being inadvertently caught in fishing nets. The fresh addition takes total compensation claims during the current financial year (2021-22) to 86 cases, pushing the amount to ?11,52,500. The scheme, jointly launched by the forest and fisheries department in December 2018, seeks to compensate fisherfolk for a loss of fishing nets and encourage them to release protected species caught inadvertently. Since its inception, 264 compensation claims have been received by the state government and? 40, 78,050 have been disbursed to 253 fishermen. Sea turtles are the most commonly affected species, with 138 Olive Ridelys having been caught-and-released in just over three years, followed by 67 green sea turtles, five hawksbill turtles and two leatherback turtles. At least ?30 lakh has been paid in compensation for the release of turtles alone. This is followed by 37 whale sharks, whose release was compensated with? 8, 54,700, followed by six giant guitarfish, one Indian Ocean humpback dolphin and one Indo-Pacific finless porpoise.

A similar scheme in Gujarat offers compensation for the release of whale sharks, but Maharashtra is the only state at present that compensates fishers for the loss of all protected marine species. As per the compensation scheme, if any fisherman finds a protected marine animal caught in their nets, they are entitled to compensation of up to ₹25,000 if they release the animal and their fishing gear is damaged in the process. All applicants have to submit video graphic and photographic evidence of the incident, along with the GPS coordinates of where the animal was caught and released along with details of their boat license. In January this year, the state government revised the compensation structure of the scheme, and fisherfolk are now reimbursed based on the size and degree of protection according to the animal under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972

### **Maharashtra: How Jaljeevika is enhancing the income, livelihood, and productivity of inland aquapreneurs**

<https://yourstory.com/2022/01/jaljeevika-enhancing-income-livelihood-productivity-inland-aquapreneurs/amp>

Hailing from Maharashtra's Yavatmal district, Prajakta, who once worked as a bank-sakhi, had to travel a great deal to reach the workplace. She gave it up to become a Financial Literacy CRP but found her true calling only when Jaljeevika entered her life. As a matsyasakhi, Prajakta took to her new vocation like a fish to water since she had prior knowledge of what the job entailed. She says that the new trend set by Jaljeevika for fisheries has helped several women farmers increase their income considerably and gain respect at home and outside. Jaljeevika has empowered women to make their mark in a male-dominated industry. In 2014-15, the startup trained about 70 tribal women in Maharashtra in freshwater fish farming. The lessons on pond management and income through fish farming encouraged more than 4000 women and SHGs to engage in fish farming and fish sale-related microenterprises. Prajakta adds that before Jaljeevika's arrival most aqua farmers had limited knowledge of the processes and incomes related to fish farming. The startup showed these small-scale farmers how to increase productivity in small spaces. Founded in 2013 by Neelkanth Mishra, the startup has helped many aqua-farmers optimise their spawn-rearing techniques. It has enabled farmers with affordable and sustainable aquatic farming practices that bring together technology, innovation, and traditional knowledge systems. In 2020, Jaljeevika Infotech Private Limited started integrating data-based advisory support for fish farmers and strengthened the local market. Challenges of fish farming Although India boasts 7 million hectares of freshwater resources, less than 50 per cent of these are utilised for fishery production systems.

Even though India ranks second in global freshwater fish production, there is still tremendous potential to boost food security, livelihood, and employment generation for millions of fish

farmers. However, there are some challenges to be addressed first, including lack of proper knowledge of locally suitable aquaculture technologies, absence of better management practices, private sector investments, poor extension services, unavailability of locally produced fish seed, and limited quality input supply. Lack of access to markets is another major issue impeding the creation of a robust supply chain. Organisations also grapple with a dearth of tech tools that bring efficiency into the fishing operations, provide weather predictions and ensure the safety of fishermen by assisting in search and rescue operations. Empowering the farming community Jaljeevika's Women Extension Agent has helped women become matsyasakhis. According to Niraj Nakhare, District Mission Manager at National Rural Livelihood Mission at Yavatmal, We can do scalable work under DAY NRLM - UMED livelihoods activity along with well-established fisheries that have technical support from Jaljeevika. In this regard, our community members are becoming more confident and empowered through fisheries-based activities promoted by Jaljeevika.

The Aqua School model is helping hundreds of women fish farmers bring livelihood and income generation. 'Empowering Farmers through the Power of Data' is not merely a tagline for the startup, which has opened up an entirely new avenue of livelihood for communities dependent on the freshwater ecosystem. According to Neelkanth Mishra, all stakeholders in the community, including banks, traders, and insurance companies can leverage data analytics to obtain information related to production, processes and market. Project AquaEco, envisaged by Jaljeevika, has slashed production costs by at least a third by improving feed utilisation and reducing wastage. Neelkanth shares that the model has helped in creating digital profiles of farmers and waterbodies using IoT sensors. The project ensures that the data assimilated by these devices is recorded and collected offline by people. AquaEco has also leveraged tools and digital infrastructure to build an ecosystem that facilitates value chain development, tech-enabled knowledge creation, and IoT-driven advisory services delivery. Another model called AquaSchool encourages entrepreneurship among community members and uses technology-linked solutions to integrate backward and forward linkages, and the simplicity and accessibility of the solutions give confidence to small and marginal farmers. While ensuring a smooth production process through constant supervision, the technology also reduces the production costs, thus helping fish farmers increase their productivity by over 30 per cent. With the help of Social Alpha?, Jaljeevika has also roped in people who can help with the architecture and design of applications and web pages.

Moving away from conventional means, the startup is helping fish farmers access specific pond-based advisories based on the water quality of ponds, which has helped such organisations step into the new age. Towards this, Jaljeevika uses a cluster-planning approach to bring together all ecosystem partners in a particular district and attract more investments to help smallholder



farmers scale. Siddharth Bharadwaj from Social Alpha says that while aquaculture is a relatively new space for livelihood generation, it has the potential to create both upstream and downstream supply chains required to make the process easier and efficient. Finding solutions as a part of the Krishi Mangal program powered by Social Alpha and supported by Cisco India CSR, Jaljeevika is implementing a micro-entrepreneurship model with hundreds of small and marginal farmers. With nutrition, taste, varieties, availability and pricing taking centre stage, freshwater fisheries are beginning to see rising demand from the markets. The application of new data technologies in this sector has increased the efficiency of fisheries management processes. According to a study by the Centre for Strategy and Leadership, a better strategy for fishing could help improve marine resource management, while also increasing the profits of marine farmers significantly.

CISCO India CSR believes that only when these organisations scale up, will they achieve incremental growth through a combination of digital and on-ground innovations. Leveraging SaaS-based solutions alongside deep-tech to enhance and build product capabilities have helped these enterprises take on the demands of the market. It has also allowed them to adopt technological advancements like communications, cloud management, networking, and cybersecurity. With fisheries and aquaculture being recognised as powerful income and employment generators, CISCO India CSR aims to ensure continuous monitoring of the production process through data collection by IoT devices coupled with analytics to gather intelligence proactively and provide fish farmers with insights that can help them optimise productivity and reduce risk. Maintaining product quality is another key aspect of this value chain that requires continuous monitoring of the production process. Data collection conducted by IoT devices, when coupled with analytics, helps in gathering intelligence and insights that can boost productivity and improve decision-making. After looking at the enhancement of fish production through scientific service delivery, over 570 farmers have turned to the fishery livelihood in the Ralegaon Block of Yavatmal. These steps taken by Jaljeevika have helped them stay true to their value proposition of ‘Water-efficient farming as a business service’. It’s heartening to see how Jaljeevika has been acting as a change agent, leveraging digital tools and streamlining processes to make communities self-reliant. Its far-reaching impact is best evident in the increasing presence of empowered women in a male-dominated vocation.

**Maharashtra: Mumbai coastal road construction: Meeting misleading, boat navigation issue remains unresolved, says fishermen**

<https://www.financialexpress.com/infrastructure/mumbai-coastal-road-construction-meeting-misleading-boat-navigation-issue-remains-unresolved-says-fishermen/2400822/>

On Thursday, Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray held a virtual meeting with the fishermen community, two months since protesting fishermen stopped the construction of the Coastal Road interchange at Worli. The fishermen called the meeting misleading and said the issue of their boats' navigation remained unresolved. The fishermen also said that the development work on the interchange should not commence till the minister visits the site to understand the issue. Fisherfolk had prevented the construction of an interchange since the month of October last year, that will connect the Coastal Road to the existing Bandra-Worli Sea Link, according to an IE report. As per the plan, between two pillars of the interchange, the BMC is providing a span of 60 metres while the fishermen demand a navigational span of 200 metres for safe passage of their boats.

According to one of the participants in the meeting, the civic body reiterated its suggestion of appointing an independent, qualified and recognised organisation by the fishermen to review their demands. However, a joint inspection of the disputed area was demanded by the fisherfolk. With machinery lying at the site unused for more than two months, earlier, BMC had stated that the protest caused loss running in crores per day. The civic body, in Thursday's meeting, suggested proceeding with the development other than that of the interchange. According to Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal, the Worli fisherfolk have permitted them to start work of pillar 1 to pillar 5. However, fishermen have said until their demands are met, they will not allow BMC contractors to start any construction in the sea at the site. Two fishing societies from Worli- Worli Koliwada Sarvoday Sahakari Society and Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society, who participated in the online meeting, expressed discontent and said the meeting's purpose was not to address their concerns. On the contrary, it appeared that the online meeting was intended towards justifying the stand of BMC to restrict the navigation span to 60 metres, which endangers their lives, a member was quoted saying in the report.

**Maharashtra: Coastal road construction: Aaditya holds meeting, Worli fisherfolk say no resolution yet**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/coastal-road-construction-aaditya-holds-meeting-worli-fisherfolk-say-no-resolution-yet-7710549/>

Two months since the construction of the Coastal Road interchange at Worli was stopped by protesting fishermen, Environment Minister and local MLA Aaditya Thackeray held a virtual meeting with the community on Thursday. Fisheries minister Aslam Shaikh, Industry Minister Subhash Desai, the BMC commissioner and officials were also present. Calling the meeting misleading, the fisherfolk said the issue of navigation of their boats remained unresolved. They also said that the work on the interchange should not commence till Aaditya Thackeray visits the site to understand the issue. Since October last year, fisherfolk have

prevented the construction of an interchange that will connect the Coastal Road to the existing Bandra-Worli Sea Link. As per the plan, the civic body is providing a span of 60 metres between two pillars of the interchange while the fisherfolk demand a navigational span of 200 metres for safe passage of their boats.

One of the participants in the meeting said the BMC reiterated its suggestion of appointing a qualified, independent and recognised organisation by the fisherfolk to review their demands. However, fisherfolk demanded a joint inspection of the disputed area. With machinery lying unused at the site for over two months, BMC has earlier stated that the protest caused loss running in crores per day. In Thursday's meeting, the civic body suggested proceeding with the construction other than that of the interchange. Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal said, they (Worli fisherfolk) have permitted us to start work of pillar 1 to 5. However, fishermen have said they will not allow BMC contractors to begin any construction in the sea at the site until their demands are met. Expressing discontent with the meeting's proceedings, Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society Ltd. and Worli Koliwada Sarvoday Sahakari Society, two fishing societies from Worli who participated in the online meeting, said the purpose of the meeting was not to address their concerns. On the contrary, it appeared that the meeting was intended towards justifying the stand of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai to restrict the navigation span to 60 m, which endangers our lives, a member said.

### **Maharashtra: Why fisherfolk are opposing Mumbai's coastal road project**

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/why-fisherfolk-are-opposing-mumbai-s-coastal-road-project-1895919-2022-01-04>

Fisherfolk staying in Worli area of Mumbai are vehemently protesting against the city's first coastal road being constructed by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) as they feel the infrastructure project is going to ruin their business. Some community members from Worli's Cleveland Bunder area are not allowing construction of an interchange near Worli, taking objection to the narrow width of the navigation span between two pillars. The BMC has proposed the width to be 60 metres whereas the fishermen want it to be 200 metres. The fisherfolk have claimed the proposed span of 60 metres will cut off their access to the traditional fishing areas. The fisherfolk have received support from 51 eminent Mumbaikars, including former BMC commissioner D.M. Sukthankar and urban planner Shirish Patel. They have raised concerns over the project's impact on environment and livelihood. In a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and local MLA Aaditya Thackeray, they have criticised the BMC's move to construct the interchange and suppress peaceful protests by the fisherfolk.

We are worried that a government that claims to be pro-people and pro-environment has allowed this injustice, and has done very little to address the very legitimate demands of the community, reads the letter. The letter urges Uddhav to engage with the fisherfolk and resolve their issues, including the demand for adequate navigation span. It seems as though the BMC, contractors and the police are out to create an environment of terror to suppress the efforts being made by the community to defend their livelihoods and customary fishing grounds and spaces on land and in the sea, states the letter. The proposed interchange is the last leg of the coastal road connecting it to the Bandra-Worli Sea Link. Work on it has not commenced yet. The fisherfolk have argued that their demand to expand the navigation span could be executed at this juncture. On the contrary, the BMC is adamant on having a 60 metre navigation span. The civic body has already conveyed its stand to the community. The Project the Rs 16,000 crore coastal roads project—an eight lane, 22 km freeway—will connect Marine Lines in south Mumbai to Kandivali in the north through the Arabian Sea. The first phase (9.98 km) between Princess Street flyover and Worli end of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link is expected to be completed by end-2023.

Once the entire 22 km road is completed, travel time between Mumbai's south and north is expected to come down to 40 minutes, from about two hours now. In 2011, then Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan had proposed the coastal road to ease traffic in western Mumbai. Then BMC commissioner Subodh Kumar studied the proposal in 2012 and submitted a detailed plan. Later, the Devendra Fadnavis-led BJP-Shiv Sena government obtained the requisite clearances from the Union environment ministry in 2017. Work on the project began in 2020.

Previous protests the fisherfolk allege that the barges, tugboats and anchors used in the construction of coastal road are repeatedly damaging their fishing nets and obstructing the route of boats. Two fishing societies, the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society (WKNMVSS) and the Worli Koliwada Sarvoday Society (WKSS), have approached the state fisheries department, seeking action against BMC contractors. Nitesh Patil, a representative of WKNMVSS, cites an instance of their fishing nets getting entangled in the fan of the tugboat. Work on the coastal road is being carried out in the intertidal and subtidal area of Worli. On a number of occasions, we have suffered damage to our boats, he says. Last October, the fishermen had opposed a temporary jetty built by the BMC on the coastal road construction site in Worli. They had demanded that their fishing routes be cleared of any obstacle.

**Maharashtra: Letter signed by 51 eminent residents flays BMC's stand on Coastal Road interchange**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/letter-signed-by-51-eminant-residents-flays-bmcs-stand-on-coastal-road-interchange-7702805/>

Amid a standoff between the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and fisherfolk from Worli over the Coastal Road interchange, a letter signed by 51 eminent Mumbai residents including a former municipal commissioner and urban planners to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and minister and MLA from Worli, Aaditya Thackeray, has criticised BMC's attempt to construct the interchange and suppress peaceful protest by fisherfolk. We are worried that a government that claims to be pro-people and pro-environment has allowed this injustice to continue, and has done very little to address the very legitimate demands of the community, reads the letter. Some of the signatories are DM Sukhtankar, former municipal commissioner, Shirish Patel, an urban planner who envisioned Navi Mumbai and built the city's first flyover, Dr Surendra Thakurdesai, a Coastal Geomorphologist, Dr Amita Bhide, Dean, School of Habitat Studies, TISS. S

Since October 30, fisherfolk from the Worli's Cleveland Bunder has occupied the construction site of the interchange near Worli, halting the work. The fisherfolk have demanded that the navigation span between the upcoming two pillars to be 200 metres whereas BMC has proposed a span of 60 metres. The fisherfolk have said the proposed span will cut off their access to the traditional fishing areas. The proposed interchange is the last leg of the Coastal Road connecting it to the Bandra-Worli Sea Link. Urging the authorities to engage with the fisherfolk and ensure a safe and adequate navigation span, the letter further stated, It seems as though the MCGM (civic body), contractors and the police are out to create an environment of terror to suppress the efforts being taken by the community to defend their livelihoods and customary fishing grounds and spaces on land and in the sea. It has also urged BMC to stop resorting to intimidation from police. Since work on the interchange has not yet commenced, it is still possible to execute a design change to increase the span as demanded by the fisherfolk, stated the letter.

A reply last month by the BMC to the fishermen had stated that the proposed navigation span is adequate, The demand of for the 200 m navigation span was raised by you in a letter dated December 18, 2018, which was received by the MCGM from the fisheries department on December 26. This office (Coastal Road Department) in a letter dated 31 January 2019 and March 5, 2019, have informed both you and the fisheries department that the provided 60 m navigation span is adequate for the passage of fishermen's boat.

**Maharashtra: Mumbai, Konkan region witnessed 3.7mm sea level rise every year between 2006-2018**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-konkan-region-witnessed-3-7mm-sea-level-rise-every-year-between-2006-2018/articleshow/88477942.cms>

Maharashtra has witnessed around 175 incidents of extreme rainfall events in 31 districts and about 189 incidents of untimely rainfall in 36 districts in the last 5 years besides a four-time

rise in extreme drought events to around 80 in 2010-19 from 17 in 1990-99 which all can be attributed to the climate change, indicated a report by Inter Parliamentary Committee on Climate Change. Among these Mumbai and Konkan region districts assume prominence. The report was presented by state principal secretary for environment and climate change Manisha Mhaskar at a function held at the central hall of the state assembly on Thursday. State has spent over Rs 21,000 crore in compensation and draught relief works taken up during disasters caused by events such as flashfloods, unseasonal rains, cyclone and hailstorms, landslides etc the report said. Environment minister Aaditya Thackeray, chairman of the state legislative council Ramraje Naik Nimbalkar, deputy chairman Neelam Gorhe and former chief minister and Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan were among the guests at the releasing ceremony.

According to the report almost entire Mumbai has become Urban Heat Island (UHI) which is attributed to increased concretization, destruction of wetlands, degradation of mangroves and depleting greenery while areas such as Kothrud, Hadapsar, Aundh and Viman Nagar in Pune city have turned UHI. The UHIs have higher daytime temperatures which contribute to flashfloods and unseasonal showers besides causing reduction in groundwater levels. While major parts of Mumbai have experienced a temperature rise of approximately 2 degree C between 1991-2018, the parts of Pune have experienced about 3degree C temperature rise between 2001-2016, the report points out. Loss of work hours due to decrease in human productivity subsequent to rising heatwaves poses threat to the economy and the public health -- make us prone to virus attacks such as Covid-19. Loss of crop productivity, rising crop burning incidents, pest attacks and lower dairy yields could be the impacts, report warns. Between 2006 and 2018, the sea level has risen to 3.7mm, highest since 1971 due to rising temperature, report reveals.

Mumbai is one of the 12 listed cities at the risk of coastal submergence due to increase in sea surface temperature, extreme rainfall events and rapid urbanization, the report indicates. By 2050, report says, major land area of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane will be more likely to get severely flooded. Thackeray said the effects of climate change have already reached us and adversely affecting us and is no more a prediction but a reality. Now, it's time to act decisively to save mother earth and the precious life on it, he added. Nimbalkar said an incident of 750mm overnight rain in Mahabaleshwar is nothing but the fallout of climate change which needs serious efforts to negate carbon emissions.

### **Maharashtra: Fishing communities in the state oppose environment ministry's draft CRZ notification**

<https://en.gaonconnection.com/fisher-maharashtra-environment-coastal-regulation-zone-climate-change-global-warming-narendra-modi/>

More than 100 fishing community members and fishers' organisations including Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti, Vadarai Machhimar Sarvodaya Sahakari Society Ltd, and gram panchayats of Satpati and Mahim villages in Palghar district of Maharashtra have opposed the Union environment ministry's recent draft notification to amend the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019 — a law meant to protect coastal areas of the country. The fishing communities have issued objection letters urging the environment ministry to withdraw the draft notification as it was not in favour of the local communities. Gaon Connection has a copy of these letters. The draft notification, issued last month on November 1 proposes changes that include allowing temporary beach shacks to be retained during the monsoon season, allowing sand bars to be removed by coastal communities, and exempting prior clearance for development and production of oil and natural gas. Experts believe these proposed amendments will not only disrupt the ecology of these areas, but will also increase the risk of environmental damage further endangering human lives and coastal and marine biodiversity.

In times of climate change and global warming, where the impacts of the same are evident in the coastal areas, the Environment Ministry should make all necessary efforts to protect the coastal communities and the coastal environment to ensure food safety and safety of the coastal communities, Mumbai-based Dhvani Shah, research associate, Centre for Financial Accountability, told Gaon Connection. However, the ministry is doing everything just opposite to the actual objective of introducing CRZ Notification in the first place, Shah added. Her organisation works with the aim to bring in accountability in financial institutions who lend money to development projects. What are the proposed amendments As per the draft notification dated November 1, the temporary structures such as beach shacks in Goa and Maharashtra may be retained during the monsoon months of June to August. Such structures are customarily put up between September and May.

These temporary structures are being made permanent. If this happens then common public lands [in coastal areas] would be lost to private persons, said Shah, who is demanding the withdrawal of the draft notification. The removal of the structures was important as during monsoon, the coastal areas could rejuvenate and there would be minimal invasion of human activities on the ecologically sensitive ecosystems, the flora and fauna of the coast, she added. The notification also proposes allowing sand bars to be removed by coastal communities by manual method in non-mechanised dinghies or small boats using baskets/buckets in specified time and specific quantity.

Sand bars are naturally occurring temporary sand deposition (accretion) along the coast. If they are developed in the navigation of the fisherfolk, they should be removed. However, giving a free hand to the removal of the sandbars without scientific approach and regulation would

promote illegal sand removal and also sand mining, said Shah. Among other proposals, the Union environment ministry seeks to exempt prior clearance for development and production of oil and natural gas and exploratory drilling operations. Experts fear this would lead to the abandonment of oil and gas wells that continuously release oil impacting the marine flora and fauna. It is to be noted that the natural ecosystems such as mangroves, mudflats, intertidal areas, and coral reefs ecosystems play a substantial role in supporting livelihoods and carbon sequestration. Interestingly, the draft notification was issued when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was making commitments to reduce India's carbon footprint at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow this year. Meanwhile, the Union ministry has given a two-month time period to the public for making objections and suggestions on the draft notification for consideration. The deadline comes to an end on December 30. Comments on the draft notification can be emailed to the Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

### **Maharashtra: Even after three years, sunken 'Suvarna Tribhuja' awaits compensation**

<https://www.dajjiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=907697>

'Suvarna Tribhuja' deep sea fishing boat which had left Malpe port, had sunk in the sea at Malvan, Maharashtra, taking with it all the seven fishermen including a boat partner, over three years back. But other than the personal compensations paid to the families of individual fishermen, the compensation relating to the fishing boat has not been disbursed so far. The families which had nursed hopes that their breadwinners would return one day, have been dashed. The boat had left the shore from Malpe on December 13, 2018, with seven fishermen from Udupi district including partner, Chandrashekhar Kotian. It had moved towards Maharashtra but had lost its contact with others at night when in Malvan on December 15. The remains of the boat were detected 65 meters deep under and 35 nautical miles away from Malvan seashore on May 1, 2019. The fishermen had reasons to suspect that the boat would have sunk after either INS Kochi ship of the Indian Navy which had traversed this route that day, or some other ship rammed into it, rather than believing that inclement weather would have caused the tragedy. The request made to the defence ministry to investigate and provide suitable compensation to the families has failed to materialize. Even though the then defence minister, Nirmala Sitaraman, later became finance minister, the centre has not shown the commitment to meet the promises made to the fishermen then.

The state government has paid compensation of Rs 21 lac each to the seven families. The insurance claim of Rs 40 lac has been settled against the loan liability of Rs 45 lac. Therefore, the family of Chandrashekhar Kotian and the other partners continue to reel under the burden of debt. Deputy director of fisheries, Malpe, Ganesh, said that no compensation amount has so far



been received towards this tragedy from the central government. Malpe Fishermen's Association former president, Satish Kunder, has urged the government to disburse compensation to the fishermen who lost a boat worth one crore rupees in the tragedy, without further delay.

### **Maharashtra: Development of fisheries sector in Vidarbha region**

<https://arunachaltimes.in/index.php/2021/12/28/taki-attends-agrovision-summit-in-nagpur/>

Arunachal Pradesh' Agriculture & Horticulture Minister Tage Taki participated in 'Agrovision – India's premier agri summit', which was held at the Reshimbagh ground here in Maharashtra from 24 to 27 December. The summit was presided over by union Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, in the presence of union Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Department Secretary Sanjay Agarwal, Maharashtra's leader of opposition Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra's former energy, new & renewable energy minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule and Agrovision advisory council chairman Dr CD Mayee, among others. The objective of 'Agrovision' is to educate, encourage and empower the farming community and make them financially stable and progressive. Themed 'Transforming agriculture through technology innovations', the focus of the summit was to bring the latest technologies and products to the farmers. Speaking on 'Development of fisheries sector in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra', Taki covered the length and breadth of the fisheries sector in the arid Vidarbha region, its growth, opportunities, diversification of aquaculture and activities from typical carp culture, along with species diversification to usher in commercialization of aquaculture and ensure sustainable development with assured income to the farmers, according to a release.

Stating that quality fish seeds and feeds are critical inputs that determine the production and productivity not only in Vidarbha but also across the country, Taki urged the Centre to support and handhold the fisheries sector. He further stated that augmentation of fishing communities and providing support in terms of various inputs, especially for the inland fish farmers, are of paramount importance. The minister also presented a brief on the need to make a visible impact and to usher in real-time 'Blue Revolution' to bring about all-round development of the sector and for the welfare along with socioeconomic development of our farmers. He also provided know-how on the fisheries sector in the Northeast states vis-à-vis the rest of the country, the release said. The summit was also attended by union AH, Dairying & Fisheries Minister Parsuttam Rupala and Karnataka's Skill Development, Entrepreneurship & Livelihood Minister CN Ashwath Narayan.

## **Maharashtra: Winds of change in Mumbai's fish economy: No, the pandemic isn't only to blame**

<https://mumbai.citizenmatters.in/mumbai-fish-economy-changes-due-to-pandemic-and-consumption-28483>

Marian D'Costa of Aiyo Patrao, an online kitchen that serves Goan and Kerala delicacies in response to orders received on Instagram, faces a stiff business challenge today. Sourcing fresh fish at good rates has become increasingly difficult. She says. Marian echoes what a large section of the huge fish-loving community in Mumbai and its suburbs have been feeling and what holds strong connotations for the fish economy in Mumbai. Fish used to be a staple in most East Indian, Koli and some Maharashtrian households. All kinds of fish from shellfish, the bigger varieties like King fish, silver and black pomfret to smaller fish like anchovies and mackerel were consumed pretty regularly. But the state has witnessed a price surge, increased demand and decreased supply in locally consumed fish in the past three years. Untimely rains and soaring fuel prices have left a huge impact on the fishing industry. Broadly speaking, many factors are to blame for the change in the fish economy, not just price hikes. Ocean pollution, overfishing, the e-commerce boom, closure of fish markets in the pandemic have all played a role in determining the patterns of fish consumption.

People's access to fish has changed over time, not only in terms of the fish they buy from markets, but also what can be sourced from the oceans. What affects supply? The fishermen and fishing boat owners have not received their annual diesel subsidy for the past four years, said Ganesh Nakhwa, a fisherman and the previous Director of Karanja Society, a fisherfolk union in Colaba. Depending on the size of the boat, subsidies can range from 50,000 rupees to 3.5 Lakh rupees. To some fishermen, the government currently owes about Rs 14 – 15 lakh in subsidies alone. No welfare schemes were efficiently implemented for the fishing industry in the pandemic, even though our income was completely cut-off. It is really troubling to see the Government's inconsiderate attitude towards the fisheries industry, he added. The rising cost of sourcing fish has affected the quantities of the catch as well as the price at which it is sold. According to Ganesh, there has been a gradual decline in the number of fishing boats out in the waters. Reasons range from fuel price hikes to lack of infrastructure and government restrictions that determine how many boats can operate within certain radii of the coastline. Whatever little infrastructure we have for parking boats is all built by the British; there have been no new facilities since then.

There are no landing centres for Mahim, Worli, Versova and Madh Island fishing boats, Ganesh told me. The decline in the number of fishing boats inevitably affects supply; however, the demand has roughly remained the same in Mumbai. Which is why fish is now being imported

from Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. The quality of fish has declined too in recent years. Rising mercury levels in the ocean, industrial waste, plastic pollution are all contributing factors to this phenomena. Even though there are better storage facilities and preservation methods now, the quality of the catch itself has been compromised. 80% of Mumbai's catch goes to wholesale markets all over the city, and to Goa, Mangalore and other cities. Only 10 – 20% of the fish is exported to other countries. The fish isn't good enough to be exported; the White Pomfret and King Mackerel are the most sought-after varieties of fish outside of India, hence they are the only ones that are imported in large quantities, said Ganesh. Is consumption also to blame? Overexploitation of natural resources by human beings is one of the greatest pressures affecting the structure and functioning of marine ecosystems over the short term.

Our choices have the ability to steer the demand, and subsequently the pressure on our oceans. Although fish is still in high demand, individual households are steering away from buying the more local, smaller varieties of fish that are seasonal and more sustainable. Higher demand for bigger fish like Pomfret and King Fish has made these species victims of overfishing. According to a 2019 report by Subuhi Jiwani, originally published on the People's Archive of Rural India, the time that trawlers and big boats spend at sea has also increased over the years. Vinay Deshmukh, who was with the Mumbai Centre of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) for over four decades, was quoted saying, in the year 2000, these boats would spend 6-8 days at sea; this rose to 10-15 days and is now 16-20 days. This has added to the pressure on the existing fish stock in the sea.

Most fish consumers are aware that all fishing activities are banned in the monsoon season, and hence people try to avoid buying fresh fish during that time, but this knowledge is not enough. It is important to understand and promote informed, ethical and sustainable consumption of fish. In 2017 a monthly calendar called Know Your Fish was launched to provide monthly updates for which fish to buy depending on the season. According to Know Your Fish, in the past two decades, it has been getting harder to get the largely consumed varieties of fish because fewer of them exist in our oceans. This has happened because the number of fish being caught is greater than the number of new fish being added to their wild populations. This is called overfishing. The pandemic and its impact on fisherwomen Buying fish in the pandemic was made a lot easier due to e-commerce sites. This brought respite to wholesalers and fishermen, as fish markets were completely shut. Some fishermen started selling fish through Whatsapp networks. Juber Malkani buys fish from Malad fish market and sells at Aarey Colony. I have a broadcast list of about 200 customers that buy from me regularly. I started doing this in the pandemic when I worked out a good deal with one of the Versova wholesalers. said Juber. Juber's success was largely due to the great deals he offered on fresh fish and word of mouth publicity. Many fishermen started going to large societies and selling from their tempos. This helped them build a solid customer

base by providing them at-home service. Huzaifa Malik, a fisherwoman in Goregaon East fish market, took to walking around the neighbourhood with a basket on her head selling fish as lockdown restrictions eased.

People now prefer buying from home every Sunday, said Huzaifa, who goes on her regular route every Sunday afternoon, despite fish markets being open. However, this adversely affected those who did not have the means to deliver in bulk or through online platforms. Historically, the distribution of labour in Koli families has been equal: men catch, women sell. But the pandemic created an imbalance in the ecosystem of the fisherfolk. The e-commerce boom primarily benefited the big players, those who could operate at a large scale. As wholesalers resorted to supplying to e-commerce sites, the fisherwomen who sold moderate quantities in the markets were particularly affected. These were women who catered to a more or less fixed clientele, and could not rope in new customers in the manner of those who moved to Whatsapp or door-to-door sales. A lot of the women here have to deal with jobless husbands, paying 200-300 rupees 'hafta' or rent to the market and not making enough profit on some days. This has led to rivalries amongst women in the market, each desperate to score a purchase.

So you find them fighting for the best spot, or berating one another just to catch a customer's attention, said Lalita Patil, a fish seller at Goregaon fish market. The hustle and bustle of Wednesday, Friday and Sunday markets is not as prominent as it used to be, she adds. Some consumers however continue to remain staunchly loyal to the markets. Marian of Aiyo Patrao, for example, prefers going to the Mahim fish market. We get more choices and better rates in Mahim market. Of course, it's the best at Sassoon Docks, but that's not very convenient for us, she tells me. In the monsoons we would buy dried fish from Marol to last us through those three months of monsoon said Rita Rodricks, a resident of Bandra for 62 years. The fish buying and eating culture was very strong when I was younger. I grew up fond of cooking and eating fish, however I see fewer and fewer among the youth going to fish markets. Buying online sure is convenient, but the charm of fish markets in Mumbai is somehow lost, she added. However, the sheer nostalgia associated with the long history and the romantic idea of fish markets does not answer the question if we even need fish markets anymore. Will fish markets stand the test of time?

**Maharashtra: As BMC extends coastline, experts flag danger to mangroves, fisherfolk**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/bmc-extends-coastline-experts-flag-danger-mangroves-fisherfolk-7691748/>

After over two decades, Mumbai has again turned to the Arabian Sea to solve the growing problem of vehicular congestion. Cranes, barges, sand, construction equipment, and scores of labourers are working round the clock on the city's coastline to fill up the sea to create new land

and new roads. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is extending the city's western coastline from Marine drive to Worli up to 100 metres inside the sea for the 10.58 km Coastal Road. Of the 111 hectares area in the Arabian Sea, the civic body has completed about 100 hectares. The Bandra-Versova Sea Link (BVSL), a 17.7 km long sea link, is scheduled for completion by August 2027. Executed by MSRDC, the project is said to pass just 1 km from the shoreline in the western suburbs of the city, holding at least six artisanal fishing villages. Another 21.8 km long sea bridge — the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link — promises to seamlessly connect the island city with Navi Mumbai.

However, the creation of new land and sea bridges has left the century-old fishing villages that have fished in the waters around the city's coastline— Worli Koliwada, Versova village, Mora gaon in Juhu, Khar Danda, Koliwada in Santa Cruz, Chimbai village in Bandra— in the financial capital dismayed. The fishing community, some of Mumbai's oldest residents, are against these roads as the project has threatened breeding grounds for fish, and impacted aquatic life. The impact of the reclamation near the Worli sea face and Haji Ali can be already seen, and the process is not even complete. The construction noise and reclamation has disturbed the fishes. The fish available in the area has gone down by 25 per cent. Now, another sea link is coming up in Khar- Danda area as well, which will further push the fishes away, said a member of the Koliwada at Worli. The fishermen have claimed long term impact and loss of livelihood due to the Coastal Road Project.

A Central Marine Fisheries Institute (CMFRI) (appointed by the civic body) report — 'A baseline study on the impact of coastal road on fisheries and fisher livelihood' of August 2020 — stated that the fishing community may get temporarily affected during the construction phase. A Marine Biodiversity report prepared by SagarShakti, the marine research division of the environmental group Vanashakti, with two independent marine experts, had identified sea snails, crabs, oysters, corals, sponges, octopus, sea fans, snappers, mussels, shrimps and rays — some of which are schedule 1 species under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 — in the 800-meter stretch between Worli Dairy and the start of the Bandra-Worli sea link. Nitesh Patil, director of Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Vyavsay Sahakari Society (WKNVSS) and spearheading the protest at Cleveland Bunder, said, the currents are becoming unpredictable with each passing day. We have already lost a few fishing grounds during the construction of the Bandra Worli Sea Link. Noise vibrations from the vehicles passing over the bridge disturb the aquatic life. Now, there is a Coastal Road connector coming up in the area. After this, there are plans to get Sewri Worli connector as well. However, Dr Baban Ingole, retired chief scientist of National Institute of Oceanography, Goa and consulting scientist to MoEFCC, said, there is a drop in fish catch, but that is not specific to any area or because of a singular project. It could be sea pollution as well.

We need development projects, and no development project is environmentally friendly. What we can do is see how we can minimize the impact.

### **Maharashtra: Troubled waters: Coastal road project**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/troubled-waters-coastal-road-7691745/lite/>

It is peak fishing season in Mumbai. For over two months, nearly 200 artisan fishers of the Worli Koliwada (fishing colony) have been taking out their boats each morning, however, all are not heading out for fishing. From September 20, around 25 motorised and non-motorised boats in rotation set out through the day and night from Cleveland Bunder in Worli, located in the central part of Mumbai, to park their boats around a temporary jetty at the Coastal Road construction site. On December 21, despite being warned of penal action by the Worli police, the protesting fisherfolk disrupted the construction of the Coastal Road project for the 11th time. Their demand is singular— increase the gap between two pillars that will come at the Worli end of the project. The Coastal Road is a 10.58 km stretch starting from the Marine Drive promenade to the Worli-end of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link, promising to ease traffic in one of the most congested cities.

While work on the southern section Coastal Road—at Marine lines, Haji Ali — is continuing, it is the Worli section of the project that is attracting attention. At the Worli end, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will construct two bridges connecting the south of the Bandra Worli Sea Link and the north end of the Coastal Road. The work on the section has been stalled for over two months as the fishermen have gheraoed the temporary jetty and the barge that will carry construction materials and machinery from the jetty to the construction site. Cleveland Bunder Beyond the yellow barricades that advertise the Mumbai Coastal Road project, which, at the very least, promises to change the face of the Mumbai coast, lies one of the four-artisanal fishing landing centres— Cleveland Bunder. The century-old fishing village fears that very promise. The bunder is a harbour for shallow water, small-scale fishers, called artisanal fishers. These artisanal fishers do not use trawlers, and fish in shallow water with motorised and non-motorised boats. The Koli community leaders estimate that Cleveland Bunder supports 200 families in Worli Koliwada which are involved either in artisanal fishing or as retailers and sellers. It provides harbour for a varying fleet of motorised and non-motorised boats, which range between 45 and 60 on any given day, and also employs several migrant fish workers in addition to the Kolis. Locals estimate that the dock is at least a century old. The interchange, protest and the demand Running parallel to the Cleveland Bunder, an interchange bridge will connect the Coastal Road project with the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL), for traffic to seamlessly flow between the two. Like the Bandra-Worli Sealink which also runs parallel to

Cleveland Bunder, the new interchange will severely restrict the navigational route available to boats venturing out to open seas, said the fisherfolk.

Currently, as the boats exit the Cleveland bunder, it traverses through a narrow, zig-zag, shallow and rocky path to the fishing grounds. These shallow waters off the west coast, from Mount Mary in Bandra to the southern tip of Malabar Hills, are rich fishing grounds for the small scale, traditional fishers. The boats pass between two pillars about 30 metres apart that support the Bandra-Worli Sea Link overhead. Once the interchange comes at the location, the boats will have to pass again through four pillars. As per the current plan, BMC will provide a gap of 60 metres between the pillars. However, the fisherfolk have claimed that the gap is not enough. Spearheading the protest, Nitesh Patil, 35, a fourth-generation fisherman and the director of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Vyavsay Sahakari Society (WKNVSS), said, we require a span of at least 200 metres to safely manoeuvre our boats. Steering a boat is not like driving on the road, where if a road is shut, one can take the unknown diversion. The wind, waves play a major role in it. In addition to being rocky, this area has strong sea currents. One strong wave, or a gust of sudden wind, can throw our small boats crashing against the pillars. The BWSL pillars have already slowed us down and now two more bridges will completely restrict our movement. Nitesh further explains that the distance between the BWSL pillars is only 30 metres and that their wider cylindrical foundations below the surface of the water make the passage even narrower. He said, these infrastructure projects are close to the dock, aligning with the coast, in the inter-tidal zone, that directly attacks the livelihood of the traditional shallow water fishers. We don't use trawlers or go into the deep sea disturbing the seabed.

Our fishing grounds are shallow water, which is the location of the project and thus a threat to us. In peak fishing season, from August to December, there is an intense competition for water-space and a continuous line of nets is cast along the rocky seabed between Worli and Raj Bhavan at the end of Malabar Hill. The fishing water is based on a mutual understanding between adjacent Koliwadadas (fishing villages). Every family is apportioned a specific area of the sea which the fishers refer to as the saj, a muddy portion of the seabed, beyond the rocky areas. However, with multiple projects in the sea and restrictions on the fishing grounds, these mutual understandings are also under stress. Fisherfolks said more than one boat cannot pass through the span at a given time. The pillars have slowed them down and made it an everyday risk just to reach their fishing grounds, they said. On October 14, when the Hindustan Construction Company – which is tasked with building the interchange, anchored three buoys in the fishing waters just off Cleveland Bunder, to facilitate the movement of barges and tugboats in the area, the protests began at the site. '60 metres navigational span is sufficient' In response to the growing protest, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said that the design has been vetted by competent authorities.

Giving an example, BMC said that the clear span between the two pillars of the existing Bandra-Worli link road for fishermen is 17 metres and boats can pass through only one place while the Mumbai Coastal Road project will allow boats to pass through three spans and the net distance between the spans is 56 metres. BMC stated that as per the guidelines of the Inland Waterways Authority of India issued by the Maharashtra Maritime Board, the navigation span of 30 metres is sufficient. According to the guidelines, the navigation span is required to be 8 times the width of the boat for transportation. According to the data from the state fisheries department, the largest licensed vehicle at Worli jetty is 10.4 metres long and 3.8 metres wide with a carrying capacity of 4,980 kg and a water depth of 3.6 metres. According to this, the navigation span should be kept at a maximum of 30.4 metres for double carriage. The Mumbai Coastal Road project is providing a navigational span of 60 metres, double than mandated, read the statement issued by the civic body in response to the protests. The BMC further stated that it has appointed Tata Institute of Social Sciences to draft a policy to compensate the fishermen during the construction of the project. Municipal commissioner Iqbal Chahal also agreed to an independent review of their demands for a re-design of the interchange.

However, the BMC has asked the fishermen to appoint an independent, technical committee that can without any bias review their demands. BMC has said that it will pay the fees of the consultant. Fishermen are irked with the BMC's insistence on an independent, expert review which undermines the fisherfolk's own knowledge and expertise. How can they even imagine replacing the decade-long expertise with experts who do not know about steering a boat in the open sea? There are practical problems here. The least experts, BMC and our elected MLA (Aaditya Thackeray) can do is come to the site and see for themselves the problems on the ground, said Ritesh Gajanan Shivdekar, one of the fishermen from Worli Koliwada. Fisherfolks have responded saying that the IS: 4651 standards are meant for harbour entrance channels, and not for bridge columns in the open sea, as is the case with the interchange. The appropriate distance for navigation ought to be based on the specific geomorphic conditions and tide pattern and currents. The standards do not say that large spans cannot be built, the fisherfolks' statement said. Following over two months of halt in construction, Worli Police station earlier this week warned fisherfolk of penal action if they protest in the open sea and stop BMC from performing its duties.

The fisherfolk have refused to move from the area until their demand for design change is met. Loss of fishing grounds with the reclamation work for the Coastal Road which began in 2018, the fisherfolk said they have already lost fish breeding spots.

Explaining the shallow water and fishing ground near the Worli Koliwada, artisanal fisherman Vijay Shantaram Pawar said that in the water between Worli and Bangana, crabs, each weighing



2 kg, lobsters weighing 1-1.2 kg are found, which can be sold at Rs 1,100 to Rs 1,200 for a piece. Earlier, just off the Worli sea face, we didn't even have to set out our boats, we simply use to wade into knee-deep water and throw a net and pick them out with our bare hands. Before the construction began, when the experts came for inspection, I caught a ghol, just off the Worli sea face, which fetches Rs 8k to 10k per kg. That area now is reclaimed. Small-scale fishermen of the Worli Koliwada are largely concentrated in the shallow waters. Pawar said, The rocky shore that has been reclaimed for this road was the most fertile breeding zone and is completely lost. This rocky coastal area is a hub for the expensive lobsters and black and white tiger prawns. At the start of the peak fishing season and soon after the monsoons, the quality of the sea is different, as rainwater mixed with saltwater gives it a slightly sweetish taste.

During this time, lobsters and ghol arrive in large numbers and remain close to the shore for 17-20 days. However, fisherfolk claimed that because of the ongoing construction noise, fish don't remain close to the shore. Since the construction, there is a change in the tidal patterns, which has hindered the movement of the fish and has either pushed them deeper into the sea or towards the northern end— Dadar Seaface, Khar, Bandra. Now, I have to invest more in diesel to take my boat from my backyard to Dadar and Bandra fishing grounds, cutting into my earnings, said Pawar. Other fishers along the South Mumbai coast from Priyadarshini Park to Worli too, have begun to report declining fish stocks — in this particular stretch, land has been reclaimed and a connecting bridge is coming up at Haji Ali — as space for small-scale fishers on non-motorised boats and fisherwomen to pick oysters and shellfish has reduced. This comes at a time when the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) raised a red flag over the fishing industry in the state, last year. In 2019-20, fish landings reported their lowest harvest in 45 years, while reports show a decreasing, year-on-year trend since 2017.

According to the CMFRI, red toothed triggerfish (*Odonus Niger*), a commercially unimportant fish that feeds on other fishes, has registered a significant increase along the state's coastline. The preliminary observation shows that changes in water currents in the Arabian Sea could be the reason. In a meeting with Worli fisherfolk in October, the BMC has directed fisherfolk to not cast their nets, use boats in the fishing ground stretching from Worli sea face, running almost parallel to the Bandra Worli Sealink. BMC has assured compensation for two years, starting October 8, this year. They have stopped us from casting our nets. We are restrained from our livelihood activity and in return, we are getting a promise of compensation. What will be the compensation, and will we ever get it? asked Nitesh Patil.

### **Maharashtra: Worli fishermen continue protest over coastal road**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-worli-fishermen-continue-protest-over-coastal-road/articleshow/88421229.cms>

The Worli fishermen continued to presence on Tuesday. A day earlier they had been served notice by the police informing them that section 144 had been imposed across the state on account of the Covid pandemic. They were also warned to desist from obstructing work on the coastal road and to remove their fishing nets.

### **Maharashtra: Police warn fishermen against stopping coastal road work**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/maharashtra-police-warn-fishermen-against-stopping-coastal-road-work-7682694/>

Worli Police on Monday warned the fishermen of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society Limited not to obstruct construction work on the Coastal Road. The notice named the fishing society's secretary, Nitesh Patil. It said that Even after multiple meetings with the shareholders, including officials from BMC, the contractor, Mumbai Police, you have held protests near in the construction site and blocked attempts of resumption of work on September 20, October 14, 21, 24 and 29, November 1,7, 20 and 30 and December 7. The notice warned that any future obstruction will result in them being held personally responsible and action will be taken for assembling at the construction site and obstructing the work and a chargesheet will be filed against them for unlawful assembly. Fishermen from Worli Koliwada have held multiple protests since October 14 against the construction of an interchange between the coastal road and the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL).

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen again write to state govt against coastal road work**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/fishermen-again-write-to-state-govt-against-coastal-road-work-7678496/>

Upset with barges, tugboats and anchors repeatedly damaging their fishing nets and obstructing the route of boats, fishermen from Worli Koliwada have once again shot off a letter to state fisheries department against the Mumbai civic body's execution of the Coastal Road work. Highlighting Thursday's incident where the tugboat destroyed 10-12 fishing nets, Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society Limited and Worli Koliwada Sarvoday Society, the two-fisheries society working in Worli has demanded action against the BMC and the contractor working at the Worli end of the Coastal Road site. You are requested to conduct an inquiry and to issue necessary directions to the MCGM and their contractors to ensure that our nets and other fishing equipment are not damaged by the construction activity being carried for

the Coastal Road, read the letter. On Thursday morning at 10 am, the contractors brought their tugboats to the area where the fisherfolk had cast their bag nets, destroying 10-12 nets. Some of the fishers' nets got entangled in the fan of the tugboat. The contractors then got a diver to swim underwater and cut the nets which had got entangled in the fan, said Nitesh Patil, a fisherman and representative of Worli-Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society Limited.

We have addressed multiple representations to you drawing your attention to the damage being caused to our nets due to the work of the Coastal Road being carried out in the intertidal and subtidal area of Worli. There have been a number of instances where the movement of boats of the contractors engaged by the MCGM (Mumbai civic body) in the shallow sea along the coastline has resulted in breakage and destruction of the partially submerged nets which have been cast by the fishermen, stated the letter to the commissioner and assistant commissioner of fisheries.

### **Maharashtra: Moving fish wholesalers out of Mumbai will kill industry**

<https://www.mid-day.com/mumbai/mumbai-news/article/moving-fish-wholesalers-out-of-city-will-kill-industry-23205413>

The legacy of the city's fishing community is at stake with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) trying to do away with one of the biggest collection and distribution centres at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Fish Market and shifting the operations to other places. While a part of it has been moved to Navi Mumbai, the civic body also plans to shift some of the fishmongers to Crawford Market. This is not only adding to the commuting woes of the fish sellers but will eventually lead to an increase in fish prices for Mumbaikars. Speaking to mid-day, Devendra Tandel, president of Akhil Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti said, It all started with the demolition of the dilapidated Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Fish Market. The structure was in need of an upgrade so the BMC started its demolition and asked fish wholesalers to move out temporarily. But now it seems that they want to permanently shift all wholesalers out of the city.

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Fish Market has been the biggest collection, distribution and retail centre in Mumbai with fishermen from Dahanu, Thane, Palghar, and even from as far as Ratnagiri and Raigad visiting the place. Fish is sold in bulk to wholesalers who sell the catch to local fisherwomen and retailers. The BMC's long-term plan is to shift all the wholesalers and suppliers to Navi Mumbai. This will kill Mumbai's fishing industry. We want the market to be given back to us once it is upgraded. Tandel further said, our fishermen from Dahanu and Palghar have to face a lot of hardships to reach a place like Airoli. Instead of 4 am, they have to start their day much earlier, which means they need to take the last train of the previous night

instead of the first train of the day just to reach the market. All this will also push transport and logistics costs, which will eventually reflect in the prices of fish. The civic body has temporarily allowed some fishermen to carry out their business in an open space inside the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Market, but the plan is to shift them to the Crawford Market after a couple of years. The area has limited space and there will eventually be clashes between the vegetarian and non-vegetarian markets.

As the Phule Market is a heritage structure, it won't be open to alterations, leading to limited sellers operating out of that place. This will eventually kill the entire industry, he added. The fishing complex was a complete hub and as per the Development Plan 2034, any market going under redevelopment should be given back to its rightful stakeholders. Why are we being treated like this then? Furthermore, does the BMC even have the right to change the reservation of Shivaji Market if their own DPR guidelines say otherwise? asked Tandel. However, BMC officials said that they were in the process of setting up temporary sheds at the same location but as per the DP of 2034, the plot of the Shivaji Market had been reserved for municipal offices and a disaster management facility, and hence, a permanent market could not be constructed there.

### **Maharashtra: TISS gets nine-months to complete survey of Coastal Road impact on fishermen**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-tiss-gets-nine-months-to-complete-survey-of-coastal-road-impact-on-fishermen>

The BJP corporators on Tuesday pointed out to the Standing Committee that Worli fisherman will have to wait for at least one year to get any compensation from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and demanded that the survey by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) should be completed within three months. The civic body had tabled a proposal before the Standing Committee to approve consultation fees of Rs 1.5 crore to TISS for carrying out a comprehensive survey to examine the possible losses to the fishermen in Worli due to construction of Coastal Road project. TISS had proposed a nine-month timeline to complete the survey. When the proposal came up for discussion at the meeting on Tuesday, BJP group leader Prabhakar Shinde told the committee that the Coastal Road project work had begun in 2018 and since then, no proposal was mooted to give compensation to the fishermen. Why fishermen's loss was not considered in the Environment Impact Assessment study report? he questioned. Standing Committee chairman, Yashwant Jadhav said, The big ships deployed by construction companies engaged in Coastal Road project are inadvertently destroying the nets of fishermen hitting the livelihoods of fishermen. Hence, we should resolve their problem as soon as possible. The committee eventually approved proposal unanimously with TISS being given a nine months' time to complete the survey.

## **Maharashtra: Dumping stopped at Uran mangroves in Mumbai**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/dumping-stopped-at-uran-mangroves-in-mumbai-state/articleshow/88265775.cms>

The state government on Monday told the Bombay high court that the dumping of solid waste on mangroves at Uran was stopped last Friday. From (December) 10th, dumping of garbage at the site is completely stopped, advocate general (AG) Ashutosh Kumbhakoni told a bench of Justices Shahrukh Kathawalla and Milind Jadhav. Last week the court had turned to state environment minister Aaditya Thackeray to intervene and resolve the long-standing issue of a dumping ground for Uran. A petition was filed in December 2018 by Hanuman Koliwada Macchimar Vikas Maryadit saying dumping of solid waste on mangroves was impacting the breeding grounds of fish and affecting the fishing community's livelihood. Miffed that solid waste was being dumped and even burned on mangroves, the judges pulled up the collector (Raigad), Uran municipality's chief officer, Cidco and even the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board's member-secretary for the three-year delay in identifying a dumping ground for Uran.

The AG said that a meeting, chaired by Thackeray, was held on December 9 where decisions were taken. He said steps would be taken to notify the Uran mangroves as reserved forest land. He also informed that the Uran Municipal Corporation (UMC) will float a tender for the scientific closure of the dumping site. A tender will be issued within 15 days and the work will be completed in 30 days, the AG said, adding that the state government has paid Rs 5.8 lakh for the closure of the site. The minutes of the meeting recorded that Thackeray directed the UMC to prepare a restoration plan of the existing Boripakhadi site of the mangroves in consultation with the forest department. The AG said the UMC will also segregate wet and dry waste as daily eight tons of wet garbage and five tons of dry garbage is generated. The minutes stated that the availability of various government lands with Cidco and the district collector, Raigad, was discussed. However, it was observed that there are limitations, including coastal regulatory zones, airport authority area and nearby water bodies, for identifying and allotting land. It was decided that UMC will utilise Cidco's solid waste facility at the village Chal in Panvel taluka. The judges took the minutes in recording, saying they would include it in their order. They will take an update on the matter after the Christmas vacation.

## **Maharashtra: Coastal road: BMC appoints TISS to draft policy for rehabilitation of fishermen**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/coastal-road-bmc-appoints-tiss-to-draft-policy-for-rehabilitation-of-fishermen-7671483/>

Three years after reclamation work for the coastal road began, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has appointed Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) to conduct a comprehensive survey towards rehabilitation and compensation policy for the fishing community at the Worli end affected by the project. TISS will draft a policy to compensate fishermen during the construction of the project. Fishing communities, however, said the study was too late as a massive portion of the intertidal sea, where they carried out the fishing activity, has already been reclaimed and should've been included in calculating the compensation. TISS will conduct the study in the next nine months for Rs 1.44 crore. A nine-member working group of the BMC and representatives from the community called Fishermen Rehabilitation Assessment Committee has also been formed and many of its meetings have been held with fishermen, said BMC.

The BMC held a meeting with the fishermen's representatives on November 1 and took into account their concerns. They have been assured that any loss during construction will be compensated for, said a senior BMC official. The proposal to appoint consultants for the survey was first floated in 2019. Tenders for the same were floated in December. As there were no bidders, the contract TISS was directly appointed. TISS can draft the compensation policy based on a baseline study conducted by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) on the impact of the coastal road on fisheries and livelihoods. According to the baseline study done by CMFRI, there are 800 fisher families in Worli Koliwada with a population of 3,055. Fishermen from Worli and Haji Ali have opposed the coastal road project. The fishing community has also demanded that the distance between two pillars should be 200 metres instead of 200 feet as proposed by the BMC since it will not be enough for navigation of boats.

#### **Maharashtra: Fishermen at Sassoon dock bring 300-400 kg of unknown fish for sale**

<https://www.mid-day.com/mumbai/mumbai-news/article/fishermen-at-sassoon-dock-bring-300-400-kg-of-unknown-fish-for-sale-23204837>

Fishermen at the Sassoon dock were a surprised lot on Sunday when about 300-400 kg of a species of fish unknown to them was brought for sale. According to experts, the species — Reticulate Unicornfish — is usually seen in Taiwan and Indonesia. Fisherman Karan Kohli from Karanja in Raigad district said, One of the fishing boats from Revas had ventured into deep sea for fishing when they caught around 300-400 kg of the fish. This is the second time in a month that we have seen this species of fish. The catch was also taken to the market for sale but no one purchased it, as many of the buyers were not sure whether it's edible. However, we have learnt from experts that this fish can be consumed, too. Marine Biologist Swapnil Tandel said, Specimens from Gujarat and Kerala have been documented during a survey in 2016-2017. But this is the first time it has been spotted in Maharashtra. According to Tandel, the species is

specific to the Western Pacific region like Taiwan and Indonesia. This landing can suggest that the species may have extended its range. More data can help us know whether it's migrating, added Tandel. However, he said that the fish could be consumed. According to a research paper, Ten New Records of the Reticulate Unicornfish *Naso reticulatus* Randall, 2001 (Perciformes: Acanthuridae): Distributional Range Expansion along the Southern Coasts of India, The Reticulate Unicornfish *Naso Reticulatus* Randall, 2001, has been previously reported from Indonesia, Taiwan, Philippines, north-east coast of India and Pakistan.

### **Maharashtra: Readies policy to compensate fishers affected by development projects**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/maharashtra-readies-policy-to-compensate-fishers-affected-by-development-projects-101639397289048.html>

The state government has prepared a draft policy for compensation of fisherfolk affected by development projects with six broad recommendations including directing project proponents (state or private organisations in charge of a project) to pay 2% of their total project cost toward compensation to fishers affected by the project. This comes in response to a petition filed in the Bombay high court (HC) by the Mariaayi Machhimaar Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit – a registered fishworkers cooperative based in Vashi – on behalf of the fishing community from Vashi, Juhu, Koparkhairane, Ghansoli and Diva villages. The petitioner had claimed compensation for the fishermen, contending that they were inhabitants of the Thane creek area and their customary right to fish in the creek was adversely affected by the construction of the third Thane Creek bridge (TCB-3), a proposed six-lane bridge on the Sion-Panvel highway which will connect Mumbai with the mainland at Navi Mumbai.

The policy document prepared by a committee under the department of fisheries includes providing unique smart identification cards renewable every three years (in addition to the already existing IDs provided by the fisheries department) and creating a fresh database of subsistence fishers in the state. Hindustan Times has seen a copy of the draft policy. The state has a database of commercial fishers to some extent and traditional fishers to certain extent, however there is complete lack of data on subsistence fishers who are poor and unorganised fishers who need more care due to their fragility, the document stated and recommended that all the proponents of infrastructure projects deposit a sum equal to 2% of the total project cost with the fisheries department for rehabilitation of fisherfolk. Details around this proposed regulation are presently unclear and will be decided later, the draft policy stated.

A division bench of justices SJ Kathawalla and Milind Jadhav of the Bombay HC on August 12 directed the Maharashtra government to frame a general policy for compensation not only for fishermen, but for compensating any community whose customary rights to carry out an activity for their livelihood is impacted by government infrastructure projects. Subsequently, on October 11 the state constituted a 23-member committee to look into the matter. In the preface of the policy document, dated November 29, the committee wrote, There are a lot of projects going on in Maharashtra state being implemented by the government or other agencies like MMRDA, MSRDC, MCGM, CIDCO, MMRC, JNPT, NHAI, Railways, MMB, ONGC etc... All these projects demand to mitigate the risk of affecting fishing activities, therefore affecting the livelihood of the fishers.

The draft policy also recommended including a fresh census of shipping vessels, mandatory prior social and technical impact assessment exercises before commencement of development projects, setting up a standard operation procedure (SOP) to mitigate its impact and setting up grievance redressal committees (at the regional, district and state level) for fishers, and mandatory baseline surveys on quality and quantity of fishing catch in a project affected area prior to construction work. Fisherfolk said that stressing on a provision of compensation instead of safeguarding their intergenerational right to carry out a traditional livelihood is disappointing. Devendra Tandel, president of the Akhil Maharashtra Machhimaar Kruti Samiti (AMMKS), said such a move would not adequately address the community's concerns.

This policy is not acceptable to us, because it does not consult us. There is not even a single member of the fishing community who has been taken into the deliberations, let alone members who represent a good cross section of the community. There are also several aspects of this policy which are contrary to what it sets out to do. For example, social impact studies have been mandated by the project proponents themselves, which is a huge conflict of interest. Second, the method to calculate compensation for project affected fisherfolk assumes that only one member of each family earns an income, which is not true, Tandel said. In Palghar district's Kopran and Akkarpatti villages, fishers have been displaced by the Tarapur power station and in Raigad's Uran, people have been displaced by the JNPT port. Whole generations have been kept from practicing their traditional livelihoods, on the backs of promises of modernity and better living which were never received. If the committee is unwilling to learn from the states past mistakes, where does that leave us? Tandel asked. A senior officer in the fisheries department seeking anonymity, however, said, The High Court will decide whether or not the draft policy is suitable. Besides, this is only a draft and will be further revised based on Cabinet discussions. The draft policy has not yet been cleared by the state government.



As far as consulting the community goes, we have invited, received and considered all the comments we have received from fishing societies and fisherfolk. The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation began constructing the new TCB-3 in December 2020, with a deadline of three years. It will help ease traffic volume on the existing TCB-2, built in 1997.

### **Maharashtra: Worli fishermen refuse to allow resumption of coastal road work**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-worli-fishermen-refuse-to-allow-resumption-of-coastal-road-work/articleshow/88153874.cms>

Worli fishermen on Tuesday blocked attempts by BMC contractors to resume work on the coastal road. The community has been demanding the BMC increase the span between columns so they can navigate their boats between the rocks and strong currents. They have been demanding a span of 200 metres between columns as against 60 metres being provided. In a letter to the BMC as well as to environment minister Aditya Thackeray who is the local MLA, they had pointed out the span between the sea link in front of Cleveland Bunder is already narrow and the coastal road connector bridge will add more columns. The BMC had assured us they would hold a meeting on December 12. On Monday, several men had turned up. Today (Tuesday) they came with a large posse of policemen and started work which we blocked, said a fisherman. The BMC said it has set up a committee for the rehabilitation of fisherfolk.

### **Maharashtra: Governor approves Marine fisheries regulation (amendment) ordinance 2021**

<http://www.uniindia.com/governor-approves-maharashtra-marine-fisheries-regulation-amendment-ordinance-2021/west/news/2574850.html>

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari on Friday approved an ordinance brought by the state government relating to fishing and fishing business in the coastal areas adjacent to the sea. State Fisheries Minister Aslam Shaikh said on Friday that the Maharashtra Maritime Fisheries Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance has finally been implemented in Maharashtra after the signature of the Governor. He said the new law would benefit traditional fishermen as strict penalties have been imposed on illegal fishing in Maharashtra. There was a need to curb illegal fishing to protect fish stocks in a sustainable manner and to protect the interests of traditional fishing, which has been fulfilled through this ordinance.

### **Maharashtra: BMC has no regard for our fishing trade' in Mumbai**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/bmc-has-no-regard-for-our-fishing-trade-in-mumbai/articleshow/87636095.cms>

Fishermen from Worli said on Wednesday that BMC was trying to deflect the main issue by saying compensation will be given while they would want to continue the fishing occupation as it is. Members of Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavasay Sahkari Society Ltd in a letter to the media said that the coastal road has already destroyed their intertidal fishing area through reclamation, causing them hardship and losses, and now if navigation route is not provided, their livelihood will be finished. The BMC has no regard for rights of us kolis and our future, they said in a statement.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) extended their support to the protesting fishermen**

<https://www.afternoonvoice.com/mumbai-metropolitan-region-mmr-extended-their-support-to-the-protesting-fishermen.html>

Fishermen from Worli Koliwada have held multiple protests since October 14 over the issue. Over 100 fishing boats from Worli Koliwada have been staging a sit-in in the placement of the interchange since October 30. On Sunday, nearly 19 fishing villages from across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) extended their support to the protesting fishermen. In response to protests by Worli fisherfolk against the construction of an interchange between the coastal road and Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL), the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has restated that the interchange design and location have been examined by competent authorities and that the civic body is providing higher navigational span than mandated by the guidelines issued by the Inland Waterways Authority of India. The BMC said that the impact of the coastal road on fishing has also been scrutinized by several institutes. Nitesh Patil of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society Limited said one-time recompense will not be enough. Due to renovation, those fish which would come to the seashore at Worli have stopped and they now are more towards Khar Danda, Mahim waters. One boat has five people on it and there are 2,000 boats.

The livelihoods of all these will be affected, said Patil. In response to the protest, BMC released a statement listing the permissions it has received for the project. Giving an example, BMC said that the clear span between the two pillars of the existing Bandra-Worli link road for fishermen is 17 metres and boats can pass through only one place, while the Mumbai coastal road project will allow boats to pass through three spans and the net distance between the spans is 56 metres.

BMC stated that as per the guidelines of the Inland Waterways Authority of India issued by the Maharashtra Maritime Board, a navigation span of 30 metres is sufficient. Fisherfolk claimed that Cleveland Bunder – an artisanal fishing port in Worli Koliwada – will be at risk of permanent closure owing to coastal road interchange at the spot. They said the proposed span of 60 metres between the pillars of the interchange will cut off their access to customary fishing grounds and have demanded a span of at least 200 metres to ensure safe passage for their boats. According to the guidelines, the navigation span has to be 8 times the width of the boat for transportation.

According to data from the state fisheries department, the largest licensed vehicle at Worli jetty is 10.4 metres long and 3.8 metres wide with a carrying capacity of 4980 kg and a water depth of 3.6 metres. According to this, the navigation span should be kept at a maximum of 30.4 metres for double carriage. The Mumbai Coastal Road project is providing a navigational span of 60 metres, double than mandated, read the statement. BMC further stated that the Tata Institute of Social Sciences has been appointed by the civic body to draft a policy to compensate fishermen during the construction of the project.

**Maharashtra: Coastal road project: In response to protests by Worli fisherfolk, BMC lists permissions it received**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/coastal-road-project-protests-worli-fisherfolk-bmc-permissions-7615363/>

In response to protests by Worli fisherfolk against the construction of an interchange between the coastal road and Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL), the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has reiterated that the interchange design and location have been vetted by competent authorities and that the civic body is providing higher navigational span than mandated by the guidelines issued by the Inland Waterways Authority of India. The BMC said that the impact of the coastal road on fishing has also been vetted by several institutes. Fishermen from Worli Koliwada have held multiple protests since October 14 over the issue. Over 100 fishing boats from Worli Koliwada have been staging a sit-in in the alignment of the interchange since October 30.

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through only one place, while the Mumbai coastal road project will allow boats to pass through three spans and the net distance between the spans is 56 metres. BMC stated that as per the guidelines of the Inland Waterways Authority of India issued by the Maharashtra Maritime Board, navigation span of 30 metres is sufficient. Fisherfolk claimed that Cleveland Bunder – an artisanal fishing port in Worli Koliwada – will be at risk of permanent closure owing to coastal road interchange at the spot. They said the proposed span of 60 metres between the pillars of the interchange will cut off their access to customary fishing grounds, and have demanded a span of at least 200 metres to ensure safe passage for their boats. According to the guidelines, the navigation span has to be 8 times the width of the boat for transportation.

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### **Maharashtra: Mumbai coastline crisis: Koliwada residents face loss of livelihood**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/mumbai-coastline-crisis-koliwada-residents-face-loss-of-livelihood-101636399624140.html>

In Mahim Koliwada, a fishing colony metres from the city's coastline, the day starts at 3 am for 47-year-old Bhushan Nijai. It started just as early for his father Yeshwant (72), and deceased grandfather Pandav, who have been fishing in the same waters for the past 90 years. Nijai's children — three girls aged 6 to 22 years — however, don't wake up at the crack of dawn like their father. Unlike Nijai, who joined his family's occupation as a fisher immediately after completing his Class 12, they don't have anything to do with the trade. The Nijais aren't the only family in the hamlet whose youngest generation has veered away from the century-old work. Their neighbour, Nitin Vaidya, has two young children, a girl aged 10 years and a boy aged six, neither of whom will be taking up the trade. Most of the fishers — all men — from the 5,000-resident strong Mahim village who take their boats out each morning are above 35. For them,

catching, selling and eating fishing is their *astitva* (identity), they say. Nijhai's oldest, Raksha, who is a commerce graduate, aspires for an office job. I have seen my parents work very hard. My mother (Smita) also wakes up around 3am and goes to buy fish at Sassoon Docks, which she sells at a fish market in Dadar. They work long hours but our family's debts have only increased. I know how to clean and buy fish, but if our situation has to improve I can't continue in this line, she said. Smita Nijai does not sell the fish that her husband catches; her business — and earnings — are separate. Depending on the day's catch, Nijai sells the fish to wholesalers or small hotels. Fishing communities that have, by most historical accounts, lived along the Mumbai coastline since the 15th century, are increasingly finding their occupation unviable.

More than a trade In 2003, Maharashtra's department of fisheries estimated that 37,695 people in Greater Mumbai are completely reliant on small-scale fishing activities [or as it is called, artisan fishing, marked by small capital, short fishing trips closer to shore, use of small fishing vessels and local consumption]. In 2010, state-run Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute estimated that there were 40,953 small-scale fishers across the Greater Mumbai region, residing in 30 fishing villages. With an average family size of 4.4, that's about 9,307 families — in a city of over 20 million — who are dependent on fishing and allied activities that includes everything from cold storage to boat repairs, net making and mending to selling fish. The number of people, at least within Greater Mumbai, who are opting to fish full time, is only a small portion of our larger community, said Devendra Tandel (40), who heads the state's largest fisherfolk society, Akhil Maharashtra Machimaar Kruti Samiti. Tandel now has a full time job in a private bank. Commercial trawling, overfishing, the cost of fuel and other operating capital is increasing, and there is an influx of migrant workers who now dominate the sale and distribution of fish, Tandel said listing the issues that the fisherfolk community contends are problems that threaten them. I have friends from the community who are doing jobs in IT and software and finance. Fishing can always be a backup for us, but it is not first choice.

I am the last generation of my household that will stick to this occupation. In our line of work, we struggle to make ends meet and I don't want the same fate for them, Nijai said. Development story But the community is currently dealing with another, more pressing concern. The city's landscape is undergoing changes and the *kolis* are on the edge. In 2011, a Joint Technical Committee of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) proposed a radical alteration to the city's coastline that would connect the city's southernmost tip to the suburbs of Vasai-Virar 70km away. In its current format, the Mumbai Coastal Road project includes a network of under-sea tunnels, elevated roads and several interchanges, most of which will be created over the sea and partly over reclaimed land. There is also the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, off the eastern seafront, which promises to be the longest sea-bridge in the country. Add to this a range of beautification projects involving the reclamation of near-shore areas (comprising

mangroves and sandy beaches) in Cuffe Parade and Versova. In 2018, the Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) was appointed the special planning authority (SPA) for beautifying 966.30 hectares along the city's 28-km eastern seafront.

The plan also proposes public parks, plazas, promenades, walking trails and marinas apart from restaurants and cafés. The Union ministry for environment and climate change recently gave its nod to the Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMPs) for Mumbai city and suburban districts, thus allowing construction up to 50m from the city's high-tide line. This follows a 2019 amendment to the Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) rules which, up until then, had prevented development up to 500m from the city's high-tide line. With the easing of this norm, existing coastal properties would be allowed to develop at least two and a half times their existing floor space. Liases Foras, a real estate research firm, estimates that around 10,000 old buildings in Mumbai will benefit from this. And now, the effect Work on the first phase of the Coastal Road project began in 2018 and since then, fishing communities have attempted to direct the attention of the city municipality and the state government to the impact of this project on fishing commons —the shore and intertidal areas that are collectively used by the community without title. At Cleveland Bunder, a fishing port in Worli koliwada (fishing village), two connecting bridges will come up between the coastal road at Worli and the Bandra Worli Sea Link (BWSL) to allow seamless flow of traffic. Fisherfolk said this interchange will severely constrict the only navigational route available to their boats venturing out to the open sea.

Since October 30, residents of the village have been staging a protest at sea at the site of this upcoming interchange: fishers in 100 boats have dropped anchors near a construction site in Worli, where an interchange is slated to come up and, which the fisherfolk say, will prevent safe passage to fishing commons. Municipal commissioner Iqbal Chahal has agreed to an independent review of their demands for a re-design of the interchange. Other fishers along the South Mumbai coast from Priyadarshini Park to Worli too, have begun to report declining fish stocks — in this particular stretch, land has been reclaimed and a connecting bridge is coming up at Haji Ali — as space for small-scale fishers on non-motorised boats and fisherwomen to pick oysters and shellfish has reduced. This comes at a time when the state's fish stocks are showing a drastic decline. In 2019-20, fish landings reported their lowest harvest in 45 years, while reports show a decreasing, year-on-year trend since 2017. Fisher communities who stay on the eastern coastline in places like Sewri, Mazagaon, and Wadala fear that beautification projects like the one being planned by MbPT, would recast indigenous land use to a public space for larger citizenry that would eventually nudge them out. Fisherfolk are also caught in the net of other development projects. For instance, in Bandra's Chimbai village, the fisheries department is building a jetty and construction material now occupies the grounds used by fisherfolk to sort and dry fish.

Although the land is owned by the BMC, its own Development Plan 2034 for Mumbai has classified this area as a fish and net drying yard. (The civic body can affect a change in the land use, but there is a process for it to do so.) In September, in response to a petition by the Mariyayi Macchimar Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit, a society of fishers in and around Thane creek, the Bombay high court instituted a committee to create a fisherfolk rehabilitation policy for the state that would devise a standard operating procedure to gauge the impact of development projects undertaken by the government that affect fisher communities. Saving a way of life One of the things that fisherfolk are demanding is freehold possession of their commons (land on which they park their boats, or dry fish, for example) because there is no public document available that delineates what land belongs to them, and what can be rightfully used by the state. All the koliwadadas in Mumbai are supposed to be mapped and demarcated in the coastal zone management plan (CZMP). This is a provision of the CRZ 2019 as well. In Mumbai, the koliwadadas have been mapped, but the plans have not been released for public scrutiny, revised and accordingly incorporated in the CZMP. It leaves us completely in the dark about which lands around our villages are going to be opened up for development, Tandel said.

The community has tried to adapt, of course, with some assistance from the fisheries department that has provided critical infrastructure like fish landing centres in Mumbai's koliwadadas and diesel subsidies. Others have tried supplementing their traditional livelihoods with more aspirational jobs. Nijhai estimates that in his own lifetime, the income from fishing has shrunk by three quarters. The pandemic only sped up the process. It is really the poorest of the poor who are left to fend for themselves on fishing. Our practice won't die out, but the struggle will get harder, he said. Sanjay Wategaonkar, Assistant commissioner of fisheries department, Mumbai district we are committed to helping small scale fishers... We are pushing for starting a credit scheme similar to the Central government's Kisan Credit Card. As for impact of infra projects, we provide NOCs only if the project proponent commits to not disrupting fisherfolk livelihoods Bhushan Nijai, Fisher, Mahim Koliwada I am the last generation of my household that will stick to this occupation. In our line of work, we struggle to make ends meet and I don't want the same fate for them.

### **Maharashtra: Coastal Road project: Fishing community says no to one-time compensation**

<https://www.mid-day.com/mumbai/mumbai-news/article/coastal-road-project-fishing-community-says-no-to-one-time-compensation-23200274>

Even as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), in a meeting on November 1, promised to compensate fisherfolk as fishing activity was affected due to the ongoing construction work for Coastal Road, the problem is far from resolved. The civic body has clarified that the move is temporary as fishing activity will be affected only till the work is

completed. But fisherfolk opposed the same, saying a one-time compensation will not be enough. Fisherfolk also claimed that the pillars for the road, as planned, shorten their navigation span which is not enough and asked that the pillar be placed 200 metres apart, from the existing 60 metres. BMC officials said they are considering this, as the plan for the road is made according to the permissions of the respective authorities. BMC has appointed the Tata Institute of Social Sciences to draft a policy to compensate the fisherfolk during the construction of the project. It has also formed a group of officials who are holding meetings and talks with the fisherfolk. Explaining the process, a civic official, not willing to be named, said, In the previous meeting held on October 8, it was clarified in which part of the sea the fishermen should not cast their nets. They were also told not to use boats in the area.

However, the fishermen demanded compensation as soon as possible and the process of fulfilling this demand has been started. The municipal commissioner held a meeting with their representatives on November 1 and assured them that there is provision of adequate navigation span in the project plan itself and that compensation will be given for the temporary loss to the fishermen during the construction of the project. Nitish Patil of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society Limited said a one-time compensation will not be enough. Owing to the reclamation, fish which would come to the sea shore at Worli has stopped and have moved towards Khar Danda, Mahim. There are around 2,000 boats that operate in this area and each of them carry five people.

The livelihoods of all these people will be affected, said Patil. In the case of pillar placement and navigation span, as per the plan the distance between two pillars is 60 metres. While fisherfolk have opposed it and asked for it be increased to 200 metres, according to permissions issued by National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), navigation span is required to be five times the width of the boat for single carriage and eight times the width for double carriage, which is maintained in the plan. According to a letter issued by the Department of Fisheries, the large licensed vessel at Worli Jetty is 10.4-metre long and 3.8-metre wide with a carrying capacity of 4,980 kg and water depth of 3.6 metres. As per this, the navigation span should be around 30.4 metres for double carriage, whereas the project has provision of a navigation span of 60 metres.

### **Maharashtra: Talks with BMC inconclusive, fishermen from Worli Koliwada to continue protest**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/talks-with-bmc-inconclusive-fishermen-from-worli-koliwada-to-continue-protest-7603216/>

After their meeting with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) remained unsatisfactory, the fishermen from the Worli Koliwada will continue with their protests at the



Coastal Road construction site at Worli on Tuesday. Worli's fisherfolk have appealed to other fishing communities across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) to join the agitation. They claimed that the Cleveland Bunder – an artisanal fishing port in Worli Koliwada – will be at the risk of permanent closure owing to coastal road interchange at the spot. According to the Coastal Road plan, the BMC will construct two bridges connecting the south of the Bandra Worli Sea Link and the north end of the Coastal Road, which will run parallel to the Cleveland Bunder.

The protesting fishermen have demanded that the BMC should redesign the interchange as the current distance between the two pillars of the bridges severely constrict the only navigational route available to boats venturing out to open seas. Representatives from the Worli Koliwada met Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal and Additional Municipal Commissioner Ashwini Bhide on Monday to discuss their problems with the current design. One of the members claimed that the civic body is reluctant to consider the viewpoints of the fisherfolk and is adamant to go ahead with the current design. State Environment minister Aaditya Thackeray along with officials had also met two community leaders, including the president of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsyavevsay Sahakari Society (WKNMSS), on October 25 and assured them to look into the matter and respond within a few days. However, the community leaders said that there is no response yet. The fisherfolk are demanding that Thackeray, who is also MLS from Worli, should intervene on behalf of his constituents.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen in Uttan protest against middlemen, hold meeting to formulate guidelines for sale in market**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/bhayandar-fishermen-in-uttan-protest-against-middlemen-hold-meeting-to-formulate-guidelines-for-sale-in-market>

The fishing community of Uttan near Bhayandar is up in arms against the massive exploitation and manipulations by a section of notorious middlemen at the fish market in Naigaon. Members of the fishing community-mostly women held a meeting on Saturday under the aegis of the Palghar-Thane –Mumbai Fishermen's Federation led by Bernard D'mello to register their protest and formulate fresh guidelines and regulations at the fish market to stop the high-handedness of the middlemen, traders and agents. It was alleged that the middlemen not only manipulated rates but also influenced the timings of the market at their own discretion with the sole intention of buying fish from original fishermen in large quantities for cheap rates and selling the stock at higher rates. Notably, 80 percent of the stock in the fish market is sourced by fishermen based in the coastal areas of Uttan near Bhayandar. The federation members unanimously decided to open the markets as per the convenience of the fishermen, this apart from finalizing uniform guidelines in context to commissions, handling and transportation charges.

If the traders fail to fall in line we will be left with no other option but to stop sending our catch to the Naigaon fish market. To minimize dependency on middlemen, we have been demanding proper fish landing complexes and independent marketplaces in Uttan or at some convenient location on the highway where the fishermen could sell their fresh catch directly. said Bernard. The quaint fishing villages including-Uttan, Pali and Chowk are home to over 650 fishing boats in the region.

### **Maharashtra: BMC still owes nearly Rs 80cr for coastal road's CRZ permit'**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-bmc-still-owes-nearly-rs-80cr-for-coastal-roads-crz-permit/articleshow/87443379.cms>

Despite the environmentally conscious Thackerays leading the state government and the BMC, the civic body is yet to fully pay the cost for environmental mitigation measures for the coastal road project. Among the many conditions for grant of coastal regulation zone (CRZ) clearance for the controversial project was payment of 2% of the total project cost for mitigation measures to the mangrove conservation cell. The cell had raised a demand for Rs 254.52 crore. So far, the corporation has paid only Rs 175 crore, as per documents obtained under the Right to Information Act by the Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti. The money is to be paid before work starts on the ground. Work on the project started around 2017-18, and yet, till October 2020, the cash-rich corporation had paid only Rs 25 crore. After a reminder from the mangrove conservation cell in October 2020, the BMC paid another Rs 150 crore.

However, the civic body is supposed to pay another Rs 79.52 crore, according to the cell. The BMC has paid only 2% of the estimated cost, and not the actual cost, said Virendra Tiwari, chief conservator at the cell. But Ashwini Bhide, additional municipal commissioner, in-charge of the coastal road project, insisted that the BMC had cleared its dues. She said, The Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) NOC is issued only after all due amount is paid. The required amount is 2% of construction cost, which is Rs 8,249 crore, plus 4% contingency, which comes to Rs 175 crore, and it is paid in full. Bhide added that the amount of Rs 254.52 crore would only arise if calculated on the total project cost, which includes water, sewerage charges and supervision charges, which are notional and not part of the actual construction cost. So no more amount is payable from BMC to the mangrove cell, she said. The Samiti, which supports the fight of the Worli fishing community against the coastal road project, wants the BMC to widen the distance between the pillars of the bridge from the current 60

metres to at least 200 metres so that they can navigate their boats out to sea and back without crashing on the rocks. Fishermen have been staging a sit-in out at seato highlight their grievances. The mangrove conservation cell is supposed to use these funds to study the project's impact on fisheries and aqua culture. However, so far, not a single paisa has been spent for the study, said Devendra Tandel, president of the Samiti.

### **Maharashtra: Worli fisherfolk occupy sea near coastal road site, say won't vacate until demands met**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/worli-fisherfolk-occupy-sea-near-coastal-road-site-say-won-t-vacate-until-demands-met-101635608341479.html>

Between 120 and 150 fishing boats from Worli Koliwada on Saturday occupied a portion of the sea near the coastal road construction site, where work is underway on building an interchange to connect the coastal road and the Banda-Worli Sea Link (BWSL). The fisherfolk said that this segment of the controversial infra project will cut off access to their customary fishing grounds, and have refused to vacate the area until their demand for a redesign is met. Boats have been parked in the alignment of the interchange since around 8am on Saturday, and Worli's fisherfolk have appealed to other fishing communities across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) to join the agitation. HT had reported on October 17 that Cleveland Bunder – an artisanal fishing port in Worli Koliwada – is at the risk of permanent closure owing to the coastal road, specifically the interchange. The civic body plans to construct two connecting bridges between the south-end of BWSL and the north end of the coastal road, as part of a link that will allow traffic to flow seamlessly between the two.

Fisherfolk said this interchange will run parallel to Cleveland Bunder and severely constrict the only navigational route available to boats venturing out to open seas. On October 14, nearly 200 boats from across the Worli fishing zone had gheraoed a temporary jetty at the coastal road construction site as a mark of protest. They demanded to meet with the civic body officials and Worli legislator and state environment minister Aaditya Thackeray. Thackeray, along with officials, met with two community leaders including the president of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsyavevsay Sahakari Society (WKNMSS) on October 25 and assured to look into the matter and respond within a few days. However, the community leaders said there is no response

yet. HT reached out to Thackeray's representative, but the minister was unavailable for comment.

Meanwhile, pre-construction activities on the interchange have continued, with movement of barges and tugboats in the Koliwada's customary fishing grounds. Fisherfolk were also informed by the civic body on October 8 that they will not be allowed to fish in a 500-metre strip of water stretching from Haji Ali to Bandra, to facilitate the movement of tugboats and barges, for a period of two years. The movement of boats in our fishing grounds has already destroyed about 70 to 80 fishing nets. It costs between Rs.70,000 and Rs.1 lakh to get each net made. Who is going to pay for them? Not only will the interchange force us to shut down Cleveland Bunder, but we'll also not be able to fish in our own waters for two years until the work is done. This is a gross violation of conditional clearances granted to the project, which clearly state that our activities cannot be impacted. We will not accept any outcome other than a redesign of the interchange. If that is not agreeable to the BMC (Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation) then we will continue to park our boats and won't allow construction work to continue, said Nitesh Patil, president, WKNVSS. In a letter to officials on October 24, representatives of WKNVSS wrote, One of the specific conditions of the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) clearance dated January 4, 2017, was as follows: 'BMC to ensure that no fishing activity is hampered during construction and operation phase of the project'.

Thereafter the final CRZ clearance dated May 11, 2017, was granted by MoEFCC (Union environment ministry), subject to the following specific condition: 'Bridges with navigable spans will be provided by the project proponent as committed, so that there are no obstructions to fishing boats'. The fisherfolk have maintained that their request for a navigable span, of at least 200 metres, as opposed to the proposed distance of 60 metres, under the interchange, has been raised formally on multiple occasions since 2016. The assistant commissioner of fisheries has also written to BMC and the fisheries commissioner in April 2017 and December 2018, respectively, pointing out to the fisherfolk's concerns over possible closure of their only navigation route out to sea. Subsequently, in January 2019, the assistant commissioner of fisheries also wrote to fisheries commissioner saying that the department's no objection certification (NOC) for the project should be re-examined in light of this predicament. Officials from BMC's coastal roads department, including chief engineer Vijay Nighot, could not be reached for comment despite efforts.

However, a senior official from the fisheries department, occupying the post of assistant commissioner, said, and the fisherfolk should not be impacted by the project. We will have a discussion on violations of our NOC on Monday. After the losses they have suffered already, the Worli fishers are asking for an increase in the navigation span just to be able to sustain their

livelihood. This just and reasonable demand. The fisherfolk are now counting on Thackeray to act on their behalf, said Shweta Wagh, an architect and researcher with the Collective for Spatial Alternatives, who was present at Saturday's protest.

### **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.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai and Coastal Regulations: Conservation vs development**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-and-coastal-regulations-conservation-vs-development>

The Indian coastline faces unprecedented pressures due to industrial and urban development, pointed out former Director of National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) Dr Rakesh Kumar. Kumar was talking at a virtual panel discussion on the approval of the new Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change that was hosted by Mumbai First in association with Eco Support on Wednesday. The panel discussion titled Mumbai & Coastal Regulations: A Battle of Decades outlined various important points for the strategies towards the application of CRZ 2021 notification. The panel also discussed the trends which affect business investment and the environment during the panel discussion, Kumar presented a report prepared in 2009 by the MS Swaminathan committee. He further explained how the Indian coast is facing unprecedented pressures due to industrial and urban development. He pointed out that consequently, there is climate change-related devastation because of growing intensities of cyclonic storms and the eventual rise in sea levels. Kumar said, Fishing communities are in double danger as well from conservative on one hand and development on the other, although they are the biggest and strongest stakeholders. Future policies for coastal area management must reserve these trends.

Check violations to CRZ through improved space technology, he reiterated Senior Principal Scientist at CSIR-NIO, Dr V S Naidu, who has been dealing with environmental impact assessment issues in coastal areas for 25 years, discussed the situation of the three water bodies that surround Mumbai and explained the classification of Coastal Regulation Zone notifications. Independent journalist, columnist, writer, and teacher, Smruti Koppikar put forth her remarks on the notification and the perception of mass media. Koppikar said, in the popular news media, environment and development are often treated as binaries. In my view Mumbai & Coastal Regulations: A Battle of Decades is a battle for 5-6 decades or probably a little more. The latest IPCC report based on NASA satellite and data listed 12 Indian cities on the threat of submergence due to sea rise where Mumbai tops the list. We are all familiar with stories of the past 50 years in Mumbai. But are we ready for the next 50 years of submerges in the city of what levels and what kind? The question is: Are we still going to look at development and environment in a binary fashion? she added. Managing Director of Neelkanth Group, Mukesh Patel said that as a developer they want to be part of solutions, not the problems. It is good that the notification has finally seen the day of light.

Anything which is uncertain really creates a lot of problems. Now it is very clear what is available and what is not and its impact on development, Patel said. Speaking on the legal perspective of the notification, former joint director, legal of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) Dattatraye Devale said, the battle of Mumbai and Coastal Regulations started with the amalgamation of uniting seven islands. Then further development of Backbay reclamation and Bandra reclamation and encroachment in the coastal areas. From 1991-2008 CRZ notification 1991 was amended 25 times. But the ecologically sensitive coastal region has become more and more vulnerable because of unregulated development and failure of current CRZ notification 1991. Therefore regulation of illegal construction by resorting since 1991 as the cut off year and not opting for 2008, Devale said.

### **Maharashtra: Cargo vessel hits a fishing boat, detained at Mumbai port**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-cargo-vessel-hits-a-fishing-boat-detained-at-mum-port/articleshow/87291127.cms>

Two fishermen were injured while 15 survived after their fishing boat was allegedly hit by a merchant cargo vessel, Navios Venus at Colachel in Kanyakumari on October 22. The vessel is at Mumbai port as it continued sailing after the Indian Coast Guard carried out a check following the collision at the location, after the fishermen sent alerts. The coast guard carried out a rescue operation and saved the fishermen. The cargo vessel was directed to head towards Cochin Port, where it was supposed to be detained. However, the vessel sailed to Mumbai. After the incident the victims' lawyers have sent a legal notice to various agencies, including the Director-General of Shipping, to initiate action against the ship for violating the rules. DG Shipping Amitabh Kumar said a surveyor will board it as soon as it comes to the inner anchorage to conduct the probe.

### **Maharashtra: Threat to livelihood: Worli fishing community writes to CM, seeks design change in coastal road project**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/threat-to-livelihood-worli-fishing-community-writes-to-cm-seeks-design-change-in-coastal-road-project-7590634/lite/>

Fearing that work on the coastal road will permanently impact the routes of their boats, people from the fishing community from Worli Koliwada wrote to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray demanding a design change to increase the gap between two pillars of the bridge proposed under the project. The letter, submitted on Monday, pointed out that despite the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) promising that their project won't hamper the community's

livelihood, the ongoing work has obstructed their boat routes and fishing area at Worli. The BMC is constructing a 10.58-km coastal road from Princess Street Flyover in Marine Drive to Worli end of flyover on the west coast of the city. According to the BMC proposal, the distance between two pillars is 60 meters, however, the letter demands that the gap be increased up to 200 meters so that the navigation of their boats is not hampered. One of the conditions while giving the approval for the project by the Coastal Regulation Zone authority was that the bridges with navigable span should be provided by the BMC so that there are no obstructions to fishing boats. This will also be damage to the future fishing activities and especially it would be dangerous when the sea is stormy as there will be hardly any navigation space, said Nitesh Patil, secretary of Worli Koliwada Nakhawa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society Limited.

He further stated in the letter, We have been requesting the administration to meet and discuss our problems as this will lead to the destruction of our livelihood almost permanently as there will be no navigation space with such a short distance. Even on October 18, when the weather was stormy, the tugs and other equipment by the contractors were shifted elsewhere as they realised it will be dangerous in such weather and with such a short navigation span how can we carry out our fishing activity in future. Meanwhile, fisherfolks have also complained that BMC is yet to clear out the anchors and barges that have been obstructing and damaging their fishing nets and routes of the boats.

### **Maharashtra: Koli fishing port under threat of permanent closure**

<https://mumbai.citizenmatters.in/mumbai-buzz-koli-fishing-port-threatened-by-permanent-closure-navi-mumbai-vaccinates-100-of-its-citizens-26827>

Cleveland Bunder, one of four artisanal fish landing centres in Worli Koliwada, could close permanently, fisherfolk claim. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) coastal road project (CRP) construction is limiting access to fishing grounds, according to the Kolis who live in the koliwada. Currently, a fourth of around 500 families – who are sustained entirely by artisanal fishing – is supported by the Cleveland Bunder. The barrier currently in their way is an interchange bridge between the CRP and the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL). One strong gust of wind can send our boats crashing against the pillars. It happened to many boats when BWSL was being constructed. Also, more than one boat cannot pass through the span at a given time. The pillars have slowed us down and made it an everyday risk just to reach our fishing grounds, explains Deepak Vasudev, a fourth-generation artisanal fisherman from Worli Koliwada. The phase 2 of CRP will erect four more pillars along the Baroda Palace-Haji Ali-BWSL route, with a 60 metres gap between them. Fishermen claim this is too little.



## **Maharashtra: Government was told to review fish stock along Konkan coast for fresh view on Purse Seine Net fishing**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/maharashtra-told-to-review-fish-stock-along-konkan-coast-for-fresh-view-on-psn-fishing-101634799325616.html>

The Bombay high court on Wednesday directed Maharashtra fisheries department to review in three months the status of fish stock along Konkan coast and decide whether to continue the restrictions imposed on purse seine net (PSN) fishing along the coastline. PSN is essentially a technique of fishing that utilises a purse seine to capture large schools of fish. The division bench of justice Ujjal Bhuyan and justice Madhav Jamdar issued the directive on a petition filed by five fishermen, one from Mumbai and four from Ratnagiri district, engaged in PSN fishing. They had challenged the validity of February 5, 2016 order issued by the fisheries department, reserving certain areas along the shore for traditional fishing and restricting PSN fishing beyond certain limits of the territorial waters. The order also laid down strict norms for purse seine nets. They contended that the order was violative of their fundamental right to profess an occupation and that there was no effective consultation, as contemplated under the Maharashtra Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1981 and views of the PSN fishermen were not taken into account before issuing the order.

Fisheries department, on the other hand, maintained that PSN fishing was allowed in about 60% of the coastline between September and December and the order balanced the rights of traditional fishermen and the PSN fishermen, who use mechanised boats. Also Read: Shiv Sena leader alleges Rs.500 crore scam in BJP-led municipal corporation High court, in its order, noted that the February 2016 order was based on recommendations made by a committee set up by the state government in September 2011 which had recommended that the fish stock situation be reviewed every five year and fresh decision be taken as regards PSN fishing for the next five years. HC noted that despite the lapse of considerable period, the fisheries department had not reviewed the fish stock along the coastline and directed that it be done. The court also said that following the survey, a fresh decision in regard to PSN fishing is taken after due consultation with the District Advisory Committees and after hearing the representatives of the PSN fishermen.

## **Maharashtra: Fishermen protest coastal road work at sea near Worli**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/fishermen-protest-coastal-road-work-at-sea-near-worli-7572483/>

Hundreds of fishermen from Worli-Koliwada took to the sea to protest the coastal road work near Worli Dairy on Thursday morning. Upset with barges and anchors damaging their fishing nets and obstructing the route of boats, fishermen in their boats surrounded a jetty constructed for coastal road project for more than two hours. According to the fishermen, for the past two days, barges set up for coastal road construction had started impacting nets casted by kolis in the nearby area. Huge barges and anchors were set in our fishing area and the route of our boats was also blocked. Earlier, the BMC officials had promised the community to be intimated prior to keeping these barges. However, they were installed in fishing areas without warning and it is now impacting our daily fishing, said Nitesh Patil, a fisherman and representative of Worli-Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society Limited.

After the protest, BMC agreed to remove anchors and barges. We have suggested to them three places to set up these barges and anchors so that our fishing is not affected, he added. Earlier, a meeting was held with BMC and fishermen on October 8 on the same issue. In the meeting, it was decided that coastal road work will not be carried out in the areas where fishing will be affected. The BMC had promised that work would not impact fishing of fishermen but their nets were damaged, routes of boats were blocked. But it was a clear violation of court orders, Shweta Wagh, activist and one of the petitioners in the Bombay High Court, said.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai coastal road project: Koli fishing port to face permanent closure?**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/mumbai-coastal-road-project-koli-fishing-port-to-face-permanent-closure-101634477001367.html>

Cleveland Bunder is one of four artisanal fish landing centres in Worli Koliwada, which is one of Mumbai's earliest fishing villages, in existence since before the Seven Islands of Bombay were merged through successive land reclamation projects in the 19th century. Now, fisherfolk say, the bunder is under serious threat of permanent closure due to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) coastal road project (CRP), arguably the city's next frontier in land reclamation. Aaditya Thackeray, cabinet minister for environment and climate change (and MLA representing Worli constituency) did not respond to requests for comment. As of date, Koli community leaders estimate that Cleveland Bunder supports at least a fourth of around 500 families in Worli Koliwada who still rely entirely on artisanal fishing as a source of income. It provides harbour for a varying fleet of motorised and non-motorised boats, which range between 45 to 60 on any given day, and also employs several migrant fish workers in addition to the Kolis.

Those operating from the bunder – locals estimate it to be at least 100 years old – may soon find themselves unable to access their customary fishing grounds. A barrier to their movement, in the

form of an interchange bridge to connect the CRP with the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL) is on the anvil. MCGM recently began preparing to construct this segment of the controversial infra project, prompting nearly 200 boats from across the Worli fishing zone to gherao a temporary jetty at the CRP construction site on October 14. The plan and problems faced by fisherfolk the civic body plans to construct two connecting bridges between the south-end of the BWSL and the north end of the CRP, as part of a link that will allow traffic to flow seamlessly between the two. Like BWSL before it, fisherfolk said this interchange will run parallel to Cleveland Bunder and severely constrict the only navigational route available to boats venturing out to open seas.

As fishing boats leave the harbour, they traverse a narrow, zig-zag path to their fishing grounds which extend from the north near Mot Mauli (or Mount Mary) in Bandra to Walkeshwar in south Mumbai. The boats pass between two pillars (about 30 metres apart) that support the Bandra-Worli Sea Link overhead. Both the inter-tidal and sub-tidal areas of the beach are extremely rocky, and this route needs to be manoeuvred with great skill to prevent accidents. We have been using the same navigation route for generations. After the Bandra Worli Sea Link came up, the route has become narrower and we have to be very careful, says Rupesh Patil, member of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Vyavsay Sahakari Society. Unlike cars on the road, steering a boat in open water is more complicated, with the wind and waves playing a major role in the safety of the vessel and its passengers. One strong gust of wind can send our boats crashing against the pillars. It happened to many boats when BWSL was being constructed. Also, more than one boat cannot pass through the span at a given time. The pillars have slowed us down and made it an everyday risk just to reach our fishing grounds, explains Deepak Vasudev, a fourth-generation artisanal fisherman from Worli Koliwada. As per the design plans for phase 2 of CRP — from Baroda Palace at Haji Ali to BWSL — another four pillars are to be erected directly within this precarious navigation route, which is used by fishermen every day. BMC has proposed to leave a gap of 60 metres between these pillars, which fisherfolk say is simply too little.

We require a span of at least 200 metres between the pillars to ensure safe passage. There is no doubt that if BMC continues as per their original plans, we will have to shut down Cleveland Bunder entirely. There will be no use for the boats because we won't be able to take them out, says Nitesh Patil, director of the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Vyavsay Sahakari Society (WKNVSS). Patil emphasised that they have appealed to multiple authorities to consider redesigning the interchange. Not a recent demand The first time that fisherfolk at Worli Koliwada raised the issue of their navigational channel dates back to at least October 2016, followed by representations sent to MCGM, fisheries department and various other arms of the state government in April 2017, November and December 2018. In yet another, dated October 2020, Vijay Kishor Patil (WKNVSS chairman), wrote, The construction of two additional

bridges in front of Cleveland Bunder... will completely cut off our access to the sea and nearshore areas which comprise our fishing zone.

It is therefore imperative that the design is changed and that the distance (between the proposed pillars for the CR-BWSL interchange) is increased to at least 200 metres as we have highlighted in countless representations in the past, the letter continues. Over a year and at least two more such representations later, fisherfolk say they have not received any formal acknowledgement of their concerns, from any authority. We have met all sorts of officials to discuss this matter many, many times. All we are told is that adequate compensation will be given to project-affected persons. But that is not what we want. We want to continue fishing and there is no way we can do that if these pillars come up. What trade will we teach our children? questions Marshal Koli, a resident of Worli Koliwada and a spokesperson for the Akhil Maharashtra Machimaar Kruti Samiti, a state-wide fish workers union. Work in progress the predicament, which has loomed over Cleveland Bunder for the past several years, is fast coming to a head. On October 14, the Hindustan Construction Company (which is tasked with building Package 2 of the CRP, from Baroda Palace at Haji Ali to BWSL) anchored three buoys in the fishing waters just off Cleveland Bunder, to facilitate the movement of barges and tugboats in the area.

The anchors are there to support barges that will carry construction materials and machinery from our jetty to the construction site. We are just about to start digging the foundations of the bridge. It is the final arm of the coastal road's southern stretch and is scheduled for completion by 2023, an official with the BMC's coastal roads department confirmed to HT on the day. However, when asked for a comment regarding the fishermen's navigation route, the official declined to comment — as did two others who are directly involved in the project. Vijay Nighot, chief engineer in the BMC's coastal roads department, said, There will be no redesign of the interchange. HT also reached out to officials in the fisheries department but did not receive a response in the matter. Former fisheries minister Aslam Shaikh, whom fisherfolk have written to directly, could not be reached for comment despite attempts. However, an official (formerly occupying the post of district fisheries officer), said while seeking anonymity, It is up to BMC to take appropriate steps as the coastal road is their project. It is not the fisheries department's job to intervene in these disputes.

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute has already conducted a social impact assessment for the project and a survey has been commissioned by from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) to give the fishers proper compensation. Demand for a design change to continue Shweta Wagh, an architect and researcher who has been closely mapping the impact of the CRP on fishing communities in Worli, remarked that reclamation has already grievously affected the livelihood of the community and that their demands can be easily accommodated

through a design change. Given that physical works on the bridge have not yet commenced, and that the coastal road itself has been subject to design changes including the addition of 21 hectares of reclaimed land, a modification is certainly possible, Wagh claimed.

### **Maharashtra: In Satpati: No fish. So what will I sell now?**

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/in-satpati-no-fish-so-what-will-i-sell-now/>

Meena Meher's days are busy. At 4 a.m. she reaches the wholesale market in her village, Satpati, to auction fish for boat owners. Back home by around 9 a.m., she cures fish with salt and stores it for drying in thermocol boxes in her backyard, to be sold after a week or two. In the evenings, she takes a bus or shared autorickshaw to the retail market in Palghar, some 12 kilometres away, to sell dry fish. If any stock remains, she tries to sell it in the evening retail market in Satpati. But the boats she auctions for are becoming fewer, the quantity of fish she dries is reducing too. No fish. So what will I sell now? Asks 58-year-old Meena, who belongs to the Koli community (listed as an OBC). So she has diversified – after the monsoon, she purchases fresh fish from boat owners or traders at the Satpati wholesale market, and sells that to try and earn enough. (She does not however tell us any details about her income.) To make up for the family's income shortfall, her husband Ulhas Meher, 63, is working more too. He continues to occasionally go out on ONGC survey boats as a labourer and sample collector, but has extended his work on big fishing boats in Mumbai from around two months of the year to 4-6 months.

Their coastal village, Satpati, in Maharashtra's Palghar district, is in what's been called a 'Golden Belt', its seabed recognised for fish breeding and for the famous bombil (Bombay duck). But the bombil catch is decreasing – from a record high of 40,065 tons in 1979 in the Satpati-Dahanu zone, the state produced only 16,576 tons in 2018. The reasons are many – an increase in industrial pollution, overfishing by trawlers and purse seiners (large nets used to capture dense shoals, including smaller fish, which halts their growth). Trawlers are not allowed to enter our ocean, but no one stops them, Meena says. Fishing was a community occupation, but now anyone can buy a boat. These big boats kill the eggs and small fish, leaving us with nothing. For long, Meena and other auctioneers have been called by local boat owners whenever there is fish to sell – but now there is no guarantee like before that the boats will come back with a full load of bombil and silver pomfret, along with smaller fish like mushi, wam and others. Meena now auctions for only two boats – down from up to eight until around a decade ago. Many boat owners here have stopped fishing. In the 1980s, there were 30-35 boats fishing in Satpati [for bombil], but this number reduced to 12 [by mid-2019], confirms Narendra Patil, president of the National Fishworkers Forum and former chairman of the Satpati Fishermen Sarvodaya Cooperative Society.

The entire fishing community in Satpati – the gram panchayat and cooperative societies estimate the population here is now 35,000 (up from the 17,032 listed in Census 2011) – is facing the impact of this decline. A fisheries primary school (with a regular academic curriculum) set up in 1950 by the state government and transferred to the zilla parishad in 2002, is in decline. Similarly, a marine fisheries training centre offering specialised course, set up in 1954, is no longer operational. Only two fisheries cooperative societies remain, and function as intermediaries between boat owners and fish exporters, and as a source of loans, subsidies on diesel and other services for fishermen and boat owners. But Satpati’s fisherwomen say they have received no support from either the government or the cooperative societies – which offer them only ice and cold storage space at nominal rates.

The government should give every fisherwoman at least Rs. 10,000 for our business. We don’t have money to buy fish to sell, says 50-year-old Anamika Patil. In the past, women here would usually sell fish caught by family members, but now many have to purchase it from traders – and that requires credit or capital which they don’t possess. Some have taken loans of Rs. 20,000-Rs. 30,000 from private lenders. Institutional borrowing is not an option because we have to mortgage our jewellery or house or land, says Anamika, who has taken a Rs. 50,000 loan from a boat owner. Other fisherwomen have moved out of the trade — wholly or for a portion of their work-day. With the fish stock reducing, the women engaged in drying Bombay duck have had to adapt. They are now going to Palghar for jobs or for any work in the MIDC [Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation] complex, says Ketan Patil, chairman of the Satpati Fishermen Sarvodaya Cooperative Society. Satpati used to be filled with bombil, we would sleep outside because our houses were full of fish stock. Once the catch started decreasing, it became very difficult [to earn enough] and this is when we switched to other jobs, says Smita Tare, who has been working at a pharmaceuticals company in Palghar for around 15 years, doing assembly line packaging tasks. For a 10-hour a day shift, six days a week, she earns roughly Rs. 8,000 a month. Her husband too does not fish anymore, but plays the drum in a band during weddings and other events in Palghar or other places. Palghar town is around 15 kilometres away.

In the mornings now, a line of women stand at the local bus stop waiting to go to work. Meena’s daughter-in-law Shubhangi, 32, too started working in a Palghar appliances unit in February 2020, where she packs coolers, mixers and other items, earning Rs. 240 for a 10-hour shift, or Rs. 320 for 12 hours, with a weekly off every Friday. (Shubhangi’s husband Prajyot, 34, helps Meena with the fish processing, and works at the fisheries cooperative society, though there are fears about losing this permanent job because the cooperatives too are struggling.) Meena herself now spends 2-3 hours every day with a plate of white beads, golden coloured metal string, a big circular sieve, a nail cutter and her spectacles. Her task is to pass the string through the beads and

make a closed hook. She earns, from a woman in the village who gives out this work, Rs. 200-250 for 250 grams of finished beads – which can take a week to complete. From this amount, she spends Rs. 100 to buy the raw material again.

For Bharati Meher, 43, whose family owns a boat, the decision to join a cosmetics company was made in mid-2019 after income in the fishing trade began falling. Until then, in addition to auctioning and selling fish, Bharati and her mother-in-law would, like Meena, make artificial jewellery. While many in Satpati have moved on to other livelihoods, a sense of a time gone by prevails in conversations. After some years, we will have to draw and show our kids what a pomfret or bombil looks like – there will be none available here, says Chandrakant Naik, a retired BEST driver who now goes fishing on a small boat owned by his nephew. Still, many others are sure that nostalgia cannot convince them to stay on in fishing. I don't let my kids enter the boat. Small [fishing-related] tasks are okay, but I don't take them on the boat, says 51-year-old Jitendra Tamore, who inherited a vessel from his father. The family also owns a fishing net shop in Satpati, which helps them stay afloat. We were able to educate our sons [20 and 17 years old] only because of the net business, adds his wife, 49-year-old Juhi Tamore. But the way our life is going on, we don't want them to enter the fishing business at any cost.

### **Maharashtra: Navy yet to get NOC from fisheries dept for no-fishing zone in front of its helibase**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/mumbai-navy-yet-to-get-noc-from-fisheries-dept-for-no-fishing-zone-in-front-of-its-helibase-7564545/>

The Western naval command has been repeatedly requesting the state government to have a no-fishing zone or a waterfront security zone 100 metres from the wall of their helibase INS Shikra at Colaba as birds that come to feed on fish pose risk to the helicopters landing there. INS Shikra houses helicopters like Sea King, Kamov, Chetak and the ALH and caters to the needs of various ships and is also used for search and rescue operations. A senior officer of the Indian Navy said, Shikra is a premier air station of the western naval command. The air station operates several helicopters that embark ships of the Indian Navy and also undertakes critical operations ashore. During the recent cyclone Tauktae, several search and rescue operations commenced from here. Shikra is located between Sassoon dock and Sundernagari fishing colonies and fishing boats regularly ply in front of Shikra and some boats do fishing in front of the wall of INS Shikra.

The staff of INS Shikra has raised highlighted their concerns in the past as it becomes critical when VVIPs like President, Vice-President and Prime Minister come and Shikra is the landing

spot. The waterfront is the designated landing area and the presence of these boats is an obstruction for the safe operation of helicopters. The Navy has proposed that a 100-metre area from the wall of INS Shikra be cordoned with ropes and buoys as this would prevent the entry of fishing boats close to the wall. The Navy has got NOC from Mumbai Port Trust and the Maharashtra Maritime Board but the same is still pending from the fisheries department. In a meeting held on November 20, 2020, the chief secretary had directed the state fisheries department to give NOC and it is yet to come.

The issue was raised again with Chief Secretary S J Kunte in a meeting held in the third week of September. Rajiv Nivatkar, Collector of Mumbai City, said that the fisheries department had to decide on the no-fishing zone. Fisheries Commissioner Atul Patne said, there are many boats which go around the Shikra base. But there are eight fishermen, who fish right next to the Shikra wall. They claim that their families do fishing since British times. We are ready to relocate them, but they want jobs. This is a question of national security and the Navy is right. Devendra Tandel of Akhil Maharashtra Machimar Kruti Samit, All these years there was no hindrance. How come they have suddenly demanded a no-fishing zone around Shikra?

### **Maharashtra: Exposed at sea, fishers need better insurance to manage climate risks**

[indiaspend.com/climate-change/exposed-at-sea-fishers-need-better-insurance-to-manage-climate-risks-781266](https://indiaspend.com/climate-change/exposed-at-sea-fishers-need-better-insurance-to-manage-climate-risks-781266)

Rufino Possa, 52, a fisher from Uttan, a coastal village in north Mumbai, returned home on October 2, after 12 days at sea, four days more than he planned. The rough seas churned up by Cyclone Gulab towards the end of September meant that he could not find any catch. Each trip costs us more than Rs 1 lakh, we cannot afford to come back without any catch, he said. Possa, like others of the fishing community, is still to recover from the losses caused by the pandemic. But their problem is further aggravated by the frequent and intense cyclones and torrential rains that have been battering India's coastline over the last few years. When Possa and his 12-member crew now launch their boats, they are not sure they will return home safely. A few days ago, one of his friends lost a member of his crew at sea. The body was later found floating at a harbour in Palghar district, around 80 km north of Uttan. I have been in the fishing business for the last 30 years but have never faced so much loss and damage at sea as I have in the last few years, said Possa. Unexpected summer rains this year also damaged Rs 2-lakh worth of fish he had put out to dry. Leo Colaco runs a fishing co-operative society in Uttan, the Uttan Machimar Vikas Society Ltd. Its 115 members now frequently seek help with insurance claims, loans and subsidies, he said.



The fishing business has become even more precarious after these frequent weather events like cyclones and heavy rains, said Colaco. India's 8,000-km coastline is a source of livelihood for almost 28 million workers in the fishing sector, including those vendors, boat owners and operators, 'ice breakers' who ensure that the catch is kept iced, drivers and owners of vehicles used to transport the catch and so on. Among them, close to 67% live below the poverty line, according to the 2016 National Marine Fisheries Census conducted by the government-run Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). Unusual extreme weather events are being witnessed along India's coast. For example, in May 2021, a severe cyclonic storm Tauktae landed on India's west coast though cyclonic storms are rarely formed in the Arabian Sea and this can be traced to the warming of oceans, we reported in May 2021. Coastal climate disasters can impact the livelihood of fishers in multiple ways--they not only cause death and injuries at sea but also loss of or damage to expensive fishing gear, large-scale decline in the haul, and damage to assets such as aquaculture farms, marine cages used in aquaculture, storage infrastructure and so on.

These losses are not covered under conventional insurance schemes. Currently, fishers have access to insurance against accidents, death and certain other kinds of losses. The Centre offers group accident insurance that provides coverage against accident or death at sea to entire fishing crews. Insurance is also available for total destruction or loss of fishing vessels from public insurance companies such as the New India Assurance Company Ltd, Oriental Insurance Company Ltd and United India Insurance Company Ltd. Some private insurers also compensate for loss of fishing gear at an extra premium. There is an increasing loss of workdays, loss and damage of vessels, property, and mortality on account of adverse climatic conditions. This is not matched by the current levels of risk-coverage provided under these schemes, said Adithya Pillai of Dakshin Foundation, a Bengaluru-based research organisation working on marine conservation and environment sustainability. Need for measures to deal with climate shocks the agriculture ministry did introduce a weather-based index insurance scheme in 2003 but only to benefit farmers. In 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana or the PM's crop insurance scheme began to cover crop losses caused by adverse weather, replacing the weather index insurance. However, there is no equivalent scheme for the fisheries sector. What can be done to help livelihoods impacted by disasters precipitated by climate change?

In a February 2021 report, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations asked national governments to come up with social security measures to help fishers recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and the exacerbated climatic events. Income-support programmes and better social support systems help absorb systemic shocks like natural disasters, or Covid, that increase overall vulnerability and negative coping strategies, said Pillai of Dakshin Foundation. Insurance schemes need to be suited to the level of occupational risks, uncertainties and ability of

fishers to provide collateral and pay premiums. Several western countries have designed a weather index insurance to cover climate risks such as excess rainfall or droughts that impact specific populations. In 2007, 23 countries in Central America and the Caribbean formed a Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, a multi-country insurance instrument to cover the financial impact of natural hazards like tropical cyclones, earthquakes and excess rainfall.

The instrument also has a specific fisheries policy, the Caribbean Ocean and Aquaculture Sustainability Facility (COAST) that insures fishing vessels, fishing equipment and fishing infrastructure against extreme weather events. Climate risk insurance is being promoted by organisations to support vulnerable communities and compensate them for unavoidable risks such as extreme weather events. Partial protection against climate vagaries Apart from one-time compensations provided under disaster relief funds, which we detail later, fishers also have access to accident insurance schemes provided by the Centre and state governments such as the Group Accident Insurance Scheme for Fishermen under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana. In 2020, the central government came up with another insurance scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) that gives greater coverage between Rs 25,000 and Rs 5 lakh for accidental injuries or deaths of fishers. However, such state and central schemes do not cover loss and damage caused by extreme weather events, said Shinoj P., a senior scientist at CMFRI. And, apart from accident risks, other big risks in the sector such as loss and damage to fishing vessels, gear and assets of fishers are only partially covered by private entities, he said.

As we said earlier, India's coastline has been hit by successive disasters in recent years. In 2020, four cyclones hit different coastal parts of India: Amphan hit the east in May, Nisarga landed in Maharashtra in June, Nivar swept coastal south-east in November and Burevi impacted Tamil Nadu and Kerala in early December. The frequency of cyclones in all oceans surrounding India has increased: both 2018 and 2019 recorded seven cyclones, higher than the annual long-period average (1961-2017) of 4.5, we reported in December 2020. Lynel Mallekar, 40, a fisher from Uttan, has had to deal with the impact of several such weather events. He had bought a new boat in 2019 but it has already undergone six or seven major repairs costing a total of Rs 4 lakh. The boat itself cost him Rs 20 lakh. Though the vessel is insured, Mallekar could not recover the cost of repairs. Vessel insurances in India cover only total loss, which means that only if your boat disappears can you claim Rs 1-2 lakh for a Rs 10-50 lakh loss, said Colaco, head of the fisher collective in Uttan, who has appointed an insurance clerk for the cooperative.

**Delayed payment** Apart from vessel insurance offered by public insurance companies, accident/death insurance schemes for fishers are largely covered under state and central insurance programmes. The centre's Group Accidental Insurance Scheme for Active Fishermen

covers life/disability risks of a fishing crew. Under this, the insured can seek Rs 2 lakh in case of permanent disability/accidental death, and Rs 1 lakh in case of partial disability. Investigations into incidents to claim insurance are also time consuming, said Colaco. Fishers rarely have time to pursue them, he said. Royden Dhokalkar, who lost his crew member in an accident at sea in January 2020, was sanctioned his claim of Rs 1 lakh a year and a half later, in June 2021. Local co-operative societies, like those run by Leo Colaco, have been instrumental in pushing for insurance claims. But loss of life and damage to vessels is not the only risk fishers have to bear, said Narendra Patil, president of the National Fishworkers Forum, a union of small and traditional fishworkers.

Equipment like large hooks, lines, traps and fishing nets are expensive and every fisher invests around Rs 1 lakh in a trip. When storms hit or there is no catch, they return home with no income in hand and there is no support available for that, he said. 'One-time disaster relief not enough' The Arabian Sea, as we said, no longer enjoys a relatively stable climate due to global warming. The three cyclones to impact it in 2020-21--Amphan, Yaas and Taukate--damaged over 14,000 boats and 78,000 fishing nets, as per the Inter-Ministerial Central Teams constituted by the government. But such damage is rarely accounted for in insurance claims, said activist Patil. Disaster relief programmes do offer financial assistance to those whose livelihoods have been hit but these are not in the nature of insurance. There are one-time compensation schemes specific to disaster management and mitigation, like relief and rehabilitation of coastal communities affected by floods and cyclones but there aren't insurance schemes that talk explicitly about climate risk and resilience in the fisheries sector, said Pillai of Dakshin Foundation.

Additionally there are some private schemes that help cover damage to fishing vessels and gears, but these insurance schemes still have low levels of coverage. In Andhra Pradesh, each of the 109,231 registered fishers in the state benefited from a financial assistance of Rs 10,000. In April 2020, Andhra Pradesh also announced a one-time payment of Rs 2,000 benefitting 6,000 migrant fish workers working in Gujarat. That same month, in Tamil Nadu, a one-time financial aid of Rs 1,000 was given to 485,000 fishers and fish vendors who were members of the State Fishermen Welfare Board. In June and July 2020, Kerala government distributed a one-time Covid relief payment of Rs 2,000 to every fisher. Every worker in allied fields was paid Rs 1,000. One-time payments cannot sustain the community for long, said activist Patil. The National Fishworkers Forum had asked the central government to announce a monthly package which includes Rs 50,000 per month for boat owners, Rs 15,000 per month for the crew and Rs 10,000 per month for those involved in selling fish. It has also sought interest-free loans of up to Rs 5 lakh from national banks ahead of the new fishing season.

We sought comments from the Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying on October 5 on why no climate risk insurance is being provided to fishers. We will update the article when we receive a response. Push for sustainable fishing M.A. Sekar, who belongs to the fishing community of Tamil Nadu, and worked in the supply chain at the Marine Products Export Development Authority under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has been charting the changes in the sector. Lately, European countries who import fish have been pressuring India for sustainable fishing. So, schemes like PMMSY are introduced to push sustainable fishing. But how can you promote sustainable fishing, without addressing the livelihood, labour conditions and labour rights of the fishing community? he asked. Unlike farmers who are supported through minimum support price, in the fisheries sector, the fishworkers are vulnerable to the [market] forces [and the influence] of corporates and middlemen.

In September 2020, the central Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying came up with a group accident insurance under the PPMMSY, a Rs-20,050 crore scheme including accident insurance for fishers. But fisher welfare is allotted only 8% of the funds compared to what aquaculture and related infrastructure get. By September 2021, only 1,585,149 fishers from seven states--Telangana, Odisha, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Sikkim-- have been covered under the scheme with their state government paying their share of premiums. But large fish producing states like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala have not yet paid their share of premiums, leaving the scheme in limbo. States like Maharashtra have not allotted adequate budget to the fisheries sector to be able to pay their due share of premiums, said Colaco of the Uttan fishers collective. We contacted the regional director of Maharashtra State Fisheries Department for a response to Colaco's statement.

The earlier group accident insurance scheme has been active in the state. The premium is divided equally between the Centre, state and beneficiary, but the benefits could not be given to the beneficiaries because they did not apply for the scheme, said Devare, regional director of Maharashtra state fisheries department. Burdened by debt, loss of livelihood Fisher Vijay Burkhav bought a new boat in 2020 for Rs 50 lakh. The new boat is made of fiberglass, unlike the earlier one, which was made of teak wood and used to get damaged in high currents, he said. But banks would not give him a loan to buy the vessel because he could not show a stable income. Burkhav ended up taking a loan from a private money lender which he says will take him at least 10 years to repay. Fisherfolk normally take loans of upto Rs 1-2 lakh for purchases and repairs on the basis of their earnings from the previous fishing season, but with earnings dipping due to unpredictable weather changes, they cannot plan ahead for their businesses, said Colaco. To respond to the economic consequences of the pandemic, a number of states set up compensation measures for workers in the fishing sector.

Civil society organisations had protested after the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi relief programme under the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare initially excluded fishers. The fisher community has been dependent on informal players in the credit market-- auctioneer-middlemen, third-party 'shareholders' (those who invest in the fishing business on an informal basis) and private money lenders, according to a 2019 study by CMFRI. These informal contracts end up becoming debt traps, the study said. Fishers are resource-poor, they cannot afford premiums. How will they pay off huge loans? Said Shinoj of CMFRI. Need for innovative schemes the compensation given under disaster management rules is very nominal. For loss of Rs 5 lakh or Rs 10 lakh, the compensation is a meagre Rs 15,000-Rs 20,000, said Kiran Koli, secretary of the Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti, a fisher's collective based in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. Existing insurance schemes are not innovative enough to deal with the climate crisis, said Shinoj of CFMRI. Activist Koli said he met Maharashtra's industry minister Subash Desai and the relief and rehabilitation minister Vijay Wadettiwar on the need to insure fishers under innovative schemes such as the crop insurance scheme that covers loss and damage arising out of unforeseen circumstances.

They agreed but there is no action yet, he said. In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in Chennai, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance with the assistance of CARE India, a not-for-profit organisation working on health, education and women empowerment, developed Disaster Risk Insurance Product for Coastal Communities, an insurance scheme for damaged assets such as fishing gear, safety nets, and partial damage to boats and so on. Many fishers availed of these schemes, said Shinoj of CMFRI. But in 2008, after cyclone Nisha, there was huge damage and the company had to pay all indemnities and suffered a financial loss as a result. The scheme is nonfunctional at present. The government had in 2020 introduced a draft National Fisheries Policy that provided insurance cover for fishing assets such as gear and craft. The intention was to help the fishers in offsetting the losses in times of natural calamities and other acts beyond their control, and comments were invited from stakeholders. But the policy has neither been finalised, nor has an update been issued yet.

### **Maharashtra: To combat depletion in fish population, calendar helps promote informed consumption**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/mumbai-depletion-fish-population-calendar-promote-informed-consumption-7566371/>

Although most seafood consumers know that fishing is banned in the monsoon and many avoid eating seafood during this period, that knowledge is not enough to promote sustainable consumption, according to the co-founders of 'Know Your Fish', a website that works to promote ocean-friendly eating habits. Know Your Fish (<https://www.knowyourfish.org.in/>) is a

monthly calendar about which fish to avoid or choose based on breeding seasons and populations. It was launched in 2017. Banking on the consumers, Pooja Rathod, Mayuresh Gangal and Chetana Purushotham— alumni of National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru — launched the website after three years of research. The idea for the website came when a restaurateur approached them for suggestions on appropriate fish to serve in 2014. There is a 61-day (June 1 to July 31) annual fishing ban on the west coast of the country. It was formulated to help regenerate marine fisheries in the Indian waters, where the monsoon season creates a conducive environment for fish spawning, and is crucial to protect the marine habitat during the reproduction period. However, to combat the depleting catch, fishermen from Gujarat have sought an increase in the fishing ban to 91-120 days.

The fisheries department should have a detailed discussion with scientists on the breeding period of different fish and have a monsoon ban accordingly. For example, the breeding period of pomfret is in May, while others start in June. We can have a two-month ban in the monsoon, and another in January and February. This way we can keep the depletion in fish catch in check, said Devendra Tandel, president of the state fisheries association. The Know Your Fish (KYF) team is hoping that informed choices and updated eating habits will lead to a change in demand and eventually to fishing practices. Addressing the issue of overfishing requires action from multiple fronts. Through KYF we can sensitise people, build a ‘human constituency’ for marine ecosystems, and if a majority of seafood consumers follow such initiatives, they can impact the demand, said Gangal, a marine biologist and one of the founders. The group checked scientific data from the Central Marine Fisheries Institute and took assistance from friends and colleagues to help put together a website. They also assembled the calendar, highlighting 12 popular species. They also partnered with restaurants that have agreed to alter their menus to serve only fish that are in season. KYF is adapting its approach based on feedback. On its website, it has asked citizens to report findings of eggs in the fish they caught/bought.

Some fish breed throughout the year, so we have asked citizens to avoid those fish in the peak breeding period. Secondly, the data with certain species is limited and through citizens’ initiatives, we can improve the information, said Gangal. Presenting the research in a simplified manner, the team is also working to make KYF more accessible and available in five languages that are widely spoken along the west coast. In 2019, two studies warned that fish populations along Maharashtra’s coast could collapse because of overfishing and the killing of juvenile fish. Maharashtra recorded a major decline in marine fish landings catch at 32 per cent in 2019 from the previous year at 2.01 lakh tonnes, the lowest in the last 45 years, according to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). The CMFRI noted a decreasing trend in the catch in the last few years — in 2018 it was 2.95 lakh tonnes while in 2017 it was 3.81 lakh tonnes. Bombay Duck or Bombil is rapidly disappearing from the city’s coastal waters (decline by 25%

in the past decade) due to a combination of overfishing and climate change, says a study by CMFRI.

### **Maharashtra: How overfishing affects Gabit fishermen**

<https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2021/10/fishermen-of-gabit-maharashtra-climate-change/>

My father told me to not go into full-time fishing, says Shweta Hule. Hule is in her late fifties and conducts mangrove safaris in Vengurla, Sindhudurg. A fisherwoman earlier, she says her father predicted a downfall in the fishing business for the locals nearly a decade ago. People don't prefer getting married to a fisherman due to the uncertainty in the business these days. There are 35-40-year-old men in our village who are still unmarried. , she told Youth Ki Awaaz. Additionally, extended monsoons and extreme weather patterns caused largely due to climate change have impacted the viability of their operations, making it difficult for them to make a living.

Impact of Overfishing, Climate Change Globally, marine and coastal ecosystems are considered to be extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and climate-change processes like ocean warming and sea-level rise. The Gabits, known for practising sustainable fishing in coastal Maharashtra, for generations, find themselves particularly vulnerable. While the community follows traditional techniques like prohibiting the catch of juvenile fish by using nets of particular mesh size and avoiding fishing during the month of August (culturally considered breeding season for fish by the community), they say that the industrial fishing sector practices unsustainable fishing techniques that are causing havoc in the sea. For example, mechanized bull trawlers used by industries drag their nets across the sea bed to capture hundreds of fish in one go, which results in the capture of a huge amount of by-catch, mostly juveniles. Locals say that they also carry out unrestricted fishing during the breeding season depleting the seas further. Maharashtra banned purse seine nets – large fishing nets used to catch fish in bulk — from January this year, but the practice continues unabated, locals say.

The state also observes a two-month fishing ban in June and July, but the Gabits refrain from fishing in August too on account of the holy month of Shravan during which people don't consume any meat. These factors, combined with the pandemic, have negatively impacted the community's livelihood and pushed many into taking up other jobs or joining industrial fishing ventures. Climate change has further exacerbated the issue with India's coastal water temperatures have already risen by over half a degree in the past 3 decades. Warmer oceans are related to a rise in extreme weather events, and data from several organizations like National Disaster Management Authority, India Meteorological Department, Press Information Bureau, and World Meteorological Organisation shows that there has been a sharp increase in the

frequency of cyclonic events from two cyclones in 1970-1979 to 12 during 2010-19 along the Maharashtra coast.

The recent Tauktae cyclone is a case in point. For the Gabits, the cyclones have major ramifications that go beyond damages caused to life and property. The cyclones make the sea rough and make it difficult for us to carry out fishing, whereas the industrial fishing sector with their trawlers remain unaffected. Adding to this, the fish tend to move away from the shore into the deep sea during the cyclones, making it a perfect time for the trawlers for a huge catch, says Nandini Pange, member of the Swamini, a group formed by UNDP to initiate mangrove safaris in the area. Threats to Biodiversity Suhas Toraskar, a fisherman and a local turtle conservationist, has an ecological perspective to add to the issue. Looking at the Arabian sea from an isolated beach where he protects turtle nests he said, Trawlers with their huge Purse nets also practice LED fishing – negatively impacting us and also the marine biodiversity. The trawlers pull everything from the sea bed causing loss of habitat and species, and fragmentation of ecosystem structure. Being a turtle conservationist, Suhas is also concerned about the effect of climate change and overfishing on the turtle population.

The jellyfish have wreaked havoc in the sea and have troubled us a lot. There is a sudden rise in their population. The decline in the turtle population has given rise to these jellyfish blooms'. These jellyfish usually feed on juveniles which will negatively impact the fish population which in turn will affect us . In 2019, Maharashtra witnessed the lowest annual catch in 45 years, with a steep decline in all the fish species being caught. According to the Marine Fish Landings Report, the total estimated fish landings (fish catch that arrives at the ports) in the state stood at 201,000 (2.01 lakh) tonnes in 2019 against 295,000 (2.95 lakh) tonnes in 2018, marking a 32% decrease. Reflecting on the decreased catch, Suhas added, nowadays, our nets are filled with more jellyfish than normal fish.

The warming, as well as cyclones, have given rise to a host of additional issues like the frequent occurrence of phytoplanktons, in a phenomenon known as The Blue Tide , on the beaches of Maharashtra. The glowing bioluminescent phytoplanktons are a tourist attraction but are also a sign of warming waters as well as climate change. Ultimately though, the warming waters aren't good news for the survival of phytoplankton, since they survive better in cooler climes. Constituting the bottom of the marine food chain, scientists say as the waters get warmer, these single-celled organisms will migrate to cooler parts, causing marine life to move with it – greatly impacting fisheries and other economies in the coastal areas. But more worrisome, loss of phytoplankton would mean more carbon dioxide trapped in the Earth's atmosphere, since these organisms also provide half of the oceans' oxygen.



Along with the waters, the sand is warming up too. Many isolated beaches on the west coast are regular nesting sites for the Olive Ridley Turtles. The temperature of the beaches during the development of the embryos determines the sex of the hatchlings. Biologists say that increasing sand temperatures on nesting beaches shift the sex ratio to almost entirely female, making it difficult for turtles to have a problem reproducing in the future. Impact On Community Concerned about the rising sea levels at Malvan, Durga Thigale, a marine biologist at Mangrove Foundation says that the beaches are shrinking at an alarming rate too. Modern fishing techniques have affected the traditional communities a lot. Even the traditional fishing communities have started selling juveniles against their tradition as that's what they get in their catch. Standing at a daily fish auction at Malvan beach, she added, the amount of fish caught is also reducing drastically. The Malvan bay is actually a marine sanctuary, it requires conservation efforts but the governance here is poor.

In the absence of adequate governance, overfishing, as well as changes caused due to pollution and climate change has meant that an increasing number of Gabit fishers find their traditional occupations unsustainable to make a living. But all this has not only impacted their livelihood but also the social fabric of the community. The men in the community are facing a totally new challenge of finding life partners due to the uncertainty of the fishing business. Consequently, the youth in the community are now drifting to different occupations, leading to an erasure of sorts of the community's traditional fishing practices. The exploitation of the oceans is emptying resources at a very rapid pace and it's important to have strict policies and most importantly to include indigenous communities and rely on their vast cultural knowledge in conservation activities. This can help in not just improving their livelihood opportunities, but also making fishing more sustainable.

### **Maharashtra: Government to amend law for fisherfolk**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-state-govt-to-amend-law-for-fisherfolk/articleshow/86822853.cms>

After nearly 40 years, Maharashtra Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1981, will be amended through an ordinance. The state cabinet approved the amendments to protect rights and the livelihood of traditional fisherfolk. A government press release said technological advances ensured fishing can be carried out on a massive scale with little human effort. The use of purse seine nets, trawlers and LED lights must be regulated, and hence the amendment. The Act, it said, has not been amended in 40 years despite advancement in technology in the fishing industry. The amendments will allow appointment of an officer from fisheries department in place of tehsildar to hold hearings and expedite decision-making. It will introduce more stringent

punishment for illegal fishing, which include an increase in penalty and confiscation of boats used for illegal fishing.

### **Maharashtra: Vast mangrove stretches chopped at Karanja, high-level probe demanded**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/navi-mumbai/navi-mumbai-vast-mangrove-stretches-chopped-at-karanja-high-level-probe-demanded/articleshow/86651062.cms>

City environmentalists have lodged urgent complaints with Maharashtra's forest mangrove cell and the Bombay high court-appointed mangroves protection panel about the illegal cutting of a large number of green mangroves along the Karanja jetty in Uran. Several of the hacked mangroves were seen thrown into the sea when the revenue and forest officials along with activists inspected the site on Wednesday. Environmentalists are up in arms against this massive destruction of mangroves and have, therefore, asked for a high-level probe by the state authorities. This is a serious issue and calls for a high-level investigation since vast stretches have been cleared of mangroves, said BN Kumar, director of NatConnect Foundation. He sent photographs of the damage to the mangrove panel. The Uran Samaajik Sanstha chairman Sudhakar Patil said at least seven huge bundles of cut mangroves have been dumped in the sea. We have been raising our voice against the landfill which is affecting the flow of creek water and the availability of fish, he said.

According to the Karanja Terminal website, the site is being operated by Mercantile Ports and Logistics (MPL) which was established to develop, own and operate port and logistics facilities in India. Uran tehsildar Bhausahab Andhare ordered a joint inspection of the site by forest and revenue officials, following these complaints. The inspection report will be submitted soon, said range forest officer Sashank Kadam. Patil pointed that bald patches along the Karanja coast can be seen at present, because the mangroves have been illegally cleared. These joint inspections appear to be eyewash and even in recent cases of mangrove destruction, the cases have been filed against unidentified people who has no meaning, argued Nandakumar Pawar, head of Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan (SEAP).

This is exactly why we are pressing for a high-level, independent investigation, Kumar pointed out. In this context, both Kumar and Pawar have requested the state government to immediately transfer all mangrove forests in Uran and other parts of Raigad district to the forest department for conservation as per the high court order of September 2018. Till then, the destruction will continue since there is no authority to check the miscreants, Kumar said. The destruction of mangroves has resulted in burial of breeding grounds of fish on which the local fishing community survives, said Dilip Koli of Paaramparik Machhimaar Bachao Kruti Samiti.

## **Maharashtra and Goa: Tarballs on India's west coast: A tale of shifting responsibilities**

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/environment/tarballs-on-india-s-west-coast-a-tale-of-shifting-responsibilities-79506>

Tarballs hit the news headlines recently when they started appearing on well-known beaches of Mumbai and Goa. These aquatic pollutants, formed from weathering of crude oil floating on the ocean surface, have flooded Anjuna, Morjim, Colva and Mandrem beaches in Goa as well as Juhu, Versova, Dadar and Cuff Parade shorelines in Mumbai. Tarballs are dark-coloured substances dropped off to shores by waves and sea currents. They accumulate in several sizes ranging from small globules to those as big as a basketball. The latter, which weigh 6-7 kilograms, are washing up more often these days. The presence of tarballs can indicate oil spills. In addition to the big spills near Mumbai, the Arabian Sea experiences oil spills routinely as it is also a crowded oil transportation waterway, with western coast corporations like Bombay High, Panna-Mukta oil field, Tapti gas fields and Essar Oil.

All the oil spilled in the Arabian Sea eventually gets deposited on the western coast in the form of tarballs during monsoon, when the wind speed and circulation patterns favour their transportation, according to a study by the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO). The seasonal occurrence of tarballs on the west coast has made the experts and environmentalists demand an investigation into the problem. Discharge from municipal waste, oil-well blowouts, deliberate and accidental release of bilge and ballast water from ships are among the main factors driving the formation of these pollutants. Tarballs can be hazardous to human life due to the presence of *Vibrio vulnificus*, a bacteria whose entry through wounds could be fatal, according to scientific studies. These petroleum blobs also affect marine biodiversity in several ways, such as disturbing turtle habitats. This in turn, augments the impact on humans who consume marine fish. Response of authorities

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and the Environment Ministry have not addressed the tarball crisis yet, maintaining that they do not have a legal mandate, according to reports in the Hindustan Times. The right authority to tackle this problem is MPCB, which comes under the environment department. It does not directly come under my purview, said Narendra Toke, the director of the environment and climate change department. Tests conducted by MPCB on beach deposits in Mumbai last year were inconclusive. The pollution control body said they do not have jurisdiction over the cleaning of beaches or in the deep oceans, where the oil leaks usually occur. They are also not authorised to control or produce guidelines for vessels and ships. BMC claimed they are going beyond their jurisdiction to clean up the beaches and remove tarballs after numerous complaints from the citizens .

Earlier this month, the civic body had removed almost 20,000 kilograms of tarballs from Mumbai's Versova and Juhu beaches. The tarballs are difficult to wash off from the cleaning equipment, the BMC reported. A junior BMC official told Hindustan Times on condition of anonymity: BMC's job is not pollution control. Let us assume that the tarballs are coming from the crude oil industry or from ships. We do not have the power to penalise them. That is the job of the maritime authorities or the pollution control board. If it was in our power, we would have already taken action against them. The environment minister of Goa, Nilesh Cabral, said that as the state government does not have much control over the source of tarballs, the state will write to the Centre. He said, Last year, we had collected the samples and the NIO had tested them to ascertain where they may be originating from. As per the findings, they were from the rigs near Mumbai high the last time around. We had submitted a report to the then Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar, but the minister has changed since then. We will be writing again to them now. The chief minister of the state, Pramod Sawant, also assured in a press conference that the state government will be writing letters to the Home Ministry, Shipping Ministry and Union Environment Ministry.

**Role of judiciary** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the Apex Court, in several cases, have held the polluters liable for oil spills and other actions that have harshly impacted the marine environment. In the Ramdas Janardan Koli vs The Secretary to Govt of India, Union Ministry of Environment & Forest and Ors case, the NGT had given relief to 1,630 fisher families of Raigad district who were adversely affected by Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust's (JNPT) project. The trust was creating an additional berth at the port in Navi Mumbai and the fisherfolk also suffered oil leakage from ONGC pipeline which damaged marine life. The fishers complained that due to the leakage from the pipeline, their traditional rights of fishing were impaired, diminished and seriously jeopardized. The tribunal held that the expansion of the port activities by JNPT was a threat to the environment.

Also, the oil spill had added to the loss of ecology and environment and ordered compensation of the affected families. In the Samir Mehta vs Union of India and Ors, the NGT bench of Justice Swatanter Kumar upheld the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle, along with the fundamental right to life and personal liberty under Article 21. The landmark judgement ordered a Panama-based shipping company, along with its Qatar-based sister concerns, to pay Rs 100 crores for damages caused by the sinking of their ship off Mumbai's coast in 2011. The tribunal stipulated that fuel spill from the vessel was among the three key factors that affected the environment. The bench also fined MV Rak, a cargo ship of the Adani Enterprises Ltd, Rs 5 crore for dumping coal in the seabed.

Legal provisions The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in 1972 in Stockholm strongly impacted the environmental laws of various countries and provided a solid foundation for the protection of the environment. India's participation in the conference resulted in the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 that was enforced to prevent and control hazards of the environment and human life. Part IV of the Indian constitution (Article 48A – one of the Directive Principles of the state policy), has also empowered the state to create laws and policies to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, was one such instance. Sections 16 and 17 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, conferred several functions upon the central and state pollution control boards. Among them is the role of devising plans and advising governments on the control of water pollution.

The environment and forests ministry had also issued coastal regulation zone notification in 2011 for the following: - Ensure livelihood security to the fishing communities and other local communities of coastal areas - Protecting and conserving coastal stretches - Promoting growth sustainably based on scientific principle and taking into account the perils of natural hazards in the coastal areas and sea-level rise caused by global warming It is, therefore, surprising to see that despite having several legal provisions on the protection of the environment, the authorities have no answers but reasons for the problems. Lawmakers must take up environmental concerns as a priority, apart from the collective efforts of the vigilant citizens, activists and environmentalists. Government regulations on licensing, oil filling at designated ports must be thoroughly followed and commissions must be set up for specifically dealing with coastal management.

### **Maharashtra: Fisherfolk write to Uddhav Thackeray, voice objections to coastal zone management plan**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/fisherfolk-write-to-uddhav-thackeray-voice-objections-to-coastal-zone-management-plan-101633362496548.html>

Members of the Mumbai's fishing community who are objecting to the Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) for Mumbai — which was recently approved by the union ministry for environment and climate change — wrote to chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday, voicing specific concerns and demands in the matter. While the approved CZMP has been welcomed by builders as it will open up large tracts of coastal land for real estate projects, fisherfolk fear that the plan will facilitate land grabs in and around koliwadās, and degrading fishing commons by putting them in close proximity to development activities. We wish to bring

to your notice that the MoEFCC, Govt of India, has recently approved the Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) prepared by the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) for Mumbai City and Suburbs. This is a serious attack on our rights under the CRZ regime and will have far reaching negative impacts on fishing, fishing communities and the coastal environment of Mumbai, stated Monday's letter, authored by Devendra Tandel, chairman of the Akhil Maharashtra Machimaar Kruti Samiti. Speaking to Hindustan Times on Monday, Tandel alleged the recently sanctioned CZMP to be in violation of not only the overarching Coastal Regulatory Zone (2019) framework, but also the municipal corporation's own Development Control and Promotion Regulations 2034 — or development plan 2034 — which is awaiting final notification.

All the koliwadads in Mumbai are supposed to be mapped and demarcated in the coastal zone management plan. This was a provision of the CRZ 2011, and remains in its updated 2019 version. In Mumbai, the koliwadads have been mapped, but they have not been released for public scrutiny, revised and accordingly incorporated in the CZMP. That's an outright violation, Tandel explained. Community members also explained that the finalised CZMP, which will allow construction activities to take place at a distance of 50m from the high-tide line (as opposed to 500m as per the CRZ 2011 rules) will particularly endanger those parts of fishing villages which do not fall under the land revenue category of 'gaothan'. There are some restrictions on redevelopment in the gaothan, while parts of the koliwadada falling outside the gaothan area were protected by the CRZ 2011 rules. It's these parts, which tend to consist of koliwadada 'extensions', which will become susceptible to redevelopment and land grabs, said Tandel. Other fishing community leaders whom HT spoke with alleged that public consultations with Kolis and other fisherfolk were not adequately organised and publicised, as pre-legislative policy dictates. What's more alarming is that the revised Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) maps, which the state level coastal zone management authority approved in March this year, are not even public.

We have no idea where the high-tide line has been drawn. This is a major lapse in governance which affects fisherfolk directly, whereas if you look at the parent law of the CRZ, it mandates that affected communities be taken into confidence, said Rajesh Mangela, spokesperson of the National Fish Workers Forum and community leader from Moragaon village in Juhu. Mangela and others have also, in their letter to the chief minister, sought to keep in abeyance all applications for CRZ clearances based on the recently approved CZMPs for Mumbai City and Suburbs until fisherfolk's demands are resolved. An official with the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority, seeking anonymity, responded to these allegations saying, Both the state and the national coastal zone management authority have followed all due process and taken public feedback into account while drafting and approving the CZMPs for Mumbai city

and suburbs. Aggrieved parties can approach the environment department, or any other mode of redressal they choose. Since they have addressed the chief minister I am sure their concerns will be addressed where required.

State environment minister Aaditya Thackeray, in January, had written to former Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar seeking inclusion of Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMP) under the Coastal Regulation Zones (CRZ) Notification, 2019 for the districts of Maharashtra, including Mumbai, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg. The draft CZMP maps were prepared by the NCSCM under the Union environment ministry in 2019 for all coastal districts in Maharashtra based on the 2019 Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms. They were published on January 22, 2020. These maps use distinct colour codes to demarcate CRZ areas (I to IV), high tide and hazard line, fishing zones, intertidal areas, mangrove forests and buffer areas, turtle nesting sites, cyclone shelters, koliwadras and gaothans. These maps also identify coastal areas that can be opened up for infrastructural development. Public hearings were then held in February to receive objections and suggestions on the previous iteration of the CZMP, which was published in January 2020. It was learnt that the main objection is with regards to the coastal mapping in which regulatory zones have been delineated. The maps were revised keeping in mind public feedback. The MCZMA gave a go ahead on these changes, and the revised plans have now received the MoEFCC's nod, said an official privy to the development.

### **Maharashtra: Centre gives nod to Mumbai coastal zone management plans**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/centre-gives-nod-to-mumbai-coastal-zone-management-plans-101633020155083.html>

The union ministry for environment and climate change has given its nod to the Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMPs) for Mumbai city and suburban districts, to the relief of developers and sparking ire among environmentalists. The Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) had green-lit revised draft CZMPs for Mumbai in March this year. State environment minister Aaditya Thackeray, in January, had written to former Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar seeking inclusion of Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMP) under the Coastal Regulation Zones (CRZ) Notification, 2019 for the districts of Maharashtra, including Mumbai, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg. The draft CZMP maps were

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### **Maharashtra: Gene Bank to help document, conserve biodiversity through local knowledge**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/maharashtra-gene-bank-to-help-document-conserve-biodiversity-through-local-knowledge/articleshow/86628273.cms>

The state government will set up a Maharashtra Gene Bank (MGB) to document native resources, conserve them, and add value to the community that is conserving this rich diversity in the state, launch biodiversity conservation as a people's movement and engage folk ecologists in a scientific enterprise. Started in 2014, the MGB project demonstrates the power of community-led conservation activities. For these to sustain and continue in mission mode, the state will now include these projects for funding. This will benefit local communities using traditional and scientific knowledge for sustainable development. Pravin Srivastava, PCCF & member-secretary of the Maharashtra State Biodiversity Board (MSBB), said a report has been



submitted to the state government. At least 30 NGOs worked in the project and 130 workshops were held since 2014 when the project started, he said. Presentation on the gene bank report was done at a three-day conference in Pune from September 21-23. Funded by Rajiv Gandhi Science & Technology Commission, it is a collaborative work of Indian Institute of Science Education & Research (IISER), Pune; National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa; National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS), Pune; Shivaji University, Kolhapur, and College of Fisheries, Ratnagiri.

It also saw participation of 13 NGOs, of which two (BAIF and CEE) are pan-India organizations. Srivastava said the project was conceptualized by eminent ecologist Dr Madhav Gadgil and brings together grassroots community workers with scientists from academic and research organizations. We have generated data on traditional knowledge of crop genetic diversity, sponges, livestock, grasslands, freshwater aquatic fish, native cow breeds like Dangi, Lal Kandhari, Gaulau, and Sangamneri, besides Berari goat and Satpudi hen, for identifying superior animals for breeding purposes. Modern genetic tools were also used to identify the genetic relations between different breeds. A Dangi Breeders' Association has been formed to conserve the cattle breed, said Srivastava. We took special efforts to reach out to the people and community-based organizations (CBOs) at the grassroots, blending science and technology tools and scientific validation. Providing livelihood and nutrition benefits to marginal communities and creating field evidence and multi-institutional partnerships across the state, Dr VS Rao of IISER, the project coordinator, told TOI.

In these six years, the project achieved significant contributions in biodiversity documentation and conservation, livelihood generation, and sustainable utilization of resources in agricultural crops, native livestock breeds, grasslands, forest eco-restoration, management of forest produce, wild edible plants, fresh water, and marine ecosystem, said Rao. We developed seed banks at the community level for exchanging and conserving these resources, and market linkages were provided. Native livestock breeds are also similarly climate-resilient and adapt themselves to the local harsh environments, Rao added. PCCF Srivastava said the project achieved grassland conservation in about 2,000 hectare across Maharashtra in Dhule, Hingoli, and Washim districts. This includes conservation of abiotic resources such as soil and water, as a result of increased grass cover in the area. Documentation and conservation of 48 grass species was done at these sites. Livelihood strengthening efforts happened in the course of this project via activities related to fodder management.

About 4,000 MT of palatable grass is produced in this area and this fodder availability is supporting about 3,000 animal heads, which belong to about 1,000 livestock-keeping families. Rao said biodiversity enhancement via eco-restoration activities were implemented in four districts of Maharashtra covering about 1,200 ha of community forest rights (CFR) land.

Documentation and validation of knowledge of ecology, propagation, utility, and properties of 150 plants and animal species selected by local communities was also done. The project has also documented androgenic and recreational activities along the sea coast threatening the coral and sponge species in the intertidal region. Under this project over 2,000 bacteria associated with sponges were isolated. Aquatic habitat restoration activity was carried out for indigenous fish diversity conservation in Bhandara under the MGB project. It is continuing in 23 tanks in three districts in 317 hectare area. Net profit of fishermen from indigenous fish production rose 2 to 12 times after habitat development.

### **Maharashtra: Environmentalists launch digital agitation to save Panje wetland**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/navi-mumbai/navi-mumbai-environmentalists-launch-digital-agitation-to-save-panje-wetland/articleshow/86320338.cms>

Ahead of the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD), city environmentalists have launched a digital agitation for conserving the 300-hectare Panje wetland in Uran as a biodiversity park and saving the destination for over 1,50,000 birds and the traditional source of survival for the fishing community. Panje was recently in news after activists had complained to the state authorities about the illegal use of firecrackers at the wetland in order to scare away the birds. An incriminating video in this regard had also been submitted to the various government departments. WMBD is an annual awareness campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats and the main days for the international celebrations are the second Saturday in May and in October. The WMBD 2021 theme is 'Sing, Fly, Soar – Like A Bird!'. In this context, NatConnect Foundation has strongly protested against concerted efforts to destroy the wetland, apparently to pave the way for converting it into a concrete jungle.

The not-for-profit organization has launched a social media wakeup call targeting the government, the officials and the people at large to save the one last remaining wetland of ecologically fragile Uran. An online petition to the government, posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are part of the 'digital agitation'. It will be an environmental disaster of the Himalayan scale if we kill this beautiful wetland despite the concerns from all across, except the vested interests, said B N Kumar, director of NatConnect Foundation, who wrote to chief minister Uddhav Thackeray. Panje Wetland as #MMRbiodiversityPark will be an ideal WBMD gift for the people of Mumbai and MMR, Kumar said, addressing CM Thackeray, because, you will agree with us that, birds are ambassadors of environment. Wetlands and mangroves around Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), not merely the island city of Mumbai, must be preserved for the sake of the survival of these areas, he said. The social media campaign is also aimed at educating and sensitizing the officials concerned – rather unconcerned – and the people at large

on the importance of conserving biodiversity, NatConnect said. Mumbai does not have even a single inch of land available and environment care is unfortunately considered a luxury, Kumar pointed out.

One will not find a vast area – 300 hectares – of wetland anywhere around. Panje has it. On a sarcastic note, Nandakumar Pawar, head of Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan (SEAP) appreciated Cidco for marking Panje as holding pond number 1 as part of flood mitigation for Dronagiri node. Yet, the same agency has leased out Panje to the now de-notified Navi Mumbai SEZ, Pawar said. Not only that, but Panje has also been incorporated as part of its Dronagiri Development Plan, marking the wetland area as sectors 16 to 28. This lease has to be scrapped, Pawar asserted. BNHS and many environment lovers have been requesting the government to save Panje wetland not only for saving Uran's biodiversity but to save the flights at upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport from the dangers of bird-hits as birds displaced by burial of wetlands will fly helter-skelter and land around the airport project area. Traditional fishing community forum Paaramparik Machhimar Bachao Kruti Samiti said no authority worth its name has bothered to look at the genuine, survival issues of the fishing community. Our constitutional right is being violated to practice our trade and has been denied to us for decades with the onset of projects such as ONGC, JNPT, NMSEZ, Samiti spokesman Dilip Koli said.

### **Maharashtra: Mystery tarballs clog Mumbai's beaches**

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/world/rest-of-asia/look-mystery-tarballs-clog-mumbais-beaches>

Mumbaikars have been experiencing a strange mystery for years during monsoon. The people have found that heavy torrential rains trigger strong currents in the sea and vast quantities of tarballs get washed ashore on the city's beaches. Earlier, the natural phenomenon was restricted to Juhu, one of the most popular beaches in northwest Mumbai. However, there has been a discernible change this year. The tarballs have washed to other beaches of the metropolis and worse even to other places along the Konkan coast from Ratnagiri in Maharashtra in the south to parts of south Gujarat, which is located north of Mumbai. There have been reports of some beaches in Goa also experiencing tarballs being washed ashore. Shaunak Modi, director, Coastal Conservation Foundation, a Juhu resident, told Khaleej Times that the tarballs have been getting washed to the beach every monsoon since 2017. Thousands of tonnes of tar balls get washed ashore. It's a major challenge to clear the beach, he said. This year has been one of the worst. Though the problem has got aggravated, Modi said that the authorities have still not identified the source and whether it is crude or processed oil. Some suspect it is leakage from an offshore oil rig. We filed a complaint in 2019, but nothing has emerged, he said. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board had taken samples, but the reports are yet to be released. The

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) deploys teams of workers with machines to clear the beaches. However, government and civic bodies have still not been able to identify the sources of the tarballs. Officials refused to comment on the issue. Juhu is the biggest recipient of the tarballs, but Cuffe Parade in south Mumbai has experienced it. Devendra Tandel, who heads a fishermen's body, said the authorities responded quickly and cleared up the mess in Cuffe Parade because of the ongoing Ganesh festival.

The BMC has cleared more than 20,000 kilograms of tar balls from Juhu and Versova beaches over the past fortnight. But the problem persists as they continue being washed ashore every day. The National Institute of Oceanography, which is a part of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has been studying the tarballs phenomenon for around a decade. Some of its research papers traced them to offshore drilling rigs in Bombay High and others to bunker oil and water discharged into the sea by ships and other vessels. Environmentalists are concerned that tarballs destroy marine life, especially those found along the coastline and even on the beaches. Small fish, crabs, and other creatures found along the coastline are destroyed by these tarballs, Modi said. Mumbaikars, who jog along the beaches in the mornings or stroll along in the evenings, are having a tough time because they are unable to access the sand because of the growing tarballs.

### **Maharashtra: Koliwadadas are Mumbai's living heritage and must be conserved**

<https://mumbai.citizenmatters.in/koli-community-koliwadadas-mumbai-living-heritage-26012>

When fishermen at Worli Koliwada tried to take their boats out to sea in the last week of August, soon after Narali Poornima – a festival that marks the onset of the fishing season – they found that reclamation work had affected the coastline used for docking boats. They have left us with no space to dock our boats in the shallow waters, says Sanjay Baikar, secretary of the Vanchit Machimar Worli Haji Ali Sahkari Sansthan Maryadit, an organisation of fishermen. Where earlier 35 boats would stand, today even 19 boats are finding it difficult to find space in the waters leading to fights and friction within the community, An estimated ten lakh fishermen reside in Mumbai and there are about 108 fish markets in the city, and their problems are expected to escalate once the controversial coastal road is joined to the Bandra-Worli Sea Link. Once the Coastal Road is connected to the Sea Link, the columns of the link could block the navigation route of the fishermen and make it difficult for their boats to enter the sea, says Hussain Indorewalla, co-founder of the Collective of Spatial Alternatives, an advocacy group that has been fighting for the rights of the fishing community. Mumbai's fisherfolk have been protesting developmental projects consistently, especially in light of recent projects like the Coastal Road and even the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link that will inevitably leave an impact on their livelihood. What is the history of the Kolis? The Kolis are the city's earliest inhabitants,

and have existed here since it was Heptanesia (seven islands) – before each island was joined to create Bombay by the British, whose development reclaimed and relocated the community. A systematic eviction These days most fishermen stay in the 30-odd koliwadadas spread across the coastal parts of the city – from Cuffe Parade to Worli and Versova – who fish with small boats in small quantities and sell in the local markets nearby. Largely, the community’s ancient tradition of artisanal fishing – a sustainable fishing method that could sustain the ocean’s natural environment – has been replaced by commercial fishing practices. Kolis now struggle to compete with rapid urban development in the city.

The recent demolition of fish markets at Crawford and Dadar, citing traffic and hazardous building conditions, replaces indigenous communities with industries. Fish vendors at both markets were asked to relocate to Airoli, but were opposed by established vendors in the area who saw this as a competition for survival. The sea, equivalent to fields for us, is here in Mumbai. Our farm is here, our clientele is here, what will we do out of the city? Is it even practical to carry the fish all the way from Worli to Navi Mumbai? Not only will our ice melt but even our transportation and labour costs will increase multifold, says Sanjay. The koliwadadas are also dealing with callous decisions by the government. Many of them were defined as slums and pushed into slum rehabilitation programs. The scheme itself failed to take off due to corruption and other factors. Allauddin Niyaz Khan, chairman of the fishermen’s group, had been staying in the Haji Ali koliwada and found his house demolished without proper notice and was rendered homeless. Allauddin is now staying in a rented house and finds himself struggling for space on the coast to dock his boats; he owns four. Most of the Koliwadadas are located in prime locations with beautiful open spaces and hence would command huge real estate rates.

Hence, they could have been at the receiving end from interested groups of the city, says Anita Yewale, who conducts walking tours in the koliwadadas of Mumbai, particularly Worli Koliwada, is an active member of the Mumbai Maritime Museum Society. What are the challenges facing the community? Kolis have navigated a challenging year on many fronts. Earlier it was outsiders who entered their fish vending business, exclusive to the kolis, that disturbed their businesses significantly. With increasing amounts of sewage in the Arabian Sea, there is more pollution that forces fishermen to traverse deeper into the waters for their catch. These problems together multiply their transportation costs by a lot, and the hike in fuel prices has only added to their woes. Lack of research on the social impact of infrastructure projects executed along the coast has resulted doubtful earning opportunities for the Kolis. Has the city failed its original inhabitants? The emergence of Mumbai could explain the current treatment of Kolis. Most of Mumbai is made up of migrants, who come from the hinterlands and have no relationship with the sea. Hence, this land-based perspective reflects in their city policies. As the city grew the fishing community kept on getting pushed towards the sidelines. Unlike Mumbai, in many

countries abroad, where the sea is part of the city, there is an engagement with the sea and its coastal or fishing communities, says Anita. What is the way out for the Kolis? The solution is simple: hear their woes and engage with the community – its history and indigenous wisdom.

A small change in the design of the Coastal Link, to increase the gap between the columns, will help facilitate navigation of fishing boats to the shallow fishing area. However, the sad part is that the fishing community is never consulted before initiating projects impacting their livelihoods, says Hussain Indorewalla. Fishermen claim that they failed to get proper details even after approaching the courts. As far as the coastal road was concerned, the government did not even know that active fishing was happening on these coasts. The fishermen have found it very difficult to talk to the government about their basic grievances despite multiple petitions and letters. This is a simple issue of governance to merely engage with the affected community, says Hussain. In March 2019, the Bombay High Court stated that the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) should have planned for the rehabilitation of the Kolis who would be affected as a result of the construction.

While BMC's claim that no Kolis would suffer the impact of the project has stayed, the reality is far from this, and damage has already been done. Demands for reparation and a decent compensation have not been responded to. Anita proposes that efforts must be made by the city to develop an active relationship with the sea and the fishermen. The koliwadās are our city's living heritage and must be conserved. It could be made viable and sustainable too by developing it for tourism. Since they are such spectacular, vibrant and colourful spaces, the koliwadās could be our cultural showpiece on the tourist map of Mumbai. It could also help generate income for the community from within, she says.

### **Maharashtra: Tar balls again appear on Juhu beach**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/tar-balls-again-appear-on-juhu-beach-7509257/>

Tar balls – dark-coloured sticky balls of oil – were once again found in large quantities at Juhu beach on Tuesday morning. This comes a day after they were found strewn at Cuffe Parade. The Dadar beach has also been affected by the menace, prompting fishermen to complain to the authorities. Deposit of tar along Juhu beach, which started in June, has been affecting the beach for the last three months. Devendra Tandel, president of Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti, who alerted the civic body about the presence of the tar balls at Cuffe Parade, said: During monsoon, fishermen from Palghar in Vasai complained of oil deposits on the shore.

However, this year, it was seen at Cuffe Parade as well. Due to the ongoing Ganapati festival, the authorities responded to our complaints immediately. After the onset of monsoon, residents and environmentalists repeatedly witnessed the deposits reaching even Chimbai and Vasai shorelines.

Deposits are repeatedly found at Juhu and Versova beaches in the western suburbs. While tar deposits along Juhu beach during high tides are common during the monsoon, experts said the volume was unusually huge and widespread this year. After the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board was alerted about a large number of tar balls, it collected samples of the deposits from the Juhu beach earlier this month. The samples will be tested for pollutants. To raise awareness and get authorities to notice the environmental problem, the director of Coastal Conservation Foundation, Shaunak Modi – who has been documenting tar ball occurrences since 2018 at Juhu beach – has appealed to the people to document the occurrence across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

#### **Maharashtra: Rs20 lakh paid to fishermen for releasing protected marine species**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/rs20-lakh-paid-to-fishermen-in-maharashtra-for-releasing-protected-marine-species-101631644296840.html>

A total of 135 fishermen across coastal districts in Maharashtra were compensated for releasing protected marine species caught as by catch back into the ocean during the financial year 2020-21, as per the recently published annual report of the Mangrove Foundation, a registered society functioning under the aegis of the state forest department's mangrove cell. These fishermen were compensated to the tune of Rs.2,041, 800. Of the 135 cases processed for compensation in the fiscal year 2020–21, 72 cases were of the release of Olive Ridley sea turtles, 36 cases were of green sea turtle, three cases of Hawksbill turtle, two cases of Guitarfish and 22 cases were of the release of the whale shark, states the annual report. Of these, the majority of cases were reported from Sindhudurg and Thane districts, where 47 and 39 protected marine specimens were released respectively.

In Mumbai, only one such case was recorded during the last year, when a single Olive Ridley turtle was released after getting caught in fishing net. As of April 2, this year, the total number of cases processed under the state government scheme stood at 178. That number has now grown to just over 200 cases, said Harshal Karve, a marine biologist with the Mangrove Foundation. The scheme was started in 2018, but the most number of compensations were given out in the last financial year after we undertook outreach exercises with the fishing community. There is a similar scheme in Gujarat for releasing whale sharks, but Maharashtra is the only coastal state which compensates fisherfolk for release of all protected marine species. According to the

compensation scheme, if any fisherman finds a protected marine animal caught in their nets, they are entitled to compensation up to Rs.25, 000 if they release the animal and their fishing gear is damaged in the process.

All applicants have to submit video graphic and photographic evidence of the incident, along with the GPS coordinates of where the animal was caught and released along with details of their boat license. In January this year, the state government revised the compensation structure of the scheme, and fisherfolk are now reimbursed based on the size and degree of protection according to the animal under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. In all, over Rs.26 lakhs have been doled out as compensation under the scheme so far. Other species which have been released (outside of the last financial year) include two leatherback turtles and the Indian Ocean humpback dolphin.

### **Maharashtra: Finance department approves disbursement of Rs 15.80 crore compensation for cyclone-affected fishermen**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-finance-department-approves-disbursement-of-rs-15-80-crore-compensation-for-cyclone-affected-fishermen/articleshow/86039366.cms>

The Maharashtra finance department has approved the disbursement of Rs 15.80 crore as compensation for the losses sustained by fishermen during the 2019 Kyarr and Maha cyclones. The state government had already approved a special financial package of Rs 65.17 crore in September 2020 for the fishermen affected by the cyclone 'Kyaar' and 'Maha' and the fishermen who were facing financial crisis due to stormy weather from August to October 2019. But with the Covid-19 crisis hitting the state soon after, only 50% of the funds were disbursed. Now the remaining amount too has been approved for disbursal. This will bring relief to the affected farmers, said fisheries minister Aslam Shaikh.

### **Maharashtra: Recurring tar pollution along Mumbai beaches needs immediate attention**

<https://mumbai.citizenmatters.in/oil-spill-tar-pollution-on-mumbai-beaches-25853>

Oil spills are annual during Mumbai monsoons and this year was no exception. Washed ashore as black or dark brown sticky liquid tar deposits, it was first noticed on August 4th that the sand in several beaches of Mumbai turned black from the tar deposits. These signs of tar pollution were seen along a stretch of 4 kilometres, extending up to Alibag and beaches in Palghar. In fact, according to Shaunak Modi, Director, Coastal Conservation Foundation, the oil deposits have been occurring throughout August. Two weeks ago a lot of tar had washed ashore at Chimbai beach in Bandra and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is cleaning up the tar twice a day, added Modi. Washed ashore as black or dark brown sticky liquid tar deposits, this is



usually the result of crude oil discharge into the sea. The tar that washes up on the beaches has, for years, wreaked havoc on the lives of sea creatures and onshore communities. We had pressed several teams on the beaches that reported the presence of tar, said Prithviraj Chavan, assistant municipal commissioner at K-West ward, BMC. To avoid problems for visitors, the staff kept cleaning the beaches whenever high tides washed the tar ashore. Initially, cleaning up all the oil collected along the 5-kilometre coastline took a lot of labour and time. We withdrew the extra manpower as the amount of oil deposit washing up with the seawater gradually reduced over the next 4-5 days, he added. When asked if a sand sample was sent for testing before this year's tar clean-up drive, Chavan said he had no such instruction from higher authorities.

Although he couldn't confirm the source, he stressed that concerned departments should proactively probe similar occurrence in the future. Speaking on the latest occurrence of tarballs along Mumbai's coastline, Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar said usually sand is put over it and that she would assign a ward officer to inspect the source. What are tarballs and why are they harmful? Spills from oil vessels, oil well blowouts, accidental and deliberate release of dirty water from ships, and industrial effluents, often pollute oceans with petroleum. This crude oil floating in the sea gets weathered through evaporation and oxidation and washes up ashore in the form of sticky oil-emanating balls, called tarballs. Comprised majorly of hydrocarbons, these balls are also formed when oil mats formed on the seafloor by oil spills break down into smaller pieces. While most tarballs are coin-sized, some measure up to 6-7 kilograms.

The residence time of one such ball in the sea may vary from a few months to one year, and can have regional variations based on environmental conditions. Onshore invertebrates such as crabs, snails, and polychaete worms often get stuck in tarballs, said Harshal Karve, a marine biologist at Mangrove Foundation, Mumbai. Oil spills in shallow water hugely harm benthic animals – creatures living on the seafloor – as they are mostly immobile or slow-moving and therefore, fall prey to oil pollution. The crude oil present in coastal waters can harm intertidal fauna and seaweeds. Fish eggs and larvae on the sea surface can be at risk because of exposure to higher concentrations of water-soluble constituents leaching from floating oil. While some sea animals might die from the contamination, others can retain the toxic hydrocarbons and cause further damage by entering the human food chain. An American study shows tarballs contain the human pathogen *Vibrio vulnificus*.

Exposure to them through wounds can cause severe skin infections and even cause death. Where are tarballs found in India? Several studies by the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) suggest India's northwest coast is prone to tarball deposits during the southwest monsoon season, especially the Mumbai-Gujarat coast. Tarballs have been found on the beaches of Goa since the 1970s, shows a 2013 paper by the NIO. In 1975 and 1976, the total deposit of them along the

west coast was 1,000 and 750 tons respectively. As per the paper, possible sources causing tarball pollution along the west coast are tank washings from oil tankers returning from Mumbai port, oil handling ports along the Gulf of Kachchh, Asia's biggest ship-breaking yard, the Alang-Sosiya Ship-Breaking Yard (ASSBY) in the Gulf of Cambay, oil transportation and tanker operations in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, and barges, ships and tankers visiting Goa's Mormugao port. Another key reason highlighted in the paper is oil leaks from Mumbai High, the largest offshore oil-producing field of India, from where significant spills are observed during operations or accidents throughout the year.

It also cites the Jamnagar oil refinery in the Gulf of Kachchh, Asia's largest, as one of the possible sources for oil spills. The circulation pattern and surface winds along the west coast during summer monsoons further favour the transport of tarballs to the beaches. Since when did Mumbai's coastline start receiving tarballs? The first major oil spill near Mumbai was in May 1993 when the rupture of a feeder pipeline in Bombay High spilled 3,000-6,000 tonnes of crude oil into the Arabian Sea. This was the first time Mumbai's beaches reported a significant presence of tarballs. The second incident was in 2005 when a multipurpose support vessel Samudra Suraksha collided with one of the four platforms of Bombay High. This was followed by the 2010 collision of Panama-flagged MSC Chitra with MV Khalijia, spilling over 800 tonnes of oil. In 2011, a cargo ship MV RAK Carrier sank nearly 20 nautical miles off the Mumbai coast.

All these events led to regular occurrences of tarballs on Mumbai's beaches, causing environmental harm and panic among residents and fisherfolk. In 2018, large patches of Juhu beach were covered in tar on several days of July and August; even the garbage washing up ashore was covered in oil. Again in 2019 and 2020, tarballs were found on Mumbai's beaches during the monsoon. This year, tarballs were found on several of Mumbai's beaches – Juhu, Versova, Dadar, and Kihim in Alibag, said Modi, who has been documenting tar pollution along Mumbai's coastline for the last 3 years. Traces of tar were also present in Bhuigaon beach at Vasai and other coastal areas of Palghar district. Source of tarball pollution in Mumbai goes untraced for years. In a 2014 study 'Source investigation of the tarballs deposited along the Gujarat coast, India, using chemical fingerprinting and transport modeling techniques', the NIO found that the Bombay High north oil fields had caused tar pollution on the beaches of Gujarat – Tithal, Maroli, Umbergam and Nargol – in July 2012.

A similar study conducted in 2013 for tarball deposition in Goa too suggests Mumbai High as the possible source. The source of tarballs on Mumbai's beaches, in recent years, however, remains untraced. Detailed analyses were conducted by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) only after the 2010 ship collision and sinking of MV RAK Carrier in 2010.

Tar ball pollution in Mumbai's beaches has been more widespread over the last few years, but there is little acknowledgement of the problem by the BMC and the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB). Vanashakti, a non-profit environmental NGO, filed a complaint in 2019 with the Maharashtra government and fisheries department demanding a stricter probe into the source of tar pollution. The MPCB at that time had said that most of the oil was coming from large cargo vessels beyond 12 nautical miles, moving parallel to the coast and that appropriate action would be taken only if the quantity increased.

When the impact is this widespread, government bodies need to stop normalizing this [tar pollution] as a seasonal phenomenon. There have been few studies by government bodies on tar ball pollution in Goa and Gujarat but nothing significant in Mumbai. Samples should be collected here as well and be sent for thorough testing, said Modi. Sea animals and Mumbai's residents pay the price Tarball pollution has varied implications, affecting citizens, vendors and fisherfolk who depend on the city's coastline. Most vulnerable are marine animals. In 2019, Karve and his team had spotted a dead turtle on Juhu beach. On performing an autopsy, we found that the turtle had crude oil filled in its throat and intestines. Several portions of the Juhu beach had tarballs during the same time, he said. Fishermen have found tarballs stuck in their nets, and recently, fishermen at Palghar complained of difficulty in fishing due to their large presence on the beach and in the mangroves.

Mumbai beaches are inaccessible during monsoon months to locals, who cite foul diesel-like odour during this period as a reason. The oil spillage makes it impossible for them to walk on the beaches. Otherwise popular tourist sites, this poor footfall directly harms vendors, but despite this, the hazards of toxic waste are still unbeknownst to some. The indifference by local authorities has made people oblivious to the problem, said Shaunak. I have seen kids playing next to the waste and people walk barefoot on the sand covered in oil. The same staff appointed for cleaning the beach are asked to clean up the collected tar. They lack formal training in dealing with hazardous waste. Nor do they wear any kind of protective gear while cleaning the tar, added Modi. Prithviraj Chavan, however, said that the assigned staff had all the required equipment to carry out tar clean-up drives.

### **Maharashtra: Bombay HC seeks reply from BMC on CSMT fish market**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/hc-seeks-reply-from-bmc-on-csmt-fish-mkt-in-mumbai/articleshow/85727569.cms>

The Bombay high court on Thursday directed the BMC to file an affidavit that it is creating separate platforms for wholesalers and retailers within the CSMT market premises and to mention the date by which they would be handed over. The fishing community has

approached the court, pointing out that while BMC had promised an alternative within a month, it has failed to do so. The BMC razed the old CSMT market which it has now taken up for redevelopment. The fishing community has been suspicious of the BMC's intention of allowing them to come back and continue their trade at the market, one of the oldest fish markets in the city. They have filed a writ petition in high court against the redevelopment. The BMC proposes to redevelop the building for civic offices and shift the market to the nearby Crawford market. The next hearing is on September 2.

**Maharashtra: We are asking for what is the right of the fishing community: Devendra Tandel**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/we-are-asking-for-what-is-the-right-of-the-fishing-community-devendra-tandel-7476901/>

Devendra Tandel, 40, the newly appointed president of Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti, speaks to SANJANA BHALERAO about the recent protests by the fishermen community over shifting of their market outside the city, and the problems they face like the depleting fish catch. Why is the union opposing the shifting of fish vendors from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Fish Market in south Mumbai to Airoli in Navi Mumbai and Crawford Market? The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Fish Market is like the agriculture produce marketing committee (APMC) of the fish trade. It is the biggest collection, distribution and retail centre. Maximum number of fishermen from Dahanu, Palghar, Mumbai, Ratnagiri and Thane — nearly 80 per cent of catch from these areas are brought to this market. Next in the chain are wholesalers who sell the catch to fisherwomen of 108 fish markets and suppliers to other states from this market. BMC's long-term plan is to shift the wholesalers and suppliers to Airoli in Navi Mumbai, which will lead to the collapse of this important link of the fishing industry. And to shift the retailers (fisherwoman) of this market to a basement space in the nearby Crawford Market, sharing the space with a dry fruit zone.

The fruit, vegetable and dry fruit sellers have also objected to sharing space with fish retailers as it will affect their client base, which includes vegetarians. The civic body has not provided us with any plan, such as the space reserved for the fishing trade, how many retailers, wholesalers, suppliers, etc. After BMC vacated the market, from where are the 300 wholesalers, vendors and suppliers operating? The wholesalers and suppliers are operating out of Airoli market. Because of this, fishermen from Dahanu are severely affected. Their travelling cost and time have increased. To come to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Fish Market, they used to leave their residences around 4 am, now they have to start at 1-2 am. Over 30 fisherwomen who are operating out of Airoli are facing stiff competition from the existing retailers and there are routine clashes. Fisherwoman from 108 small markets across Mumbai have to travel to Navi

Mumbai to buy the catch from wholesalers. We had asked BMC to shift the entire market nearby, but that has not happened. What are the community's demands? We are asking for what is the right of the fishing community.

Originally, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Fish Market was under fish market reservation from 1974 to 2017. This was created on the lines of the APMC market. We want the entire market to be reinstated once the demolition, reconstruction of the building is complete. We want that reservation to be reinstated, this is our primary and non-negotiable demand. According to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Maharashtra recorded its lowest catch arriving at ports in 45 years. Fishermen have also complained about depletion in fish catch. The main issue is unsustainable fishing and overfishing. If someone is responsible for this depletion, it is the fisheries department. They have not been able to take action against illegal, unsustainable fishing by large mechanised boats using Purse seine nets that can stretch from 500 metres up to a kilometre. They pull out a large proportion of fish as these nets have a mesh spanning 25mm to 35mm and inadvertently catch the fish and eggs.

Traditional fishing methods use bag nets, long lines, gill nets and other practices that capture relatively smaller loads of fish. As per Dr VS Somwanshi committee report, submissions banned the use of purse seine nets within territorial waters and brought down permits from 494 to 198, stopped issuing new licenses and allowed the use of such nets only between September and December in certain areas along the coast. The law was enacted in 2016. Unfortunately, the number of trawlers using these fishing methods has tripled and no action is taken against them. Your union is planning to request the state government to increase the fishing ban to 90 days from 60 days. What is the reason? In the lockdown, one must have seen noticed birds coming back to urban areas. Nature requires time to recharge, heal itself. Traditional fishermen are requesting an increase in the monsoon ban period from two to three months— June, July and August. Fishermen from Gujarat have even asked for four months.

The primary purpose of a ban is to augment marine fish production and replenish the dwindling fish stock in the waters. I also suggest that the fisheries department have a detailed discussion with scientists on the breeding period of different fishes and have a monsoon ban accordingly. For example, the breeding period of pomfret is May, while others start in June. We can have a two-month ban in monsoon, another in January and February. This way we can keep the depleting fish catch in check. What is the alternate livelihood support for fishermen during the ban period? The extension of the ban period can only be successful if alternate livelihood support to fishermen is extended by the government. Fishermen can use the boats for tourism purposes, mangrove tours, promoting cage aquaculture. One should understand that after the ban period, the catch available will be high.

## **Maharashtra: Mumbai fish workers escalate protest against displacement, loss of livelihood**

<https://theswaddle.com/mumbai-fish-workers-protest-coastal-project/>

Frustrated by the lack of cooperation from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), fish workers from the Koli community in Mumbai are escalating their protests by staging one outside the BMC headquarters today and tomorrow. Earlier in August the BMC demolished a thriving fish market in Dadar (a central area in Mumbai for fish trade). The fish workers suffered severe losses by this move. The escalation of the protest outside the BMC headquarters is aimed to amplify the inadequate compensation they were offered for their sustained losses. Fish workers are also demanding rehabilitation and resettlement for the same. The call for protesting against the relocation had been issued by the Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti's (AMMKS), where groups will also come together to protest the ongoing Coastal Road Project. The BMC cited traffic jam concerns as the reason for the Dadar market demolition, a move that fish workers claim caught them unaware. Although the community was offered resettlement in Airoli, the community claims that there are no arrangements in the area for markets and are hence refusing to be resettled there.

This protest is set against the backdrop of threats to fish workers' livelihood coming from multiple directions. The community began their protests on 22nd August near Haji Ali in Mumbai and has called for the continuation of protests in the days to come. The main demand of the fishing community is the rehabilitation of fishing markets, which have suffered in recent years due to development projects undertaken without their consultation or consent, and due to demolition and resettlement taking place without adequate or prior notice. The Koli community, one of the indigenous original inhabitants of Mumbai, depend on fishing for a livelihood. But with massive redevelopment projects looming ahead, the community faces an uncertain future due to the adverse effects on the marine ecosystem and their precarious claim over the land to be acquired for redevelopment. The result is a tussle between development authorities and the fishing communities, in a struggle over loss of livelihood and lack of proper resettlement. The Dadar market demolition is the latest in a series of events that have posed a grave threat to the community's livelihood. Members of the Vanchit Macchimar Sahakari Sangathana, a collective of fish workers, claim that nearly 2,500 families stand to be affected due to the ongoing Coastal Road project, according to the Free Press Journal. The Coastal Road is an upcoming 8-lane freeway that, if constructed, threatens Mumbai's coastline. The project was first proposed in 2011 — although Coastal Regulation Zone rules mandated that bridges be constructed to ensure the natural flow of water bodies, these rules were later amended for special cases and have effectively nullified these protections.

While the original rules protected fishing communities from being resettled without infrastructure or amenities, these protections were removed in 2019 despite 90% of representatives objecting to the change. The project is a massive undertaking that stands to benefit only a small section of society i.e. car-owners in Mumbai. The project aims to make car owners' commute smoother, leaving entire communities and fishing villages in the lurch. While the goal is to decongest road traffic, its undersea tunnels threaten marine ecology and biodiversity, creating another vector of attack on the livelihood of the Koli community. The project threatens to completely wipe out several fishing villages on the Western side of Mumbai's coast, Firstpost reported. Moreover, environmental activists claim that the BMC had not obtained the necessary environmental clearances for the project.

This is not the first time that large-scale projects threatened the very identity of the Koli community. Mumbai's Mangrove forests have been under constant threat, and are among the first to be destroyed in favour of building residential complexes. In order to compensate, authorities expand mangrove cover in other regions — this affects how fishing communities are able to carry out their job. I could not continue the family occupation as the number of fish have gone down. I am doing contractual work for my family. My children cannot swim, we are losing our identity, a member of the community told The Wire, while speaking about the impact of mangrove expansion on the community. Overall, as one of the original inhabitants of the city, the Koli community struggles to be heard and is constantly used as a pawn in development projects. We are in debt, crisis, and deep distress. We have lost all of our nets, our vessels, and even our boats. We were to be compensated, but we have not received anything, Sanjay Baikar, the secretary of the Vanchit Machimaar association, told NewsClick. The government has used the COVID crisis to carry out these operations. We are even scared to speak up; we could be intimidated or harassed.

### **Maharashtra: Fisherfolk meet BMC, fisheries minister for re-establishing fish markets**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/fisherfolk-meet-bmc-fisheries-minister-for-re-establishing-fish-markets-101629915254112.html>

Representatives of Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti (AMMKS) on Wednesday met with a senior Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) official to voice their demands regarding the recently demolished fish markets at Crawford Market and Dadar. The meeting followed a Jan akrosh morcha called by AMMKS held at Azad Maidan which was

attended by at least 1,000 members of the fisherfolk community. Community leaders expressed resentment after their meeting with joint commissioner Ramesh Pawar. We had asked to meet with Iqbal Chahal, but instead we were granted an audience with Mr Pawar. We demanded that the fish markets Crawford Market and Dadar to be re-established on sight, at the earliest. This is non-negotiable. We were told that the matter is the state government's responsibility. There were no resolutions today, said Devendra Tandel, president, AMMKS. When asked, Pawar said, Market department is not with me.

The delegation led by Tandel later met with minister for textiles, fisheries and port development Aslam Sheikh, who assured the delegation of an equitable settlement between the fisherfolk and BMC. Shaikh told us that the issues fall entirely within the remit of BMC, and that he will speak to the municipal commissioner. Our only demand is that we get back our evicted lands and fish markets, Tandel said. He added that various fishing societies across the state — which also depend on Crawford Market for business — will wait 10 days to hear back from BMC with a concrete resolution, failing which a more aggressive protest will be mounted. In July this year, BMC had demolished the Chhatrapati Shivaji fish market within the Jyotiba Phule Market, also known as Crawford Market, after the building was deemed to be hazardous. Subsequently, Meenatai Thackeray fish market in Dadar was also demolished following longstanding complaints of traffic jams near Senapati Bapat Marg. Chhatrapati Shivaji market is the heart of our business. Fish from all over the state comes there, and we go to collect it. Without that market, the fish business in Mumbai cannot survive. BMC has offered us a space in Airoli, but over there we are facing competition from established fisherwomen. Besides, it is too far away. It costs us double the fare to travel there as compared to Crawford Market. There are no bathrooms, no drinking water.

The area is a marshy jungle and we don't feel safe at all, said Manda Guru Salian, a fisherwoman from Cuffe Parade who was present at the protest. Prior to demolition, Chhatrapati Shivaji wholesale fish market reported a daily turnover of ₹ 5 crore and directly supported livelihoods of 157 fisherwomen, 87 wholesalers and 36 suppliers. These are just the licensed operators. Indirectly, the market supports over a 1,000 fish workers. You cannot expect all of them to just leave their customary area and start trade elsewhere. Existing relationships with clients will be ruined, said Tandel. Dadar fishmarket, meanwhile, was a wholesale venue for freshwater fish, a business dominated by migrants from West Bengal and adjacent states. Roughly 36 Koli fisherwomen were conducting their business there and have now been moved to a fish market in Marol, where they report facing stiff competition and from existing traders.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen protest against plan to shift them from Crawford Market**



<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/fishermen-protest-against-plan-to-shift-them-from-crawford-market/2147946>

Hundreds of fishermen from across Mumbai and neighbouring areas staged a protest outside the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) headquarters in south Mumbai on Wednesday against its plan to relocate fish vendors from the historical Crawford Market. Devendra Tandel, president of the Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti (AMMKS), said nearly 1,200 fishermen and representatives of the Koli community from all over Mumbai and neighbouring areas like Dahanu, Vasai, Thane and Raigad participated in the protest. They were opposing the BMC's plan to shift fish vendors from Crawford Market in south Mumbai to Airoli in Navi Mumbai and other parts of Mumbai, he said. The BMC has already demolished the fish market in Dadar, he pointed out. Crawford Market acts like an agriculture produce marketing committee (APMC) of fish trade and a shift to Airoli would affect business, Tandel claimed. Fish vendors should be instead relocated nearby or somewhere in Dadar, he said. Joint municipal commissioner Ramesh Pawar met the AMMKS delegation though they had sought a meeting with municipal commissioner I S Chahal, he said, adding that they did not receive any assurance from the civic body. In a representation submitted to the BMC, AMMKS demanded temporary relocation of fish vendors to Carnac Bunder and Cotton Green areas until a new shed is built for them at Crawford Market.

**Maharashtra: Mumbai coastal road will destroy livelihoods and the environment, say fisherfolk**

<https://www.newsclick.in/Mumbai-Coastal-Road-Will-Destroy-Livelihoods-and-the-Environment-Say-Fisherfolk>

For nearly five years now, the construction of Mumbai's ambitious eight lane, over 20 kilometer long road over the Arabian Sea has faced stiff opposition. Fisherfolk, activists and residents have been opposing the dilutions to law and policy which will lead to the destruction of the ecosystem of the mega-city to cater to a little over 1% of car drivers by making commute smoother. While the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) states that the work is on in full speed and the project could near its completion next year, fisherfolks grapple with the devastation the project has brought. The multi-crore project is reclaiming large portions of the sea, going up to 90 acre, forcing the communities dependent on the land to stare at debt and loss of livelihood. On August 22, on the occasion of Karali Purnima, celebrated by Kolis (fisherfolk) to mark the end of monsoon and beginning of the fishing season, the fisherfolk gathered at the Haji Ali site to protest against the construction and demand compensation. The fisherfolk state that due to the heavy construction work and the reclamation of the land, the fish have moved in deeper waters, areas in which the crabs were found also remain wrecked. Our livelihoods are

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taken away; there is no place for us to even keep our boats. We are in debt, crisis and deep distress.

We have lost all of our nets, our vessels and even our boats. We were to be compensated, but we have not received anything. The government has used the COVID crisis to carry out these operations. We are even scared to speak up; we could be intimidated or harassed. They have destroyed all of our livelihoods, especially women. Earlier we could handpick the fish and conduct artisanal fishing, however, with the construction process being sped up we do not even have money to eat. Said Sanjay Baikar, the secretary of the Vanchit Machimaar association. He added, we are facing the brunt of the coastal road construction and the COVID crisis; we have been kept in the dark. The construction of the Rs 12,000 crore coastal road project is standing tall on a series of dilutions to environmental protection norms. The coastal road was first proposed in 2012 and was taken up as an election promise by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which came to power in Maharashtra in 2014 with support from the Shiv Sena. Until 2011, the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules allowed construction of bridges to ensure natural flow of water bodies.

However, this notification was amended later to incorporate construction in special cases . Moreover, in 2015, the amendments for the first time allowed construction of roads by way of reclamation (creating new land from oceans, rivers or lakes by filling the area with rock, sand, etc.) anywhere along India's 7,500 km-long coastline without any environmental clearance, albeit in exceptional cases the definition of which was left undefined. This meant the nullification of the original notification which had guaranteed environmental protection and livelihood security to the coastal community. The Modi government had approved an overhaul of the Coastal Zone Regulation (CRZ) rules in 2019. These changes are adversely affecting the livelihoods of the fishing communities. The fishing villages of Mumbai, called *koliwad*s—despite being located in an urban space—were granted CRZ III status by the 2011 law. It saved fishing communities from being rehabilitated in multi-storey buildings without basic amenities and infrastructure.

However, that protection was removed in 2019. Read More: [Supreme Court Must Reconsider its Stand on Mumbai's Coastal Road Project due to Climate Change and Rising Sea Levels](#) Speaking to NewsClick, Shefali Alvares, Activist and a part of the group Save Our Coast, said, Yesterday, we were told that the area which has been reclaimed for the trucks to go is a permanent structure to transport the material for construction—this has been built over an eco sensitive area. It is a destructive project in terms of clearances too. The CRZ clearances were applied differently—one in the north zone and one in the south to circumvent the requirement for an environmental clearance.

First, the BMC denied the existence of corals and then further transferred them—this project has led to large-scale devastation and is based on systemic dilutions of policy. A previous investigation by India Spend had revealed that the go-ahead given by the office of the Prime Minister ignored over 90% of representations objecting to the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2019. Not just public inputs, once the process of accepting suggestions was over, the final draft of the CRZ approved by the Modi government had changes which were not put out in the public domain. These changes are seen to be aimed at benefiting corporations, allowing public utilities like sewage treatment plants, link roads, coastal roads, and ecotourism projects in sensitive and protected zones.

NewsClick had previously reported on how the notification was pushed to benefit the corporates, effects of which are being currently witnessed on the ground. Peter, General Secretary of the National Fishworkers' Forum said that the sole purpose of the notification is to pave the way to sell off the coastal lands and water to corporate business houses. The construction has also led to the shifting of coral reefs (Schedule I protected species), an exercise that has been questioned by marine biologists with many believing that the reefs would no longer survive post relocation.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen to protest about their alternate location on Wednesday**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/civic/fishermen-to-protest-on-mumbai-municipal-corporation-on-wednesday-67723>

After the vendor's eviction from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Fish Market (near Crawford Market) in south Mumbai and Meenatai Thackeray Fish Market in Dadar, they have been given an alternative location in Airoli. However, these vendors have refused to go there. In light of the same, the vendors will be staging a protest on Wednesday, August 25 the Mumbai Municipal Corporation headquarters to demand rehabilitation of fish markets in Mumbai. Akhil Maharashtra Machchimar Kriti Samiti is leading the agitation and many fishermen's association and vendors from Mumbai, Palghar and Raigad will be participating in it.

Whilst the fish market building at Crawford Market will be reconstructed because it is dangerous, the fish market at Dadar too was removed. Wholesalers and suppliers from both markets were sent to Airoli. The women fish retailers in Dadar market, however, were given a place in the Marol market. Vendors in both these markets are opposed to alternative spaces. The wholesalers in the Crawford market are not ready to go to Airoli and are selling in Mumbai. They are also attempting to sell their produce in the Karnak port area but were taken into custody by the police, claim reports. The women vendors in Dadar are sitting on the street to sell their produce. There is no arrangement at Airoli in terms of market, state accounts. Businesses are also worried that the maths of the market which has been in Mumbai for so many years, will go awry.

## **Maharashtra: Coastal Road Project: Fishermen call for mass protest**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/coastal-road-project-fishermen-call-for-mass-protest>

The members of the fishing community in Mumbai have called for a mass gathering at Azad Maidan on August 25 to protest the demolition of Dadar fish market and the ongoing coastal road project. According to members of the Vanchit Macchimar Sahakari Sangathana, an apex group of fishermen, nearly 2,500 families are being affected due to the ongoing coastal road project. Sanjay Baikar, spokesperson of the community said that due to the reclamation works that have taken place in the last one year, the entire marine ecology has been adversely affected, which has led to the loss of catch from the shallow waters. Initially we were told that reclamation was done so that the trucks and heavy vehicles can pass through during the construction works.

We were also told the road will be constructed on pillars and only five per cent of the overall sea will be reclaimed, Baikar said, adding that they realised they were being cheated only after the reclamation works began in full force. The majority of the seashore was being reclaimed, he said. Baikar added that due to the reclamation work, fish and aqua species have moved away from the shallow waters. He also said that the fishermen don't have well-equipped boats that would sail in deep waters. In the past year, most of our boats and fishing equipment got destroyed as we don't have any place to park our boats. Cyclone Tauktae too battered our boats severely, he said. Earlier this week, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had razed the fish market at Dadar, following which a video went viral on social media of a BMC worker putting fish containers in a truck. The Akhil Maharashtra Macchimar Kriti Samiti (AMMKS) has called for the protest. According to Devendra Tandel, spokesperson of AMMKS, the market has been razed illegally. He also said that fishermen from Palghar, Uran and Vasai will also join the protest. Fishermen should be given spots at Crawford Market and losses suffered by them in the last one year should also be compensated, said Tandel. Meanwhile, BMC officials said the fishermen who were evicted from Dadar had already been allotted shops at the fish market in Airoli.

## **Maharashtra: Cyclone, oil spill and tarballs: a trio of troubles for Mahim village**

<https://india.mongabay.com/2021/08/commentary-cyclone-oil-spill-and-tarballs-a-trio-of-troubles-for-mahim-village>

Purnima Meher, a 76-year-old resident, dodges big black lumps on the sand. She then stands by the mangroves on the shore of Mahim village in Maharashtra, looking at a stranded

barge and says in agony, for almost 10 years, these mangroves are growing here. I have never seen them in such a poor condition. Cyclone Tauktae, in mid-May this year, passed very close to the western coast of India. It had an impact on parts of the region, injuring and killing people, destroying property and crops and causing power disruptions in several districts of Maharashtra. One such place to feel the impact of the cyclone was Mahim village in Palghar district, north of Mumbai city. During the cyclone, the Gal Constructor, a cargo barge drifted to a part of the coast of Mahim, the rocky Wadarai coast, and was stranded there. This caused damage to the barge which led to an oil spill and further, large quantities of tarballs were deposited along the shore of the village.

The impact of the cyclone clubbed with the oil spill and tarballs, has adversely affected the lives and livelihoods of Mahim's village's coastal community. Meher, lovingly called Tai by the youngsters in the village, is a resident of Mahim village. She is an active member of the National Fishworkers Forum and Maharashtra Machchimar Kruti Samiti. Walking along the beach, tai said I have seen tarballs wash on the coast every year but had never seen them in such large quantities and of the size of footballs covering almost 5 to 6 meters of the beach in length. Both the oil spill from the barge and the tarballs have destroyed our coast and a thriving ecosystem. Many families are left disturbed as they lost their livelihood and source of nutrition. The stuck barge the four-storied Gal Constructor barge, carrying 137 crew members, drifted from Alibag to Wadarai coast's intertidal area on May 18, 2021. The barge served as a construction barge for the off-shore ONGC oil rigs.

All 137 crew members and personnel on the Gal Constructor barge were rescued. It was a 'dumb barge', having no engine and propeller to run it and was navigated using tug boats. The tug boat used to navigate the barge also broke and drowned during the cyclone. There are separate cases ongoing in the courts trying to fix the responsibilities of all these accidents that took place during the cyclone, despite several warnings from the Indian Meteorological Department. More than 80 days later, the barge continued to stand along the coast of the village. That barge is completely damaged from the bottom now, all its floors get submerged in water during high tide and only some part of it remains above water, said Mores war Meher, a fisherman of Wadarai-Mahim. Stranded, unattended, exposed to the tidal waves, rocks, rains, rough seas the barge's future looks uncertain. The villagers now worry whether the barge will cause any further unwanted loss of life and livelihoods. The barge is stuck close to the navigation route of the fishing boats. Now that the fishing season has started, the boats will venture into the sea from the Wadarai Jetty. This further pushes the fisherfolk to the risk of accidents since the barge is unattended and exposed to rough seas and weather. We have written to various authorities requesting the removal of the barge, we hope that the authorities take necessary action at the earliest and

remove the barge from this coast soon, said Manendra Arekar, Chairman of the Wadarai Sarvoday Sahakari Machcimar Society.

Tar deposits Tarballs are not a new phenomenon. They occur every year during the monsoon along the western coast of Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. The tarballs deposited on the Palghar coast this time have been in large quantities. Tarballs are little, dark-coloured round pieces, which are remnants of oil spills, leakage from the crude oil extraction and transport systems, oil, spent fuel, fuel dumped by the ships in deep seas. Since June 2021 following the cyclone, there have been large deposits of tarballs seen on the Palghar coast. Around July 27, new deposits of tarballs were also seen along the coast in large quantities. The tarballs have covered the entire beach of the village. No one can walk across the beach without stamping on the tarballs and carrying them along on footwear. As the tarballs are exposed to the sun and rain, they melt their way to the sea and mix with the water again. In the areas where there are mangroves, the melted tarball oil settles on the mangroves during high tides. From the time the tarballs settle on the beach to the time they melt and mix with the sea again, they pose a great threat to the marine ecosystem.

Monsoon is a critical egg-laying and reproduction season. The mangroves flower and drop seeds. The oysters, bivalves, intertidal marine biodiversity, fishes all lay eggs and it is a critical reproduction season. Mahim, being a combination of both, sandy beach and rocky outcrops with on-shore mangroves, make for a unique ecosystem. Three months on, the barge stood still on the coast of Mahim. The impact of the oil spill on the biodiversity and the villagers is still being denied by the officials. The containment booms used for the containment of oil spills also washed on the shore and was picked up only on July 4, 2021 when the officials visited the beach for clean-up. Later after a few days, more containment booms were washed on the shore and in the mangroves. The barge was operated by AFCONS but is owned by Tirupati Vessels. Tirupati vessels Pvt. Ltd. is a company based in Kolkata. The Mercantile Marine Department had summoned the owner of the barge for further inquiry into the accident as per the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. However, the owner did not appear before the department despite serving three summonses to him. Therefore, the Department has filed a case before the District Magistrate Court, Mumbai under section 174 of the Indian Penal Code. The matter was heard on August 5 and has now been listed for further hearing on August 25.

Even for the hearing on the 5th, neither the owner nor his representative was present in the court. As the government officials have been trying to fix the responsibility for the accident and the removal of the barge, the barge stands on the coast unattended and exposed. Several complaints were filed with the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Mangrove Cell, and the Collector Office, Palghar, by Meher and some of the local tribal women. The village residents also drew

attention to the issue by organising a beach clean-up drive on July 4, 2021 and consecutively on the following Sundays. Over 24 government officials marked their presence at the first clean-up drive. But the tarballs are still on the coast, melting their way back to the sea. On July 12, large quantities of tarballs again washed on the shore. Making way from these dambargolas, as they are locally called, the intertidal fishers still go to the sea, hoping to find a good catch for their family and make some earnings. The small mangroves on the coast have died and new saplings were found buried below the tarballs.

Policy gaps since the barge accident took place and the tarballs were deposited on the coast, little has been done by the government. The oil spill control measures used to control the oil spill that occurred from Gal Constructor were not efficient during the low tide where the entire barge's bottom was exposed and the water dries up. The booms used were all settled on the rocks and the oil spread all around the area. The tarballs have not been cleaned from the coast as none of the officials take the responsibility to do so. There is no effort made to trace the source of tarballs and stop them at the source. The tarballs that wash on the shore provide a great opportunity to be cleaned, be removed from the ecosystem, and break the chain. However, since there is no clear policy framework defining the roles and responsibilities to do the clean-up. The lack of action can be attributed to the lack of an important policy of oil spill contingency plan. This plan plays an important role in defining the responsibilities of various departments during oil spills on the shore or in the intertidal areas.

While Maharashtra had intended to make such a plan in 2011, and even included the threat of oil spill in its Disaster Management Plan, there currently exists no oil spill contingency plan state various government agencies. Dakshin Kannada district of Karnataka and Goa's oil spill contingency plan clearly define actions to be taken in case of an oil spill or on the occurrence of tarballs. However, no such contingency and management plans were found online for the Palghar district or the state of Maharashtra. The denial of such disasters, lack of scientific study, policy and delay in recognising the loss of such marine biodiversity, the source of villagers' nutrition and livelihoods is injustice, said Purnima Meher watching the Maag (a form of manual fishing) fishers walk from Wadarai to Kelve trying to catch some fish during the high tide.

### **Karnataka and Maharashtra: Rise in sea level to impact Mumbai more than Mangaluru**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mangaluru/rise-in-sea-level-to-impact-mumbai-more-than-mangaluru/articleshow/85453671.cms>

Though the impact of sea level rise will be felt across the globe, the coastal city of Mangaluru seems to be better off than Mumbai and Kerala on the West Coast of India. The effect will be more pronounced on the northern part of the West Coast – Mumbai- than southern parts – Mangaluru. This is according to a research paper published by the Department of Marine Geology, Mangalore University, and three decades back. It predicts the northern part of the west coast is characterised by extensive tidal flats and mud-flat deposits that indicate submergence, whereas tide gauge data corroborate uplift of the land around Mangaluru relative to Mumbai and Kochi. Though the research by BR Manjunatha and R Shankar, department of Marine Geology, was on Factors controlling the sedimentation rate along the western continental shelf of India, it offers a corollary on the impact of sea level rise. R Shankar, member, International Union of Geological Sciences' Commission on Geosciences Education, Training and Technology Transfer (IUGS-COGE), told TOI the uplift of land due to sedimentation may delay the inevitable here.

The paper notes suspended particulate matter (SPM) concentrations in the river's southern area are significantly lower than those for the northern area. For example, the SPMs in the Nethravati and Gurpur (53.85 and 52.28mg/I) rivers are about two orders of magnitude lower than those in the Narmada and Tapti rivers. Global warming due to harmful emissions not only melts ice caps, but also expands sea water contributing to temperature increase and sea level rise. In this part of the West Coast, the sediment deposition is low in Mangaluru coast (0.72mm/year) as against 2.60 mm/ yr off Karwar and 2.50 mm/yr off Mumbai. Over time continuing sedimentation in the water and the additional weight causes subsidence (sinking), says Shankar.

We have done the damage and results are seen, advocating four R's – Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle; applied to five types of resources: water, fuel, food, power, metals to be judiciously used to delay the inevitable. But the effect of sea rise due to increasing temperatures will have a far reaching effect on the livelihood of fisherfolk and marine resources. The policy brief by E Vivekanandan of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) on Climate Change and Indian Marine Fisheries published a decade back, notes that depending on the marine species, the area it occupies may expand, shrink or be relocated. This will induce increases, decreases and shifts in the distribution of marine fish, with some areas benefiting while others losing, indicating climate change and sea level rise will have a profound impact on fishing community and its resources, apart from impact on mangroves and creating environment, particularly suited to Harmful algal blooms.

**Maharashtra: Loans at 5--6% interest rate for flood-hit traders in Konkan**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-loans-at-5-6-interest-rate-for-flood-hit-traders-in-konkan>



Traders, shop owners and professionals who were affected by the recent floods in Konkan region and parts of western Maharashtra will receive a loan from the district central cooperative banks (DCCBs) at a concessional interest rate of 5% to 6%. This decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, along with the district central cooperative banks of Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg, on Wednesday. This decision comes days after the state government's announcement to provide Rs 50,000 to traders, shop owners and professionals affected in Pune, Satara, Kolhapur, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts under the recently announced Rs 11,500 crore relief packages. Of this, the government will spend Rs 1,500 crore on financial assistance to flood-hit villagers, Rs 3,000 crore for reconstruction and Rs 7,000 crore for disaster mitigation measures.

The government will provide Rs 5,000 for each family whose homes were damaged due to the floods and Rs 5,000 each for the damage to utensils and other cooking material. For the loss of animals, the government will provide Rs 40,000 per milking animal. The government will also provide Rs 1,50,000 per household that was destroyed, Rs 50,000 for those whose house has suffered 50% damages and Rs 25,000 for those whose homes have been 25% damaged. Also, Rs 10,000 will be handed over for partial loss of fishing boat and nets, Rs 25,000 for complete damage and Rs 5,000 each for partial and complete loss of fishing nets.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen protest outside BMC headquarters for relocating them from Dadar market**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/fishermen-protest-outside-bmc-headquarters-for-relocating-them-from-dadar-market-7459734/>

Fishermen and representatives of the Koli community in Mumbai will protest outside the BMC headquarters on August 26, opposing what they claimed are actions taken by the corporation to push fish markets and fishmongers out of the city. The call for the protest has been given by Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti's (AMMKS) president Devendra Tandel, which will be attended by fishermen from Mumbai and areas like Palghar, Uran and Vasai. Recently, a fish market in Dadar was demolished by the BMC and the traders were moved to Airoli. This led to protests with the fishermen alleging that authorities are planning to relocate members of the Koli community, who are the original inhabitants of Mumbai, outside the city. They also alleged that they were not informed about the BMC action beforehand. Civic officials said the decision on relocating fish vendors was taken a few months ago following traffic jams on Senapati Bapat Marg and the expansion of the flower market in Dadar. Further, the Koli community is not happy with BMC's earlier decision to move the fish market from Chhatrapati Shivaji market in Fort area near Manish Market. The market building was demolished four years ago due to its dilapidated condition. All fishermen should be given a designated area at Mumbai

Port Trust land on the lines of Crawford Market, which is one of the biggest fruit markets in the city. Shivaji Market fishermen should also be allowed to do business at the same location, said Tandel.

### **Maharashtra: COVID-19 and the climate impact on the Koli fishing community of Mumbai**

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/covid-19-and-the-climate-impact-on-the-koli-fishing-community-of-mumbai/>

The traditional fishing community of Mumbai, known as the Kolis, faced a double whammy in the past 17 months, with the pandemic coupled with extreme climate events impacting the livelihood of this community. There are around 500,000 Kolis living in the fishing villages along the Mumbai coast. Government statistics show that 76,345 households in the state are directly dependent on fishing, while almost a million people indirectly benefit from it. The government has contended that a relief package of INR 650 million (provided by the state exchequer) would benefit 54,573 households. While there are steps taken to financially compensate the fishermen for any weather event-based losses, there is a need to bring in a more comprehensive approach to tackle the problems of this indigenous community and its needs. The climate ordeal for this vulnerable group began in the second half of 2019, when Cyclone Kyarr and then Cyclone Maha hit the coasts in October and November respectively. It was the beginning of the fishing period, but the fisherfolk could not venture out to sea. This was followed by the winter months when the catch is usually lesser than normal. This was followed by the pandemic from March 2020 which brought in a lockdown and the closing of markets as a pre-requisite to social-distancing norms.

The increasing frequency of extreme weather events along with large-scale fishing has resulted in a steep decline in overall fish catch. The middlemen or the distributors also faced trouble due to an increase in transportation costs because of the steep drop in demand and supply. The increase in the prices of kerosene, petrol, and diesel impacted both the fishermen and distributors, severely affecting the market cycle. With diminished savings, the second wave has also seen a growth in the number of loans at high interest rates. This disrupted the supply chains by causing a reduction in demand and a fall in prices of seafood. During the course of the pandemic, the west coast of India, once again witnessed two more extreme weather events namely Cyclone Nisarga in June 2020 and Cyclone Tauktae in May 2021. The first wave of the pandemic was also followed by the government-instituted annual fishing ban which bars fishing during the months of June and July.

The duration of the ban was reduced by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying as a response to the loss of livelihood of the fishing community. The government of Maharashtra also announced a package ranging from INR 10,000 to INR 40,000—based on the type of fishing boat—for each fishing household as a one-time compensation for the loss of livelihoods. The pandemic has also had significant effects on the existing social fabric within the community. The Koli women are facing dual problems due to gender discrimination and loss of livelihood amidst the pandemic. According to experts from universities such as Ambedkar University, IIT Bombay, and Shivaji University, the pandemic has also impacted the mental health of women. Prior to the pandemic, the Koli women had informal support groups that would support them financially and emotionally.

The demands set by the Fishworkers' Forum has been criticised as they solely focus on the fishermen who go out to the sea and ignores the struggles of fisherwomen who work on land. Relief measures there has been help extended from coastal states like Kerala to their fisherfolk by providing free dry ration to the fisherfolks while the states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh provide economic support as a form of compensation for the annual ban on fishing. The government of Maharashtra too has extended a scheme 'Bachat and Sahuliyat Scheme' to provide compensation for the fishing ban period. Under this scheme, if a fisher deposits INR 1500, he/she receives additional INR 1500 from both the central and the state government. However, it is seen that lack of awareness, savings along with the transfer of money from multiple sources has resulted in few beneficiaries of the scheme. Maharashtra had also issued a Kisan credit card to specific groups of people employed in inland fisheries, aquaculture, and marine fisheries.

Through this scheme, loans can be availed, with the scheme witnessing success in terms of 4 lakh beneficiaries in the year 2020. Efforts from within the community and by NGOs have helped the Koli community stay afloat during the pandemic. Due to the unavailability of distributors and markets, fishing cooperative societies have started delivering the fish directly to the people. These societies have also changed the nature of the business by focusing on supply-based sale rather than demand-based sale, which means they market what they catch. There is a rise of fish sale related start-ups that are helping members of the fishing community to reach larger markets and adopt sustainable practices during the course of the pandemic. Numer8, a digital startup for example, provides the fisherfolk with weather data and helps them estimate catch locations, making it easy for sustaining their fishing. Recovery planning While the relief provided to the Koli community is largely related to financial help, the state government and Mumbai city corporation should seize this opportunity to ensure that there is an inclusive recovery planned for the fisherfolk, which takes care of their livelihood needs. The state

government must begin by including members of the fishing community in the drafting of the strategy to tackle the effects of climate change.

Due to the rise of India's coastal water temperatures, fish numbers have taken a serious hit. The disaster management cell of MCGM could also provide support by assisting the state government in preparing a response strategy in light of natural disasters such as cyclones, heavy rainfall or irregular tides. Such responses would not only minimise damages but will also provide safeguards to the members of the community through financial compensation. The government could launch livelihood diversification programmes as has been done in some other parts of the country, which would decrease dependency on one sole sector for earning income. These programmes could further incentivise women to form self-help groups (SHGs) and take up alternate livelihood options that provide multiple benefits. The southern districts of Maharashtra have seen some SHGs launch their own programmes which revolve around environmental conservation and eco-tourism. The government may also further support start-ups similar to those mentioned above, which aim to support fishing communities and their activities. A combined effort by all the relevant stakeholders and inclusion of the members of the community in the planning process would empower the community to face any challenges such as those brought about by climate change or epidemics.

### **Maharashtra: 30-year-old Dadar fish market demolished**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-30-year-old-dadar-fish-market-demolished/articleshow/85290769.cms>

BMC on Monday demolished a fresh water fish market at Dadar's Senapati Bapat Marg. It had around 40 vendors who were shifted to Airoli in Navi Mumbai. Some have been given shops to sell fish at the civic market in Marol. Those who refused to shift to Marol said they would sell fish outside the market in Dadar. The market was set up around 30 years back. We had issued notices to all vendors. There were 37 official fish-sellers; 27 have been allocated shops in Airoli and 10 were given space at a market in Marol. Due process was followed and the market was demolished. There will be major relief to traffic on Senapati Bapat Marg and more space for the flower market, said Kiran Dighavkar, assistant municipal commissioner (G-North).

**Maharashtra: A digital photo exhibition is documenting the history of the Kolis, highlighting the connections between the community, the larger city of Mumbai and the natural environment that binds them together**

<https://www.mid-day.com/sunday-mid-day/article/when-dariyacha-rajah-and-ranis-ruled-the-seas-23187882>

A lot of people migrate to Mumbai without knowing about the city's history, says Rajhans Tapke, a member of the Koli community and a participant in *Through the Eyes of the Kolis: A Reflection on Mumbai's Past, Present and Future*. It is a digital photo exhibition documenting the history of the community and the transformations that have taken place in its relationship with the city and its ecological systems since the 1950s. He remembers the Amboli creek flowing through the Andheri and Amboli villages, when he was a child, and of taking big boats from Versova to the Andheri market to sell fish, and how he and his mates would drink from the streams of the Navrang hillock, whose waters met the Amboli creek. This seems almost impossible [now] due to the dense urbanisation that has occurred, observes architect and urban designer, and one half of the urban solutions experimental think tank Bombay61 Studio, Ketaki Bhadgaonkar, who has curated the show.

The water channels have become smaller, and the water is not deep enough to allow boats. She points out that Tapke's narrative for the exhibition also highlighted how the names of the water systems have changed—a water body that is recognised as Mogra nullah (drain) in the BMC maps was known by the fishermen as the Amboli creek. For the urban youth, it is difficult to associate with these natural systems because they have seen them in a deteriorated state, she says, explaining how an acceptance and normalisation of this degradation is apparent in the present allusions to these water systems as 'nullahs' or gutters. An older fisherman would speak of cleaner water systems and abundant fish, but a younger Koli will refer to them as drainage systems, agrees Jai Bhadgaonkar. The couple has worked closely with the community for many years, researching concerns around climate change and vulnerabilities, and looking at public participation as the key for solutions and sustainability.

The current project's focus, thus, they explain, is generational amnesia, where relationships with the environment have changed within a matter of a few decades. Mumbai is developing in such a way that all the natural systems are being lost. We are trying to sensitise people towards how indigenous communities have taken care of these landscapes, says Jai. At the same time, the couple asserts, that it was important to bring personal narratives from members of the community to the fore, as opposed to having historians and researchers document them to avoid the exoticisation that an outsider's lens can occasionally bring. Vikas Motiram Koli, a social entrepreneur, and working president of the National Association of Fishermen, Maharashtra, who

worked closely with the Bhadgaonkars on the exhibition, says, we once had our own businesses, catching and selling a lot of fish, so we didn't have to get caught up with going out and getting jobs. But we have now become an invisible community in Mumbai, and it is important for the youth to set out on their own entrepreneurial journeys. With new technology, and allotment of land for aquaculture in areas like Bhayandar and Palghar to the Koli community, its youth, he insists, would be encouraged to join the trade.

The floating population that a cosmopolitan city like Mumbai hosts is not familiar with its history; many don't have intergenerational information passed down to them, says Arpita Bhagat of the Ministry of Mumbai's Magic, a collective envisioned around biodiversity and its protection in the city, and one of the collaborators on the project. We want young people to start thinking about [the Kolis] not just as a community that fishes and provides fish to city dwellers, but also as one that has deep historical roots to the city. While building intergenerational knowledge, the aim, she says, is also to bring members of the community closer to policy arenas in the long run. This is essential given how deeply tied their livelihoods are to the sea and its ecology, and how the climate crisis, rising sea levels and the impacts to the coastline are all collectively threatening it. Ketaki also informs of the project's plans to invite speakers from the Koli community for discussions around betterment, and the preservation of knowledge and culture, to enable this new generation to become the future custodians of the landscapes that their ancestors have preserved for so many years.

Providing a digital platform to these stories of village, water, fishing and biodiversity is the platform The Heritage Lab, a community initiative started in 2016 to enable people to share their voices, experiences and stories, and create using openly accessible cultural content. We always go to an exhibition, see it and come back. But how do we participate in this knowledge-building together? [This is important] because culture is not of the past, it is something ongoing. How do we then make ourselves part of cultural heritage? Asks Medhavi Gandhi, sharing some of her motivations behind starting the platform. The Heritage Lab, known for its work in public engagement, has created a participatory map that will enable anybody in Mumbai to take a picture, sound bite or video and add it to the location they are in. We wanted to be a part of such a citizen-led investment in our cultural habitat. We're really looking forward to seeing how the map is used and the stories that come in.

## **Maharashtra: State must compensate communities for loss of livelihood by infra projects: Bombay HC**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/state-must-compensate-communities-for-loss-of-livelihood-by-infra-projects-bombay-hc-101628859954807.html>

The state is duty bound to compensate the community if its customary right to occupation for earning livelihood is affected by infrastructure projects, the Bombay high court (HC) held on Thursday and directed the Maharashtra government to consider framing a general policy for the payment of compensation to affected communities in such cases. The division bench of Justice SJ Kathawalla and justice Milind Jadhav held that once a customary right to carry out an occupation for livelihood is affected, the principles enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution of India will come into play. This forms the basis of the state's duty to compensate in such cases, HC observed. With regards to the requirement of the policy, the bench said looking at a clear trend across all the modes of compensating affected persons and expansion of infrastructure and its impact on local communities, the state must consider framing a comprehensive policy for award of compensation to persons whose customary rights of occupation and livelihood are affected by infrastructure projects. We believe that such a state-wide compensation policy is required not only for fishermen, but for compensating any community whose customary rights to carry out an activity for their livelihood is impacted by government infrastructure projects, the bench observed.

HC also directed the state government to appoint a six-member committee to determine compensation payable to fishermen whose livelihood is affected by construction of Thane Creek Bridge (TCB)-3, a proposed six-lane bridge on Sion-Panvel highway near Vashi. The court was hearing a petition filed by Mariaayi Machhimaar Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit, on behalf of the fishing community from Vashi, Juhu, Koparkhairane, Ghansoli and Diva. The petitioner claimed compensation for the fishermen, contending that they were inhabitants of the Thane creek area and their customary right to fish in the creek was adversely affected by the construction of the third bridge on the creek that connects Mumbai with mainland at Navi Mumbai. Their counsel, advocate Zaman Ali, pointed out how their customary right of fishing was likely to be adversely affected by the third bridge. He submitted that Thane Creek consisted of extensive mudflats along its banks, characterised by the growth of mangroves. Due to the large-scale availability of inter-tidal lands such as mudflats and mangroves, Thane Creek provided an excellent catch of commercial fish and crustaceans. He added, due to the rich ecosystem and biodiversity, the Thane Creek area was declared as flamingo sanctuary in 2015. Ali further pointed out that the proposed bridge will affect 1.4 hectares (ha) of mangrove forest and 6.76ha of CRZ-1 and CRZ-4 areas, comprising fishing areas and mudflats.

The construction, Ali said, will involve heavy concretisation and reclamation of land that will block access to fishing routes and navigational channels for fishing activities. Amicus curiae,

senior advocate Sharan Jagtiani, supported him by submitting that the bridge will adversely affect the livelihood of the fishing community, causing direct and indirect losses. HC accepted the contentions and observed that the livelihood of the fishing community is dependent on a healthy environment and balanced ecology. The bench said that the destruction of mangroves for TCB-3 will disturb the ecological balance in Thane creek. The vital role that mangroves play in maintaining ecological balance and sustaining bio-diversity is well-documented. The Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary Management Plan and the Preliminary Report on Bio-diversity of Thane Creek also bear out that the destruction of mangroves often results, inter alia, in loss of biodiversity and reduced fish catch, which in turn would impact livelihood of the fishermen.

### **Maharashtra: Six fishing hamlets in Mumbai to bear brunt of Bandra-Versova Sea Link**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/six-fishing-hamlets-in-mumbai-to-bear-brunt-of-bandra-versova-sea-link-101629054441352.html>

The Bandra-Versova Sea Link, scheduled to be completed by August 2027, will directly impact artisanal fishing activities at six locations in Mumbai western suburbs, including the prominent koliwadras at Khar Danda and Vesave, and other smaller settlements at Kadeshwari Mandir (near Bandra fort), Chimbai village off Hill Road, Juhi Koliwada (in Santacruz) and Mora Gaon in Juhu. The Bandra-Versova Sea Link (BVSL), now scheduled for completion by August 2027, will directly impact artisanal fishing activities at six locations in Mumbai western suburbs, including the prominent koliwadras at Khar Danda and Vesave, and other smaller settlements at Kadeshwari Mandir (near Bandra fort), Chimbai village off Hill Road, Juhi Koliwada (in Santacruz) and Mora Gaon in Juhu. As on Sunday, 2.07% of BVSL's works have been completed. The construction of piers and temporary gabion structures can be seen at Kadeshwari Mandir, Carter Road and Juhu Koliwada. The fisherfolk said that the work has been on hold for at least four months now, which Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) officials attributed to the monsoon season.

A group of Kathiyawadi kolis, operating a small boat yard on Carter Road under the name Sarothiya Koli Samaj Matsyavyavsay Sahakari Sanstha, also said that they are vulnerable to the BVSL. The bridge will pass about a kilometre from the shore. That's where most manually driven boats, like mine, find the best catch these days. If they drill into the ocean floor there, it's over for us, said Mohan Solanki, one of the members of the community. Despite the anticipated impact, MSRDC officials and the state fisheries department said they either did not have, or were unable to provide, data on the total number of the project-affected persons (PAPs). The fisheries department officials also declined to provide data on the number of the registered fisherfolk, boats and societies in the project area. Dr Samata Shitut, district fisheries officer, did not respond to requests for a comment. Rough estimates given by environmentalists and members of the



community suggest that there are between 600 and 800 boats (mechanised and non-mechanised) operating across these fishing hamlets that help sustain the livelihoods of 2,000 to 3,000 families. An affidavit filed by environmentalists, fisherfolk and residents against BVSL in the National Green Tribunal (NGT), estimates that fishing around the larger Juhu coast sustains about 700 families. Vesave and Khar Danda are much larger colonies, for comparison.

Citing the example of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link, which has allegedly depleted fish reserves, changed navigation routes, increased the rate of erosion and made tidal action around Dadar and Mahim Koliwada more intense, fishworkers operating further up in the suburbs expect to face similar predicaments. Bhimsen Kopte, a resident of Khar Danda and member of the Danda Koli Samaj, said, If you ask anyone at Worli or Mahim Koliwada, they will tell you that boats have to go further into the sea to find fish ever since the sea link came up. Whenever a VVIP passes over the bridge, fishermen are told to stop their activities a full day in advance. The same will happen to us now. Many emphasised that the bridge will diminish access to their customary fishing grounds, forcing them to take precarious detours around the structure and burn more diesel while doing so, besides causing further disruption to ecology that is already under stress from pollution and overfishing. The MSRDC's own environment impact assessment report (EIA) reveals more in this regard. Page 34 of the EIA report reads, Construction of offshore structure modifies the relationships of benthic communities, changing the existing biodiversity in the area and creating a new local ecosystem...

The construction work phase would increase temporarily the water turbidity. This could affect marine flora (phytoplankton specially) because of a decrease in the possible received light. There may be temporary decrease or change in the faunal population due to disturbance caused by construction activities. Environmentalists and fisherfolk have criticised the EIA report for emphasising the project's temporary impacts while paying little to no consideration toward permanent ramifications. The dredging will cause permanent damage after construction, not to mention the restrictions on fishing that will be imposed during the build phase. There will be a permanent loss also of other coastal commons, such as areas for fish drying, net mending, boat parking and so on, pointed out Stalin D, director of Vanashakti NGO, which was one of the eight appellants currently litigating in NGT to overturn BVSL's regulatory clearances.

The EIA report even pointed out that there is a considerable amount of degradation of marine environment from the coast up to 2km due to discharge of untreated sewage, industrial waste etc, and refers to the project area as a polluted system which has a poor fishery potential. This claim has been made on the basis of secondary data, and despite the storied history of Mumbai's fishing trade, Stalin pointed out. Despite such concerns – which experts, environmentalists and various fishing societies have conveyed to the government from time to time – a socio-economic

survey to assess the impact of BVSL on artisanal fishing, first commissioned by MSRDC in March 2019, has been delayed by at least a year. This was after fisherfolk demanded that it be assigned to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), instead of the NGO that was initially appointed. Confirming this, a senior official with the MSRDC said, People raised some issues because the first consultant organisation did not have prior experience engaging with members of the Koli community. Fishermen also said that they preferred speaking to male social workers, so TISS was engaged in February at the recommendation of leaders from registered fishing societies.

Their final report will be ready in two months. The report, now being prepared by TISS' Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice (CODP), will be presented before a 'consultative committee' headed by MSRDC vice-chairman and managing director Radheshyam Mopalwar, along with two other officials from MSRDC, one from the department of fisheries and four representatives from affected fishing societies. The committee will decide if and how much compensation is to be paid, depending on the extent of damage to livelihood. We are not anticipating much as the sea link will be situated 900 metres from the coast. As for issues with navigation, we are providing three or four dedicated navigation channels that will be 100 metres wide, in Bandra, Juhu and Versova. Everywhere else, the piers will be 50 metres apart. That is enough room for the boats, said the official quoted above.

The official also clarified that Vesave Koliwada, which is over 2km away from the end of the proposed BVSL alignment, has been excluded from the scope of TISS study, and will be considered under the subsequent the Versova-Virar Sea Link Project. Researchers at TISS declined to comment on the story, citing confidentiality. For the most vulnerable of the groups in BVSL project area, adversities have already begun. At Kadeshwari Mandir, which is squeezed on a small patch of hillside between the Worli Sea Link and Bandra Fort, the construction of gabion structure by MSRDC has prevented water from entering the boat-yard at low tide. The fisherfolk are now struggling to get their vessels afloat when going out to fish. It's a lot of hard work to carry the boat out with your hands, but there's no other choice. They built this wall right in the middle of our navigation route. MSRDC gave us a small opening in the wall, but at high tide there's too much water in it.

At low tide, there isn't any. So it's essentially useless, said resident Bonny Joseph, 51, pointing to the fibreglass remains of a mechanised boat which met with an accident there earlier this year. Where we used to take our boats out four, maybe even five times a day, we are now going only twice a day when the tide allows, he said, fearing that this diminished routine has changed permanently.

**Maharashtra: A comprehensive statewide policy for compensation of fisherfolk and any other community whose customary right impacted by government infrastructure projects**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/bombay-hc-directs-state-to-frame-policy-for-compensation-of-customary-rights-in-public-infra-projects-permits-tcb-iii/articleshow/85297642.cms>

The Bombay high court directed Maharashtra government to frame a comprehensive statewide policy for compensation of fisherfolk and any other community whose customary right to carry out activities for their livelihood is impacted by government infrastructure projects. The HC permitted construction of 6-lane Thane Creek Bridge III (TCB III) on Sion-Panvel highway. But observing that the bridge work would impact customary right of fisherfolk at Thane Creek, directed setting up of a TCB compensation committee. The HC sought compliance after six weeks on both, framing statewide policy and determination of compensation for TCB III affected fishermen. Once a customary right to carry out an occupation for a means of livelihood is affected, the principles enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution of India will be invoked. This forms the basis of the State's duty to compensate in such cases," held a bench of Justices S J Kathawalla and Milind Jadhav.

The HC directed constitution of a Compensation Committee to comprise a member each from a project implementing agency, project affect persons and district collector, other relevant government agencies, an independent expert. It will have to lay down principles to identify persons affected by public projects, decide types of loss and determine the compensation. The judgment pronounced on Thursday said, we are of the view that a statewide compensation policy for communities affected by government infrastructure projects needs to be framed. The award of compensation in similar situations has been achieved by legislation, policy (specific to projects) and judicial orders." The HC held, Looking to a clear trend across all of these modes of compensating affected persons and also considering the expansion of infrastructure and its impact on local communities, there must be a consideration by the executive in the State to frame a comprehensive policy for award of compensation to persons whose customary rights of occupation and livelihood are affected by infrastructure projects

The Project Affected Fishermen have inhabited Thane creek and practiced fishing as their main source of livelihood for at least the last 100 years, likely more. This qualifies as an activity being practiced since time immemorial," said the bench noting that that the project TCB III is likely to impact the Project Affected Fishermen's customary right to fish for a living." The HC held, since we hold that the Project Affected Persons' customary rights are being impacted, we also hold that they are entitled to be compensated for their loss," and sought a compliance report on. The HC ruling was in a petition filed by Mariyayi Macchimar Sahkari Sanstha Maryadit, a

society of traditional fishing community from Koliwad as including at places in and around Mumba like Vashigaon, Juhugaon, Koparkhairane, Ghansoli and Diva . Their counsel Zaman Ali said they said the TCB-III project is in eco sensitive zone of Thane Creek mudflats which will affect flamingoes and also mangroves besides a huge impact on the livelihood of the fishing community residing near Thane creek, by blocking their access. They sought compensation and a scheme to protect the socio-ecological interest of traditional fishermen in the state in general for any such reclamation, damage to fishing areas during infrastructure projects. Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), represented by advocate Saket Mone said the TCB III is in public interest on the Sion-Panvel highway as an addition to the existing Thane Creek Bridge, near Vashi, connecting Mumbai to the mainland at Navi Mumbai.

MSRDC said the first bridge was constructed in 1973 and the second in 1997. It is one of the four entry points into Mumbai, the other three being the Airoli Bridge, Mulund Check Naka and Dahisar Check Naka. Senior counsel Sharan Jagtiani, appointed by court as Amicus Curiae (friend of court) to assist the court, said that information at hand does disclose that the fishing community has a customary right to fish in the Thane Creek, then they should be entitled to compensation. He also said on the larger issue of policy framework, it may be necessary to frame such a statewide policy for compensation of project affected persons whose customary rights are likely to be adversely impacted by infra-projects. The HC framed four issues. One was whether the Thane Creek fishing community has a customary right. The answer it held was yes . The HC after analyzing documents, Acts, various judgments and applying a four-pronged test of what forms a customary said 'The Project Affected Fishermen's use of the creek has uniformly been for the purpose of fishing, thereby making the usage certain and not varied'. It also said, 'Their use for the purposes of fishing has been for their own livelihood, and not on some industrial scale which makes the exploitation of their right unreasonable.'

### **Maharashtra: How the Koli community is fighting to save Mumbai's mangroves**

<https://lifestyle.livemint.com/smart-living/environment/how-the-koli-community-is-fighting-to-save-mumbai-s-mangroves-111628683296624.html>

Everyone talks about mangroves, but no one really knows what they are or what they mean, says Yogesh Pagade, 32, a fisherman and activist from the Koli community. He lives in the Roadpali Kalamboli village, about 2.5 kilometres away from the Kasadi river in Panvel, Navi Mumbai. Pagade was only 8 or 9 years old when his father first took him along on a boat before and after school to catch fish. His mother would eventually sell the catch in either the Dadar fish market or across local villages for livelihood. The mangroves here have close to 18 different species of trees, like Miswak (*Salvadora Perisica*), which is used in the toothpaste. Mangroves are where so many species thrive, mangroves are what protect us from floods, mangroves give us

much of our livelihood, says Pagade. Mangroves are coastal forests situated between the ocean and land, made up of shrubs or small trees, which grow in coastal saline or brackish water. The mangroves by the Kasadi River are a microcosm of what has long been transpiring in the once rich expanse of Mumbai's coastal forests. As the Navi Mumbai Airport gets approvals for construction, permission to clear another 6 acres of mangroves has been granted. Also read: Majuli's boatmakers pitch in to save Assam's wildlife The Taloja MIDC (Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation) is here and CIDCO (City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra) operates here.

A lot of their waste as well as a lot of Mumbai's waste finds its way to this creek--whether it's medical waste, discarded furniture, plastic waste, it's all hanging from the branches and trees or floating in the river destroying the wildlife--especially since the 2005 floods, says Pagade. According to Mangrove mapping and change detection around Mumbai (Bombay) using remotely sensed data (2005), a study published in the Indian Journal of Marine Sciences, nearly 40% of the city's mangrove cover has been cleared. A few years ago, a study found there are 19 species that use the mangroves of Mumbai and Konkan for breeding. Six of them are important for commercial aspects and ecology. In a situation where your mangroves have more pollutants, that will deplete oxygen necessary for these species to survive, says Akshay Deoras, an independent meteorologist and PhD candidate at the department of meteorology, University of Reading, in the UK. It will affect mangroves because they need salty water. If you change the composition of the water by dumping waste, it will choke the mangroves. Current estimates say that about over 700 megaliters of untreated sewage is released into four rivers in Mumbai every day. In the mangroves, as leaves dry and fall into the soil, they are consumed by crabs and other sea creatures.

This leads to decomposition and makes it a nutrient for the soil. Pagade, however, says that the waste that goes and settles by the flora in the coastal forests is destroying the biodiversity, and by extension, his livelihood. Pagade's mother, 56-year-old Indubai, grew up in Khargar. As a child, she remembers her family's agricultural work by the creek, which she would attend to and then accompany her father with the day's catch. Before heading home, they would take dried parts of the trees as firewood. Indubai, with some difficulty, can recount the crab, mullet, snapper and prawn species her father would catch among the mangroves. Pehle Jo machchi ka sale hota tha, toh log haq se maangte the. Acha lagta tha khaane ko. Ab khaadi ka machchi sun ke koi leta bhi nahi. (Earlier our local fish was in high demand, now no one wants it), she says. It reached a point where local catch was so scarce, that Indubai would travel to Sassoon Docks to procure fish and sell it locally in the village.

As a result, the current generation of the Koli community is being forced to move away from the profession of fishing. Indubai, too, had hoped her son would be able to pursue a different, more lucrative job. Ganesh Nakhawa, a fisherman and activist from the fishing village of Karanja, says, the creek and coastal fishing has already collapsed. There is no chance that people will come back to it. It was once a proper livelihood where they could earn better and live happily in their community -- but there is no fish. How will anyone survive? adds Nakhawa. Near Yogesh's village -- there are a lot of MIDC villages -- people work as security guards, labour. Nakhawa, now vice chairman of the Purse Seine Fishing Welfare Association, was also ready to settle down in the UK after completing a business studies and finance degree from the University of Edinburgh. But he was compelled to return when the plight of his father and others from the community -- as with the mangroves and creek around his fishing village of Karanja -- became alarming. It is the passion and drive of local community activists like Navakhe, Pagade and others like Nandakumar Pawar from Uran (he started the NGO Sree Ekvira Pratisthan with an aim to protect the 1,042 hectares of mangroves from Mulund to Vikhroli along the Thane creek) that is keeping the movement to conserve mangroves in Mumbai somewhat alive.

They have even led community awareness drives -- Pawar, for instance, have engaged with the community to prevent cutting of trees by the local fishermen and explained to them the importance of wildlife and birds that gather around the area as a result of the mangroves, including flamingoes. Yogesh has worked with CIDCO to put up boards around the mangroves, identifying the species of trees, listing the uses of mangroves. His father Ramchandra Narayan Pagade, 58, also cleans the creek along with other members of the local community. Much ado about mangroves The Koli community, considered Bombay's original inhabitants, have had a long and complex relationship with mangroves. Religiously, a few communities even worship them -- deem them god and perform puja annually, says Nakhawa. I have always wondered why. Then I realised, this was a form of respect and conservation -- pray to everything that needs to be protected. So be it mangroves, mammals (turtles, dolphins, blue whales) - that message spreads within the community, that woh bhagwan hai unhe bachana hai (this is our god, we take care of it). As Mumbai expands, the Koli community also needs space, but not at the cost of mangroves. Mangroves act like a sponge.

Whenever you get a lot of rainfall, they would be there to absorb the water, says Deoras. The patterns expected are that rainfall events in Mumbai will become more extreme and that is going to be a problem because the city is expanding and there is already a lot of stress. So you need mangroves to absorb more water. And in the last two years, we have started to see tropical cyclones. Last year we had (cyclone) Nisarga in June and (cyclone) Taukte in May this year. Mangroves help reduce the impact of storm surges and massive swells in the surface of the sea. To a limited and scattered extent, the importance of mangroves is being recognised at the state

and judicial levels too. Maharashtra is the only state with a dedicated mangrove cell. Over the last year, the state forest department and mangrove conservation cell have taken possession of 9,800 hectares of reserved mangrove land. In 2018, the Bombay High Court passed a judgment banning the destruction and cutting of mangroves in Maharashtra -- all mangrove land will fall in Coastal Regulation Zone-I category as per both the CRZ notifications of 1991 and 2011.

A year later, the Court noted that the construction of the coastal road in the city shall not be allowed to proceed without appropriate statutory clearances under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and environmental clearances mandated by the Union environment ministry. The order, however, was set aside by the Supreme Court, which allowed construction of the road but restricted any other development. The impact and pace of rehabilitation efforts are slow too -- activists and NGOs believe it's too little too late, and compensation for already lost livelihoods requires a more robust framework. Rooted in hope Twenty five years ago, my dad used to take me in a small boat in the Dharamtar creek, and there were a lot of fish. We would use nets to catch crabs, he says. We would bring back enough to feed the whole joint family of 25-30 people and sell the rest in the local seafood market. That is all gone. You put the same kind of net today; you will get 100 plastic packets and maybe one or two fish.

To help keep the profession alive, the Koli community has created man-made ponds in their creeks -- whether it's the Mithi or Kasadi rivers. But such artificial solutions can only go so far. Nakhawa believes more organisation and political support is required within the community, similar to the fishermen of Kerala -- they are a lobby. The government listens to them. Pagade is hopeful, inspired by efforts such as those of Godrej in Vikhroli, which is also where he has learnt more about mangroves. He uses this information in his representations before environment ministers and corporates alike. Pagade has even created pages and groups through Facebook to meet more people involved in cleaning and conservation. I want to create sustainable ecotourism in the mangroves here like they have in the Sunderbans, let people come and see what they are destroying. I think this will be useful for both -- the cause and the community, he says. I have not started a family yet, but it is the next generation of fishermen I am fighting for.

### **Maharashtra: Chimbai fisherfolk clash over infrastructure development**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/mumbai-chimbai-fisherfolk-clash-over-infrastructure-development-101628446812353.html>

Fisherfolk from Chimbai village in Bandra (West) have gotten into a heated dispute over the ongoing infrastructure development work along their waterfront executed by the fisheries department. The ₹8.5-crore project, which involves expansion of an existing jetty, construction of two new boatyards and two new net mending shelters, has also drawn the ire of

environmentalists who said the work is in violation of permissions granted under the Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) rules. The Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) had, on February 26, 2019, recommended the fisheries department's proposal for CRZ clearance while the construction work commenced in August 2019. The project is being funded by the Central government and involves developing infrastructural post harvesting facilities at 10 different fish landing sites in the state. A rapid environment impact assessment (EIA) report carried out for the same noted that the work would fulfil long-standing demand of about 2,525 fisherfolk residents in Chimbai.

While the project has faced opposition from a majority of fisherfolk, a smaller group of Chimbai residents — recently organised into the government registered Chimbai East Indian Koli Samaj Sanstha which claims to represent around 85 individuals — have supported the project. Revamping the existing infrastructure, they said, is necessary to revitalise trade in the village, particularly during the economic downturn after Covid-19. Residents highlight environmental concerns. The majority of residents HT spoke with maintained that they have never made such a demand in the first place. There are not even 150 fishing boats left here anymore. This project will only damage our small beach further, said Prakash Chimbaikar, whose family has been fishing at Chimbai for at least three generations. Because of the jetty expansion and blasting of rocks to make way for the boatyard, the water is already coming further into the village during high tide. The boatyard is being constructed over rocks that halt the water from reaching our homes. Even the jetty expansion has been done in a way which does not allow water to flow back out as quickly during low tide, he added. In a petition filed earlier this year before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) by Chimbai resident Maria Thelma against MCZMA, it has been noted that the scale of proposed amenities are entirely disproportionate to the needs of the local community, and are best avoided at all costs due to the fragility of the geomorphic features of the intertidal rocky areas and mangroves in the region.

The petition also alleges that construction debris and raw materials are being dumped wantonly inside CRZ-I areas, which an HT team found to be true during multiple site visits in the past month. Speaking to HT, Thelma also said construction material was being stored in a common area that was earlier used for net mending and fish drying. Ever since the work began, we are not able to use the area for drying fish. The area also touches a mangrove patch. The contractor has made sheds there for his staff and parks his machinery on site. Who has allowed our common areas to be taken over like this? Where is the permission? She said. Project violates terms of clearance: Activists the ongoing work in Chimbai has also come under the scanner of environmentalists who first wrote to authorities in January this year, pointing out lapses in the governance and execution of the project. The two proposed boatyards, as per the fisheries department's layout plans, will involve reclamation of 45,000 sq ft of intertidal zone on the sea-



ward side of Chimbai village, which is a CRZ-III area. These areas are marked as no development zones as per the CRZ Notification, 2011, and exceptions may be permitted only for reconstruction of dwelling units of traditional coastal communities, as per the CRZ rules. About 190 metres of the 300-metre beach will be taken up by the project.

This leaves very little open space left, and there has not been any detailed study on how the tidal influence will change. The way the project has been executed is quite shabby. Even MCZMA when granting clearance did not seem to be aware of the scale of the project. This increases room for violations which, as we can see, has already happened. Old, natural rocks which act as protective barrier between the sea and people's homes have been destroyed, said environmentalist Zoru Bhatena, who had first written to MCZMA in January this year, highlighting the project's ecological impact. A perusal of the rapid EIA report prepared for the project, too, shows glaring lapses in the consultant's risk assessment methods. For example, the report uses tidal pattern data not of Chimbai village but that of Apollo Bunder in Colaba when assessing the project's risks on flow of tide water. This is a blunder. Changes in the tide can completely change how we park and anchor our boats. If the flow becomes more intense, our boats will get damaged in choppy weather, said Brian Falcon, a fisherman from Chimbai. Despite attempts, HT was unable to reach Narendra Toke director, environment and member secretary of MCZMA, for a comment. A fisheries officer privy to the project, requesting anonymity, said, we have all permissions for the project. NGT has not stayed the work either, and has appointed a monitoring committee with members of the environment ministry and state pollution control board. Any queries should be taken up with them.

Infrastructure needed to revitalise fishing community Despite the attendant environmental repercussions, not all residents are opposed to the development. Daven Kandoriya, chairman of Chimbai Matsyodyog Vividh Karyakari Sanstha and president of Chimbai East Indian Koli Samaj, said the development was essential for reviving the practice of artisanal fishing among the local community. A boatyard will enable us to buy bigger boats, and we can also earn revenue by renting out the area for cultural events and festivals. We could start our own Koli food festival, establish a fish market and so on. It's not as if we do not have adequate infrastructure today, but given the economic downturn and job squeeze, more people are coming back to fishing instead of doing other kinds of jobs. We need to be able to provide them with support, said Kandoriya. Alan Misquita, 40, a fisherman from Chimbai, said the village currently suffers from a shortage of public space where the community can gather to conduct trade and discuss related affairs. What is being built will continue to belong to the entire community. We have also asked for a third dhakka to be built.

Each of the three Koli communities — Catholic, Maharastrian and Kathiyawadi — can have their own fish landing. We are acting in everyone’s interest, he clarified. Asked if they were cognisant of the possible ecological ramifications of the proposed works, Kandoriya, Misquita and other members of the Samaj expressed faith in a recent order of NGT which allowed the work to continue while disposing Thelma’s petition. The matter has been dismissed once earlier by the high court in January. If the courts had seen merit in their argument, we would have accepted. What some residents do not seem to understand is that if we cannot show enough infrastructure, tomorrow the village may get placed in some slum rehabilitation scheme. We are only trying to protect the koliwada, said Valley Quadros, 46.

**Maharashtra: This initiative has been saving Mumbai’s mangroves for over 3 decades; here’s why it’s crucial**

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/260147/initiative-saving-mumbai-mangroves-environment-godrej-and-boyce/>

To a visitor travelling North toward Thane district from South Mumbai, Vikhroli passes for an ecological oasis amid a stretch of the city’s towering skyscrapers. As soon as you enter the eastern suburb, you will be pleasantly greeted by hundreds of acres of the lesser-known mangroves that man the city’s coastline. Home to several endemic species of flora and fauna, the mangroves are dense coastal forests that are not only essential for maintaining the city’s ecological balance but also a source of income for Mumbai’s traditional fishing community — the Kolis. For generations that have grown up witnessing Mumbai’s picturesque marshlands, estuaries and rivers disappear, the mangroves extending from Vikhroli to the west bank of Thane are a symbol of the city that have thrived and have helped to mitigate the severity of climate catastrophes. In the 1940s, Godrej & Boyce acquired land to set up an Industrial Garden Township for its manufacturing operations and the land was blessed with mangroves along its border. The erstwhile Chairman of the Godrej Group, Sohrabji Godrej and his brother, Naoroji Godrej, had a vision to ensure that nature could co-exist with industries. The Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation was established in 1985 with the aim of conserving the fragile but life sustaining mangrove ecosystem.

The Better India spoke to Tejashree Joshi, Head – Environment Sustainability, Godrej & Boyce, for International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, to understand their three-pronged strategy of research, conservation and awareness and the initiatives they have taken over the decades. Why do we need Mangroves? Mangroves act as shock absorbers during high tides and prevent soil erosion. The sturdy root system forms a natural barrier against violent storm surges and floods. Moreover, these natural coastal forests play a significant role in the livelihood of artisanal fishing communities as they provide oxygen and breeding grounds for fish, purify

wastewater and absorb heavy metals. Additionally, the dense roots can capture five times more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than tropical forests. As a result, these mangroves have stored over 10 lakh tonnes of carbon over the last few decades. The rising sea levels and severe flooding caused due to climate change in the peninsular city, pose a huge threat to livelihood.

Hence, the protection provided by mangroves against storm surges have now become more crucial than ever before. However, due to land use changes, coastal development, unsustainable aquaculture, climate and lack of awareness on the critical role of mangroves, the world has lost over one-third of its mangroves. However, it is heartening to know that Maharashtra paints a very different picture. According to the State Of Indian Forest Report 2019, Maharashtra has recorded a whopping 72% rise in mangroves in the last six years. This is a result of the exemplary work done by both public and private organisations to protect and nurture the mangroves. The opportunities for public private partnerships in this space are immense and should be leveraged strategically to implement sustainable solutions for the long term. Inspiring communities When Godrej began its mangrove conservation journey, there were barely any laws or regulations to prevent the razing of forest patches, says Tejashree.

Only a handful of people understood the role of mangroves, as there were very few studies or literature that was available on them. Godrej conducted a pioneering study on ‘Vikhroli Mangroves: Conservation and Management’ between 1985 and 1992 to provide insights into indigenous flora and fauna, effects on climate, chalking out conservation steps and more. From preparing an informative database to monitoring growth at regular intervals and working with the local government at the policy level, the valuable inputs garnered the attention of experts, academicians and governments alike. In 1997, the foundation achieved one of its most notable milestones when the stretch of mangroves extending from Vikhroli to the western Thane creek became India’s first ISO 14001 certified forest. This has enabled a comprehensive and systematic approach to conservation efforts with measurable performance indicators and targets. Two years later, the foundation conducted a massive plantation drive across 80 acres of land in partnership with the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai. It was the first successful public private partnership for major mangrove plantation in the state of Maharashtra, and this spurred on efforts by the State Forest Department, NGOs and academic circles to undertake mangrove plantation all along the coastlines.

With a strong focus on promoting research, awareness and conservation, the foundation has partnered with NGOs and CBOs, academia, and civil society to conduct conservation training programmes, for both Godrej employees and the general public. Creating allies An important issue that is often neglected in deforestation is the public outreach. For any project to work and expand, people must be motivated through partnerships and collaborations. To streamline the

process, an Education Officer was appointed along with a team that organises nature trails for school students and the general public. NGOs, too, are welcome to study our model. Every new employee in our organisation undergoes a mangrove awareness programme during their induction, says Tejashree. Last year, the foundation amplified its efforts by launching ‘Magical Mangroves’, in collaboration with the World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature, India. Under this ongoing campaign, the foundation organises webinars, quizzes, film screenings, digital storytelling and more to highlight the need to preserve mangroves. The initiative calls for citizens from eight coastal states, including Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Odisha and West Bengal, to join the cause. We roped in close to 83 volunteers, who were educated on mangroves through 140 webinars over a span of six months.

These volunteers further organised similar sessions on their own, thus engaging more than 9,000 people, she adds. Simultaneously, Godrej & Boyce launched the ‘India Mangrove Coalition’ in partnership with CII’s Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development (CII-CESD) and WWF India on the 26 July 2021. The India Mangroves Coalition is the first of its kind industry-led platform under CII’s India Business & Biodiversity Initiative (IBBI) that will support and propagate greater mangrove conservation and plantation across India’s vast coastline through a multi-stakeholder approach, based on its importance as a Blue Carbon ecosystem. Seema Arora, Deputy Director General, CII, commented on this initiative saying, A competitive and sustainable industry must take a lead role in India’s future development as well as play a key role in the emerging shape of the global economy. This will require inclusion of nature in decision-making at all levels of business, society, and government. CII has partnered with organisations such as Godrej & Boyce and WWF India that are deeply entrenched into the conservation of such ecosystems.

Over the last couple of years, both awareness as well as the number of policies that protect the environment has increased. People are interested in participating in plantation drives but lack of knowledge is a barrier. Corporations have realised their responsibility to the environment and CSR funds have been mobilised to address conservation efforts. This kind of mass intervention is the need of the hour for biodiversity conservation. Additionally, we hope that the influence of corporations on their employees will have a multiplier effect. Corporates must involve their partners, vendors and suppliers to meet the requirements of a green supply chain, says Tejashree. Building the next generation of ambassadors to keep up with the tech generation, the foundation also created a Mangroves Application in 11 languages available on both the App Store and Google Playstore.

One can search for species of flora based on leaf shape, flower colour and name. The App also offers other interesting and engaging information such as the description of every plant species

and their uses, mangrove distribution and ecosystem, plant adaptations, faunal biodiversity in mangroves, current threats and conservation measures. The app has been downloaded in over 106 countries. With a goal to influence young minds and create a generation of mangrove ambassadors, Godrej & Boyce in collaboration with author Katie Bagli, launched a storybook for children titled 'Many Secrets of Mangroves' in English and Marathi. The book is available on the Mangroves website built by the foundation. When Godrej started mangrove conservation, very little was known about the valuable ecosystem services that mangroves provide. We recently did a study and found that around 30% of Mumbaikars will be able to tell you the importance of mangroves, which is a huge jump from a few decades ago, and this is our yardstick for successful awareness efforts, Tejashree notes. Vikhroli has 16 mangrove species, 208 bird species, 82 butterfly species, 20 fish species, 13 crab species and seven prawn species. Mammals like jackals, wild boar, and mongoose can also be spotted. This is a testament to the thriving biodiversity and healthy ecological system that can co-exist so beautifully with industries.

#### **Maharashtra: Announces Rs.11, 500 crore relief package those hit by floods**

<https://thelogicalindian.com/trending/maharashtra-announces-rs-11500-crore-relief-package-for-flood-victims-30072>

On Tuesday, August 3, the Maharashtra Cabinet announced a financial package of ₹11,500 crore for people affected by rain and floods for renovation work and other long-term flood mitigation steps. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that the relief amount had been calculated higher than the prescribed norms as the massive deluge last month caused great destruction. Besides, more than 200 people lost their lives in the recent floods. The Cabinet had given its approval for more assistance than the prescribed norms for many damage categories. At the same time, it did not increase the compensation for damages to perennial crops and horticulture farms, and they will be reimbursed according to the prescribed norms, sources stated. Break-Up of the Relief Package Out of the total package announced by the government ₹ 1,500 crore will be used to extend immediate assistance to flood victims and ₹ 3,000 crore has been allotted to remodel and repair damaged infrastructures such as roads, bridges, electricity, etc. For undertaking long-term disaster mitigation steps in the affected areas, a sum of ₹ 7,000 crore has been earmarked. The government will also be extending an ex gratia amount of ₹ 10,000 for clothes and utensils per family in the flood-hit areas and ₹ 1.5 lakh will be given per house that has been completely damaged and for houses damaged up to 50 per cent, 25 per cent and 15 per cent, the government will provide an amount of ₹ 50,000, 25,000 and ₹ 15,000 respectively and a total sum of ₹ 15,000 per hut wholly destroyed. The affected shopkeepers and small vendors will be given a maximum aid of ₹ 50,000 and ₹ 10,000 separately. Maximum assistance of ₹ 50,000 will be provided to

handicraft workers and artisans. The same compensation will be given to the fishermen for entirely damaged boats and? 5,000 for partially or fully destroyed nets.

### **Maharashtra: Palghar beach threatened by tarballs; Fishermen state their woes**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/environment/palghar-beach-threatened-by-tarballs-67207>

Amidst the heavy rainfall across Maharashtra recently, tarballs have reportedly washed up in a beach at Palghar, These tarballs pose a massive threat to marine biodiversity and the ecosystem. These happen to be dark-coloured, sticky balls of oil that form when crude oil floats on the ocean surface. Moreover, they are formed by weathering of crude oil in marine environments. Also, they are usually carried from the open sea to the shores by sea currents and waves. According to reports, these have been spotted in a mangroves forest close to Mahim beach in Palghar. Meanwhile, environmentalists have been demanding for the beach be cleaned up at the earliest. Meanwhile, speaking to news agencies, fishermen have stated that they have to walk through the tarballs to catch fish to make a living. In addition, in the months of May-June, this year tarballs had deposited on the beach and in mangroves in large amounts. On the other hand, a Mumbai-based voluntary organisation named United Ways had earlier conducted clean-up and marine conservation activities on the city's beaches for a while now. More impressively, the conservation group has adopted seven beaches in Mumbai under its Clean Shores project to maintain cleanliness across the beaches and tender proper waste management on a public-private partnership. The group plans to engage citizens with the Clean Shores initiative and also assist the efforts undertaken by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

### **Maharashtra: How the Chiplun locals saved lives during the recent floods**

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/maharashtra-floods-how-the-chiplun-locals-saved-lives-during-the-recent-floods-1834272-2021-07-29>

From swimming against the current to save lives and dragging speed boats through gushing waters to conserving the last few drops of fuel to supply food packets to the affected areas, several local volunteers emerged as saviours when parts of Chiplun and Khed in Maharashtra went under water last week. Malvan fishermen battling strong currents, young men of the Ratnadurga Mountaineers, an adventure sports company, swimming in the surging waters to pull speed boats and social activists like Pankaj Shobha Dalvi packing and dispatching food and drinking water packets—these were the images that defined how local volunteers swung into

action to save residents as their homes were flooded by the torrential rains and swelling rivers on July 21. It was an adventure we weren't exactly ready for. A boat got stuck on the roof of a house; our volunteers had to pull the boat after we had rescued a person because we were running out of fuel but we managed to take at least 70 people to safety, states Gautam Bashte, secretary of Ratnadurg Mountaineers in a long message that the group circulated. Minutes after the water levels in Chiplun's neighbourhoods started swelling, social media platforms and messenger apps started buzzing with intense activity. Residents and volunteers from different social groups started mobilising varied items--from boats to bottled water--to be sent to the flooded areas.

A Facebook group, called the Save Konkan Movement, helped people coordinate relief measures as several inquired about donating food and medicines. Some volunteers organised shelters in colleges and community halls while others started collecting food grains to start a community kitchen. Even as the government announced that teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were deployed, fishermen from Malvan, more than 230 km away, rushed with their boats to fish out people who were getting washed away by the strong currents in the rising waters. The region was cut off from the rest of the state because of landslides and floods. Even when the NDRF teams came, our local youngsters trained in rescue measures were accompanying them around. The locals know the area and the problems the best, says Dalvi, a social and environment activist and founder of the group Konkan Alert. Among the first people to reach were the fisherfolk from Malvan and Veldur and members of the Raju Kakade Help Academy from the town of Devrukh who started rummaging through the debris of the landslides. Deep sea divers and young volunteers trained in rescue operations from the neighbouring towns of Khed, Guhagar and Chiplun were roped in to help as people saw all their belongings being swept away by the force of the gushing waters.

In neighbouring villages, Dalvi and his colleagues set up a community kitchen to pack cooked meals and clean drinking water for the flood affected. People cannot cook there because their homes have been ravaged by muck which is still a few feet high. What they need immediately is mineral water and dry snacks, says Dalvi. Even as food and medicine kits are being rushed from across the region and Mumbai, members of various social organisations have set up camps to ensure that help is equally distributed among all. A few, moved by the visuals of suffering and loss circulated on social media groups and flashed on television, started collection drives where volunteers generously donated rice, pulses, clothes and household provisions to be packed into kits and sent to the affected areas. People have lost all their food grains so we have made grocery kits along with medicines and candles. The first batch was sent to the affected areas in Ratnagiri a day after the floods, says Laxmikant Khobrekar, secretary of the Nath Pai Sevangan in Malvan that has distributed more than 300 food kits in the region.

With rescue operations halted, volunteers are now helping residents resume a normal life. While some are washing out heaps of muck and mud from people's houses, others are helping people repair and restart motorcycles and car engines. Help has poured in generously but the one demand that these local groups have is to set up well trained disaster management teams comprising local men and women. We can save lives immediately instead of waiting for official help. Stationing disaster management teams won't help. We need trained locals who understand the terrain and the problems of the region well, says Dalvi. Until such rescue teams are trained, these social groups are busy working long hours in the flood-affected areas. When waters recede and visits by politicians stop, they know that what will follow are skin infections and disease.

**Maharashtra: To save Mumbai's toxic Thane Creek, experts should listen to the experiences of traditional fishers**

<https://scroll.in/article/1001487/to-save-mumbais-toxic-thane-creek-experts-should-listen-to-the-experiences-of-traditional-fishers>

Most Mumbai residents encounter the sea only on the west coast, bordering the Arabian Sea. The Thane Creek that separates Mumbai from the mainland on its east coast is unseen as a waterfront. Rather, it is seen as a toxic wetland – water has been made into land through reclamations by the Mumbai Port, the coastline transformed by industrial processes and largely barricaded from public access. Through our new film, Sagar Putra, we aim to present a different view of the Thane Creek, one experienced through the everyday practices of one of Mumbai's fishing villages or koliwadis that are inhabited by the indigenous community of Kolis. The language of fisher experiences, as the fishers themselves narrate in the film, reveals contemporary struggles against the enclosure of the coast as well as the recovery of a longer, forgotten history of entanglement of sea and city from Mumbai's eastern seaboard. More than 25 fishing villages dot the Thane Creek of Mumbai, Trombay Koliwadi being one. They form part of a complex living web where marine life, mangroves and villages are linked to each other through livelihood, social, and sacred relations. Vinod Koli is a Koli fisherman from Trombay Koliwadi. He talks about an ecological sensing or knowledge of how fishers measure time – by the tides and not by standardised minutes and hours. He took us on a tour of the creek to show us his saj or traditional fixed fishing areas in the sea, handed down ancestrally.

Koli has inherited his saj and fishing knowledge from his ancestors but it seems he will not be able to pass this on to the next generation due to the difficulty of fishing in Mumbai's toxic seas and upcoming infrastructure projects that capture the sea and coasts, leaving little room for traditional fishers. Capturing the sea and creek the fishers of Trombay are well aware of the dangers of living amidst tidal creek waters that are a toxic mixture of garbage, sewage, chemicals, sound and light pollution. Pushpa Koli wordlessly showed us the harm wrought on



her hands and feet by years of being a khajindar fisher, which involves wading in the stinky, contaminated marsh land of the creek and catching crabs and small fish with her bare hands. Vinod Koli spoke of how plastic often gets snagged in their boat propellers, damaging the boats. Once so abundant, the fish too have fled the creek, say the fishers, greatly endangering their customary livelihood.

Creek communities who live in these sacrifice zones or hotspots of chemical pollution suffer disproportionate risk burdens but no data exists on the legacy or pre-existing pollution they face that continues unabated today. Chandrakant Vaity, the President of the Trombay Cooperative Fishing Society, described how the Thane Creek is being squeezed by development from all sides – in Navi Mumbai and Thane and the newly developing Uran area surrounding the Jawaharlal Nehru Port. New infrastructure projects are being constructed– like the Maharashtra Trans Harbour Link Road, from Mumbai to the mainland – that seek to make the sea into land and property. Sitting in the village temple, we listened to the community elders’ long experience of being circumscribed on land and in sea.

In 1954, they gave their land to establish the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. The same BARC that we gave land to, virtually for free, has declared a 500 metre ‘No fishing zone’ beyond their boundary in the sea, in the name of security, one person complained. This government ban hurts the fishers while allowing the barges of the oil refineries and the nearby thermal power plant to freely travel the creek. Colonial and post-colonial governments have always sought to enclose the sea through tax regimes and make the commons of the creek a private market. For instance, the British colonial state levied head taxes on koliwadas for the right to fish, a practice carried over by the government of independent India. Till about 15 years ago, fishers say they paid an annual tax on their saj, a practice that has now been halted. The fishers saw this tax as official recognition of their right to use their saj for fishing and suggest that its cessation is an attempt at erasing their rights to the creek. Experiences of toxicity, enclosure and erasure compel the fishers of Trombay Koliwada to turn away from their sea-based livelihoods and sea-life. But they do not passively accept this estrangement, it is marked by struggle and processes of reclaiming. Protecting fishing commons When telling stories of their village, older fishers talk of not just where they live (the settlement area or gaathan) but also the adjoining expanse of seashore lands, marshy interface between land and sea, and coastal seas where they do fishing related activities.

These communal spaces or fishing commons have been produced collectively over many years of use for activities like boat parking, net mending and fish drying. Kolis therefore have a different imaginary of home than that of the city dweller. For them, their village transcends simple land-sea and workplace-residence boundaries, and draws from ideas of customary use rights rather than property relations. This allows fishing commons to be occupied and shared by

many groups for undertaking varied activities, where no one person owns or has exclusive rights over the space. The expanded sense of village that Trombay's Kolis operate with we call a remembered boundary. It is governed by the traditional fisher caste panchayat and commonly known to all within the Koliwada but unknown to outsiders because fishers cannot prove legal ownership. How the Koliwada remembers their village's boundaries starkly contrasts with how state agencies mark its official boundaries – as the much smaller residential settlement or gaathan area. Like many Koliwadadas, Trombay's fishing commons are being rapidly eaten away, a process fishers vigorously resist. In 1987, the Maharashtra government transferred legal ownership of a part of their commons to Mumbai's public bus company, BEST, to build a bus depot. Till today, the fishers practice their resistance to this enclosure by persistently using the disputed land in accordance with fishing time.

In the early mornings once the catch comes in, this ground is used for a wholesale fish market. After the market winds down, the fish are scattered to allow them to dry in the heat of the day. The cooler evening time signals it's time to pack up the dried fish and a playground that is used for sports and strolls by several neighboring communities unfurls. Through it all, the BEST buses manoeuvre around sheets of plastic that dry over a hundred kilos of jawla (a small local fish). With time, the disputed land's uses have multiplied showing that new forms of community and new uses for this commons have emerged, beyond fishing. The ceaseless movements that transgress the official property boundaries of the disputed land can be read as a resistance to the enclosure of these commons and a reclaiming of sorts. This reclaiming acknowledges the dominance of property laws in society but also offers an alternative to the propertied ownership model, drawing from older notions of remembered boundaries, shared spaces, and relations with beyond- human entities of creek, sea and fish.

Can this space that has been made through temporal appropriations and negotiations among multiple users provide us with an alternative and more just planning imaginary for our coasts in a time of climate-changed waters rather than one based on ownership, enclosure and segregated land uses? Unseeing the east coast as a waterfront is not a natural process. Both British imperial designs and post-colonial nationalist imaginaries have produced the eastern seaboard as a toxic, industrialised and enclosed zone underwritten by the drying of wetlands and the harming of marginalised groups, like fishing communities and poor, migrant workers in the docks and factories. Zoning the eastern suburbs of Trombay and Mahul for hazardous industries and for the working classes are policies that have colonial roots.

More recent government interventions seek to revalue this degraded landscape through a new real estate-centred imaginary – embodied in the upcoming Eastern Waterfront Development Project. This project aims to repurpose industrial lands of the Mumbai Port for waterfront

development, beautification and recreation while integrating the rest of the city with the hitherto inaccessible eastern waterfront. Both industrial and post-industrial coastal imaginaries are driven by the imperatives of capitalism and seek to erase the fishers' ways of inhabiting wetness that transcend those solely associated with property relations. Why we should care about fishers' ways of knowing the coast there are good reasons for why we should care about fisher's ways of inhabiting the coast and how these are being lost and reclaimed. First, fisher's experiences of estrangement reflect not only the loss of sea livelihoods and destruction of the coastal commons but the slow forgetting of an entire knowledge system that was assembled by centuries of collective living amidst rising and falling water levels. This experiential knowledge presents a different way of knowing that single- subject, credentialed experts can never attain. It is particularly vital to learn from it in a time of increased submergence owing to climatic change, when technocratic planning processes seem to be falling short. Second, the fisher's struggles against state-sanctioned enclosures reveal how they use enclosures as a ground for political action and for reimagining a system they deem unjust. This process of fisher reclaiming is deeply opposed to another kind of reclaiming we are very familiar with – state-led reclamations that are associated with colonising and territorialising the sea/creek, while polluting and making property of it. Fishers' experiences therefore offer a language to challenge current unjust imaginaries, connect what seem isolated struggles of other coastal communities, as well as build alternative futures in a time of rising waters.

**Maharashtra: Flood: 213 dead, eight missing as 103 villages in Raigad face landslide risk**

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/maharashtra-flood-213-dead-eight-missing-as-103-villages-in-raigad-dist-face-landslide-risk-1833922-2021-07-28>

The death toll in Maharashtra due to last week's heavy rain reached 213 on Wednesday. With more than 90 casualties, Raigad is the worst affected district and more than 100 villages there are again facing the risk of landslides. Reportedly, eight persons are still missing after rains triggered massive floods and landslides in many parts of Maharashtra since July 20. The coastal Konkan region and the western districts of the state have suffered the most. Among the 213 fatalities, the Satara district reported 46 deaths, followed by 35 in Ratnagiri, 15 in Thane, seven in Kolhapur, four in Mumbai, three in Pune, four in Sindhudurg and two each in eastern Maharashtra's Wardha and Akola districts, said a statement issued by the disaster management department. New bridge wreaked havoc in Mahad? In Raigad's Mahad town, water had risen up to 25 feet at some places, a level not seen in recent memory, submerging several single-storey buildings and ground plus first floor structures, news agency PTI reported.

As per a release from the office of Raigad collector Nidhi Chaudhary, 103 villages now face the risk of landslides in the district. Heavy rainfall in Mahabaleshwar (530mm), a hill station in Satara

district, and also in Mahad (383mm) and Poladpur town (575) led to the destructive floods in the Konkan region's Raigad district. However, residents and traders of Raigad have also blamed a new bridge built on the Mumbai-Goa road for the floods, saying it obstructed the flow of rainwater. Koyna dam hit Sangli Most of the deaths in Raigad, along with the Satara and Ratnagiri districts were caused by landslides, while floods wreaked havoc in Kolhapur and Sangli. Heavy rains in the Sahyadri range led to swelling of rivers flowing through Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur districts, forcing the evacuation of people. The Sangli district in Western Maharashtra did not receive heavy rainfall, but discharge of water from the Koyna dam led to flooding in Sangli city and in several villages. According to the disaster management department, there are 349 relief camps set up for evacuated people -- 216 in Kolhapur, 74 in Sangli, 29 in Satara, 16 in Ratnagiri and 14 in Raigad.

**Maharashtra: In 6 years, State forest dept taken physical possession of over 14,000 hectare of reserved mangrove land**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/in-6-years-maharashtra-forest-dept-taken-physical-possession-of-over-14000-hectare-of-reserved-mangrove-land-7427564/>

In the last six years, the state forest department and mangrove conservation cell have notified and taken physical possession of over 14,000 hectare of reserved mangrove land. All the mangrove land were owned by various government agencies, including Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation and municipal corporations. Since 2005, the state government has taken possession of 14323.29 hectare (ha). Of this, in the last one year (till June), the mangrove cell – in coordination with the forest and environment department – has notified 9,800 ha of mangrove area under Section 20 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927. In 2005, the Bombay High Court had first declared mangroves as protected forests, giving them legal protection.

However, the transfer of mangrove land from different government agencies to the forest department has been extremely slow. In September 2018, the HC had said that the destruction of mangroves offended the fundamental rights of the citizens and hence, it was a mandatory duty of the state and its agencies to protect and preserve them. All mangroves in the state are to be declared as protected or reserved forests, including the land belonging to government agencies, it had added. The process was fast-tracked by Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray. Last September, Thackeray had directed district collectors along the Konkan coast to identify and transfer mangrove land under their jurisdiction to the forest department within two months so that these could be declared as reserved forests. In 2005, the state had invoked Section 4 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 – identified and intended to declare as reserve forest 16267.66 ha of mangrove land – across Maharashtra.

The process begins with the government announcing its intention to declare a certain plot as reserved forest. Following that, a sub-divisional officer is appointed to settle all claims and rights hear grievances. Once this process is completed, a final notification is issued under Section 20 of the Act and the land is transferred to the forest department. Of the 14323.29 ha under the forest department, the highest is from the Mumbai suburban district (3829.81 ha), followed by Thane district (3262.61 ha). Across the state, mangrove forests are spread over 30,200 ha, according to the Forest Survey of India. Mumbai has one of the largest mangrove covers in the country, acting as a bio-shield against extreme weather, a regulator of land-based pollution and an effective mechanism to contain flood. It also acts as a nursery ground for many species of fish in their juvenile stages and a habitat for birds, reptiles, mammals and invertebrates.

**Maharashtra: Hundreds of fish found dead in Jambhulwadi Lake; Mud Waves stated as probable reason**

<https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/city-news/pune-hundreds-of-fish-found-dead-in-jambhulwadi-lake-mud-waves-stated-as-probable-reason.html>

In Pune's Jambhulwadi lake, 10 tonnes of fish were found dead on Thursday morning and locals rushed to collect them. Hindustan Times reported the statement given by a local fisherman on the reason behind the huge numbers of dead fish. The fisherman stated that all these fish died due to mud waves inside the lake. On Thursday morning at 6 am, all the dead fish were floating on the surface of the Jambhulwadi Lake and people were shocked at the sight. A fisherman who has been given a contract by the state fisheries department to do fishing at the lake, Manohar Pardeshi said that when it was dawn, suddenly hundreds of fish were coming out of the lake. Further, he stated that people gathered around the area and started collecting the fish from the lake. Hundreds of dead fish found in Bengaluru Lake On May 19, 2021, hundreds of dead fish were found floating in Mottanalluru lake situated in Bengaluru's Anekal town possibly due to pesticides from nearby industries and agricultural fields.

According to ANI, local residents alleged that they were forced to live with the stench of dead fish despite complaining to the officials for the last week. After the stench became unbearable, the local activists and residents then again complained to local authorities, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, following which a team of officials inspected the site on Saturday and collected samples of the waterbody. Officials of the KSPCB reportedly said that the fish died due to the dip in oxygen level in the lake water. The oxygen level might have fallen due to the effect of pesticides and effluents that were dumped in the waterbody. Locals said that the waste and effluents from industries located in Chandrapur flows to the Mottanalluru Lake, which caused the fish to suffocate and die. Meanwhile, a similar incident was brought to light when residents near the Kudlu Dodda Kere swimming lake in Bengaluru found tens of thousands of dead snails

shored up along the lakeside. They reportedly said that sewage is the main culprit behind the mass snail deaths. A sewage pipe that is connected to the lake has been causing pollution in the water body.

### **Maharashtra: Objections to the India Marine Fisheries (IMF) Bill 2021**

Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti (MMKS) has come to know regarding the Indian Marine Fisheries (IMF) Bill, 2021, which will be tabled in the current Parliament Session. The bill has certainly created more confusion among fisher communities than clarity in the coastal states. While the Indian EEZ needs legislation to regulate foreign vessels fishing activities and protect the rights of the traditional fishing community. However, the bill is aimed at deceiving the fishing community by secretly placing them in Parliament without trusting and consulting with traditional fisher communities during the Corona pandemic. Our objections to the Bill are as follows. The traditional Fishers use Dol net, Gill Net in Maharashtra to fish in EEZ i.e. fish from 13NM to 100 NM. This proposed Bill alienates and criminalise the traditional EEZ Fishers and their protection totally excluded in the entire drafting process of the IMF Bill 2021. It is not acceptable to pass a law in Parliament without discussing it with the traditional fishing community for fish in the Indian EEZ.

Also, this law shows the dangerous policy of special licensing foreign fishing boats in EEZ through the back door. The translation of the bill was not given in Marathi. The English version of the IMF Bill 2021 was only available on the Fisheries Department's website for a few days and suddenly disappeared. MMKS demands that there be extensive consultation on all relevant draft policies and laws. Following are some quick comments on the bill

1. Lack of Clarity in Interpretations: Chapter I: Section-2 Definitions (a), (c), (f), (g), (i), (n), (r), and (s) contravene the definitions and international terms with regard to the customary traditional rights of the Indian Fishers over the land and sea, and also dispossesses the Rights of the coastal States over fisheries and management of activities in territorial waters. This Bill will supersede the States and Union Territories' rules with regard to fishing in their territorial waters. NFF fears that this Bill will supersede the States and other Union Government rules with regard to fishing and the coastal territorial waters
2. Sections 3 to 8 are related to fishing licenses in EEZ. The fishing license should be the same between the state government and the EEZ. Central and State governments cannot impose the fishworkers to take different licenses under different Acts. Also, the Indian government is pursuing a policy of allowing foreign fishing vessels through LOP and other means when there is opposition from Indian fishermen in 13 to 200 nautical miles.

The policy is to deprive the traditional fishers livelihood by commercializing the fishing business by bringing in various merchant shipping acts. There is opposition to this and state and central

government boats should be registered under one window scheme. Since 2014, there have been unprecedented natural calamities, and relief has not been available for the affected fishworkers. In addition, a strategic decision to waive excise duty and excise duty on petroleum products should be included in the bill. In addition, Section 9 to 13 is the policy. MMKS opposes these sections in the Bill and demands that it be withdrawn and redirected in consultation with traditional fishers. There should be a detailed consultation on the provisions of the draft Mariculture Policy, the draft National Fisheries Policy, the Draft Merchant Shipping Act and the draft policy framework on India's blue economy. MMKS seeks to harmonize these policies with marijuana, recreational fishing and its provisions. Comparing the draft National Fisheries Policy with the Indian Marine Fisheries Bill, it is fundamentally against the interests of traditional marine fishermen, fishermen and women fishermen. MMKS is of the opinion that the draft bill is curtailing the fishing rights of Marine Capture Fishers. This Bill should be deferred and not placed in the Parliament. Narendra Patil, President, NFF Lio Colaso, President Ramakrishna Tandel Working President Kiran Koli General Secretary Mrs. Jyoti Meher, Palghar / Thane Women's Organizer, Secretary NFF Mrs. Ujwala Patil, Mumbai Women's Organizer Moreshwar Vaiti, Secretary Ulhas Watkar, Secretary

### **Maharashtra: Two months on, a fishing village continues to bear the brunt of Cyclone Tauktae**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/two-months-on-a-fishing-village-continues-to-bear-the-brunt-of-cyclone-tauktae-101626890380643.html>

Cyclone Tauktae brushed past the coast of Maharashtra on May 17 this year, killing at least 19 in the state, damaging between 3,000 to 5,000 acres of standing crops, and unleashing record-breaking rain and winds over Mumbai. Though the event is now firmly in the past for most city folk, a coastal community in Palghar district, around 115km north of Mumbai, continues to deal with the storm's aftermath – allegedly with little help from authorities. Stranded barge still grounded in Palghar. Fisherfolk operating in the vicinity of Vadrai beach (in Palghar's Mahim village, 10km from the district headquarters), have been particularly affected by the grounding of a cargo barge – the Gal Constructor – which washed up on Vadrai's rocky shore on the morning of May 18. The vessel, originally anchored in Alibag on contract to ONGC by infrastructure company Afcons, was driven north during the cyclone and remains grounded in Vadrai. At low tide, one can inspect the Constructor's broken hull, from which several thousand litres of diesel, ballast water and bunker oil began spilling into the ocean around May 28.

A spokesperson for ONGC told Hindustan Times that the barge had at least 78,000 litres of high-flash high-speed diesel (HFHSD), majority of which was recovered directly from the barge. There was no crude oil on board, the spokesperson said, clarifying that hydrocarbons extracted

from oil wells at Bombay High are transported via submarine pipelines. Manendra Arekar, chairman of the Vadrai Sarvodaya Machimaar Society (VSMS), along with several other fisherfolk, said the barge continued to leak a dark, oily liquid for at least eight days before Afcons agreed to contain the spill. Afcons later confirmed this. There was diesel, ballast water and residual fuel oil which was used onboard, hence the dark colour of the spill, an Afcons spokesperson admitted, seeking confidentiality. Afcons initially began to empty all the valuables from the barge, said Arekar, who represents owners of around 50 motorised fishing boats in Vadrai. Machinery, containers, cranes and all sorts of things. They also began removing the stored diesel, but contracted a separate company to contain the spill only after we forced their hand. Marginal fishermen hit hard by spill Unfortunately for fish workers, the barge is stranded right in the middle of a productive intertidal fishing ground which yields oysters, shellfish, crab, mudskippers, prawns, mullets, catfish, milk sharks, lobsters, groupers, rays and several other varieties of small fish. These provide not only incomes but also nutrition; they are a valuable source of meat for poor families. For at least a month after the spill, fishing in the area came to a complete halt, said 48-year old Nilesh Mahalkari, one of several Vadrai residents who rely entirely on near-shore fishing during the off season, from June to July.

Things improved a little after the rains, but the quality of the shellfish, snails and oysters is still bad. People in the market are reluctant to buy from me because they know where I catch my fish. Some of the more valuable stuff, like dhoma, hekru, and prawns, are not coming to that area anymore. Since the barge arrived on their beach, Mahalkari and others have started going to Shirgaon, 2km north of Vadrai where there is still an abundance of oysters, shellfish and snails – the three main species available in large enough quantities to guarantee a day's income. It takes about 45 minutes to walk there one way from Vadrai, which means they have less time to collect as much as catch before the tide comes back in and the workers have to return home for lunch. 'The fish tastes like kerosene' For most of these fisherfolk, with incomes fluctuating between 100 to 300 per day, the barge accident led to immediate financial losses. Rajni Thapar, a fishmonger from Vadrai, remembers the sight of dead shellfish and oysters in the days immediately after the Constructor began to spill its contents.

We couldn't sell anything from the area for over a month. The quality of the catch has gotten better only in the last ten or twelve days, but something is still not right about the way the fish tastes, she said on the morning of July 14, as she made her way back from Shirgaon. This was a common account narrated by over a dozen fishermen and locals. The fish tasted like raket (kerosene). It left a burning sensation in the mouth, said Rekha more, a fishmonger and resident of Mahim village. Women from the nearby adivasi settlement of Rawlepada, which abuts Vadrai beach, also had similar testimonies. Just this week, I brought home some khubre (sea snails) from near the barge and boiled them. There was such a foul smell that you couldn't eat the snails.



Even the boiled water, which we use for cooking, had to be thrown out, said Sunita Kawat, from Rawlepada, speaking to HT on July 14.

A letter written by over a dozen adivasi women to the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), dated June 28 – pleading with the MPCB’s regional officer to get to the root of the problem by visiting our coast – has so far gone unanswered. Vessel will hinder navigation, should be removed at the earliest the fisherfolk of Vadrai unanimously said that they want the barge removed at the earliest, and voiced opposition to a growing rumour that the vessel may be dismantled on the beach itself. Locals, well aware of the ecological impacts of ship-breaking, expressed concern over how this may further affect intertidal fishing. With the on season for fishing set to begin in just over a week, even fishermen who venture out to deeper waters are foreseeing problems. The barge is now stuck in the middle of our navigation route. The rest of the beach is too rocky, so when the fishing season starts in August, we will have to take a longer detour to reach our fishing grounds. It will take too much time, and with diesel prices being what they are, it will hurt our pockets, said Ganesh Meher, an artisanal fisherman from Vadrai and member of the VSMS. Arekar, meanwhile, rued the lack of initiative from any authority in getting the vessel removed from the location.

We have written to Aaditya Thackeray (state environment minister) twice and made representations to everyone from the collector’s office to the maritime board. So far everyone seems to be shrugging responsibility. At the moment, we have no idea as to how and when the vessel will be moved. There are rumours going around that the barge may be broken down at location. This is not acceptable to us. Marginal fishermen have already been affected by the oil spill and we cannot take any risk that threatens the larger community, especially with the fishing season about to start soon, he said. An official with the MPCB’s regional office in Thane, which also presides over Palghar district, claimed that it is near impossible for the barge to be simply towed away. Given the substantial damage it suffered during the cyclone, along with its age (the Constructor was built in 1978), and the fact that no tugboats will be able to reach it given the rocky shore, authorities have accepted that it will have to be dis-assembled on site .

It is the only way, said the MPCB official, preferring anonymity, the responsibility rests with the owner of the barge, and not with any other authority. The superintendent of police, Palghar, has already warned both the parent company Tirupati Vessels, as well as Afcons, saying an FIR will be filed in case the issue is not resolved. Contesting claims on pollution from spill A spokesperson for Afcons, seeking anonymity, denied any wrongdoing on their part. Our contract with the barge owner and ONGC had already lapsed by the time the accident took place. For a week after the spillage began, we tried to contact the owner but he was not reachable. We only stepped in because Afcons was getting a bad name in the press. We do not have any liability in

the matter, and besides, no pollution from the spill reached the shore, they said. Dr Rajendra Rajput, the MPCB's regional officer in Thane, however, revealed that there was a total of 84,000 litres of HFHSD on board the Constructor – as against the 78,000 litres claimed by ONGC. Of this, 79,000 odd litres were recovered before they could be spilled. But about 5,000 litres of diesel, mixed with ballast water and bunker oil were released into the sea. Containment booms were able to soak up about 3,000 litres of the spill, but the remaining 2,000 litres nothing could be done about, said Rajput.

A walk down Vadrai beach shows that several containment booms – long, tubular sponges used to soak up the spilled oil and diesel, and which are classified as hazardous waste – remain washed up on the beach, as far as the high-tide line. However, according to laboratory tests conducted by the MPCB on surface water samples from Vadrai beach over eight days in late May-early June, oil and grease were found to be below the detectable limit. So ultimately there is no major impact that could be found, said Rajput. These statements have been contested by locals and independent researchers monitoring the situation. How can Afcons say that the spill did not reach the shore? The containment booms have themselves washed up on the beach and have not been cleared over two months later. The MPCB has not taken any action or served a notice to Afcons for the same. There should be an unbiased study to understand the impact of this accident, rather than plainly denying any possibility of ecological impact, said Dhvani Shah, an independent environmental researcher who has been working with fishing communities in Palghar for the last two years.

Vessel owner, officials vacillate on taking responsibility As far as removing the damaged vessel from the area is concerned, spokespersons for Afcons and ONGC, as well as officials in the Coast Guard and the district collector's office and the MPCB, all repeatedly emphasised that the responsibility rests with Tirupati Vessels Pvt Ltd. Rajiv Agarwal, a director at Tirupati Vessels, did not provide an official comment for this story despite being contacted multiple times over the past week, while VK Singh, coast guard commandant, declined to comment on the matter until permitted to do so from his headquarters. Officials in the district collector's office, too, shunned responsibility for the accident, even though the defence ministry's national oil spill disaster contingency management plan (NOS-DCP) formally mandates them to provide personnel and equipment for shoreline clean-up and ensure safety and protection of the local population and resources.

We have written to the Maharashtra Maritime Board, who has further written to the director general of shipping to look into the matter. You may talk to the MMB for an answer, said Kiran Mahajan, deputy collector, Palghar district, when contacted by HT. Captain Praveen Khara, regional port officer, Maharashtra Maritime Board, also did not respond to multiple calls and

messages seeking comment, while SK Nath, head of security and safety at the MMB, could not be contacted despite several attempts to reach him. Yashwant Sontakke, joint director (water), with the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), said there was no way to assess the true scale of impact. We have done a site visit, conducted tests, and not found any significant pollution due to the spill. I cannot 100 percent deny that fisherfolk have been impacted, but the fisheries department is the right authority to comment on that, not the MPCB, he said. The lack of any environment impact assessment following the incident has irked experts.

There are whole patches of mangroves along Vadrai and the adjacent Thembi beach which turned completely black with oil and died. These are breeding grounds for fish, which the locals rely on for commercial sale and personal consumption. It is irresponsible for officials to say that they cannot conclusively determine any impact, when no such attempt has been made in the first place, said Bhushan Bhoir, a marine researcher and zoologist based in Palghar, who was present during Afcons' clean-up operation.

### **Maharashtra: Fisherwomen to stay put in CST Market to protest shifting of stalls**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-fisherwomen-to-stay-put-in-cst-market-to-protest-shifting-of-stalls/articleshow/84303857.cms>

Fisherwomen at the CST Market near Mumbai police headquarters in south Mumbai have decided not to move out after closing hours to protest the BMC's decision to temporarily allot them stalls in faraway places. The dilapidated market is to be redeveloped. There are 157 licensed fisherwomen who have set up stalls in the basement of the market. The BMC on Friday issued a 48-hour notice to all stall owners in the market to vacate the premises as they have been provided alternate sites. It further said if they do not shift to the alternatives provided, they will have to stop their business completely at least for a month. The BMC notice further informs no one will be allowed entry into the market from Tuesday. The women alleged the BMC is discriminating against them by telling them to shift to Airoli, Mulund, Andheri, Borivali and Dahisar. I have been selling fish here for the past 45 years and my sister for 60 years. Now they (the BMC) want us to go to Andheri and Borivali and set up stalls there. Is that possible? Asked Sadhna Koli.

The BMC says it is only for one month and 15 days and then they will shift us back but how can they put us through such difficulties? Asked Anjana Koli. Devendra Tandel, president, Akhil Maharashtra Machchimar Kruti Samiti, said the BMC has made provisions for the 150 licensed meat sellers at the CST market to be accommodated in the adjoining parking lot. This is sheer discrimination. Why must the fisherwomen travel so far? There is a ban on travel by local trains, he said. The women have decided to stay put after closing hours on Sunday and will not move

out unless they are accommodated in the parking lot with others. The BMC notice has assured the fisherwomen that once the market is redeveloped the stalls will be restored to them.

### **Maharashtra: Opposition to coastal road continues: Environmentalists**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-opposition-to-coastal-road-continues-environmentalists>

While the issue of felling trees at Tata Gardens in Breach Candy for the coastal road project (CRP) seems to have been resolved between a group of local residents and the BMC, the opposition to reclamation of land for the coastal road and its impact on marine ecology and local fishing community continues. After the Bombay high court vacated its stay, the BMC resumed felling of trees at Tata Gardens last week, which met severe protests from residents. Following this, senior BMC officials associated with the project held a meeting with residents on July 9. During this, the BMC highlighted the technicalities of the project and explained the importance of creating a traffic exit at the point where Tata Garden stands. Following the meeting, some residents appreciated the fact that the BMC had given them a patient hearing and stated that they understand the BMC had done the best they could to save the trees. However, environmentalists who have filed petitions against the CRP have said that the issue stands pending in the Supreme Court (SC) and the CRP is still being opposed by citizens.

The SC, itself, has said that this project will be subjected to the outcome of the petitions. It is clear that the work carried out by the BMC is in violation of the CRZ clearance and should have been stopped by MCZMA and MoEF, said Debi Goenka, executive trustee of Conservation Action Trust (CAT) and one of the petitioners, told FPJ on Sunday. Goenka stressed that even if those who were only opposing the felling of trees at Tata Garden may have ended their protest, those interested in the larger issues surrounding the CRP continue to oppose the project as earlier. There are original petitions of 2019 that are still under appeal and pending. Furthermore, the BMC has started unauthorized reclamation of additional 22 hectares of land, said Cyrus Guzder, another petitioner. Even if the MoEF does now grant its approval, there is court judgements making it clear that environmental approvals cannot be retrospectively applied, Guzder pointed out. Zia Sud, another environmentalist and local Breach Candy resident said that opposition against the coastal road will continue as it will deprive the livelihoods of the fisherfolks and will also affect the marine ecology adversely. We will stand firmly behind

projects that are sustainable and eco-friendly, there is scientific evidence to show that projects like CRP will worsen flooding and increase risk of damage to property and lives, Sud told FPJ.

### **Maharashtra: Hundreds of fish found dead in Ambernath river**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/thane-hundreds-of-fish-found-dead-in-ambarnath-river>

Hundreds of fish were found dead in the Ambernath River due to excessive water pollution allegedly caused due to discharge of waste released from nearby Poultry farms. The local villagers claim around 15 to 20 villages nearby use the natural water for daily use. But the authorities have taken no action against the erring owners. The fish were found dead on Sunday on Mukhi Govare Rivers that come from the hills of Malang Gad and adjoining areas. The river with natural water is used by many nearby villages. Local villagers from Brahman Karavale, in Ambernath rural area of Thane District claim that on Sunday morning, like a daily routine, different women from nearby villages reached the river for washing clothes. The woman called the local sarpanch and alerted citizens from the village, who later reached the spot. The locals captured a video of dead fishes. The video went viral across Thane district making it an issue alerting the authorities , said a local villager from Braman Karavale village. Thane: Hundreds of fish were found dead in the Ambernath river due to excessive water pollution allegedly caused due to discharge of waste released from nearby Poultry farms. The local villagers claim around 15 to 20 villages nearby use the natural water for daily use. But the authorities have taken no action against the erring owners. The fish were found dead on Sunday on Mukhi Govare rivers that come from the hills of Malang Gad and adjoining areas. The river with natural water is used by many nearby villages.

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waste also included chemicals in it that resulted in killing of the fish. We also got details from the poultry farm who confirmed the release of waste. Investigation is on, said an official from MPBC. Local villagers also alleged that many tribes collect the dead fish in plastic sack bags to further sell it in the market of Ambarnath, Ulhasnagar and Kalyan.

### **Maharashtra: Koli fishermen face a perfect storm: climate change, cyclones, and illegal fishing**

<https://scroll.in/article/997397/mumbais-koli-fishermen-face-a-perfect-storm-climate-change-cyclones-and-illegal-fishing>

On May 18, the morning after Cyclone Tauktae thundered through Mumbai, Janardhan Koli and other fishermen from Madh Koliwada trooped towards the shore to assess the damage to their boats. The cyclone was fiercer than any storm he had seen before, and Koli had braced himself for the worst. Still, he could not help but cry out in agony at the sight that awaited them at the shore. There were broken boats everywhere, Koli said. Two of them had completely split apart in the middle. Many were so damaged; it will cost lakhs to repair them. My own Trimurti had a big crack at the bottom, and many other smaller cracks. Trimurti is one of the two small vessels that the 42-year-old fisherman depends on for his livelihood. After the cyclone, the Maharashtra government offered fishing communities a compensation of Rs 25,000 for completely damaged boats and Rs 10,000 for partially damaged ones. This amount is a joke, says an indignant Koli. The government needs to do much more. Repairing Trimurti could cost up to Rs 2 lakh, which I don't have, he said. After a year of Covid-19 restrictions and high diesel prices hitting the fishing industry, his threadbare savings have been wiped out. These days I don't even have the money to buy proper rations for my family, said Koli, who lives with his wife and two young daughters in a 100-square foot room. Some days we just eat roti and chai.

In August, when the fishing season resumes after the annual two-month monsoon break, Koli will have just one functional boat to survive on. It means earning only half the profits he usually makes, and last year he made barely Rs 10,000 a month. But the impact of Cyclone Tauktae is not the only threat to Koli's precarious economic condition. One of his biggest fears is returning to sea and having yet another year of low fish catches. For the past five years, the number of fish available in coastal water has grown smaller and smaller, and good income is never a guarantee, said Koli. The sea is changing so much. Lately it feels like there are hardly any fish left. LED in the sea the depletion of fish stock in the Arabian Sea is a growing concern for Mumbai's

Kolis, an indigenous community of over two lakh fish workers living in villages like Madh Koliwada, along the city's coast. They practice small-scale coastal fishing in the shallower seas within a distance of 4-5 km from the shoreline.

For years, they have complained about indiscriminate fishing by large, mechanised bull trawlers that drag their nets across the sea bed to capture hundreds of kilograms of fish in one go. The phenomenon is not limited to India's western coast – data from the union government-run Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute points to a 9% decline in overall fish catch across India from 2017 to 2018. In the same period, however, Maharashtra saw a 22.5% drop in fish catch, from 3.81 lakh tonnes in 2017 to 2.95 lakh tonnes in 2018 – the lowest it had reached in 45 years. Data for the years after 2018 is not yet available, but Janardhan Koli and other fish workers claim the depletion of fish has only grown worse in and around Mumbai. The reasons for this trend are complex and varied – a combination of urban pollution, ill-advised development in coastal areas, rising sea temperatures triggered by global climate change. But what Mumbai's traditional fish workers are most irate about, however, is overfishing through unsustainable fishing practices. While indignation towards trawlers is still widespread, they now have a new target for their rage: LED fishers.

The term refers to large boat owners who lower artificial lights – often high-power LED lamps – into deep sea waters to attract shoals of fish during the night. When large numbers of fish gather, they are scooped up in nets. LED fishing is illegal in India, but it is still carried out by hundreds of boats in our waters, said Kiran Koli, a fish worker from Madh Koliwada and the general secretary of the Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti, an association of fish workers in the state. LED fishers end up catching massive loads including young baby fish, which is affecting the population of many types of fish in the sea. It has become a huge problem for traditional fishermen like us, he said. A banned practice artificial light-based fishing is relatively new in India, but has been widely used in Norway, Japan and several East Asian countries for a few decades. In 2010, this method of fishing brought in approximately 1.6% of global fish catch. In India, the use of artificial lights for commercial fishing began in the mid-2010s, largely in Karnataka and Goa. As it grew more popular, it triggered inevitable conflicts with traditional fishers who use bag nets, long lines, gill nets and other fishing practices that capture relatively smaller loads of fish. Light-based fishing aims to capture commercially valuable fish, but much like trawling, it leads to inadvertent capture of large numbers of juvenile fish (young ones that have not had a chance to spawn) and by-catch (fish that have low commercial value but serve as a food source for several other commercial fish).

In 2016, Goa was the first to ban the practice in its coastal waters. In November 2017, responding to pleas from traditional fishing groups, the central government issued a ban on

artificial light-based fishing across Indian coastal waters. In January 2019, even as fishing communities in several states complained that LED fishing was continuing in practice despite the ban, the Karnataka High Court passed an order allowing purse-seine boat operators in the state to carry out light-based fishing beyond 12 nautical miles from the shore. Purse seining is an equally controversial fishing method in which large rings of net are used to capture fish like tuna, mackerel and other specific fish species. Fewer fish, higher costs In Maharashtra, where the national ban on LED fishing is still in place, fish workers and environmentalists blame the state fisheries department for doing little to implement it. There are very few fishermen from Mumbai who practice LED fishing – most of the boats come from Raigad, Ratnagiri, and even Goa, said Ranjit Kale, a fish worker from Mumbai's Versova Koliwada and the chairman of the village's Vesava Nakwa Mandal, an association of large boat owners.

We have complained so many times to the authorities, but nothing is done to control them. According to environmental activist D Stalin, most LED fishers are wealthy, politically-connected and have boats that can travel at up to 16 nautical miles per hour. But the fisheries department's patrol boats operate at barely six nautical miles per hour. The department is understaffed and simply does not have enough infrastructure, arms, speedboats or political will to take on the LED fishers. Officials from Maharashtra's fisheries department did not respond to phone calls or email queries from Scroll.in. In Versova Koliwada, however, Ranjit Kale spoke at length about the impact of overfishing on the lives of traditional fish workers like him. I have three big boats that employ ten labourers each, so at least 30 families depend on the income from my boats, said Kale, sitting at the edge of Versova creek. Most of Mumbai's boat owners hire migrant labourers from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other north Indian states. Because of LED fishing and overfishing in general, there has been a definite drop in the number of fish available for catching in the past four or five years, and it has become harder and harder to earn any profits. A decade ago, Kale says he could take his boats out for a four or five-day fishing trip and return with a few hundred kilograms of catch.

Now we have to spend at least 14 or 15 days at sea in order to get the same size of catch, and sometimes it's not even that much. Spending more days at sea is an expensive affair, since boats require at least three times the amount of fuel than before. With the steep hike in diesel prices in the past two years, investing in low-yield fishing trips is becoming increasingly untenable for many Kolis. Diesel that used to cost Rs 54 per litre a couple of years ago are now at Rs 93 per litre. How many can afford that? said Kale. Our village has 300 boats, but because of high diesel prices, only 60-70 boats have been actively sent out since last year. According to activists like Ganesh Nakhawa, the more expensive fishing becomes, the more it is likely to trigger a disruptive cycle of overfishing through unsustainable fishing practices. The cost of fishing operations has increased so much, traditional fishers know that in order to make profits in the



industry, they too have to have larger catches, said Nakhawa, chairman of the West Coast Purse Seine Fishermen Welfare Association, who has been raising awareness about climate change, sustainable fishing and marine wildlife conservation in the Konkan region.

Down to four months a year while traditional deep sea fish workers are more directly affected by widespread LED fishing and trawling, small-scale coastal fish workers in Mumbai also have to deal with the impact of depleting fish stock in the deeper seas. Part of the reason is because fish in the shallower sea closer to the shore have also shrunk in population. There is so much plastic, sewage and chemical acid dumped into Mumbai's creeks, that the water we have traditionally fished in is almost completely polluted, said Balkrishna Koli, 55, a coastal fish worker from Madh Koliwada. Many of the fish that we used to find close to the shore are moving further away towards cleaner waters. In recent years, Balkrishna Koli claims he has seen crabs, lobsters, prawns and fish like Bombay duck, catfish and golden anchovies dwindle in population. This depletion has also forced small fish workers to halve the number of days they traditionally spent for seasonal fishing. Around 10 or 15 years ago, we used to fish for eight months a year, said Balkrishna Koli. Now, we go for just four months – September, October, April and May – and even then the catch is getting smaller and the costs of staying in business are rising. Like Balkrishna Koli, many coastal fish workers in Madh have no other vocations or businesses that can bring them an income in the remaining months of the year.

To make up for this, the residents of Madh Koliwada have devised a system in which large boat owners auction their catch to small fish workers instead of directly selling it in wholesale markets. After buying the fish from the bigger fishermen, we are the ones who sell it in the markets and keep the profits, if there are any, said Balkrishna Koli. This has helped to sustain us during the months when we don't go fishing. So if bigger fishermen don't have enough fish to catch, it will mean less income for us too. Missing 'signs' of the cyclone the incomes of small-scale fish workers are, of course, also increasingly threatened by ambitious infrastructure projects along Mumbai's coast. They include the proposed statue of Maratha warrior king Shivaji off the coast of south Mumbai and the controversial 10-km coastal road for which reclamation of vast portions of the sea is rapidly underway. Kolis in Mumbai have been vociferously opposing such projects, which will not only swallow the shallow seas that coastal fish workers depend on, but also alter the tide patterns and currents that govern the behaviour of fish. This would exacerbate the effects of global climate change that have already caused India's coastal water temperatures to rise by over half a degree in the past three decades. Warmer oceans are linked to a rise in extreme weather events, and experts have predicted that the Arabian Sea is likely to witness more frequent cyclones in the years to come. For Kolis who are still reeling from the devastation caused by Cyclone Tauktae, this is a frightening prospect. Tauktae was the biggest storm we have seen in our lives, and none of us could have predicted it would get so bad, said

Kiran Koli of Madh Koliwada. The strangest thing is, this year we did not see any of the natural isharas [signs] that normally signal the arrival of a storm. His reference is to ancestral wisdom that has been passed down for generations in the region's fishing communities.

One signal, for instance, is spotting large shoals of silver pomfrets close to the surface of the water five or six days before a storm. Our ancestors used to say, ye machhi toofan ke aage daudti hai – these fish run before a storm, said Kiran Koli. We also usually see many small crabs climbing on to boulders before a storm. But we did not see any of these before Tauktae, and we have no idea why. According to fisheries researcher Siddharth Chakravarty, this odd absence of natural storm signals could be symptomatic of the unusual nature of the cyclone in May. A lot of the recent cyclonic storms have deviated from their usual patterns, said Chakravarty, a researcher with the National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers. Because cyclones are intensifying and forming much faster, their paths are different from traditional cyclone paths. Perhaps this is why Cyclone Tauktae messed with the traditional knowledge of fish workers.

### **Maharashtra: Sanctioned Rs 141 crore to enhance the community's resilience to climate change**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-sanctions-rs-141cr-for-climate-change-proj/articleshow/84052193.cms>

In view of rising sea levels and its impact on coastal communities, the Maharashtra government on Thursday sanctioned Rs 141 crore to enhance the community's resilience to climate change. The project will be implemented in the coastal districts of Sindhurg, Ratnagiri, Raigad and Palghar up to December 2025. This year we shall work on rejuvenating 500 hectares of degraded mangrove areas in these districts. Another 35 hectares of degraded coral reefs in Malvan taluka in Sindhurga will be rejuvenated by translocating healthy coral communities to these areas, said Neenu Somaraj, deputy conservator of forests (Mangrove Cell). Around 40 villages have been identified for training and providing alternate livelihoods. Initially Panvel and Uran had been selected for the programme but had to be dropped as the coastal areas have been extensively developed. These were replaced with Alibaug and Shrivardhan in Raigad district and Guhagar in Ratnagiri district. In the next couple of years in all 3,100 hectares of degraded mangrove land will be rejuvenated. Mangroves serve as a natural barrier against storms and tidal waters. The agriculture department will carry out watershed development programme for 600 hectares. 'Enhancing Climate Resilience of Indian Coastal Communities' is a United Nations Development Programme – Green Climate Fund activity. Two states along the eastern coast – Andhra Pradesh and Odisha and Maharashtra on the western coast have been selected for this programme.

The Maharashtra government will receive Rs 86 crore as grant from the GCF and the state in turn will provide Rs 141 crore spread over the next five years. While the forest department will expend Rs 100 crore, the agriculture department will provide approximately Rs 19 crore and the fisheries department Rs 17 crore. The mangrove conservation cell plans to set up crab hatcheries in Sindhudurg to help create sustainable livelihoods. The others being training villagers to cultivate fish to used in fish tanks for display, fish fertilisation centre, fish food production house and dairy centre and paddy cultivation. We shall be creating a network of institutions for coastal governance. The objective is to integrate the perspective of the public and private sectors into adaptation to climate change, plans and resolutions, said Somaraj.

### **Maharashtra: State to restore mangroves and coral reefs with UNDP aid**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-state-to-restore-mangroves-and-coral-reefs-with-undp-aid>

The Maharashtra Government will implement a coastal area management project funded by the United Nations Development Programme-Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GCF). This will be implemented through innovative co-management techniques and will include cross-sectoral planning. The project will be implemented in 11 talukas of four coastal districts of the state – Sindhudurg (Devgad, Malvan, Vengurla), Ratnagiri (Dapoli, Guhagar, Rajapur and Ratnagiri), Raigad (Shrivardhan and Alibag) and Palghar (Palghar, Dahanu). It will include mangrove restoration and maintenance of restored mangroves for three years (3,100 hectares; ha), coral restoration and their maintenance for three years (35 ha) and degraded watershed restoration and its maintenance, also for three years (600 ha). The duration of the project will be till December 31, 2025. Livelihood activities included in the project are crab farming in mangroves, mussel farming, oyster farming, crab hatchery, ornamental fish farming / hatchery, seaweed farming, SRI (System of Rice Intensification) for paddy cultivation, fish value-added products, fish food production unit, fish drying / smoking unit and apiculture.

According to the government resolution issued on Thursday by forest department principal secretary, BC Gopal Reddy, the total approved plan for the project is \$130.26 million, of which GCF's share will be \$43.41 million. The state government will receive a total grant of \$11.43 million from GCF, out of which \$2.11 million will be the project management cost and \$9.32 million will be for ecosystem restoration and livelihood initiatives. The co-finance commitment of the state government was expected to be \$26.85 million. However, it has limited it to \$19 million (Rs 140.90 crore), as it will not be receiving grants from GCF as per the original outline of the project. In case of change in US dollar-rupee conversion rate during the period of the externally assisted project, the forest department shall be bound for taking approval of the finance department, if the amount of co-finance exceeds the sanctioned amount of Rs 140.90

crore.

## **Maharashtra: State food processing policy – Road ahead**

<http://www.fnbnews.com/Top-News/maharashtra-state-food-processing-policy--road-ahead-64439>

Maharashtra is one of the most industrialised States in the country. The two big cities, Mumbai and Pune are the major manufacturing hubs in India. Apart from this Maharashtra is also one of the forerunners in terms of agricultural produce. The state is blessed with nine agro-climatic zones, typical monsoon climate and diverse weather conditions that facilitate the cultivation of different agriculture crops. Some of the major crops produced in the state include rice, pearl millet, pulses, jowar, soybean, groundnut, sugarcane, sunflower, cotton. Banana, mango, grapes, onion, tomato, citrus, pomegranate, papaya, orange, etc. are some of the major fruits and vegetables grown in Maharashtra. The grape capital of India, Nashik contributes to more than 50% of the grape exports of India. The state holds the top position in production of fisheries in the country.

Advantages of Maharashtra since the state has a strong presence in agriculture and abundant availability of raw materials prepare a ground for flourishing the food processing industry in the state. To the extent that the Maharashtra Industrial Policy-2019 has identified the food processing sector as one of the thrust sectors for the state. Things that work in favour of the state are:

- World-class infrastructure, abundant availability of raw materials and human resources
- The capital city Mumbai has major corporate firms and financial institutions
- 2nd largest populated state with abundant workforce
- The state is the largest contributor to India's economy
- 720 km of coastal line and 9 agro-climatic zones
- Robust logistic facilities, connectivity with all major cities in the country

In all there are four major factors that play a role in the growth of the food processing sector: A strong domestic demand due to changing lifestyle and food habits due to increased disposable income. Secondly, the high level of agricultural production-- wide variety of crops, large livestock base, inland water bodies and a long coastline aids in rise of marine production. Thirdly, proximity to key export destinations and greater integration with the global economy has increased the export opportunities.

Lastly, there have been proactive government policy and support for the sector. Government initiatives to push the sector to promote the food processing industries in the state, Government of Maharashtra provides a lot of incentives to the food processing sector. Fruits and vegetables, dairy sector, fishery, meats, poultry, rice milling, pulse processing are the sectors eligible for the schemes.

- Electricity duty exemption
- 50% land-related concession
- Stamp duty and registration fee exemption
- 5% subsidy on capital equipment for technology upgradation

5% interest subsidy on loans for fixed capital investment for 5 years • Financial assistance to setup for new plant • Monetary aid for modernization and expansion of the food processing industries Development of related infrastructure Maharashtra has an immense opportunity for the food processing industry. It has eight food parks at Aurangabad, Nagur, Latur, Ahmednagar, Nasik, Osmanabad, Ratnagiri, and Nanded with world-class facilities for cold storage, test laboratory, warehousing, and advanced packaging. Maharashtra is also home to three wine parks and three floriculture parks. In the NABARD status report for year 2015-16 it was stated that the food processing units would help Maharashtra to process 40 per cent vegetables and 30 per cent fruits, which are wasted due to lack of infrastructure.

The inadequate food processing sector also is a primary reason for poor remunerations farmers get. They cannot bargain in absence of robust market linkages. In 2016, with Centre's decision to allow 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the food processing sector, the agro-industrial investments in Maharashtra got a big boost. Maharashtra has been listed by the Union Ministry of Food Processing among the states that have potential to derive maximum benefits from policy reforms in food processing. Among the four states, including Haryana, Punjab, and Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra leads with 40 per cent produce in horticulture produce in the country. In a recent move to provide more benefits to agro-based food processing units, Maharashtra Government took the decision to relax the eligibility criterion to help more firms to be considered as large and mega projects.

The move was aimed at providing the benefit of industrial promotion subsidy scheme. Grading the criterion has been made based on the areas where the investment will be made; the government said has identified that maximum benefits to be given to units investing in districts such as Osmanabad, Nandurbar, Gadchiroli, and Hingoli. Road Ahead Recently Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray announced setting up of a food processing industry on 500 acres of land and a skill development complex in Aurangabad district. To be set up in Bidkin (Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor), about 100 acre will be reserved for women entrepreneurs. Such developments, not only strengthen the industrialists and farmers through development, but also the new industries open up more job opportunities.

A skill development complex will also be set up in Shendra for local youth. As compared to other states, Maharashtra is among the major beneficiaries of Kisan SAMPADA (scheme for agro-marine processing and development of agro-processing clusters) introduced by Centre. Going forward, there are several benefits of the adoption of food safety and quality assurance mechanisms such as Total Quality Management (TQM) including ISO 9000, ISO 22000, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Hygienic Practices (GHP) by the food processing industry. Such measures can enable the

industry to adhere to stringent hygiene and quality norms to protect consumer health and prepare the industry to face global competition. These initiatives also enhance product acceptance by overseas buyers and keep the food processing industry technologically abreast of international best practices.

### **Maharashtra: Not in consonance with CRZ laws, MCZMA stalls Aksa Beach redevelopment plan**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/not-in-consonance-with-crz-laws-mczma-stalls-aksa-beach-redevelopment-plan-7381968/>

The state coastal zone management authority has stalled the Maharashtra Maritime Board's plan to undertake a makeover of Aksa Beach in the western suburbs. Under the proposal, which had come up before the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) earlier in the month, the MMB had proposed to repair bunds, reconstruct pathway, construct parapet wall and provide solar lights for a stretch of 300 metres. The MMB had later modified the proposal and sought permission for a seafront development. They proposed creating a garden and play area for children, parking lot, food plaza, lawns and toilet, gyms, space for yoga, wooden shacks, bamboo sheds and volleyball courts. The project was discussed at a meeting with MCZMA officials in November last year where the latter had asked the MMB to state whether the changes were as per the Coastal Regulation Zone of Environment Protection Act. The MMB has now observed that activities like food plaza, restaurant, gymkhana, and wooden shacks are not permitted on the seaward side. The MCZMA has also said that activities like landscaping, playground, recreational ground and ground will be allowed as permitted under CRZ laws. Earlier, the MCZMA had stopped the beautification of Versova beach. Environmentalist Harish Pandey of the New Link Road Association said, Beaches are open public places and citizens of Mumbai have right to use this open space for their entertainment and no construction and concretization is allowed as per CRZ norms. It will serve no public interest.

### **Maharashtra: NGT forms panel to study CRZ nod for JNPT expansion**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/navi-mumbai/navi-mumbai-ngt-forms-panel-to-study-crz-nod-for-jnpt-expansion/articleshow/83895418.cms>

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has constituted a four-member committee to go into the complaints of violations of Coastal Regulatory Zone violations in the expansion of JNPT Container Terminal-IV and submit an independent factual report in three months. Hearing a complaint filed by the Uran based fisherman Dilip Pandurang Koli and others against the union government challenging the manner in which an Environmental Clearance (EC) was granted to JNPT for the expansion on October 9, 2019, the western zonal bench of NGT headed by Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel also issued a notice to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Control (MoEF&CC). The four-member committee comprises representatives from the ministry, Maharashtra State Pollution Control Board, the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA), and the Raigad district magistrate. The appellants argued that the fragile ecology of the area has been subject to an onslaught of environmentally destructive activities by JNPT.

The appeal challenged the joint CRZ and Environmental Clearance granted to JNPT by the MoEF & CC, on the ground that it was done on the wrong footing that the CRZ area consisted of the project site is CRZ-IV, while it actually falls within CRZ-IA, where no fresh construction activities are permitted as per the CRZ Notification of 2011. The appellant said the mandatory stage of public consultation under the EIA Notification, 2006 has been foregone, without any valid basis and JNPT had violated the conditions of previous Environmental Clearances. The application also said there has been a rich history of fishing activities in Uran taluka, and the project impact assessment that preceded the grant of the impugned joint EC and CRZ Clearance has disregarded this completely. The original EC was issued in July 2008, extended in February 2014 and the impugned CRZ clearance was issued in July 2019 which was challenged now. NGT noted the grievance of the appellants that the JNPT expansion area has been identified as ecologically sensitive area by the MCZMA and falls under the CRZ-1A as per the coastal zone map. No construction is permitted in CRZ-1A.

The reclamation that is proposed to be carried out for the balance work of the 4th container terminal will seriously impact fishing activities being carried out by traditional fisherfolk that have a large presence in the area. The fragile ecology of the area has been subject to an onslaught of environmentally destructive activities. The expansion of the Jawaharlal Nehru Port over the years has seen wetlands destroyed, mangroves razed and rich fishing grounds destroyed. Deepening and widening of the navigational channel, dredging, blocking the tidal flow of water in the course of the expansion of the Port has caused considerable damage to the natural ecosystem of the area. The rich and diverse ecology of the area has been the subject of several

reports and studies. The NGT Bench opined that response of the concerned statutory authorities and ascertainment of ground factual situation is required and hence issued order for constituting the committee. Justices Sudhir Agarwal, M. Sathyanarayanan and Brijesh Sethi were the judicial members, while Dr Nagin Nanda, was the expert member of the Bench that heard the application and passed the order on June 23. Next hearing will be held on October 27 after the receipt of the committee report. The applicants pointed out that there were discrepancies in the environment compliance reports that were not discussed at the MCZMA meeting before issuing the clearance in July 2019. Welcoming the order, environmentalist B N Kumar, director of NatConnect Foundation, expressed the hope that the truth would come out.

### **Maharashtra: Industry minister assures rehabilitation of fishers who suffered losses due to Cyclone Tauktae**

<https://en.gaonconnection.com/maharashtra-fishing-community-losses-kiran-koli-cyclone-tauktae-damage-boats/>

In a meeting held with the representatives of a pressure group that works for the welfare of the fishing community, state Minister for Industries and Mining Subhash Desai , on June 17, assured that the fishers who have been hit by the cyclone Tauktae will be provided with financial aid and rehabilitation. The officials including Fisheries Commissioner Atul Patne have been ordered to provide protection to fishermen under crop insurance in the next fishing season. They are also serious about your problems. We will extend all possible help, Desai told the representatives from Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti (MMKS). Can't fishers be protected under crop insurance schemes? Let us know if there are any problems, let's fix the problem immediately and apply, he asked the officials in the meeting. MMKS general secretary Kiran Koli, who attended the meeting, told Gaon Connection that at least seven fishers have died or disappeared when the cyclone Tauktae made a landfall on May 17. A total of 156 fishing boats with nets and fishing equipment were destroyed and 1,027 boats were partially damaged, he said.

The state government has declared meager assistance to them. This assistance is insufficient and will not rehabilitate fishers. We want the government to put aside the obsolete laws in this regard and rehabilitate those who are displaced due to cyclone, Koli added. He also informed Gaon Connection that the state Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Vijay Vadettiwar had sent a proposal of Rs 10.40 billion to the Central government. The central government has provided only Rs 2.68 billion. In the meeting, Ramkrishna Tandel, MMKS working president told that the amount released for the fishers so far is not enough to rehabilitate them. Only Rs 11.75 crore (101.75 million) has been given to fishermen. It will not rehabilitate them. The state government should



provide financial assistance of Rs 3, 00,000 for non-mechanical, Rs 500,000 for four cylinder boats, Rs 10,00,000 for six cylinder boats and Rs 10,00,000 for relatives of the dead and missing fishermen, demanded Kelly. Fishing communities in the coastal states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa and Karnataka suffered the worst brunt of the cyclonic storm in terms of loss of livelihoods.

### **Maharashtra: Cabinet nod to climate fund plan for coastal restoration**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/maharashtra-cabinet-nod-for-climate-fund-plan-for-coastal-restoration-101623436296467.html>

The Maharashtra cabinet has given its assent to the implementation of a Global Climate Fund initiative — Enhancing Climate Resilience of India’s Coastal Communities — in four districts on the Konkan coast, including Palghar, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg and Raigad. The six-year project, which is funded partly by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) through the United Nations Development Programme, partly by the Union environment ministry and partly by the state government, will aim to restore about 3,350 hectares of mangroves, 35 hectares of corals and 400 hectares of coastal watershed area in these districts, in addition to creating climate-adaptive livelihoods for coastal communities, in the form of aquaculture projects. The state government in its cabinet meeting on Thursday appointed the additional principal chief conservator of forests (APCCF), mangrove cell, as the state projector director, allowing him to open up a bank account to receive funding from the GCF.

Maharashtra’s contribution is about \$19 million, while the MoEFCC is allocating another \$20 million. The state governments of Orissa and Andhra, where the project is also being implemented, are contributing \$20 million each, while the GCF is providing \$43 million in all, said Virendra Tiwari, APCCF, mangrove cell. Out of \$43 million, Maharashtra will be getting a share of 11.43\$. The targeted areas for the project in Maharashtra are Devgad, Malvan, Vengurla, Dapoli, Guhagar, Rajapur, Panvel, Uran, and Dahanu and Palghar. Initiatives in each of the four districts will be overseen by district-level steering committees (which are yet to be created), which in turn, will report to a state-level steering committee (headed by the chief secretary). We have already submitted an annual work plan to UNDP. That is awaiting the chief secretary’s nod before work can start, Tiwari said. Though specific numbers for Maharashtra were not provided, the scheme aims to create employment opportunities for 1.7 million beneficiaries across three states, of which, 50% are targeted to be women. Ornamental fisheries, crab culture, mussel farming, seaweed farming and oyster farming are some of the livelihood opportunities that the scheme intends to create over the next six years.

For this purpose, the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has already provided the mangrove cell with a list of creeks and inlets along the coast which may be conducive for

these activities. We will also need to conduct an assessment of where exactly the mangrove and coral restoration initiatives need to be implemented, for which an appropriate expert organisation will be engaged. While we have some experience with mangrove restoration, coral restoration requires specialists. The idea is to translocate corals into suitable environments and let them grow naturally. Local communities will be consulted and involved in the eco-restoration efforts, said Tiwari.

### **Maharashtra: Nod for project to protect mangroves, boost eco-based livelihood for locals**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-nod-for-project-to-protect-mangroves-boost-eco-based-livelihood-for-locals/articleshow/83416254.cms>

The state cabinet approved the project to preserve mangroves and coral reefs as well as encourage eco-based livelihood for locals. The project will be implemented in 11 talukas of four coastal districts including Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Raigad and Palghar. A high-power committee under state chief secretary Sitaram Kunte will monitor implementation of the project. The project ‘Enhancing Climate Resilience of India’s Coastal Communities’ is being implemented in three states—Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha—with partial funding from UNDP and Green Climate Fund. Bolstered by the success of the pilot project in Sindhudurg with livelihood programmes that included crab and fish farming, Siri paddy farming and mangroves tourism, the state has made a commitment of \$19 million to the \$130 million project that will run until December 31, 2025.

### **Maharashtra, Odisha and West Bengal: Why mangroves matter**

<https://www.thehindu.com/children/why-mangroves-matter/article34743502.ece>

Last month, India was hit by back-to-back cyclones. While cyclone Tauktae formed in the Arabian Sea and affected coastal districts in Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat, cyclone Yaas formed in the Bay of Bengal and ravaged parts of Odisha and West Bengal. Scientists highlighted the impact of climate change in the intensification and frequency of tropical storms that hit India. And they also brought our attention to the role played by mangrove forests in reducing the impact in Odisha, West Bengal and Mumbai. Although there were losses to lives and property, it was highlighted by experts that mangroves safeguarded people and the inland against the severe storm surges of the cyclones.

While Mumbai has a mangrove cover of 66 sq km, Odisha and West Bengal boast luxuriant mangrove cover along the Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district and the Sundarbans respectively. What are mangrove forests and why are they considered to be beneficial to coastal communities? Let's find out in this Five Ws and One H. What is a mangrove? A mangrove is a small tree or shrub that grows along coastlines, taking root in salty sediments, often underwater. The word 'mangrove' may refer to the habitat as a whole or to the trees and shrubs in the mangrove swamp. Mangroves are flowering trees, belonging to the families Rhizophoraceae, Acanthaceae, Lythraceae, Combretaceae, and Arecaceae. The upper trunk, including the branches and leaves, of a mangrove tree lives completely above the waterline, while the lower trunk and the large root system are partly covered by seawater. Many species have roots diverging from stems and branches and penetrating the soil some distance away from the main stem (like banyan trees). What are some of the special features of mangroves?

- Saline environment: A speciality of mangroves is that they can survive under extreme hostile environment such as high salt and low oxygen conditions. Mangrove trees contain a complex salt filtration system and complex root system to cope with salt water immersion and wave action. The roots filter out 90% of the salt they come into contact with in the saline and brackish water they call home. Some species of mangrove excrete salt through glands in their leaves.
- Low oxygen: Underground tissue of any plant needs oxygen for respiration. But in a mangrove environment, the oxygen in soil is limited or nil. Hence the mangrove root system absorbs oxygen from the atmosphere. Mangroves have special roots for this purpose called breathing roots or pneumatophores. These roots have numerous pores through which oxygen enters the underground tissues.
- Mangroves, like desert plants, store fresh water in thick succulent leaves. A waxy coating on the leaves seals in water and minimises evaporation.
- Mangroves are viviparous – their seeds germinate while still attached to the parent tree. Once germinated, the seedling grows into a propagule. The mature propagule then drops into the water and gets transported to a different spot, eventually taking root in a solid ground. How do mangrove forests help protect against strong cyclones?
- Mangrove forests act as natural barriers against storm surge, coastal flooding and sea level rise. Their intricate root system stabilises the coastline, reducing erosion from storm surges. Together with the tree trunks, they work like speed-breakers to slow down the tides.

- They protect shorelines from damaging winds and waves. A series of studies in the early 2000s discovered that mangroves with an average height of 6-10 metres could shorten a cyclone's waves by 60%.
- Mangroves also help prevent erosion by stabilising sediments with their tangled root systems.
- A 2013 study of mangroves in Florida estimated that a mangrove forest could reduce the effects of a Category 5 storm to the intensity and effects of a Category 3 storm. What are the other benefits to the environment?
- Mangrove thickets maintain water quality by filtering pollutants and trapping sediments originating from land.
- They provide habitat for a diverse array of terrestrial organisms. Their branches provide homes for lizards, snakes and nesting birds. Many species of coastal and offshore fish and shellfish rely exclusively on mangroves as their breeding, spawning, and hatching grounds.
- Mangroves also have a big impact on climate. Mangroves are powerhouses when it comes to carbon storage. Studies indicate that mangroves can sequester (lock away) greater amount of carbon than other trees in the peat soil beneath. They store this carbon for thousands of years.
- Many people living in and around mangroves depend on them for their livelihood. The trees are a source of wood for construction and fuel. The ecosystem provides local fishermen with a rich supply of fish, crabs and shellfish. The ecosystem also supports tourism. Where are mangrove ecosystems found? Mangroves can be found in over 118 countries and territories in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. Asia has the largest coverage of the world's mangroves, followed by Africa, North and Central America, Oceania and South America. Approximately 75% of the world's mangrove forests are found in just 15 countries. In India: The deltas of the Ganges, Mahanadi, Krishna, Godavari, and the Cauvery rivers contain mangrove forests. The backwaters in Kerala have a high density of mangrove forest. The Sundarbans in West Bengal is the largest mangrove region in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

It spans from the Hooghly River in West Bengal to the Baleswar River in Bangladesh. The Bhitarkanika mangrove system in Odisha is India's second largest mangrove forest. Pichavaram in Tamil Nadu has a vast expanse of water covered with mangrove forests. It is home to many aquatic bird species. What are the threats to mangroves? Scientists estimate that at least one third of all mangrove forests have been lost during the last few decades. Coastal development, including construction of shrimp farms, hotels, and other structures, is the primary threat to mangroves. Mangrove forests are cleared to make room for agricultural land and human settlements. • Mangrove trees are used for firewood, construction wood, charcoal production,

and animal fodder. In some parts of the world, there has been overharvesting which is no longer sustainable. • Overfishing, pollution, and rising sea levels are the other threats to mangrove forests and their ecosystem.

### **Maharashtra: Ban imposed from June 1 to July 31 on fishing activities using mechanical boats**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/civic/fishing-is-banned-in-the-coastal-areas-of-the-state-from-june-1-to-july-31-65313>

Maharashtra State Fisheries Minister, Aslam Sheikh, on Tuesday, June 1, 2021, said that the use of mechanical fishing boats will be banned in the state from June 1 to July 31, 2021. The decision was taken to protect fish stocks and the fishermen during monsoons. As per reports, the months of June and July provide a fertile environment for fish to breed and keeping this in mind, the ban has been implemented on fishing during this period to protect the fish seed production and save the fish stock. On the other hand, coastal areas in Maharashtra, every year, face torrential rainfall and many fishermen lose their lives and finances due to stormy weather. Considering these factors, an order was issued by the Fisheries Department which clarified that starting June 1 to July 31, 2021, bans have been imposed on mechanical fishing boats up to 12 nautical miles from the coast of the state.

However, the fishing ban will not apply to non-mechanical boats and if the same is being done in the traditional manner. Meanwhile, if any mechanical fishing boat is found fishing in the waters, during the monsoon fishing ban period, the same will be confiscated under section 14 of the Maharashtra Maritime Fisheries Regulation Act, 1981 and the provisions of section 17. Moreover, maximum punishment will be imposed as well. A few weeks later, the fishermen from some coastal regions in Maharashtra requested the state to postpone the ban from June 15, 2021, as they were not able to earn money or run business during the recent cyclone. Furthermore, the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has also affected the business in a harsh manner.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen complain about oil spill around stranded barge**

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2021/india/fishermen-complain-about-oil-spill-around-stranded-barge.html>

Twelve days after cyclone Tauktae wreaked havoc in and around the ONGC's Mumbai High oil fields as it passed to Gujarat, oil spill has been reported by local fishermen along the Palghar coast in Maharashtra, from one of the barges that ran aground. Having noticed the oil spill around GAL Constructor that got stuck in the rocky shores of Vadrai, the local fishermen have

reported the matter to the Satpati coastal police station. Vadrai Machimar Sarvodaya Society chairman and a member of Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti Manendra Arekar, has flagged the issue, said: We estimate that is at least 80,000 litres of diesel, besides large quantities of lubricants and grease on board the barge. It is 12 days since the barge ran aground, no agency concerned has turned up here to remove diesel and oil board the barrage. As a result, diesel and oil are leaking in a big way from the barrage into the sea. We have already noticed an oil spill in the water around the stranded barrage. We anticipate a big ecological problem in the days to come.

Till July 31, the Maharashtra government has imposed a ban on fishing in the area; because of the south west monsoon As a consequence a lot of fishermen depend on fishing in the water along the shores. Already some people have started complaining about the smell in the fish that we catch along the shore. Before long, the oil spill will affect the fish in the area. If no steps are taken to address the oil spill issue, the livelihoods of fishermen in the area will be severely affected. Hence, I appeal to the state government and other authorities to remove diesel and oil on board the barge immediately and also do something about the oil spill in the area, Arekar said. On their part, the local fishermen have already reported the matter to the Satpati coast police station which has in turn reached out to the contractors and owners of the barge for containment oil spill in the area. In a related development, reacting to the concerns expressed by the local fishermen about the oil spill in their area, the Indian Coast Guard said that the barge was carrying 78,000 litres of high flash high speed diesel and not crude oil. No breach of the oil tank is reported... Afcons Infrastructure Ltd has arranged M/s Seacare which has laid a 400 mts boom around the barge while M/s Shree Krishna is undertaking hull repairs. Besides, M/s Smith & Coy has been hired for removal of the vessel, the ICG said.

The ICG said that its Guard helicopters had reported silvery oil sheen of 50 meters width. No oil spill has been reported on shore now and continuous liaison has been maintained with agent of GAL Constructor, an ICG spokesperson said Sorbent pads have been laid along the boom. It will be recovered with bing oil with the help of fishing boats, the spokesperson said. Of the total 350 floating and fixed assets in the Mumbai High region, five were affected in the cyclone that passed the Maharashtra coast on May 17. The five floating vessels comprised Papaa-305, n accommodation barge with 261 persons on board, GAL Constructor barge with 176 persons on board, its anchor handling vessel Varaprada with 13 persons on board, drill ship Sagar Bhushan with 101 persons on board and construction barge Support Station with 202 persons on board. A total of 714 persons were on board these vessels of which 628 were saved while 86 lost their lives. The deceased oil workers were from Papaa-305 and Varaprada. All those on board the GAL Constructor were rescued by Indian Navy and Coast Guard.

## **Maharashtra: New lighthouse in Uttan spells relief for fishermen**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/new-lighthouse-in-uttan-spells-relief-for-fishermen>

After running into rough weathers for nearly two years, the new light house in Uttan has finally become operational at the confluence of Vasai creek in the Arabian Sea which is popularly known as Khutacha Raasta. Thane MP Rajan Vichare inaugurated the lighthouse on Wednesday evening in the presence of legislator Geeta Jain, municipal corporators Sharmila Bagaji, Aliaz Bandy and fishing community leader Bernard D'mello. The lighthouse has spelled a much-needed respite from boat mishaps for the fishing community based in the Uttan-Arnala coastal belt. Notably, the lone lighthouse in the region which has been lying in a heavily damaged state had stopped functioning several years ago. Since then fishermen from the coastal areas including Uttan, Pali, Chowk, Vasai, Naigaon, Khochiwada and Arnala had a harrowing time while navigating their boats and fishing vessels on the dangerous channel of the coastline, some meeting with fatal mishaps and blind crashes owing to the presence of hazardous reefs.

In response to pleas by the local fishing community, Thane parliamentarian Rajan Vichare had followed up on the issue and procured a nod for the Rs. 56 lakh lighthouse project from the District Planning and Development Council (DPDC) with Maritime Board as the executing agency. The lighthouse will now ensure a safe passage for fishermen, who were facing a harrowing and dangerous task while passing this stretch of the coastline, said Bernard D'mello. Commissioned more than four decades ago, the lighthouse which was upgraded in 1998, 2002 and 2006 had a luminous range of 19 nautical miles, emitting light twice every 20 seconds, officials said.

## **Maharashtra: Minister Shaikh assures compensation to cyclone-hit fishermen of Palghar**

<http://www.uniindia.com/maha-minister-shaikh-assures-compensation-to-cyclone-hit-fishermen-of-palghar/west/news/2400598.html>

Maharashtra Minister Aslam Shaikh on Thursday assured the fishermen from the district that he would get them compensation from the government for the losses suffered due to the recent cyclonic storm Tauktae. The Minister for Fisheries and Ports Development gave this assurance after touring the district and taking stock of the damage caused by the cyclone. He said that the fishermen in the district have suffered huge losses due to the damage to their boats and houses by the cyclone. He said that the cyclone has adversely hit the fishermen and as their source of income should not be affected he would make efforts to get them compensation from

the government. Mr Shaikh visited the villages of Murbe, Tembe, Usali, Bhudwal and Kore among others and took stock of the damage.

### **Maharashtra: Cyclone Tauktae hits fish supply to Pune, retail prices double**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/others/cyclone-tauktae-hits-fish-supply-to-pune-retail-prices-double-101621434273209.html>

PUNE Retail prices of fish doubled in the city in the wake of a lack of fresh stock arriving from coastal districts hit by Cyclone Tauktae over the last three days. The prices of pomfret, prawns, and kingfish have all doubled. Before the cyclone hit the state, the price was for one kg of pomfret at the fish markets in Nana peth and Camp (Shivaji market) were between Rs.700 and Rs.800 per kg. Now the cost of a kg of pomfret is Rs.1,800. Similarly, one kg of prawns was selling at Rs.600 per kg. It is now selling at Rs1, 200 per kg. Tausif Shaikh, fish vendor at the Camp market, said, There is a shortage of supply from the coastal areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat, so prices have gone up. Sandeep Pardeshi , a fish vendor from Nana peth said, there is short supply of fish hence the high prices. Now customers are demanding river fish varieties. Fisheries along the west coast have all almost completely shut. We hope fisheries on the East coast, from Howrah, West Bengal, will ease the supply situation. Demand for fish is high in the city, he said. Alex Sebastian, a fish lover, said, Fish is out of reach of the middle class. Instead of buying pomfret, I prefer to buy cheaper varieties. I hope the prices come as the cyclone has passed.

### **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 tree 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: Fishermen bear brunt of storm too, many lose fishing boats**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-fishermen-bear-brunt-of-storm-too-many-lose-fishing-boats>

The cyclone Tauktae which unleashed its wrath on Mumbaikars on Monday had caused heavy damage to the properties of the fishermen of the city as well. The huge tidal waves and gusty winds not only damaged the fishing boats but several boats have gone missing after the high tide receded in the afternoon. Members of the fishermen community said, after getting the cyclone warning from the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday, not a single fisherman ventured into the sea for fishing. Many of their boats have been damaged despite taking all the precautions. Ganesh Jagtap, a member of the community and general secretary of Macchimar Sarhoday Sahakari Society (MSSS) in Colaba, said that on Monday he had seen the most ferocious tidal waves in his life. All the boats were anchored in the shallow waters from Saturday, but on Monday, the tidal waves were so strong that the anchors got broken and the boats drifted away in the sea, Jagtap told FPJ. He mentioned that there are approximately 300 boats with the society and as soon as the fishermen saw the boats drifting away, they chased them in smaller boats.

Considering the heavy tidal waves and gusty winds, they couldn't go far away. However they managed to save 2-3 small boats, as of now many boats are still missing and we will be able to analyse the exact figures of loss not before tomorrow, he said. Fishermen, who park their boats at the Haji Ali creek, blamed the ongoing coastal road project for their losses rather than the cyclone. The fishermen said, due to the reclamation works, their original hangar for parking the boats has been destroyed and the area where they park their boats now, don't have safety measures. After the warning was issued we asked the engineers if we can temporarily park the boat on the reclaimed land, however the engineers present there had denied our requests, said Allaudin Niyaz Khan, a fisherman at Haji Ali. Khan said there are more than 40-50 families who are solely dependent on fishing. He said till Monday afternoon as many as 12-15 boats either went partially missing or got damaged.

We didn't just lose the boats, all our fishing nets and equipment were also kept inside the boat and everything got washed away due to the tidal waves, he said. Fishermen of the Khar Danda Jetty said that as many as 20 small boats have sunk in the water with five to six boats still

missing by Monday afternoon. We had 30-40 boats parked at the shallow waters out of which many small boats have got sunk under water, some of the boats have been partially damaged while the remaining of them are still missing, said Chintamani Niwate - member of the community. Shiv Sena MP Rahul Shewale visited the affected fisherfolk at Trombay and Mahul Koliwada and inspected their losses due to the cyclone. Shewale took to his Twitter and announced that he had demanded compensation from the state government for the fishermen. I have demanded the state government to compensate for the loss of the fishermen, whose boats and houses got destroyed in the cyclone, Shewale tweeted.

**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 Coromondel, 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: Cyclone Tauktae: Storm turns 'extremely severe', heavy rain**

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/cyclone-tauktae-live-updates-rain-alert-for-mumbai-ndrf-teams-on-standby-landfall-in-gujarat-11621210927832.html>

At least one person has been killed and two injured in Maharashtra's Raigad district due to heavy rain and gusty winds caused by Cyclone Tauktae. Mumbai too witnessed heavy rain, forcing the authorities to suspend airport and rail services, and shut Bandra-Worli sea link. The BMC informed that the Worli sea link has been closed till further updates. The airport operations have also been suspended for three hours till 4 pm. In its latest update, the IMD said that the very severe cyclonic storm Tauktae moved north-north-westwards with a speed of about 20 kmph during past 6 hours, and intensified into an extremely severe cyclonic storm. It is very likely to move north-north-westwards and reach Gujarat coast in the evening hours of Monday and cross Gujarat coast between Porbandar and Mahuva (Bhavnagar district) during the night (8–11 pm) as a Very Severe Cyclonic Storm with a maximum sustained wind speed 155-165 kmph gusting to 185 kmph.

The cyclone is expected to reach Gujarat Coast between 12 pm to 3 pm and cross the Gujarat Coast between Porbandar and Mahuva (Bhavnagar district) between 3 pm to 6 pm. Heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected to occur in coastal areas of Gujarat on May 17 and May 18. Extremely heavy rainfall is also expected at some places. At the time of landfall, winds speed is expected to be 155-165 kmph gusting to 145 kmph, IMD DG Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said. Damage expected by IMD in coastal parts of Gujarat the IMD says heavy damage is expected over Diu, Amreli Junagarh, Gir Somnath Botad and Bhavnagar and coastal areas of Ahmedabad. The cyclone can cause total destruction of thatched houses/ extensive damage to kutcha houses. Some damage also expected to pucca houses. Potential threat from flying objects. Bending/

uprooting of power and communication poles. Major damage to Kutch and Pucca roads. Flooding of escape routes.

Minor disruption of railways, overhead power lines and signaling systems. Widespread damage to salt pans & standing crops,. Blowing down of bushy trees. Small boats, country crafts may get detached from moorings, the department says. Cyclone Tauktae: Damage Expected over Diu, Amreli Junagarh, and other areas The IMD has speculated that the cyclone Tauktae might cause destruction of thatched houses/ extensive damage to kutch house, as well as, it might uproot power and telephone towers in these areas: Diu, Amreli, Junagarh, Porbandar, Kutch, Jamnagar, Rajkot & Morbi, Valsad, Surat, Vadodara, Bharuch, Navsari, Anand, Kheda, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Gir Somnath Botad and Bhavnagar, Coastal areas of Ahmedabad. Cyclone Tauktae to reach Gujarat coast in the evening hours According to the IMD, cyclonic storm Tauktae is very likely to move north-north-westwards and reach Gujarat coast in the evening hours of Sunday.

The storm will cross Gujarat coast between Porbandar and Mahuva (Bhavnagar district) during the night (between 8 pm- 11 pm) on May 17. High speed winds, heavy rainfall lash Mumbai; local train services hit High speed winds and heavy rains lashed Mumbai and its neighbouring areas as cyclonic storm Tauktae headed towards Gujarat on Monday. Local trains services of the Central Railway were disrupted between suburban Ghatkopar and Vikhroli for about half-an-hour as a tree fell on an overhead wire while a train was heading towards Thane. Services on the harbour line, that provides rail connectivity to Navi Mumbai, were also affected after a vinyl banner fell on an overhead wire between Chunabhatti and Guru Tej Bahadur stations around 11.45 am. Airport operations suspended till 4 pm Mumbai Airport operations closure has been extended till 4PM. One killed, two injured in Raigad Maharashtra: Raigad District Collector has informed that one person has been killed and two injured due to Cyclone Taukate. So far, 8,383 people have been shifted to a safer place.

Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy have rescued nine people from Tug Coromandal Surrender IX which ran aground at Mulki Rock in Karnataka Coast. Five people were rescued by ICG Ship Varaha and 4 were winched by IN702 of Indian Navy ex-Kochi. Goa CM Pramod Sawant speaks to Amit Shah Goa CM Pramod Sawant says that he spoke to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah regarding the impact and devastation caused by the Tauktae cyclone in the state of Goa. The Home Minister inquired about the widespread damage caused by the cyclone in the state and assured full support of all Central agencies to the State for returning to normalcy. We will provide all necessary assistance to Goans impacted by the cyclone, he said. Gujarat Cabinet Minister takes stock of preparations Gujarat Cabinet Minister Kunvarjibhai Bavaliya is visiting Amreli to take stock of the preparedness for Cyclone Tauktae. Gujarat is likely to face extremely severe cyclone. Heavy rainfall likely in coastal parts of Gujarat Heavy to very heavy

rains are likely at coastal parts of Gujarat. The IMD said that heavy falls are likely in the districts of Saurashtra namely Gir Somnath, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Junagadh and in Diu; in the districts of Gujarat region namely Valsad, Navsari & in Daman, Dadra Nagar Haveli. Heavy rain, winds hit Mumbai's Covid care centre. Heavy rain and winds partially hit Mumbai's Bandra Kurla Complex Covid care centre. IAF preparation for storm continues. The Indian Air Force on Sunday had deployed 2 C-130J and 1 An-32 aircraft for transportation of 167 personnel and 16.5 tonnes of load of NDRF from Kolkata to Ahmedabad.

Another C-130J and 2 An-32 aircraft carried 121 NDRF personnel and 11.6 tonnes of load from Vijayawada to Ahmedabad for the same purpose. Also, 2 C-130J aircraft transported 110 personnel and 15 tonnes of cargo for NDRF from Pune to Ahmedabad. Nearly 600 cases of structural damages in Maharashtra (536 instances of structural damages (house collapse, roof collapse, pole uprooting) reported in Sindhudurg, 61 in Ratnagiri and 2 each in Raigad and Thane districts till last night due to cyclone Taukate. Heavy rainfall likely in Raigad, Palghar, Mumbai, Thane. As per IMD, moderate to intense spells of rain with gusty winds reaching 90-100 kmph is likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of Raigad, Palghar, Mumbai, Thane and Ratnagiri during the next 3 hours. Bandra-Worli sea link closed. BMC has informed that the Bandra-Worli sea link in Mumbai will be closed to commute till further update. It has advised commuters to take alternate routes.

Mumbai Airport operations suspended from 11 AM to 2 PM. Due to cyclone Tauktae, Mumbai Airport operations have been suspended for three hours from 11 am to 2 pm. Due to cyclone alert, Mumbai Airport operations need to be closed from 1100 hours to 1400 hours of May 17, the MIAL (Mumbai International Airport Limited) said. Cyclone Tauktae to reach Gujarat by evening. The cyclonic storm is likely to reach Gujarat coast in evening hours and cross Gujarat coast between Porbandar and Mahuva during night as the storm with maximum sustained wind speed of 155-165 kmph gusting to 185 kmph. Latest update from IMD: The extremely severe cyclonic storm lay centered at the Eastcentral Arabian Sea near latitude 18.5 degrees North and longitude 71.5 degrees East about 160 kms West-Southwest of Mumbai, 350 kms South-Southeast of Veraval, 310 kms South-Southeast of Diu and 840 kms South-Southeast of Karachi. Fishing boats out at sea safely returned to harbour: Coast Guard. 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 the harbour, reported ANI.

NDRF teams reaches Ahmedabad. Gujarat is expected to witness maximum impact of Cyclone Tauktae. Karnataka: 9 tugboat crew members stranded at sea near Udipi. Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority yesterday informed that nine crew members of tugboat 'Coromandel Supporter' remained stranded at sea near Udipi district due to strong winds caused

by Cyclone Tauktae. According to PTI, rescue operation using chopper halted after adverse climate condition. The District administration held meetings with the Indian Navy DG, coast guard, and Coastal Police for rescue operation of stranded. Latest update from IMD As per the latest Satellite observation at 5:30 am today, the vortex Tauktae has further intensified and now lay centered at 18.5N/71.6E with a ragged eye. Convective bands are tightly wrapped. 50 NDRF teams deployed in Gujarat NDRF Director General S N Pradhan has informed that 50 teams have been deployed in Gujarat. Speaking to ANI on Sunday, Pradhan said that by the evening or late night, 50 teams will reach Gujarat. We are constantly working on evacuation and awareness generation. Gujarat is most likely to experience the maximum impact, he added. 100 NDRF teams deployed in 5-6 states NDRF DG SN Pradhan has informed that more than 100 teams have been deployed in 5-6 states. During a meeting with chief ministers of Gujarat and Maharashtra, he said, the home minister said that our aim should be zero casualties and we are focusing on that.

Nearly 150,000 people will be moved from low-lying areas The Gujarat government has said that nearly 150,000 people will be moved from villages and low-lying areas near the coast and directions have been issued. The storm is expected to reach Gujarat by Monday evening. People living on coastal areas evacuated In view of Cyclone Tauktae, people living on coastal areas of Malia in Junagadh were evacuated yesterday. Inspecting arrangements, Collector Sourabh Pardhi said that over 1200 people were evacuated and all precautionary measures were being taken with food and shelter arrangements. Latest update from IMD As per the latest Satellite observation, the Vortex Tauktae lay centered at 18.3N/71.5E, with a ragged eye and at a distance of around 260 KM south-southeast of Diu. Convective bands are tightly wrapped. In Maharashtra, two sisters -- 17 years old and 12 years old -- lost their lives and their mother seriously injured after a tree uprooted and collapsed on their hut due to strong cyclonic winds in Anchalwadi area of Jalgaon, the NDRF said.

**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.

**Kerala, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Goa and Maharashtra: Cyclone Tauktae: Coast Guard warns fishermen as cyclone likely to hit Western Coast**

<https://www.india.com/news/india/cyclone-tauktae-coast-guard-warns-fishermen-as-cyclone-likely-to-hit-western-coast-4660263/>

With the formation of Cyclone Tauktae over the Arabian Sea, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) issued an advisory to the Fisheries Department to warn the fishermen not to venture into sea and ask them to return to the nearest harbour, officials said. Also Read - Year's First Cyclone 'Tauktae' Forming Over Arabian Sea, Likely To Intensify Further, Says IMD. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), a low-pressure area is forming over the Arabian Sea and it may gradually turn into a cyclone over the east-central Arabian Sea by May 16. The cyclone 'Tauktae' is likely to impact areas including the coast of Kerala, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Goa and Maharashtra. Meanwhile, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has ordered the suspension of fishing activity on the coasts. IMD issued a warning for a low-pressure area over the Arabian Sea that is likely to turn into a cyclonic storm. Although Kerala will not be in its path. Heavy rainfall is likely to occur on May 14 and 15. Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) held preparedness meetings with Army, Navy, IAF, Coast Guard and NDRF. Fishing activity has been suspended, said the chief minister. If the cyclone hits the Western coast, then it will be the first cyclonic storm in the country in 2021.

**Maharashtra: Livelihoods of Worli's Koli community, impacted by coastal infra projects, further battered by COVID-19 crisis**

<https://www.firstpost.com/long-reads/livelihoods-of-worlis-koli-community-impacted-by-coastal-infra-projects-further-battered-by-covid-19-crisis-9608591.html>

At Mumbai's Worli coast, 130 motor boats go out to the sea from the Worli bateri (canal) and over 200 smaller boats from two more jetties in the vicinity. The boats belong to members of Worli Koliwada Nakhawa Machhimaar Society and Worli Koliwada Sarvoday Society, the two fishers' societies functioning in Worli. The term 'nakhawa' in the local language means boat owner. A Koliwada is an indigenous coastal village of fishers. The Nakhawa Society at Worli has 465 members, both boat owners and non-boat owners. Over the years, fishers at Worli have been coming back from the sea with lesser and lesser catch. The 2021 Netflix documentary *Seaspiracy*, directed by Ali Tabrizi, posits the blame of disappearing marine species in certain parts of the world on overfishing. But, according to Worli's Kolis,

disappearing fish is the direct result of the city's coastal infrastructure projects and climate change, rather than unsustainable fishing. While the western environmentalist film suggests that its viewers simply give up seafood, indigenous fishers on this coast say they cannot stop catching fish from the sea. The Koli, Agri and Bhandari fisher communities on the western coast of India have for centuries depended on the sea for their livelihoods, and the local population largely depends on these communities for its seafood. In most discourses against coastal development projects, the environment and its non-human life takes a center seat with no mention of indigenous humans who live in co-dependence with the environment. For years, artisanal Kolis at Worli have been coping with environmental and community endangerment from coastal development projects.

When the Bandra-Worli Sea Link was built for the western suburbs 12 years ago, its columns not only replaced the generational fishing spots, but also affected the fish population beneath the Sea Link. Road projects at Worli seem to be constant agoniser for the coastal community. Even in its construction phase, the 22-km coastal road project is proving to be the biggest threat to the fisher community. Adding to the woes of the fishing community, the country in March 2020 went under complete lockdown in light of the COVID-19 crisis. Restrictions were imposed on fishing activities in Mumbai without warning, leaving fishers with unsorted, unsold and rotting fish. Fishermen at Worli said that the Mumbai police beat them up for if they tried to go to sea. So, some of them took a more discreet route out to sea before dawn. It was reported in April 2020 that the government of India will be compensating fishers in the country for the losses incurred 'through direct benefit transfer to bank accounts'. But even after a two-month curfew on fishing activities, not one family at Worli Koliwada has received any benefits from the government, said fishermen.

They added that the distribution of this state compensation was haphazard and overdue . With COVID restrictions re-imposed by the Maharashtra government in April 2021, transportation and sale of seafood and storing ice have taken a hit again. With fewer restaurants and hotels running and more people buying fish online now, prices have also taken a dip. But before taking the annual monsoon break from June to August, fishers must make the most of what they catch in May without catching more than they can sell.

### **Maharashtra: 1K Mangrove trees likely to be cut for six-lane bridge at Navi Mumbai**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/others/1k-mangrove-trees-likely-to-be-cut-for-six-lane-bridge-at-navi-mumbai-101620588014615.html>

An estimated 1,000 mangrove trees are proposed to be cut by the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) for constructing a six-lane elevated bridge between Airoli and Ghansoli. The trees will be cut to make way for 25 load-bearing pillars. In total, an estimated 5,500 mangrove trees, spread over a 4-hectare area, will be affected by the project, officials familiar with the development confirmed. The proposed bridge will connect Sector 14 in Ghansoli to the Airoli Katai Naka Freeway via Airoli-Mulund Bridge, and will help decongest the Thane Belapur Road. The matter has, for the time being, been deferred by the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) for want additional details by the project proponent – NMMC. The project involves construction of a bridge in the mangrove area along the east bank of Thane creek over a length of 1.05km. As per the approved CZMP (coastal zone management plan), the project falls under CRZ (coastal regulation zone)-I (A) and II areas, MCZMA observed in its last meeting on April 15, when the matter was considered for CRZ clearance. Part of the project will also cut through 50 metres of the reserve forest buffer zone in Dive village. In a report submitted by NMMC to MCZMA in February, about 810 mangroves trees were slated to be cut for the project, with another 2,640 trees being temporarily affected during the construction phase.

However, a subsequent site visit conducted by the forest department's mangrove cell in March estimated that about 1,000 trees would need to be cut. As per the report of the mangrove cell, a total number of mangroves affected [will be] about 5,500-6,000 which fall in the alignment of the proposed bridge, MCZMA observed in its minutes of the meeting. Virender Tiwari, additional principal chief conservator of forests (APCCF), mangrove cell, said, We have conducted the site visit and a more detailed survey is yet to be done. Given the damage to the mangroves, NMMC will have to seek clearance from the Bombay high court (HC) and also apply for diversion of forest land under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. The CRZ clearance will be contingent on these compliances. In light of a September 2018 HC order which barred construction in mangrove areas other than for projects of public interest, MCZMA decided that NMMC need to submit the explicit note on the public interest involved in the project... accordingly, the matter was deferred for want of said information. HT reached about to Navi Mumbai municipal commissioner Abhijit Bangar for a comment on the issue but did not receive a response.

### **Maharashtra: River Project could heighten flood risk, worry Pune residents**

<https://www.newslick.in/River-Beautification-Project-Heighten-Flood-Risk-Worry-Pune-Residents>

If my mother were really old and quite sick, should I take her to the doctor or to a beauty parlour?, this was a rhetorical question posed by a concerned citizen in a Zoom meeting

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on May 2, 2021, to discuss the Pune River Rejuvenation Project, estimated in 2018 to cost Rs 2,619 crore. This would cover 44 km of the Mula-Mutha river system that flows through the city limits. These are rivers that flow into the Bhima River, which in turn is a tributary of the Krishna. The meeting was held by NGO Sajag Nagarik Manch, which works for civic education in Pune. In 2015, soon after Devendra Fadnavis of the Bharatiya Janata Party took over as Chief Minister of Maharashtra, a consultant was assigned the task of planning this project and submitting a report, at a cost of Rs 3.96 crore. HCP Design, the Ahmedabad-based architecture firm, that serves as the consultant for this project also drew up the plan for PM Narendra Modi's pet Central Vista project in New Delhi. Construction of the Sabarmati Riverfront Project in Ahmedabad in 2005 was also undertaken by this firm when Modi was CM of Gujarat. The website of the Pune Municipal Corporation mentions that work on the riverfront project is already underway.

This project will prevent the environmental degradation of Pune's Rivers, protect them from being choked by development, reduce the threat of flooding, create a public realm along the river and provide Pune with a vital riverfront that enriches life in the city, the PMC website states. On May 2, 2021, as several concerned people from the city gathered to take stock of the project, one person demanded to know who this project was being constructed for. Environment officer Mangesh Dighe of the Pune Municipal Corporation explained that it had been planned for several years, and funding would be sought through a Special Purpose Vehicle. Since construction is expected to last about a decade and cannot be finished in a jiffy, allocation will also be made from the budget of the municipal corporation. Dighe mentioned that the project consultants had surveyed over 4,000 people whose opinions were sought as part of the planning process – none of the over 200 people attending the meeting over Zoom, though, had been part of the planning process, and questions were raised about the nature of that public consultation. In 2016, Government of India and PMC signed a nearly Rs 1,000 crore loan agreement with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to mitigate the pollution in Mula-Mutha rivers, through construction of 11 new sewage treatment plants, with 85 % funds to come from the Centre.

The loan has been received at an interest rate of 0.30%, and the project was set to be completed by 2022. This, too, was mentioned as part of the river rejuvenation plan, although some citizens wondered where space would be found for so many new sewage treatment plants. Rohit Prajapati, joining the online meeting from Gujarat, pointed out that the Supreme Court, in an order in February 2017, had sought that all industrial units releasing effluents must have functional sewage treatment plants in three months' time. After that, their license to function should be withdrawn if they were found polluting water bodies. This order was also applicable to domestic sewage pollution in all municipal and gram panchayat areas, as also cantonment

boards. Businesswoman and social worker Anu Aga asked if the Rs 2,619 crore that was set to be spent on this project might not be better spent providing hospitals and adequate oxygen during the pandemic. Architect Sarang Yadwadkar pointed out that although this was a river rejuvenation project, nearly 78% of the allocation of funds was on civil works – the extensive construction would hardly serve to rejuvenate the river. He also pointed to how much planning still remains – there is a move to raise the height of bridges across the river in the city limits – but if the height of connecting roads, too, is not elevated, buses would scarcely be able to continue to use these bridges.

Reading out from the project proposal, Yadwadkar pointed out that there were plans to use the land in the floodplains as a revenue source, which was blatant disregard for environmental norms – the environment officer of the PMC, however, in his presentation, had claimed that the project would not be a commercial one. Yadwadkar pointed out that the Detailed Project Report submitted by the consultants also offers the suggestion that government-owned land adjoining the river could be monetised. There are private lands to be acquired as part of this project. The cost of this acquisition had not yet been factored into the total project cost. Yadwadkar said the saucer-like shape of the city, and the fact that five rivers flow into Pune and merge to leave as one, meant the city was prone to floods. The monsoon of 2019 saw nearly 25 deaths in the city on account of flash floods. Yadwadkar raised the question that if the report on changing rain patterns in this region, presented to the state government by TERI in 2014 – which had projected 37.5% rise in annual rainfall and increased frequency of cloudbursts as the period of rainfall showed a trend towards lesser days of more intense rain – had been considered in the planning process.

The environment officer admitted that this report had not been considered. Also, embankments planned were higher than the ground level adjoining it, indicating heightened possibility of pluvial flooding. There were questions raised about whether the planners of the project had considered the nearly 30 different streams that feed into the river from different parts of the city; whether groundwater use and sewage generated from it was at all part of the consideration. One woman raised the issue of the biodiversity near the river banks, and expressed concern that flattening the rocky outgrowths to create the sloped embankments along the river might affect the fish and bird species that use these. The environment officer attempted to answer the barrage of questions, and said he would need to consult with the group of which he is a part to answer several of these questions. He also requested the people of Pune to consolidate all their questions and send it to him, so that he could provide written answers. It may be pertinent to mention that the Sabarmati Riverfront Project, also planned by the same consultants, has faced several legal hurdles. Prominent social activist and lawyer Girish Patel argued in court that the

project would disrupt livelihoods; in March 2005, the Gujarat High Court stayed all evictions for the Sabarmati project.

The Sabarmati was also a seasonal river, retaining water only in the months after the monsoon – to make the riverfront project a real river project, water had to be diverted from the Narmada Main Canal. Over Rs 1,500 crore has already been spent on the Sabarmati Riverfront project. The Rs 7,474 crore Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Budget of 2021-22 sets aside over 17% of the total budget for drainage. Since it was constructed, the riverfront has been flooded in the monsoon several times. Yet, Bimal Patel, the architect who designed it, says the design has taken care of the floods too. It has been designed in such a way that there is minimal damage, only cleaning cost is involved, he explained, after the floods of 2017 when snakes from the river wiggled into factories in Behrampura, on the banks of the Sabarmati in Ahmedabad. Concern over whether large sums of money would be committed to a project that would only exacerbate flooding was evident in the Pune citizens' Zoom meet. Another concern is given the massive construction works proposed, is this project more about real estate than the river? Pune Municipal Corporation should explain what the property tax it collects is spent on, one participant said.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai coastal road project work leaves fisherfolk in uncharted waters**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/others/mumbai-coastal-road-project-work-leaves-fisherfolk-in-uncharted-waters-101619982717867.html>

Despite two Covid-related lockdowns in the last year, work on the city's Coastal Road has continued at a swift pace. At least 217 acres of land has so far been reclaimed from the Arabian Sea for the project, with an additional 50-odd acres yet to be created. Officials estimate that about 30 percent of the work has been completed. The 'Mavala' underground tunnel boring machine (TBM) also continues to excavate earth from under Malabar Hill, at a pace of 7 metres (m) every day. About 330m of tunneling has been finished presently. While the project is at least two years away from completion, land reclamation along the Worli coast has already begun impacting the livelihoods of fisherfolk, with women and small fishermen's incomes being the first to be hit. For decades, these groups within the broader fishing community have conducted their trade almost entirely along the rocky shore between Nepean Sea Road and Worli. They largely include the Kolis, but also consist of members of the Agri and Christian communities who practice artisanal fishing. Boat owners, labourers, migrant workers, daily-wage or subsistence fishers, net-menders, oyster pickers and other vocations tied to the artisanal fishing trade have all been affected by the loss of these coastal commons, HT learnt through interviews and ground reporting.

Since construction work on the coastal road began in late 2018, about 5-6km of the rocky intertidal zone between Priyadarshini Park and Worli sea face have been reclaimed, two officials involved with the project estimated. As a result, productive fishing grounds near Priyadarshini Park, Amarsons Garden, Breach Candy, Shree Mahalaxmi Temple, Worli Dairy and a significant portion of Haji Ali have been completely wiped out, fisherfolk said. Crucially, the space for women, who pick oysters and shellfish by hand, as well as small-scale fishermen who use non-motorised 'tony' boats, gill nets, cast nets, drift nets or simple fishing rods in shallow waters, has been reduced to a small patch of rocky shore outside Haji Ali. This area, popularly called Lotus Jetty, is set to shrink further once a connecting bridge is built across the waterfront. 'Dol ka dhandha', or the more lucrative practice of fishing in deeper waters at depths of over 20-25 feet, with larger 'dol (bag nets)', is reserved for certain families or groups of fishermen from Worli Koliwada. As per a March 2019 report by advocacy group Collective for Spatial Alternatives (CSA), their customary fishing grounds extend from Malabar Hill to Mount Mary.

For small fishermen, many of whom do not even have boats or official IDs, the shore is where you make a living. I have myself been doing it for decades. My family does not have permission to do dol fishing, said 48-year-old fisherman Lawrence Fernandes, from Worli. During low tide, if one peers across the Lotus Jetty pier, one can see dozens of women, hunched over jagged rocks with tochas (ice pick) in hand, picking oysters, or scraping for shellfish in the muddy substrate with khupris (spade). They speak without pausing work, attempting to gather as much as possible before the tide returns. There are more women coming here now. Earlier, we used to pick shellfish and oysters, even crabs, all the way from Worli Dairy to Priyadarshini Park. Now there is no more business along that shore, only Haji Ali is left, said Turbherkar. Marginal fishermen and women were always going to be the first, and hardest, hit by this project. They should have been given compensation before reclamation work started. Almost all indigenous land use has been completely erased along this coast.

Most of the reclamation work was done during lockdown. Poor fishermen who were badly hit by the pandemic were left with no way to recoup their losses, said Debi Goenka, founder of the Conservation Action Trust, one of several legal petitioners against the CRP. At Haji Ali too, shellfish and crab are getting scarce, fisherwomen say, pointing to the once gravelly part – that has now been reclaimed – where one could find them in large quantities – of the beach. But a small bucketful of oysters, which can be harvested even 200m away from the shore during low tide, will fetch them about Rs.400-500 in the market. Before the pandemic, if we were lucky, we could sell it for Rs.800 also. But prices have been down for a while, and it takes a lot longer to gather enough money. I don't know if there are more women or fewer oysters, Turbhekar said. Multiple groups of women from Cuffe Parade, Colaba, Wadala, Trombay, Mahul, Sewri and

Worli, expressed similar concerns. Sometimes, one could find really big lobsters and crabs in front of Mahalaxmi temple.

At Worli Dairy, I have picked up stingrays and other big fish that used to get washed up at low tide. Everything was gone after lockdown, said Shubangi Tanel, 44, from Machhimar Nagar in Badhwar Park, Colaba, who has been foraging along this coast for over 20 years. Most women HT spoke to had fishermen husbands who ventured into deeper seas, either on their own boats or as labourers. But this haath ka kaam (work by hand) has always been done by us. We sometimes go to Nariman Point or Marine Drive, but have to wait for the lowest low tide, which comes once every eight or nine days. And the tetra pods make it hard to enter the water. Mahalaxmi temple, Amarsons Gardens, Breach Candy and Worli Dairy were the best places to find shellfish and oysters on most days, until the reclamation, says Madhuri Tandel, 36, from Colaba. Some, like Pratibha Patil, 40, from Cuffe Parade Koliwada, rely on this trade as the sole bread-winners in their family. Patil's husband, Jayant, a fisherman, lost his legs in an accident at sea in 2016, after which she has relied solely on oyster and shellfish picking to make ends meet for her family of four. She sells her wares at Sassoon Dock.

Out of at least 15 women HT spoke to over multiple visits to the area, four said this was the sole source of income for them and their immediate relatives. Three of their husbands had been in debilitating accidents, while one had passed away over a decade ago. Several others were unable to pay off existing debts, incurred largely due to medical expenses in the family. Once they finish building the road, even what's left at Haji Ali will be wiped out. Where will we go after that, said Patil. Still others did not have any family history of fishing and had learnt the trade purely out of necessity. Anyone who wants to make some money in a day can come here and do this work. No one will stop you, said one of two women from Wadala, declining to give her name. Unlike their male counterparts, who are represented by unions such as the Worli Machhimaar Sarvoday Sahakari Society and Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsyavevsay Sahakari Society, these women, who hail from several localities other than Worli, are not organised into similar interest groups.

This also seemed to be the case for fishermen like Mahesh Waghela, a 30-something resident of Worli Naka who now works as a security marshal, guarding an access road to the coastal road project construction site near Lotus Jetty. Waghela's family, from Gujarat, has not been historically associated with fishing. But having lived his whole life around the Worli fishing zone, he picked up the trade growing up. I've spent days at a stretch out at sea. During the August to December season, there is a need for labour on boats. When there is a job squeeze, during the off season, one could throw a net close to the shore and fend for themselves. Ghar ki kadhi toh ban jaati thi (you could catch enough to make a curry at home). Now we can't even



manage that much, Waghela said. A Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute rapid-report from 2019 had stated that this particular segment of the seashore is a rich oyster bed, and that livelihoods of oyster pickers, particularly fisherwomen, is likely to be impacted by reclamation of the coastal road. The report also notes multiple instances of artisanal fishing across the shore from Haji Ali and Worli Dairy, at a distance of about 300m, recording catches of prawns, stingray, Ghol, seabass, moonfish, ribbonfish, acetetes and pomfret running into dozens of kilos in a single day.

Even in deeper waters, Worli Koliwada's fishermen say, they are anticipating tough times ahead. A range of commercially important species – pomfret, khaira, Ghol, barramundi, catfish, halwa, rawas (Salmon), hekru – are becoming harder to catch in viable quantities. There is sedimentation in the water due to construction work and a lot of noise pollution. Fish are very sensitive and run away to deeper areas on slightest of disturbance. This reclamation is clearing out water even faster than the sea link did, said Deepak Vasudev, an artisanal fisherman from Worli Koliwada. In their March 2019 report, experts at the Collective for Spatial Alternatives had noted, Based on the past experience of Bandra-Worli sea link project, which caused siltation in Worli (affecting access to the sea), reduced fish catch, and affected navigation (due to sea link columns), it is inevitable that reclamation and construction activity for the coastal road will adversely impact fishing and livelihoods in the area. Except that the impacts are likely to be much worse. Anand Pendharkar, a naturalist who has closely studied the area, said, These predictions are now beginning to manifest themselves.

Over the years, community dependence along this coast has come to include many stakeholders across categories of jobs, class and caste. The scale of dislocation is massive. Officials in the civic body's coastal road department did not directly respond to a detailed questionnaire seeking a comment for the story. However, a spokesperson for the department said that civic body is currently in the process of appointing a third-party agency to assess the nature and extent of the project's impact on fisherfolk. We have already floated a tender for a thorough rehabilitation assessment. A third-party organisation will take stock of the situation and work out a compensation plan for affected fishermen. We can give more details only after this has been done, said the official. As per the tender floated by the civic body last December, the entire rehabilitation process for project-affected people (PAP) is slated to take about three years, which the fisherfolk said is far too long. HT also reached out to Ashwini Bhide, chairman of the civic body-appointed Fisherfolk Rehabilitation Assessment Committee (FRAC) for a comment, but did not receive a response.

**Maharashtra: Mumbai's oldest & largest wholesale fish market, Sassoon Docks chronicles humble beginnings & now**

<https://www.knocksense.com/mumbai/sassoon-docks-mumbai->

The relationship between fisherfolk and Mumbai is older than we can imagine and everyone around knows that this city and fishing, are entwined. Lying in Azad Nagar, Colaba, Sassoon Docks is the oldest and the largest wholesale fish market in Mumbai, dating back to 1875. It is often said to be the commercial base through which Mumbai gained momentum! A sight that will hold your interests if you like exploring the aspects of daily life, it is definitely not a spot for people with a weak stomach. Built in 1875 by Sir Albert Abdulla David Sassoon, a Jewish merchant, Sassoon Docks is known to be the first wet dock of Western India where ships can sail through, regardless of the tide. Run by the known Marathi fishing community of the Kolis, it is one of the few docks left in our country that hasn't been replaced by hardcore commercialisation!

A hub for wholesale fish buying and selling, you can often spot chefs of famous restaurants wandering around here amidst the stench of the fishes and their entrails. Every single day around 20 tonnes of fish are brought and sold from this dock and these include pomfrets, baby sharks, blue crabs, shrimp and giant prawns, amid other varieties. This trade practice has provided economic sustenance for many over the years and generations of fisherfolk can be found engaged here. The sight of birds trying to catch a few bites while no one's looking, hordes of people lining up at the stalls and fishes that seem shocked by their lives unexpectedly coming to an end, are all the elements that make up Sassoon Docks. This site speaks extensively of the city's commercial past, like no other around. But before stepping out here, be mindful of the fact that the pandemic is still alive and soaring so you must take COVID-19 precautions or you can plan a visit sometime later as well.

### **Maharashtra: Draft coastal zone management plans get nod in Mumbai**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/draft-coastal-zone-mgmt-plans-get-nod-in-mumbai/articleshow/81940448.cms>

The draft Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMP) for the city and suburbs have been approved by the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA). As per the minutes of the meeting, the CZMPs have been updated in line with the provisions of the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2019. The draft CZMPs show the demarcation of the high tide line, low tide line and hazard line along with the various classification of CRZ categories as well coastal land use maps indicating eco-sensitive areas. Land use information pertaining to fishing villages, fishing infrastructure, highways and roads would be superimposed on the CZMP by

local bodies, said the MCZMA. With regard to any disparity in the CZMPs, the issue is to be referred to the ministry of environment, forest and climate change for rectification along with valid reasons for the same. The ministry will, in turn, refer the matter to the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management for verification based on latest satellite imagery and ground truthing.

### **Maharashtra: Area in Sindhudurg named as biodiversity heritage site**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/area-in-maharashtras-sindhudurg-named-as-biodiversity-heritage-site/article34211679.ece>

The Maharashtra government on Wednesday declared an area at Amboli in Western ghats in Sindhudurg district, where a rare freshwater fish species was discovered, as a biodiversity heritage site. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's son Tejas Thackeray, who is a wildlife researcher, and his team had discovered the new freshwater fish species — Schistura Hiranyakeshi — near Amboli in Sawantwadi tehsil of Sindhudurg district. Schistura Hiranyakeshi is a rare sub-species of Schistura, a freshwater loach. The fish was named after the Hiranyakeshi river near Amboli village. The State government on Wednesday issued a notification declaring the area at Amboli as a biodiversity heritage site. Earlier, the State government had declared the Glory of Allapalli in Gadchiroli district, Landor Khori Park in Jalgaon, Ganesh Khind in Pune, myristica swamp vegetation in Sindhudurg district as biodiversity heritage sites. Schistura is a small and colourful fish that lives in water and streams in an abundance of oxygen. The decision to declare the habitat of these freshwater species as the bio-diversity heritage site is taken because it is rare species, and due to fishing activities, it might have faced extinction. It was important to conserve the species, reads the government notification. The discoveries of the freshwater fish species were published in the International Journal of Ichthyology in the October 2020 edition by Tejas Thackeray and co-authors.

### **Maharashtra: Water pollution in Powai Lake: Blue-green algae causing severe damage to life**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/water-pollution-in-powai-lake-blue-green-algae-causing-severe-damage-to-life>

With the rising pollution and increased human activity, the natural ecosystem of Powai Lake seems to have gone for a toss, killing many fishes earlier this week. Alarmed by fish corpses floating on the lake surfaces, Maharashtra State Angling Association (MSAA ) has informed BMC about it after conducting a field investigation of the lake between March 24 to March 26. The maximum number of fishes that were found dead were Rohu and Mrigal, then

Catla and Tilapia. As a group of environmentalists protecting the fish and fauna and precincts of Powai lake, we patrol the lake 24 hours. On March 24 2021 at 7.30 am our watch and ward staff observed large specimens of fishes showing signs of extreme distress and swimming on the surface of the lake. After having closer look at it, several fishes were found to be dead, said Kamlesh Sharma, secretary of the Maharashtra State Anglers Association (MSAA) adding that they immediately initiated a field investigation. This is an indicator of ecological imbalance and environmental degradation. The exact cause is a mix of multiple factors acting simultaneously and spontaneously, added Sharma. According to the field investigation report of MSAA, the factors of the dying fish is the fluctuation of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) level (Low oxygen level at early morning time), Clogging due to Blue-green algae in the gills of the more vulnerable species of fish.

Most dominant species of Blue-green algae which is lethal to fish and fauna are *Microcystis*, *Merismopedia*, and *Anabaena* sp. The sudden bloom is caused by nutrient enrichment and bright sunlight. Bright sunlight is natural at this time of the year. However the nutrients are mainly due to domestic waste which is being discharged from Northside and towards Ganesh ghat side of the lake, the report stated. The water quality of Powai lake has highly deteriorated. The colour is greenish caused by the abundant bloom of Blue-green algae. There was a very bad fishy smell emitting from water, the report further stated. Dr. Pramod Salaskar, Secretary of Naushad Ali Sarovar Samvardhini (NASS), who has been studying the Powai lake ecosystem for several years now and has conducted water tests too, said that the biggest reason behind the low transparency is the increased growth of blue-green algae, which has also rendered the colour of the lake green. The problem started aggravating in the last decade. The water level is decreasing every year after the monsoon due to the rapidly changing climate and the rising temperature.

The amount of green algae has declined and the amount of blue-green algae has increased which is lethal for the fauna in the lake, Salaskar said. He added, I have been following this for a year now. The amount of oxygen in the water is an important indicator of overall lake health. DO is the most important parameter which can be used as an index of water quality and pollution. With the drop in DO levels, it is clear that the pollution level at Powai is increasing at an alarming rate. Large fluctuations in DO levels over a short period of time may be the result of an algae bloom, and this is deadly for a water body. Dissolved oxygen is an important measure of water quality, as it is a direct indicator of a water body's ability to support life. Powai Lake is home to carp, eels, and other varieties of fish, apart from a small colony of crocodiles, but has already lost many native species. According to MSAA, the remedy to prevent Powai lake from dying is to immediately stop all inlets through which sewage enters the lake. They have stated that the BMC was aerating the waters by a network of technically designed water aeration systems installed

over the last months. The current arrangement of the aerator is not effective at Powai Lake, they concluded.

### **Maharashtra: Vendors shy away from fish market, NMC to cancel pact**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/vendors-shy-away-from-fish-market-nmc-to-cancel-pact/articleshow/81740131.cms>

The property tax department of Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) has proposed to cancel its agreement with wholesale and retail fish vendors, who have procured platforms in air-cooled fish market in Mangalwari. The proposal will be tabled before the standing committee meeting to be held on March 30. In 2010, as a part of its plan to develop hygienic fish market, the NMC had approved developing an air-cooled fish market in Mangalwari vegetable market. The market was built by the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) and Maharashtra Fisheries Development Corporation (MFDC) and it was readied by 2014 at a cost of Rs3 crore. The indoor market comprises four platforms for wholesale and 108 for retail sale of fish, besides having an auction gallery, two cold storages to preserve fish. Since the beginning, no fish vendor had shown interest citing huge deposit and rent. Though NMC had relaxed the deposit norms, still it found few takers. Even after so many years, those who entered into an agreement with the NMC were setting up shops in parking area outside the market complex.

Fish vendors from Bhoipura wholesale fish market too pointed this out before the high court, which took serious note of selling fish in unhygienic surroundings. The HC had, in the past, directed the NMC to shift the fish market from Bhoipura to Mangalwari market complex. However, traders there showed no interest citing the size of platforms was very small, even though 79 fish vendors had entered into an agreement with the NMC agreeing to set up their shops inside the complex. Now, the NMC has decided to cancel the agreements with vendors. Along with this proposal, the civic administration has also submitted a proposal to spend Rs1.09 crore for pesticides and tablets to control vector-borne diseases in corporation limits. Hotmix department has submitted a proposal seeking provision of Rs1.91 crore for purchasing raw material for roads in the city from a shortlisted bidder M/s Altaf Ahmed.

### **Maharashtra: 1.6km sea-link to come up in South Mumbai to connect Nariman Point to Colaba**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/1-6km-sea-link-to-come-up-in-south-mumbai-to-connect-nariman-point-to-colaba/articleshow/81673768.cms>

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has finalised a plan to built a 1.6km long sea-link that will connect Nariman Point to Colaba and help reduce

congestion on interior roads of the central business district in south Mumbai. Lea Associates had submitted a traffic survey report in 2005-2008 to the MMRDA in which it had recommended the construction of a bridge connecting Nariman Point to Colaba. At present, for travelling on this route, only single-lane Captain Prakash Pethe Road is available. As a result, a lot of traffic congestion is reported on the route on a daily basis. An MMRDA spokesperson said, To overcome the existing traffic problem and enable smooth travelling experience, MMRDA has planned to construct the new bridge. We have appointed a project management consultant (PMC), which will prepare a detailed project report (DPR), suggest alignment, conduct traffic survey and study about necessary permissions that need to be obtained for carrying out the project.

The PMC will also undertake the tendering process and calculate the estimated cost. There may be hurdles too as the project is located in the high-security zone. The sea is patrolled by the Coast Guard and the Indian Navy. Environmental clearance will be required too as there may be some reclamation involved, besides the work can endanger marine life. Metropolitan commissioner RA Rajeev said, the new bridge will not effect the existing livelihood of fishermen and we will take care of it. All precautionary measures will be adopted. No obstruction will be caused to the fishermen's boats due to the project work. Also, the PMC of the said project will conduct study of marine species. The 2+2 lane connector may originate from near National Centre for the Performing Arts campus and connect Cuffe Parade. This connector will ensure completion of an effective ring road around the Mumbai Island road. It will also provide connectivity to Metro 3 (Colaba-Bandra-Seepz) underground corridor.

**Maharashtra: World Water Day: Fish from common ponds help fund weddings in this Maharashtra village**

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/water/world-water-day-fish-from-common-ponds-help-fund-weddings-in-this-maharashtra-village-76078>

The villagers of Dongartamashi in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, got ownership of the three ponds in their village in 2011, under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. In the decade since, the tiny village of about 60

families was flush with profits, mostly from high fish yield. The impact of the windfall was visible across sectors like education, agriculture, water availability. And today, the profits even contribute to paying for tents and music at their weddings. We sell the fish to the residents of our village at Rs 100 per kilogram and to others at Rs150 per kg. The money is kept with the Gram Sabha. Since 2013, every year we sell around 15-20 quintals of fish and the village earns around Rs 3-4 lakh, said Manik Kisan Masram, a member of the community forest rights (CFR) management committee. This was possible because of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, also known as FRA. Under FRA, Gram Sabhas can collectively claim ownership and management rights over traditionally used forest land and water bodies.

The Gondia district was historically part of the region ruled over by Gond kings and then by the Bhonsle dynasty of Nagpur. Both the dynasties, according to historian Bhangya Bhukya, professor of history at the University of Hyderabad, laid special emphasis on creating water conservation structures like ponds and tanks in the area. These are the same ponds that villages still use today, although new tanks and ponds have also been constructed in the region, especially under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005. When this area was still part of the Central Province, the Madhya Bharat Zamindari Abolition Act, 1951 transferred the ownership of these ponds to the irrigation department. While the villagers had usufruct rights over these ponds to use water for irrigation, the government department auctioned off the fish. The coming of FRA changed this and with it, the financial status of the village. The idea was that if there are forests, there will be water in the ponds and if there is water in the ponds, then agriculture will be possible in the village, said Dilip Gode, executive director of Vidarbha Nature Conservation Society (VNCS), a Nagpur-based non-profit.

Once the Gram Sabha had the ownership over the pond, they created a management plan in 2013 for their CFR area with the help of VNCS in 2013. Activities like de-siltation and deepening were listed in the plan. The de-siltation activity was undertaken with funds from private companies under Corporate Social Responsibility and the Gram Sabha, said Gode. The development work increased the water availability in the village and the fish yield. With more water availability, the agricultural yield on my two-acre field has increased to 12-13 quintals from 5-6 quintals. I am making Rs 30,000 more every year, said Dhanjaay Yaswant Madawe. His children now go to a private school instead of the government's Adivasi Ashram school, he added proudly. The success of the fish sale prompted the villagers to set up a Macchi Beej Kendra (fish egg centre) in 2015. We used the money from the fish sales to set up the beej kendra. Every year, we sell around 300 kilograms of fish eggs for other cultivators and we charge around Rs 500 per kg, said Mesram. The Dongartamashi Gram Sabha has also constructed a tank along a nearby river and a pipeline from there to the pond to recharge water,

all at its own expense. Ownership rights for over 150 ponds have been given in around 90 villages in Gondia and Gadchiroli districts, and in all of those villages, lives of people have improved, said Gode.

### **Maharashtra: Bombay HC asks BMC to find a remedy for the shifting of fish vendors in Parel**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/infrastructure/bombay-hc-asks-bmc-to-find-a-remedy-for-the-shifting-of-fish-vendors-in-parel-62749>

Hearing a petition filed by the Dr Shirodkar Vyapari Welfare Association, a Bombay High Court bench comprising of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Girish Kulkarni has asked the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to find a suitable remedy for the temporary shifting of fish vendors at the city's Parel Municipal Market. The association represents 114 fish vendors in the region. The vendors approached the court to initiate a stay on the destruction of the ground floor of the region where fish has been sold for 50-60 years. The petition went on to explain that there were originally two structures in the region, a front building and another complex with ground plus four storeys which is where the vendors sold fish. However, a redevelopment project was pitched for the front building in 2016. Although 21 storeys were proposed, only five were constructed. The BMC then decided to shift the vendors into the lower ground (basement) of the under-construction building. Advocate for the association, Vishwajeet Kapse said that the basement is 15 steps down adding that it doesn't have proper ventilation making it difficult to conduct business. Kapse added that since the basement is low-lying, it's also prone to flooding during monsoon season. The fish vendors are currently on the ground floor which is open on all sides. There is a place for loading and unloading of fish, Kapse added. The advocate representing the BMC said that the consent was given by the Secretary to shift the location. Taking these matters into cognizance, the bench asked the BMC advocate to let them know if the first floor is vacant and if the fish vendors can be shifted there. Basement fish market is not feasible, the Chief Justice noted. The next hearing on the matter has been scheduled for Tuesday.

### **Maharashtra: Is Mumbai's Coastal Road worth the losses to livelihood and ecology?**

<https://www.newslandry.com/2021/03/17/is-mumbais-coastal-road-worth-the-losses-to-livelihood-and-environment>

These days, barricades and bulldozers obscure the view of Mumbai's Arabian Sea coastline. Signboards that read connecting people and places watch over construction crews that have made good use of the pandemic lockdown to ramp up work on the ambitious Coastal Road



project. The 29-km road will link Marine Drive in the south to Kandivali in the north. The anticipated benefit? Reduction in travel time by about 70 percent in the second most congested city in the world. Is the intended benefit worth the estimated cost in public resources, livelihoods, and environmental damage? The project comprises an eight-lane partly elevated road, a 2.31-km main bridge, a 13-km interchange bridge, a sea wall, and India's first undersea tunnel. About 68,000 vehicles are estimated to ply on the road one way per day. It entails the reclamation of 111 hectares of land from the sea, a plan lambasted by environmentalists who say the consequences of taking from nature could be devastating. The project, for better or worse, will fundamentally alter Mumbai's iconic coastline, particularly the 10.58-km stretch from Marine Drive to the Worli end of the Bandra-Worli sea link, likely to be completed by 2023. The road project is divided into three packages .

Package 1, from Priyadarshini Park to Baroda Palace, and Package 3, from Princess Street flyover to Priyadarshini Park, are being constructed by Larsen & Toubro; Package 2, from Baroda Palace to the Worli end of the sea link, is being put in place by a joint venture of the Hyundai Development Corporation and the Hindustan Construction Company. Construction work started in 2018, but it wasn't until well into the lockdown – and Rs 12,721 crore, 17 NOCs, multiple court battles, a nine-month suspension of work, and chief ministers from three parties later – that the project finally gathered pace. Much to the chagrin of environmentalists, citizen groups, and local fisherfolk who have had their lives disrupted. While environmental activists believe the project will irretrievably harm the ecology, the fisherfolk fear they won't be provided adequate compensation for the loss of livelihood.

However, the state government and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, unsurprisingly, hail the project as a gamechanger for the megacity. 'They have taken away our homes and livelihood' On a sunny Friday afternoon at Lotus Jetty, which overlooks the Haji Ali dargah, fisherfolk watch a lone boat sail off. It's a rare sight now, they say. Over the past four months, their lives have been upturned by the ongoing work to reclaim the sea for the Coastal Road project, and they fear what it'll yet bring. Severe injustice has been done to us.

They've taken away our homes and our livelihood, says Ganesh Armadeva, a fisherman who has five boats in the area. We aren't getting income from anywhere. It has been so many years since our country has got freedom, but we still don't have the right to speak up. Noises and vibrations caused by drilling have been scaring away the fish; say the fisherfolk, most of whom come from families that have been engaged in fishing for generations. Fish that were easy to catch and provided a steady source of income to the fisherfolk have moved deeper while the waters where crabs were found have been wrecked by the construction work, they claim. They take longer to catch fish and their problem is compounded by rising diesel prices at a time when

they can barely make ends meet. They also claim that fish are dying as construction work dirties the waters. Ecological sensitivity is completely absent in the planning, execution, even the attribution of this, complained Stalin Dayanand, an environmentalist with the NGO Vanashakti who was one of the first people to challenge the Coastal Road project legally.

Fishing communities are never considered even during conceptualisation of the project. The Bombay High Court last month disposed of a plea by fisherfolk demanding unhindered access to the Lotus Jetty after the BMC promised to build a navigational bridge that would enable fishing boats to move freely. Describing the apprehensions of the petitioners misconceived, baseless and devoid of merits, the municipal body claimed the fisherfolk's livelihood wouldn't be affected. The court then directed the petitioners to approach the Fisherfolk Rehabilitation Assessment Committee, which the BMC has formed for assessing whether fisherfolk would be affected and, if so, work out a compensation plan for them.

The committee will soon come out with a policy, Vishal Thombare, executive engineer with the BMC coastal roads department, claims. Fishing activity is carried out deep in the sea and our project is near the coast. Whatever fishing activity is affected, experts are studying and will come up with a policy, he says. The affected people will be compensated accordingly. The fisherfolk are especially upset with Maharashtra's environment minister, Aditya Thackeray, who is also the legislator from the Worli constituency, which encompasses the Haji Ali area. The fisherfolk claim to have played a major role in electing him in 2019, and are convinced he could solve their problems if he wanted. We voted for him, we campaigned for him. He should be standing with us at the front, says Armadeva. Aditya Thackeray was not immediately available for a comment. We have emailed him a set of questions about the project and the fears of the fisherfolk. This story will be updated if there's a response.

In January this year, Thackeray inaugurated a Zebu Bull sculpture next to the Haji Ali coastline, where the fisherfolk live and work. He was just a few feet away from the fisherfolk and their problems, but failed to speak with them. Due to the heavy security they could not approach him either. He saw the statue, but did not see us, says a fisherman who asked not to be named for fear of reprisal. They talk about humanity, but don't do anything for it. Sanjay Baikar, president of the Vanchit Machchimar Haji Ali Sahakari Sanghathan, says the situation has never been this dire for the fisherfolk in the area. This has completely destroyed us. The fishermen are barely getting through, he adds. Baikar's association represents nearly a hundred fisherfolk and their families from around the Hajji Ali coast. Many of the fishermen, faced with the loss of their traditional livelihood because of the construction work and mounting debts, have taken to daily wage jobs, while some fisherwomen have been compelled to work as domestic servants. This is happening at a time when fisherfolk, like other marginalised communities, are struggling to

recover from the heavy blow of the coronavirus pandemic. Baikar speaks of the desperation that swept their community at the peak of the lockdown.

Had you been there and seen the situation you would have had tears in your eyes, he says. I invite the chief minister to come live with us for two days, and see how we live. We do not even have vegetables to eat with rotis sometimes. ‘Traffic will be seamless’ Larsen and Toubro workers sit under a tree in Priyadarshini Park on Napean Sea Road, where construction work on India’s first undersea road tunnel is in full swing. A tunnel boring machine called Mavala is digging 70 meters under the Malabar Hill. It is India’s largest such machine. It was manufactured by a Chinese company and arrived in Mumbai in April 2020. The underwater dual tunnel, 2.07-km long, is proposed to run from Priyadarshini Park till Chhoti Chowpatty on Marine Drive. The main purpose of the project, explains Thombare, is to decongest the city’s traffic and create more open spaces for Mumbaikers. Mumbaikers rely mainly on public transport, however. According to a report by Mumbai Vikas Samiti, a forum of transport experts, 77.1 percent of daily passenger trips in the city in 2015-16 were by public transport and only 22.9 percent by private vehicles. So how many people will benefit from the project? The entire Mumbai city will, claims Thombare. If travelling takes an hour now, it will only take 12 minutes after the road is built. There will be no tolls, signals.

Traffic will be seamless. One lane will be dedicated to buses. While the road will undoubtedly make commuting to the suburbs easier for people in South Bombay, many cityfolk are concerned it may actually increase the traffic. And, of course, they lament the loss of the coastline view. Gayatri Nair, an assistant professor at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, who has done research on the Koli fishing community, calls this a skewed idea of planning. This kind of planning caters to the interests of a certain section of people – those commuting by cars in Mumbai – and is to ease their mobility even as it directly impacts lives of vulnerable communities, she adds. The idea for the Coastal Road is credited to the transportation firm Wilbur Smith and Associates, which proposed a similar plan in 1962. It was formally adopted by Prithviraj Chavan, then chief minister, in 2011. Construction work began in 2018, but was halted in July 2019 by the Bombay High Court, which quashed the project’s Coastal Regulation Zone clearances ruling that they had been granted without proper scientific study.

In December 2019, to the relief of the BMC and the state government, the Supreme Court stayed the high court’s order and allowed the civic body to reclaim land from the sea for the project. The BMC claims they have been transparent about the project, even as activists allege that there has been a lack of public dialogue. We have been uploading all information on the website since the very first day and will continue to do so, says Thombare. The municipal body is also required to deposit 2 percent of the total project cost with the state-run Mangrove Foundation. So far, it

has deposited Rs 175.33 crore. The fund will be held in a fixed deposit and used for improving marine and coastal biodiversity. Scientists from the National Institute of Oceanography have translocated the corals at Haji Ali and Worli. Though the BMC had been issued clearances to reclaim 90 hectares of the sea, it claimed last year that it needed 21 additional hectares. In response, an expert committee of the union environment ministry approved an amendment to the clearance for the project.

Once it is ratified by the central government, the BMC will have the authority to reclaim all 111 hectares. The reclamation work is changing the flow of the water and shifting the tides, the fisherfolk point out, and this will harm Mumbai during monsoons when the city tends to get flooded. Our beaches will go underwater, the currents will change, the shoreline will start eroding faster, there will be loss of biodiversity, and the livelihood of fishermen will be destroyed. This project is an exercise in extravaganza which could very well have been avoided, or at least executed in a less damaging manner, warns Dayanand. This belief that you can restore nature has to vanish from every human's mind, and the judiciary's.

### **Maharashtra: One cup of kadak chai: How Mumbai's Koli women survived the coronavirus pandemic**

<https://scroll.in/article/989295/one-cup-of-kadak-chai-how-mumbais-koli-women-survived-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

One year ago, Hema Bhanji sat wearily outside her home, a makeshift two-story building in the crowded, twisting alleyways of the Versova Koliwada, Mumbai's oldest fishing village. She was slicing deftly through the last of her fish, caught on the boat's final trip before the Covid-19 pandemic arrived on India's shores. By her side was a woman nearly 30 years younger, helping to clean the catch while hesitantly eyeing the chunks of surmai being tossed into a plate. Hema sighed and looked at her friend with exasperation. Take the fish. Staring at it won't fill you up. Nearly in tears, the woman thanked Hema and hurried across the road to her family. She had to cook the fish before her husband woke up from his evening nap.

As for herself, Hema went to bed hungry that night. One empty stomach is better than five, she said simply. If this were a few months ago, the two would have been flocking, along with hundreds of other Koli fisherwomen, to their open, women-run fish market nearby with kilos of fish, joyfully gossiping about their husbands, their work, and all the other daily dramas of the area. What followed was a tumultuous year where they had to hold on to every last rupee. India's infamously strict lockdowns had halted all fishing activity, bringing Koli women's livelihoods and social interactions to a complete standstill. By late June, many of them had begun to run out of money and food for themselves and their children. What was most remarkable about Hema's

act of generosity is that it was not born out of any singularly altruistic sentiment, nor was it an isolated example of friendship.

A group doubly marginalised for their caste and their gender, Koli fisherwomen have had the odds stacked against them for decades. Their average income has declined by as much as 30% since 2010, yet the Indian state does not sufficiently acknowledge their economic vulnerability, according to research by Dr Samir Jale at Shivaji University. More than two-thirds of Mumbai's Koli population of 200,000 is female, but their voices are seldom included in the city's political processes. Despite these challenges, Koli women continue to be fiercely independent, financially, and domestically – a feat that is rare in a male-dominated country.

A network of solidarity legally classified as a Backward Class, Kolis are unofficially considered a lower-caste community since the British Raj, although their own definitions of the term are fluid. Widely considered Mumbai's native inhabitants when the city was just a group of islands, Koli fishermen go out to sea – sometimes for months – while the fisherwomen take charge of collecting, cleaning, cutting, drying, and selling the catch across town. The traditional lifestyles of this small-scale fishing community have been under increasing threat since the late 1980s, owing to the rapid urban development of the city and climate change. Increasing levels of water pollution, changing marine ecosystems, and destruction of mangroves, among other factors, have forced fishermen to go out even longer and further in search of fish, shrinking the already-low levels of income for most households.

Many young Kolis are increasingly moving out of fishing in search of more stable jobs as the fisheries get more uncertain by the day. With the men away and without any economic support as India's economy liberalised at the turn of the century, this group of women began forming ties to solve small problems that arose in their daily lives. Sometimes this meant helping out with each others' kids because childcare services were inaccessible to them. At other times it has meant sharing ingredients or cooking meals together when there wasn't enough food. They gave money to women in need even if their own funds were tight. They spent time listening to each other's anxieties, fears and dreams, particularly in fish markets that became their safe spaces. They shielded each other from abusive husbands or lent shoulders to cry on.

Over time Koli women's small acts of kindness developed into a complex network of solidarity, shaping a sense of collective identity. Describing them as existing within the cracks and fragments of society, Dr Niharika Banerjea, a sociologist at Ambedkar University, explained that the Kolis' informal structures of care arise both as a result of the economic and gendered injustice they face and in resistance to it. This is a community that has been marginalised for so long, Banerjea said. To survive, they have had to create alternative forms of living that do not prescribe to the dominant narratives of how society should be – based on caste, class, race,

gender, and so on – and they have thrived. Emotional bonds unlike most women elsewhere in this overwhelmingly patriarchal country, Koli fisherwomen hold the decision-making power in households and in business. But outside of the Koliwadās, they continue to be denied access to their fundamental rights. So they use their collective power and informal networks to lift each other up as the state beats them down, especially during the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

All of us, we have grown up together, spent all our lives around each other – and we have kind of been hidden from the rest of the world, said Sheetal, Hema’s niece, who shifted from fishwork to a job at a local salon after getting married. Sometimes we don’t get along, and some women certainly drive me crazy, but I can’t imagine a world where I would not stick up for anyone if they needed my help. These bonds are cultivated as much by the women’s compassion for each other as the infrastructure of their surroundings. The strong cohesion between Koli women has always been a feature of the community, said D Parthasarathy, a professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Bombay. It is continually nurtured by the activities of everyday life, like in the way Koliwadās are spatially organised. Their houses look right into each other, their doors are always open, kids run through them all the time, and they do most household and business work together.

As Koliwadās got increasingly encroached upon by developers, women began to combine the spaces between their homes into small courtyards, laying out all their fish to dry there instead of the big drying grounds they used to have. We shared [physical] space for work and other things, but we also shared an emotional and fun space where we could just hang out, said Hema, fondly recounting funny stories and encounters from the past few years. Even faith reinforces the solidarity. Koli women’s strong belief in their goddesses – not gods – strengthens their political identity, said Parthasarathy. Though there are some Christian Kolis and Muslim Kolis, the majority are Hindu Kolis who worship seven main goddesses – including Mumba Devi, from whom the city of Mumbai gets its name. These goddesses symbolise harmony and unity, an important aspect in understanding the relationalities among Koli women.

‘Someone stole my air’ Most of the Koliwada’s communal spaces, however, closed off abruptly when the Covid-19 lockdowns were announced on March 23, 2020. The mandatory curfews and strict restrictions on movement brought fishing and all related fishing activities to a complete halt, including a shutdown of fish markets. Koli fisherwomen went from earning around Rs 100-300 per day to absolutely nothing. When the lockdowns began to ease, the annual 61-day ban on monsoon fishing to protect marine life came into force. Fisherwomen were forced to stay indoors for more than five months. The financial stress was one thing – at one point, we had no money even for buying vegetables, remarked Bharati Chamar, a colorfully-dressed Koli fisherwomen in

her 40s who sells fish in markets across Mumbai. But being stuck with only my husband in our tiny house for half a year? I was bored. I missed the markets. It felt like someone stole my air. Mucky and densely packed, saturated with the smell of raw fish and the cacophony of enthusiastic customers, the fish market was the beating heart of these women's friendships.

It's not just a place of work – it's the place their mothers went to, and their mothers before that, a space deeply enmeshed in their sense of identity, said Gayatri Nair, a sociologist at IIT whose research focuses on Koli communities. It's a social, familial, familiar space that is thick with these relationships flowing through them. Ignored by the state in a country that rarely accords visibility to women, hundreds of Koli women trading freely and controlling the cash flow in large public spaces is extraordinary. They not only participate in the labor force but also contribute confidently to how it is shaped, with generations of expertise. Koli women manage the entire economic system of fishing within the Koliwadās, said Ketaki Bhadgaonkar, co-founder of the non-profit Bombay61. With their enterprising nature they make all the decisions about rents, budgets, household expenses, how fish should be processed and distributed. This rarely happens with women in other sectors.

With less than 30% of the country's women employed, a number steadily on the decline, India ranks 121st out of 131 in the Female Labor Force Participation Rate according to a World Bank report. Many Indian women stop working after marriage, largely because they are not allowed to by their husbands and in-laws. There are few labor protections or incentives for working women, in rural and urban sectors. Especially during the pandemic, more than 17 million women lost their jobs according to data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, a higher percentage than men. Although Koli women's work lives are far more independent than other Indian women's, they too saw their incomes vanish overnight, and received no support from the state. Two fishworker unions' that advocated for relief were run by men. Their demands centered primarily around things like fuel subsidies, discounts on fishing nets, and compensation for hours lost on boats – things that are relevant for fishermen who go out to sea, but not so much the fisherwomen who work on land.

The resulting government policies that passed applied nationally and, unsurprisingly, did little to aid fisherwomen. There is general disregard in our country's policies for the work that women do, whether that's unpaid labor in the household or in the fisheries value chain. It's just assumed women will come and do the drying once the fish has been caught, said Siddharth Chakravarty, a consultant on fisheries and public policy. He added that even though women in Koli communities do at least 2-3 times the amount of fishwork as men, they are not able to take out loans or avail credit legally unless they have assets to put down as collateral. These assets, usually land holdings or other property, are generally drawn out under the man's name. Informal

safety nets for women in the Versova Koliwada, that has meant finding refuge in their friends' generosity when institutions failed them. Jagruti, a smaller scale distributor who bought fish wholesale from other fisherwomen and then sold it door-to-door, had no way to make ends meet. Her husband Ashok, a dhol player for weddings, was also out of a job. They burned through their savings in the first month of the lockdown and were unable to take out any form of credit.

The Maharashtra government had set up a ration stall which gave each Aadhaar card holder 5 kilos of rice and 5 kilos of lentils per month, but only Ashok had the identification card. Jagruti and their two young children have been waiting for their documents to process since 2013. After weeks of not eating a single full meal, I called my friend Seema and asked if she could make me just one cup of chai. We were saving up whatever little we could during lockdown in that silver box up there, just so we could afford some tea leaves, Jagruti said, pointing to a rusted box next to a pooja space full of her seven Koli deities. But with the electricity company tripling the cost of power, our water supply running out, the bank denying our loan, the kids' school – we didn't have a chance. She smiled abruptly. I just wanted one cup of kadak chai to take my mind off things. The next thing I know, Seema shows up at my door with 10,000 rupees that the women have pooled together.

This sharing of money is possible because some women who own their own boats, like Hema, are relatively more cash-rich, while other secondary distributors like Jagruti frequently need to depend on others – usually their husbands – when their flow of income falters. In an informal setting, these class differences matter less. Women with more means will gladly help women without, said Nair. But when you try to formalise these networks, the lines are blurrier. There's a noted difference between women with trawlers, women with smaller boats, and women with no boats at all. This is especially visible when it comes to, for instance, an issue of voting and taking a trade union position on limiting the amount of trawler fishing. These conflicts have kept Koli women's networks from being formalised, despite repeated attempts to form women's cooperatives to leverage more political power. However, spontaneous forms of solidarity continue to thrive.

The relationships among Koli women and their informal networks are no less important or powerful than any formal ones, said Shibhaji Bose, an independent consultant with the TAPESTRY research project. The Koli people – especially the fisherwomen – have always been central to the popular imagination of Mumbai, said Bose, referring to old Bollywood movies and the city's culinary traditions. But the city has not paid Koli women any dividends. They are natives of the land, but have not gotten their fair share from the country's economic boom. With their existence at a crossroads, they say it's only their goddesses and their bonds that keep them afloat. The ways in which Koli women adapted their homegrown social structures to collectively



survive the pandemic is indicative of their strength as much as it represents the deep failures of Indian society and state. Koli women opened up their homes, risked their lives and livelihoods for each other even as a deadly virus loomed, while many privileged communities instinctively turned inwards. We are proud people, said Hema. And we are proud of asking each other for help, and proud to be able to give it to our sisters who need it most.

### **Maharashtra: BMC's plan to set up a park on reclaimed land opposed**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-bmcs-plan-to-set-up-a-park-on-reclaimed-land-opposed/articleshow/81488372.cms>

The BMC on Saturday gave a concept plan to fishermen and local residents on a proposed green park which will come up by reclaiming 300 acres of land along the Cuffe Parade seashore. However, resident groups, elected representatives and fishermen opposed the plan, saying no concrete environmental study was carried out. Fishermen unions have already voiced protest against BMC's plan, saying that if such reclamation is done, Mumbai would soon become Venice as a result of greater flooding in coastal areas. BMC shared a concept plan and it showed that it's not just a green space but a theme park. No detailed environmental study was done to study impact on marine life and fishing..., said BJP corporator Harshita Narwekar. Viswanath Salian, working president of Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti for Mumbai, saw the presentation at Radio Club but was not satisfied. Fishermen have not been taken into confidence.

If they carry out reclamation, water levels will rise. It will hamper our livelihood... This park is not needed at Cuffe Parade, Salian said. Deputy Municipal Commissioner (Gardens) Ramakant Biradar said, this was a preliminary concept plan and we will incorporate all suggestions and objections... The environmental aspects will be studied by NEERI and National Institute of Oceanography... We will ensure the park will not hamper livelihood of fishermen and will not have any adverse impact on the environment, Biradar said.

### **Maharashtra: Fisheries department to offer a compensation to the fishermen community**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/civic/fisherman-will-get-compensation-from-maharashtra-government-says-aslam-shaikh-62481>

As per the Central Government rules, fishing in Mumbai is prohibited in the months of June and July, due to the monsoon, and this leads to a heavy loss for the fishermen. Understanding these concerns, the government has decided to support the community with a positive decision, and will soon be compensating the members of the Koli community during this period. As per reports, the government is also ready to work on changing the criteria for

assistance, if necessary, informed Fisheries Development Minister Aslam Sheikh. The same was presented in the Legislative Council. The response was given while sharing the same and answering a question posed by member Ramesh Patil during Question Hour. During the ban on fishing in the state of Tamil Nadu since 2017, the fishermen were being compensated with INR 5,000. The state has planned a scheme to help the members under the National Welfare Savings based on the guidelines of the Central Government. Under this scheme, INR 53.07 lakh has been given to the fishermen below the poverty line in 2017-18 and INR 40 lakh in 2018-19.

The government had announced a package for fishermen for the last two years, whereby the ones affected by the cyclone in Konkan have also been provided assistance. A study group has been set up to study the progress made by Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the field of fisheries, said Fisheries Development Minister Aslam Sheikh. Present at the discussion were Leader of Opposition Praveen Darekar, Member Bhai Girkar, Kapil Patil, Shashikant Shinde, Mahadev Jankar, Dr. Parinay Phuke, Gopichand Padalkar and others participated in the discussion. Aslam Sheikh also informed that a proposal has been submitted under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana in this regard. Manisha Kayande had also asked a question about the matter. It is said that the Maharashtra Fisheries Development Corporation (MFDC) Mumbai office has completed the survey work by appointing a consultant for the survey work at Harne. Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, the MFDC has submitted a proposal whereby INR 155.46 crore has been proposed for the development of a fish port at Harnai. The proposal has been approved by the National Fisheries Development Board, Hyderabad, said Sheikh. Legislative Council member Ramdas Kadam also participated in the discussion.

**Maharashtra: All fishermen in a family affected by cyclone Nisarg to be compensated**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-all-fishermen-in-a-family-affected-by-cyclone-nisarg-to-be-compensated/articleshow/81415141.cms>

The state government on Tuesday issued a Government Resolution (GR) extending compensation to all fishermen in a family that was affected by the Nisarg cyclone last year. The GR was issued after the legislative council took it up during question hour earlier in the day. Even women who sell fish will be compensated. There are 13,838 mechanical boats and 1,564 non-mechanised boats that carry out deep sea fishing. Members complained that in many families, father and sons were all fishermen. However, the government had limited aid to only one member of the family denying the others who are equally affected, said MLC Ramesh Patil. Fisheries minister Aslam Shaikh said in the past two years, the government has announced aid packages for fishermen and under the central government scheme, has distributed Rs 53 lakh in 2017-18 and Rs 40 lakh in 2018-19 to those fishermen who are below the poverty line. Shaikh

added a committee has been set up to study the success of the fishing industry in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

### **Maharashtra: Lockdown scare hurting fishermen more than corona's return**

<https://www.newsclick.in/Maharashtra-Lockdown-Scare-Hurting-Fishermen-Corona-Return>

Sudhakar Gantandel from Harna port of Ratnagiri district returned from deep-sea on Monday evening after he got a call from his partner telling him about a rumour of lockdown in Maharashtra. Everyone is saying that a lockdown is imminent. That is why Prakash (Sudhakar's partner) called me back. Why waste diesel and human resources for fishing if there will be no market? There is already huge losses in business for the last year, said Sudhakar on phone. As the number of coronavirus patients is increasing in the state, there is indeed a possibility of lockdown in Maharashtra. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray while addressing the state on Sunday evening said that the number of patients and situation would be considered while bringing back lockdown.

If you don't want lockdown then start using the mask, maintaining a physical distance. If you want lockdown like back then you will not use mask, he said. Since then, the number of patients has been increasing by more than 6000 per day. So, people are anticipating a lockdown by March 1. The fishermen community has three broad types. One category is small-time fishermen who go fishing in the nearby sea and earn their bread and butter. The second type of fishermen is those who generally go fishing for one to two days with their medium-size boats. And, the third type of fishermen generally go in deep sea with big trawlers, for four to six days. Sudhakar Gantandel is from the third category and has 12 fishermen on his two trawlers.

My per day expenses include diesel (for trawlers) plus salaries of fishermen and their food. Twelve fishermen are given 350 rupees each. So, 4,200 rupees per day for fishermen. We cook ourselves and the food cost goes up to 1500 rupees. And we need diesel of 2000 rupees per day for one trawler, so that comes to 4,000 rupees per day. So, our daily expenses run into 10,000 rupees approximately, explained Sudhakar. Therefore, when they go fishing for six to eight days, one trip costs Sudhakar around 75 to 80 thousand rupees. If we can't come with fish more than one lakh rupees in one trip, there is no reason to go. This time, we could have come back with more fish but there was no guarantee of the market due to lockdown. Therefore we decided to return, he said. This is the story of big fishermen. Now those 12 persons won't have work until Sudhakar goes back for fishing. The fear of a lockdown has snatched their work for at least eight days and each one of them lost Rs 2500 to Rs 2700.

The smaller fishermen who own one single small boat and do traditional fishing are facing their own problems because of rumours. Yogesh Bhandari, from Girye village of Sindhudurg district, has a small boat. He goes fishing at 3 or 4 am every day and returns to the coast by 10 am. He brings back fish of around Rs 2500 to Rs 3000. He, along with his cousin and partner Mahendra Bhandari, need Rs 1000 to Rs 1200 daily as boat expenses--mainly for diesel and travel to take fish from coast to market.

Generally, these smaller fishermen do fishing near coastal areas. So, they get fish of smaller size, which are not so popular among sea food lovers. These fish sell in local markets mainly. But as there is the fear of coronavirus, people are avoiding going to fish markets. These fishermen like Yogesh sell their fish showing customers the freshness of fish as the small fishermen do not have the capacity to keep fish in cold storage. Our fish sell has gone down to 1000/1200 rupees--that too on Sundays and Fridays when people generally consume non-veg food. On the other hand, expenses on diesel are increasing. The return of coronavirus and the fear or lockdown are the reasons for this, said Yogesh.

The auction of fish at Malad is famous and popular in Mumbai and its suburban area. Vanita Koli, a fisherwoman from Malad, is one of those hundreds of fish sellers who buy fish here and go back to their local area to sell. She is also experiencing a downfall in demand. My sell has gone down by almost 50%. I can see in Malad market that people don't come like earlier. We too are hearing about a lockdown, so nobody wants to take the risk and buy fish here, said Vanita. Meanwhile, Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh has warned on Twitter to not spread rumours about the lockdown. We will take strict actions against those who are spreading rumors about the lockdown, be it on Whatsapp or other social networking sites, said Deshmukh. But it is not helping on ground as increasing number of patients and the CM's statement (above mentioned) is being received together as a sign of impending lockdown.

### **Maharashtra: 150 fishermen get Rs 26L for setting marine animals free**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/150-fishermen-get-rs-26l-for-setting-marine-animals-free/articleshow/81132630.cms>

The state government has paid Rs 26.50 lakh as compensation to 150 fishermen for setting marine animals free after they were caught in their nets during fishing. In order to protect marine biodiversity and to shield fishermen from incurring losses, the state government had in December 2018 announced a compensation for those fishermen who have to cut their expensive nets to release turtles, shark, dolphins or even protected fish such as sawfish and guitar fish back into the sea. According to the compensation scheme, if any fisherman or fisherwoman releases such rare fish or animal which is caught in their net and the net is damaged in the process, they

should file an application before the chief conservator of forests, mangrove protection cell. The state government will provide them a compensation of up to Rs 25,000. For compensation, a fisherman will have to give details of his fishing licence, boat licence, exact location of the incident, including GPS, details of the exotic fish or animal that was caught and video or photographs. Many times, turtles, dolphins and even protected fish like sawfish and guitarfish get trapped in fishing nets.

Catching and selling of these species is a crime. But these fisherfolks also incur losses when their nets are damaged. So, we have started compensating them, an official from the mangrove cell said. After the scheme was launched more than two years ago, 150 fishermen released the endangered species in the sea and followed the procedure for compensation. They have been compensated. According to the data, 68 olive riddle turtles, 47 green sea turtles, 27 whale sharks, 3 hoxbill turtles, one Indian Ocean humpback dolphin, one leatherback sea turtle and two jaunnt guitarfish have got a new life due to the scheme in the past two years.

Recently, 17 new compensation proposals were also received by the mangrove cell for approval. In January this year, the government issued a fresh GR in connection with the compensation, revising the compensation structure. It was decided that the fishermen will get the compensation amount depending upon the size and type of the species. The maximum compensation is Rs 25,000 while the minimum compensation is Rs 8,000. The government had also mentioned in the GR that the a fisherman can apply for compensation only thrice a year and the amount of compensation will be reduced after the first compensation. For example, for the second time they will get Rs 20,000 and the third time they will get Rs 15,000.

### **Maharashtra: Rising costs, falling catch deflate Maharashtra trawl boom**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/rising-costs-falling-catch-deflate-maha-trawl-boom/articleshow/80900196.cms>

Sunil Foka is one of the few fishermen in Versova to take his boat out in recent weeks. As in much of the state, the 300-odd trawlers in this prosperous village on the city's northwestern shore have been grounded by high diesel prices and an export backlog. But Foka gave up his trawl nets a couple of years ago for the more traditional gill-net. The earnings are not as high as in export-oriented trawl. But neither are the costs of fuel and labour. As for the catch of needlefish (tol) he just landed, he'll sell that in local markets. One can manage, Foka said. Maharashtra's trawlers have had a bad couple of years. The pandemic hit export demand last year and cyclones hit the catch in 2019. But their problems predate the current crisis. For several years now, rising input costs and depleting fish stocks due to overfishing have left the once booming sector with shrinking margins.

The number of trawlers in the state has reduced from 5,613 in 2012 to 4,290 today— still many more than the optimum number for sustainable fishing. While some boats may be under repairs, fewer new boats may be being built due to rising costs and the end of a government loan scheme in 2012, said observers. New wood boats now cost upwards of Rs 50-60 lakh—double than a decade ago—and fibreglass boats even more. Some fishermen, like Foka, have moved back to dol- or gill-nets, or expanded to allied businesses.

It's become harder to cover the costs, especially for smaller fishermen, said Ramdas Sandhe, chairman of Maharashtra Rajya Macchimar Sahakari Sangh Ltd. Trawling rose to dominance from the 1970s when central government schemes helped traditional dol- and gill-net fishermen convert to mechanised boats and, a few decades later, to upgrade to high-power engines. Trawls scoop fish that dwell close to the seabed—a destructive practice known as bottom trawling — including large quantities of shrimp. The trawl boom transformed villages such as Versova, which was within easy reach of urban and export markets, and grew state fish production from the 1980s to the 2000s. But with too many boats chasing too few fish off the northwest coast—including heavily subsidised fleets from Gujarat—returns began to diminish. Some upgraded to high-speed engines to chase schools of mackerel (bangda). Still, year-on-year growth in the state catch has been declining since 2000, according to an analysis by fisheries economist M Krishnan and others. They found that state fishing incomes were buoyed largely by rising export prices. The price of crustaceans such as shrimp and lobster, for instance, rose 400% between 1997 and 2016. Fishing beyond the sustainable threshold may give you a high current income, but it eats away your future, said Krishnan.

Even in well-off Versova, some are feeling the pressure. Boats that used to get good catch near Mumbai now have to go as far as Gujarat or Ratnagiri, increasing days on sea. Wages and diesel prices have risen while state fuel subsidies have been stuck for three years. Some fishermen in Alibaug have returned to dol-nets but Versova's Rajendra Hire doesn't see that as an easy option, especially since the ONGC platform near Mumbai restricts their fishing grounds. Pollution has also affected the area's near-shore fish nurseries, he notes. Dol-nets also catch fish that need to be dried in the sun—there's little space for that any more in a now built-up neighbourhood. Instead, Hire opened a shop to sell fishing nets more than a year ago. It helps supplement my income, the trawl-owner said. Historically, the government has subsidised fish quantity, not quality, said marine fisheries expert Divya Karnad. New central government policies are now focusing on cold-chain systems to improve post-harvest fish quality. But they are also incentivising construction of deep-sea fishing vessels to compete on the international high seas. Everyone is recognising that trawlers have gone as far as they can go, said Karnad.

## **Maharashtra: JNPT doesn't have CRZ clearance for making SEZ, say greens through RTI**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/navi-mumbai/mumbai-jnpt-does-not-have-crz-clearance-for-making-sez-say-greens-through-rti/articleshow/80926434.cms>

Local environmentalists have stated that as per Right to Information Act (RTI records, there is no proper Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) clearance to build the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) special economic zone (SEZ) project at the port area in Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai. The greens have thus asked the state environment department to take remedial steps to restore the coastal biodiversity. As per records of the MCZMA, the information (that) pertaining to CRZ clearance to JNPT SEZ for implementing the SEZ project in Uran taluka of Raigad district is not available. This communique from the environment department was shared in response to our RTI application, said BN Kumar of NatConnect Foundation. He further said, We sought the information on CRZ clearance as we have been noticing widespread destruction of mangroves due to the landfill for the JNPT SEZ. The 'no info available' response is surprising as it means that the CRZ clearance documents are not there.

JNPT website itself says there are 900 hectares of mangroves (numbering 900,000 sea plants) and their transfer to the state forest department is still pending despite the government orders to do so, Kumar said. These mangroves have to be protected at any cost to save the coast and the JNPT project itself, apart from the scores of villages, from tidal water attacks and the plants serve as the first line of defence, Kumar said. TOI contacted the JNPT PR agency in order to get their version on this green issue. However, a spokesperson of the agency said that a formal reply has not come till the time of going to press. Member of the high court appointed mangroves panel D Stalin commented: Nearly 85% of mangroves in Uran taluka have been destroyed for various projects during the 15 years. The greens are desperately trying to save the surviving mangroves and wetlands, including those with JNPT's jurisdiction. The state must act now on this. Kumar pointed out that the original environmental clearance given to JNPT SEZ expired in December 2019 and the renewal was granted at the 195th meeting of the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA).

He expressed surprise that the SEIAA website, as of February 12, 2021, does not have minutes of this particular meeting supposed to have taken place on March 14, 2020 though it posted the preceding and succeeding meetings. We filed an RTI application seeking minutes of the SEIAA 195th meeting, the activist said. In a separate response to NatConnect's another RTI application, the government said it asked the Raigad district collector to probe into the allegation of burial of mangroves under JNPT SEZ. In fact, state Environment Director Narendra Toke himself asked the Collector to check violation of the CRZ notifications. NatConnect and other groups such as Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishthan and traditional fishing community forum Paaramparik Machhimar

Bachao Kruti Samiti also complained to the Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray against the mangroves and wetland destruction under JNPT. The maharashtra chief minister asked the Environment Department to check these. The groups have also approached the Bombay high court appointed Mangrove Protection and Conservation Committee to order immediate halt to the burial of mangroves under JNPT SEZ and action on those responsible for it.

The environmental clearance given for expansion of JNPT container terminal clearly stipulates that the project proponent must adhere to all court orders and CRZ rules and clearly to stay 50 metres away from mangroves. But in all the cases at Dhutum and Ulwe, tonnes and tonnes of earth has been dumped straight on mangroves as if the law protecting the sea plants does not exist, Pawar said. Meanwhile, the traditional fishing community forum offered to take the government inspection teams to show the glaring violations of earlier ECs granted to JNPT including the shutting of the fishing routes and burials of mangroves. We can show the extent of destruction by guiding the team by land and sea routes which will amply prove our charges, said Dilip Koli of the Kruti Samiti.

### **Maharashtra: Rising costs, falling catch deflate trawl boom**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/rising-costs-falling-catch-deflate-maha-trawl-boom/articleshow/80900196.cms>

Sunil Foka is one of the few fishermen in Versova to take his boat out in recent weeks. As in much of the state, the 300-odd trawlers in this prosperous village on the city's northwestern shore have been grounded by high diesel prices and an export backlog. But Foka gave up his trawl nets a couple of years ago for the more traditional gill-net. The earnings are not as high as in export-oriented trawl. But neither are the costs of fuel and labour. As for the catch of needlefish (tol) he just landed, he'll sell that in local markets. One can manage, Foka said. Maharashtra's trawlers have had a bad couple of years. The pandemic hit export demand last year and cyclones hit the catch in 2019. But their problems predate the current crisis. For several years now, rising input costs and depleting fish stocks due to overfishing have left the once booming sector with shrinking margins. The number of trawlers in the state has reduced from 5,613 in 2012 to 4,290 today— still many more than the optimum number for sustainable fishing. While some boats may be under repairs, fewer new boats may be being built due to rising costs and the end of a government loan scheme in 2012, said observers.

New wood boats now cost upwards of Rs 50-60 lakh—double than a decade ago—and fibreglass boats even more. Some fishermen, like Foka, have moved back to dol- or gill-nets, or expanded to allied businesses. It's become harder to cover the costs, especially for smaller fishermen, said Ramdas Sandhe, chairman of Maharashtra Rajya Macchimar Sahakari Sangh Ltd. Trawling rose



to dominance from the 1970s when central government schemes helped traditional dol- and gill-net fishermen convert to mechanised boats and, a few decades later, to upgrade to high-power engines. Trawls scoop fish that dwell close to the seabed—a destructive practice known as bottom trawling—including large quantities of shrimp. The trawl boom transformed villages such as Versova, which was within easy reach of urban and export markets, and grew state fish production from the 1980s to the 2000s. But with too many boats chasing too few fish off the northwest coast—including heavily subsidised fleets from Gujarat—returns began to diminish. Some upgraded to high-speed engines to chase schools of mackerel (bangda). Still, year-on-year growth in the state catch has been declining since 2000, according to an analysis by fisheries economist M Krishnan and others.

They found that state fishing incomes were buoyed largely by rising export prices. The price of crustaceans such as shrimp and lobster, for instance, rose 400% between 1997 and 2016. Fishing beyond the sustainable threshold may give you a high current income, but it eats away your future, said Krishnan. Even in well-off Versova, some are feeling the pressure. Boats that used to get good catch near Mumbai now have to go as far as Gujarat or Ratnagiri, increasing days on sea. Wages and diesel prices have risen while state fuel subsidies have been stuck for three years. Some fishermen in Alibaug have returned to dol-nets but Versova's Rajendra Hire doesn't see that as an easy option, especially since the ONGC platform near Mumbai restricts their fishing grounds. Pollution has also affected the area's near-shore fish nurseries, he notes. Dol-nets also catch fish that need to be dried in the sun—there's little space for that any more in a now built-up neighbourhood. Instead, Hire opened a shop to sell fishing nets more than a year ago.

It helps supplement my income, the trawl-owner said. Historically, the government has subsidised fish quantity, not quality, said marine fisheries expert Divya Karnad. New central government policies are now focusing on cold-chain systems to improve post-harvest fish quality. But they are also incentivising construction of deep-sea fishing vessels to compete on the international high seas. Everyone is recognising that trawlers have gone as far as they can go, said Karnad.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen's group opposes undersea Metro proposal**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/fishermens-group-opposes-undersea-metro-proposal/articleshow/80777903.cms>

The Maharashtra Machchimar Kruti Samiti has opposed the state public works department proposal to build an undersea Metro to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue in the Arabian Sea at Nariman Point. In a press release the Samiti said they were already opposed to the memorial

in the sea and the undersea Metro would completely destroy their livelihoods. It has demanded that the memorial be shifted.

### **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.

#### **Maharashtra: BMC to HC: Won't hinder fishermen's access to Lotus jetty**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/bmc-to-hc-wont-hinder-fishermens-access-to-lotus-jetty/articleshow/80676930.cms>

BMC assured Bombay high court on Wednesday it will not obstruct access of fishermen to Lotus jetty from where they carry out their fishing operations in the Haji Ali bay area due to reclamation work for constructing the coastal road. A bench of Justices Ramesh Dhanuka and V G Bisht heard a petition by 10 fishermen who complained that BMC has obstructed them and others from operating their boats. Also, that the petitioners are threatened and intimidated to prevent them from carrying out their bona fide livelihood activities. They urged the court for unhindered access to the jetty. Their advocate, Meenaz Kakalia, argued that BMC has repeatedly stated before the court that fishing activities from Lotus jetty will not be impaired. Therefore, the petitioners seek the fulfilment of this assurance, she added. BMC's reply, filed by the chief engineer (coastal road), denied the petitioners' allegations and said reclamation work is some distance away from Lotus jetty and that it is building a navigational bridge for movement of boats of fishermen to and from the jetty.

It annexed a plan to show that reclamation for the coastal road and construction of the navigational bridge do not prevent use of or access to the Lotus jetty. Senior advocate Aspi Chinoy for BMC submitted that if BMC wanted to obstruct the fishermen, then it would not build a navigational bridge. In their order, the judges recorded BMC's assurance. While

disposing of the petition, they also permitted fishermen to approach the Fisherfolk Rehabilitation Assessment Committee, set up by the state government, to settle their claim for damages to their fishing boats and related equipment.

### **Maharashtra: BMC trying to evict us under guise of redevelopment: Fish sellers at Mumbai's Parel market**

<https://www.mid-day.com/mumbai/mumbai-news/article/bmc-trying-to-evict-us-under-guise-of-redevelopment-fish-sellers-at-mumbai-parel-market-23157854>

For decades, selling fish at Parel's Dr Shirodkar Market has been the only source of income for 70 years-plus Shantabai. But today, the septuagenarian is amongst 114 licensed fisherfolks who stare at an uncertain future. They have alleged that the BMC is trying to grab their marketplace in the guise of redevelopment. The civic body has planned the redevelopment of the market in two phases. The first phase, work on which began a few years ago, is still incomplete and the fish sellers say they are being pressured to move into the under-construction place to make way for the second phase.

A few weeks ago, they [BMC's market department] even tried to send a bulldozer to demolish their structures. It was temporarily stalled due to resistance by local women groups and fisherwomen, said Purnima Shirishkar, Secretary at Savitribai Phule Mahila Vikas Mandal. They [BMC] will have to take their bulldozer over us. We won't shift to an under-construction market basement, our six generations have sold fish in this market, said Shamla Worlikar, 45, secretary of Dr Shirodkar Mandi Vyapari Welfare Association. The fish sellers say the place offered to them does not have the occupation certificate and mandatory NOC from the fire department apart from lacking in ventilation. Pointing to the slow pace of Phase I, Purnima said the BMC has raised only five floors in the past six years and nobody knows what will be the fate of Phase II. Officials claim this is temporary, but when we asked them to give the same in writing, they haven't, she said. Purnima and the vendors say BMC's former assistant commissioner (Market) had given in writing that repairs were underway at the market. How come they are now talking about demolition? Asked Purnima.

Some vendors also accused the BMC of snapping their power and water connections and creating hurdles in the renewal of their annual licences. Rajini Keni, BJP corporator and a member of BMC's garden and market committee, said the BMC is misguiding the fish sellers. These fisherfolk are not cattle who can be shunted about. She warned of a protest if the BMC demolishes the market. Ujwala Patil, a rights activist and a member of Maharashtra Kruti Samiti, said BMC is terming the basement the 'lower ground floor' to suit its purpose. The place is not only small, but also full of filth. Moreover, the risk of falling debris and construction noise

would add to the inconvenience. Advocate Floyd Gracias, who is representing the licensed fisherwomen, said the ongoing work could be a risk to the fish sellers and their patrons. He pointed that the BMC has not given any written assurances about the rehabilitation. He added, I have already sent a notice to the BMC on behalf of the fisherfolk, and we are awaiting a response, in the absence of which, we will be constrained to take appropriate legal recourse. The other side Mrudula Ande, Assistant Commissioner (market) of BMC, insisted the arrangement is temporary and that it has been done in the lower ground floor and not the basement of the Phase I building, planned as a 22-storey structure. We have to demolish the existing market, start excavation and finish it before monsoon. Unfortunately, the work is getting delayed due to the fisherfolk's non-cooperation, she said.

### **Maharashtra: Where has the fish gone in Harnai?**

<https://www.mid-day.com/sunday-mid-day/article/where-has-the-fish-gone-in-harnai-23157772>

A village that once sent back tourists with box full of local catch, is struggling to meet demand. Experts say it's time consumers, fishermen and government kept its greed in check. At 4 pm every day, the fish market at the Harnai beach in Ratnagiri gets buzzing. Fresh catch from the trawlers gets unloaded and bullock carts ferry it to the spot where an auction is unfolding. Kilos of pomfret, kingfish, mackerel, jumbo prawn, lobster, squid, sting ray are sold in bulk, and transported to Mumbai and other cities. It's a bargain. The catch is fresh and cheap, almost one-fourth the price of what you pay in Mumbai. The year-end sees plenty of tourists from Mumbai and Pune flocking the scene and packing ice-box full of seafood to take home. However, according to locals, many returned home disappointed last year. There was not enough fish in the sea. Harnai in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, with its 1,200 boats, is one of the only few ports in the country that follows sustainable fishing practices.

The waters in the Dabhol-Harnai belt have forever been abundant with marine life, but the last three years have been difficult for the local fisherfolk on the Konkan coast. Mubeen Harge, Chairman, Swarnadurga Fishing Co-operative Society in Harnai, tells mid-day, The cyclones on the West coast, especially Nisarg last year, created great havoc and affected us deeply. In addition, across the Western coast, including the shores of Goa, Karnataka and Kerala, LED fishing is being done. Fish are attracted by holding a light above water or suspending it below water. Fish are then caught using nets in large quantities. This has led to a depletion of supplies because juvenile fish are killed. It has become a sustainability issue. Aslam Khan, former chairman of the society highlights the overfishing of sardines, which are food for other fish, as another problem. The fishermen of Harnai had organised protests at Azad Maidan and Sassoon Dock three years ago to highlight the issue. Khan believes it's not long before fishermen too fall

prey to suicides due to pressures their traditional occupation is facing. Loans are now also tougher to come by.

Previously, the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) used to give us 75 per cent loan and 25 per cent came from the government. Since 2016, NCDC has stopped the loans. Our boats are in bad shape and need repairs. Explaining the math behind a fishing trip, Harnai local Azim Sarang says that while previously, the cycle for trawlers was two to three days, now, it's between eight to 15 days. One trip takes four barrels of diesel, each costing R20,500. Add to it the cost for ice and seven member labour. They don't return unless they feel they have enough return on investment, which is more than a lakh per trip. Alissa Barnes is an independent marine biologist specialising in shark and ray fisheries. She explains that fish missing from the sea cannot be an overnight phenomenon. Rapid declines have occurred over the last 50 years, especially after trawl nets were introduced in the 1960s along the east and west coasts to harvest shrimp. This was aided, she says, by the Food and Agriculture organisation (FAO) and the Indo-Norwegian project. However, the last five years have been especially hard, considering major climate change. And the pandemic only made matters worse.

It looks like a vicious cycle then, with multiple factors, including recent cyclones along the west coast, causing chaos in the marine ecosystem. Unhealthy fishing behaviour, including increased soak time (duration where the net is set/dragged under water) and number of times nets are set, leads to decreased availability. The fishing grounds then move further away into open waters, leading to fishermen using bigger boats and higher horse power engines. And if bottom-trawl gear is used, it destroys the seabed. Concrete reclamation in the coastal road has done more harm than good for fishing. It's a recipe that'll destroy what Sarita Fernandes, managing trustee, Morjim Sea Turtle Trust and Capan Seas, calls the peace of the coastal zone. Tide diversion and shifting of tidal boundaries lead to complications because these zones are also the breeding ground for economical catch like lobster, prawn and deep sea pelagic fish. Barnes feels, a good place to start is to be mindful of what fish you eat. She says, Eat local. If you have access to spaces where fishermen land/sell/buy fish, talk to them, ask them about different varieties they catch. On a larger scale, policy change is a must, but the idea should be to find customisable solutions for each region. Australia and the US are good models to look at for laws and management plans although copy pasting plans never works. It's always prudent to involve the fishing community in policy changes since it affects their livelihood.

## **Maharashtra: Price of fish soars amid the scare**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/civic/fish-price-increase-in-market-of-mumbai-60368>

The rising cases of bird flu in Mumbai and other parts of the state have instilled fear among the people. A lot of non-veg lovers are now resorting to eating fish instead of chicken and eggs. As a result, the prices of fish have shot up exponentially over the past few days. The price of fish has increased to INR 250 per kg from INR 150 in the wholesale market. The wholesale fish owners in local markets have cited an increasing demand as the reason behind rising prices. In addition to that, during the colder months of December to March, fish are less likely to find themselves on the ocean floor. This is one of the reasons why fish prices have gone up, said the fishermen community. According to reports, it has come to light that the price of the fish is getting more expensive in the original market. However, despite the rise in prices, consumer demand has not declined. Advertisement The highest increase has been at the price of pomfret. They have become more expensive, earlier, it was available at INR 500, while wet bombils are rarely available here. Wholesale market prices of fish Kolambi – INR 550 Surmai – INR 600 Pomfret - INR 900 Wet Bombil - INR 400

## **Maharashtra: Kolis displaced by JNPT threaten to stop ships from Jan 21**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/kolis-displaced-by-jnpt-threaten-to-stop-ships-from-jan-21/articleshow/80353092.cms>

Fishermen families displaced by JNPT have threatened to stop movement of ships from January 21 as they have not been compensated. Displaced Kolis have been living in a transit camp, Hanuman Koliwada, for 40 years. Suresh Damodar Koli, head of the village reforms committee, said, our only demand to implement promises made to resettle us as per government norms. He said JNPT had agreed at meetings with Union minister Nitin Gandkari, deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and others to resettle project-hit on 17 hectares in Dronagiri, for which Rs 6.2 crore had been committed. The then Raigad district collector had filed an affidavit on May 2, 2017, with Lok Ayukta, promising to allot the land for Sheva village displaced families, Koli said. In all 256 families had been displaced from Sheva, but now they have increased to 600, Koli said. JNPT was to train project-hit and give them jobs. Now, the fishing community is being denied its legitimate, constitutionally guaranteed right to fish, he said.

**Maharashtra: Fishermen can claim compensation only thrice a year for rescue of endangered marine life: Maharashtra fisheries department**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/fishermen-can-claim-compensation-only-thrice-a-year-for-rescue-of-endangered-marine-life-maharashtra-fisheries-department-101610566584209.html>

Fishermen claiming compensation for rescuing and releasing marine life into the sea can now do so only three times a year. The state government has introduced an upper limit to the number of claims one can file and the amount that can be claimed to the compensation scheme for the fishing community. In a notification issued last week, the state fisheries department has announced a new structure for the compensation scheme for conservation practices by the fishing community. Endangered marine animals, protected under various schedules of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, get caught in large trawler fishing nets and are rescued by cutting these nets. However, while the animals survive once the nets are cut the fishing community endures a loss due to damaged nets. Changes to the compensation scheme, which was introduced in 2018 to encourage conservation practices by fishermen, were proposed by the state mangrove cell to ensure more fishermen take advantage of it instead of the rewards going to those making multiple claims through the year. The compensation is provided once the fisherman can submit proof of the release and damage to nets. The compensation amount, which was earlier ₹25,000 for rescuing all kinds of marine life and releasing them into the sea, has been lowered for smaller species to ₹12,500.

For instance, for rescuing and releasing sea turtles, such as the Olive Ridley, green sea, loggerhead and hawksbill, fishermen will receive ₹12,500 for their first claim. One fisherman can make claims only three times a year. The compensation for the second claim will be ₹10,000 and for the third will be ₹8,000. The compensation will remain ₹25,000 for the first claim for rescuing and releasing larger species such as the whale shark, Gangetic shark, Pondicherry shark, sawfish, giant guitarfish, leatherback turtle, dolphins and whales. Compensation for subsequent claims has been reduced to ₹20,000 and ₹15,000. Since the start of the scheme, we have disbursed ₹25 lakh to fishermen for their conservation efforts. However, we have noticed that some fishermen make multiple claims throughout the year. It can't be that all these rare species are getting trapped in the nets of only a handful of fishermen. Therefore, we had proposed an upper limit on the number of claims one can file, said Virendra Tiwari, additional principal chief conservator of forest (mangrove cell). The compensation scheme for conservation practices was launched by the mangrove cell and fisheries department on December 21, 2018, and was subsequently passed by the state cabinet. The mangrove cell had also found that the damage



caused to nets by releasing smaller species was not very high, and therefore proposed to reduce the compensation, Tiwari added.

### **Maharashtra: Expedite work on two sea link projects in Mumbai: CM**

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/expedite-work-on-two-sea-link-projects-in-mumbai-maharashtra-cm-121011201502\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/expedite-work-on-two-sea-link-projects-in-mumbai-maharashtra-cm-121011201502_1.html)

Thackeray on Tuesday instructed officials to expedite work on the Bandra-Versova and Versova-Virar sea link projects to ease vehicular movement in Mumbai. According to an official statement, Thackeray gave the instruction during a meeting he chaired here to review these projects, being executed by state-run Maharashtra Road Development Corporation. The 9.6-km Bandra-Versova sea link aims to address traffic jam issues and save fuel and time of motorists, the statement said. The chief minister suggested during the meeting to connect the coastal road to the Western Express Highway from suburban Versova, it said. The authorities have targeted to complete the project work by 2025, the statement said. The Versova-Virar sea link, of 42.75-km length, will be completed in two phases - from Versova to Vasai and Vasai to Virar - it said. The statement said precaution is being taken to ensure the project does not affect the movements of fishermen. A detailed project report of Versova-Virar sea link has been prepared, the statement said. Thackeray said the two sea link projects will help boost the economy in the areas concerned and increase employment opportunities there.

### **Maharashtra: Five fishing boats damaged in high tide near Haji Ali**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/five-fishing-boats-damaged-in-high-tide-near-haji-ali>

Five fishing boats belonging to the members of the Vanchit Macchimar community were damaged on Wednesday due to the high tide of the sea. However members of the community have blamed the civic body and the ongoing coastal road project for their loss. To facilitate the ongoing reclamation at the Haji Ali bay, on-site engineers of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) have dismantled the hangars at the Lotus Jetty where the fisherfolk used to park their boats. Now the fishermen have to park their boat in the shallow waters, 500 metre way from the Lotus Jetty and the jetty area is now being filled with boulders and stones. The fishermen claimed, due to the heavy water current the boats collided with boulders and were damaged.

Now that we don't have any hangar, we leave our boats in the shallow water, when the tide came, the boats got carried away and collided against the boulders Allaudin Niyaz Khan told FPJ. Khan is the chairperson of Vanchit Macchimar Haji Ali Sahakari Sanghathana - an apex body of

the fishermen community at Haji Ali. According to the fishermen, total five boats were damaged completely and few other boats were also affected partially. They said about 40 boats are being parked now at the Haji Ali Bay regularly. Khan said it will cost them minimum Rs 20 lakh to repair all the boats and the fishermen further informed, due to the coastal road project the fishes have migrated towards the deep sea water, this has heavily affected their livelihood as they don't have the logistics to go fishing at the deep sea. We are not against any development projects but the state needs to provide us with any alternative at least stated a fisherfolk.

### **Maharashtra: Bandra Locals Take On Fisheries Department Over Chimbai Shore Destruction**

<https://www.mid-day.com/articles/bandra-locals-take-on-fisheries-dept-over-chimbai-shore-destruction/23173247>

Four nature lovers have sent a legal notice to the state accusing it of causing permanent destruction of the rocky shore at Chimbai fishing village in Bandra and damaging the mangroves abutting the area. In their notice dated December 30, addressed to the Commissioner of Fisheries, Maria Thelma Suresh Poojary and three others have said that local fishermen are opposed to a government project to upgrade the existing jetty saying it makes their homes and fish-drying area vulnerable to flooding. The activists have already moved the Bombay High Court on the project and the case is scheduled to be heard today. They say a legal notice will ensure a quick response from the state government which might otherwise try to seek more time from the court.

The petition challenges the permanent destruction of the natural rocky intertidal shore at Chimbai, Bandra, caused by the project being undertaken by the Fisheries Department for 'Providing infrastructural post harvesting facility to fishermen at fish landing centres at Chimbai' in accordance with the CRZ clearance dated 16.09.2019 erroneously granted to your project, reads the notice addressed to the Fisheries Department, a copy of which is with mid-day. It goes on to say, The local fishermen of Chimbai village have already declared and informed you along with other departments of the state government that they do not want any development of existing jetties, fish drying yards and net mending yards located in Chimbai village. The activists say there are about 120 boats in the Chimbai Koliwada which can be comfortably accommodated in the existing jetty and there is no need to upgrade it. Citing Coastal Regulation Zone norms, the notice says the sedimentation rate is high at Chimbai.

The location and alignment of the jetty needs to be designed properly in order to avoid excessive siltation on the downward side. The mangrove patch near the site should not be destroyed, says the notice, alleging that the contractor has gone ahead ignoring these important aspects. The

notice says construction material and rubble is being dumped on mangroves, cutting off their access to saline water that is crucial for their survival. The MCZMA has also issued a legal notice to the Collector dated 20.10.2019 asking the office of the Collector to submit an action taken report on the various violations of the CRZ Notification 2011 brought to its attention vide complaints submitted by locals. However, no such report has been submitted about this issue, said the activists. The notice also says the rocky intertidal area at Chimbai acts as a natural barrier to the seawater and destroying this natural barrier will make their homes fish drying yards prone to floods.

### **Maharashtra: Adani gets nod for captive jetty**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/adani-gets-nod-for-captive-jetty/articleshow/80078489.cms>

The state environment ministry has given clearance to a captive jetty of Adani Cementation in Raigad district. The proposal that was deferred in July had come up before the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) of the state environment department in its meeting held on December 4. Adani Cementation proposes to set up a captive jetty, conveyor corridor and approach road over Amba River for its cement plant near village Shahbaj in Alibag taluka of Raigad district. Earlier, Adani Cementation had been asked to look for alternatives as the site in Shahbaj has several mangroves. The proposed jetty will consist of a berth head, breasting dolphins, mooring dolphins and approach trestle. About two hectares of water front area was proposed to be used for a jetty, and 1.5 hectare of river bank for conveyor corridor and approach road. The proposed berthing facilities would handle dry cargo like fly ash, slag and cement. The port facilities are to be developed in a phased manner commensurate with traffic growth. The cargo to be handled at the jetty includes ordinary portland cement and fly ash. These materials will be brought from Gujarat by ships (barges) to the jetty and thereafter by pipe conveyor up to the blending units. The initial proposal showed that construction will happen in mangrove area and nearly 150 mangroves will be cut. The area has mangrove forest, and permission will also be required from the forest department for diversion of forest land.

In the 145th meeting of MCZMA held in July this year, there was opposition to cutting of mangroves and six sites were studied and option that requires minimum cutting of mangroves was chosen, the minutes said. The Adani group has promised to replant ten mangroves for every mangrove lost. Clean, aesthetic construction norms have to be adopted offshore for construction on piles. According to the minutes of the MCZMA meeting although mangroves are noticed in 10 km radius within 1 km of proposed jetty beyond banks of River Amba, it is barren land with wild vegetation. Conveyor corridor and approach road (covering 0.64 hectares mangrove forest out of 1.3 hectare of required area) will be constructed in such a way that there is minimum

disturbance to mangroves. The engineering structure of the diameter and spacing between piles are to be designed in such a way that it will not cause damage to existing mangroves. Adani has been told to cut minimum mangroves and there must be no reclamation near two creeklets. The Adani group had not responded to Mumbai Mirror's phone calls and email for comment till the time of going to press.

### **Maharashtra: Don't obstruct sea link work, fisherfolk told**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/dont-obstruct-sea-link-work-fisherfolk-told/articleshow/80024101.cms>

Several members of the fishing community from Chimbai village have been warned by Bandra police not to obstruct the Versova-Bandra Sea Link work being carried out by the contractor (Shapoorji Pallonji) on behalf of the government. The notice, issued by police, names nine people who had tried to stop the work at Chimbai jetty on September 29 and December 8. It warns that any future obstruction will result in them being held personally responsible and action will be initiated under IPC section 188.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen to block JNPT ships on January 21**

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/west/maharashtra-fishermen-to-block-jnpt-ships-on-january-21-932055.html>

Taking the sea route, the JNPT-project affected people of erstwhile Sheva village in Uran have decided to launch a 'channel bandh' agitation pressing for their rights on 21 January 2021 blocking ship traffic. The villagers, who have been confined to the transit camp at Hanuman Koliwada about 40 years ago ever since their lands have been acquired for the country's largest container port, have not received any compensation, said Suresh Damodar Koli, head of the Village Reforms Committee. Environmental groups such as NatConnect Foundation and Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan which have been campaigning against the destruction of wetlands and mangroves by the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust have come out in support of the agitating fishing community. Koli has recently written to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray highlighting the plight of the people who lost their source of survival in the land acquisition and the CMO cell at Konkan Bhavan asked JNPT Chairman to address the issue. In all 256 families have been displaced from Sheva and now they have grown to about 600 families, Koli said and pointed out that none of the rehabilitation measures as per even the government norms have been implemented.

As per the norms, JNPT is supposed to train the project-hit and give them jobs, however, according to them, it was not done. "Fed up with this attitude, we are left with no alternative but

to launch an agitation, Koli said. Hanuman Koliwada has over 125 fishing boats which will be pressed into action on January 21 to block the entry and exit of ships at JNPT, he said. NatConnect Foundation Director BN Kumar said the lives and livelihoods of the people must be protected. Any development that destroys these must be stopped, he said. In fact, NatConnect has recently asked the government to implement the Blue Economy and Mangrove-based aquaculture activities to help the people who lost their source of income with the land acquisition. Nandakumar Pawar, head of Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishthan, said, How can you have a development that destroys the local economy? JNPT has also violated the provisions of the environment clearance which clearly stipulate that the fishing activity should not be disturbed.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen skeptical about success of bio-toilets on boats**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/uttan-fishermen-skeptical-about-success-of-bio-toilets-on-boats>

In order to address sanitation issues and minimize sea pollution levels, the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) has floated a project mandating the installation of bio-toilets onboard mechanized fishing boats. However, the fishing community is skeptical about the success of the project as clarity eludes key aspects- mainly in context to facilities towards the on-land scientific disposal of the liquid sewage that will emanate from the digester tanks of the bio-toilets. After conducting a survey to chalk out steps needed to be taken for maintaining on-board hygiene following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the fisheries department decided to install bio-toilets in mechanized fishing boats that use six or more high-powered cylinder engines. The project was launched under the aegis of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)- a flagship scheme of the central government aimed at focused and sustainable development of the fisheries sector in all states and union territories across the country.

“The project looks good on paper, however, ground realities have not been taken into account it seems. A major challenge is the safe disposal of the accumulated liquid waste once the boat returns from its fishing voyage. Are local civic bodies including- municipal councils and corporations at respective landing points equipped to handle the liquid waste? questioned Bernard D'mello who is the working president of the Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samithi. The fisheries department claims to have launched several initiatives like messages on social media platforms and presentations on World Fisheries Day (21, November) to create appropriate awareness about the much needed bio-toilets for fishing vessels. The bio-toilet project which is a part of the Blue Revolution Scheme and Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package offers a subsidy of Rs. 20,000 to boat owners ( Rs.30,000 in case the owner is a woman) for the installation of the tailor-made bio-toilet which is priced at Rs. 50,000. The quaint fishing villages

including-Uttan, Pali and Chowk and Manori is home to around 750 mechanized fishing boats in the region.

### **Maharashtra: Govt to give fisheries societies motorboats for patrolling**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/govt-to-give-fisheries-societies-motorboats-for-patrolling/articleshow/79830152.cms>

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in the state, minister of animal husbandry, dairy development and fisheries, Sunil Kedar, has proposed to give motorboats to fisheries cooperative societies across the state for patrolling against illegal fishing. Kedar on Sunday inaugurated the state's first patrolling motorboat at Futala lake. He even boarded the boat and made rounds of the lake. "Patrolling is needed because illegal fishing causes loss to fisheries cooperative societies who are awarded contracts by the government and local bodies for lakes and reservoirs, said the minister. The societies are financially weak and cannot afford motor boats. The government will purchase the boats costing around Rs4 lakh each and gift them to societies. Corporator Kamlesh Chaudhary, activist Naru Jichkar, president of Panchsheel Matsyavyavsay Sahkari Sanstha which has the contract for Futala lake, Prakash Lonare, president of Zilla Mazdoor Sangh, Swapnil Likhari and others were present. Chaudhary told TOI, "It is a good project planned by Kedar to boost fisheries industry as well as societies. The societies across the state are running into losses and illegal fishing has aggravated the problem. It is not possible for fishermen to make regular rounds of the lakes and reservoirs for patrolling with their hand operated boats. Societies cannot afford motorboats, he said. The department under Kedar has procured four motorboats in the first phase and likely to bring more in the coming days.

### **Maharashtra: BMC to demolish Shivaji Chhatrapati Maharaj fish market**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/bmc-to-demolish-shivaji-chhatrapati-maharaj-fish-market>

Nearly a decade after declaring the structure extremely dangerous, and a year after issuing notices to the vendors to vacate the premises, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will finally be demolishing the Shivaji Chhatrapati Maharaj fish market near Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Market or Crawford Market in South Mumbai taking into consideration the requirements of fisherfolk who operate from there. The Bombay High court had last week asked the civic body to chalk out plans to relocate the fish vendors to an alternate accommodation, present a detailed plan of demolition in an affidavit and table it by January 6, 2020. Municipal markets and fish markets in Mumbai are an integral part of the city. Most of its municipal markets need urgent repair. The civic body has, so far, failed to shift the fish wholesalers and

exporters operating out of the building to an alternative accommodation. On July 3, BMC had issued a notice asking vendors and wholesalers to vacate the building, which has been declared dilapidated, within a month. What has come as a bigger blow is the alternative location offered.

According to the current plan, the civic body is planning to shift the fish vendors to Airoli Naka market in Navi Mumbai, a move that has been opposed by a group of wholesalers and fish vendors. If everything goes as planned, the civic body will be shifting fish vendors from the iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj fish market located near Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Market or Crawford Market in South Mumbai and Maa Saheb Meenatai Thakare market, near the Dadar flower market, to Airoli Naka market. However, this still needs approval from the BMC commissioner. Majority of the vendors have agreed to shift to an alternate location. The building is dilapidated. Instead of risking our lives or being evicted forcefully, shifting to the new market in Airoli seems to be a better option. The high court has asked the civic body to come up with a detailed plan before demolishing the building and has given a deadline till January 6 to file an affidavit before it, said Naseem Khan, one of the fish vendors in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj fish market. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj fish market, the city's only wholesale seafood civic-run market in south Mumbai, used to clock a daily turnover of about Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore, but was devoid of business activity for months due to coronavirus-induced lockdown. Many of the wholesalers think that shifting to Airoli will kill their business.

Vendors from across the city come here to buy fish at wholesale rates. Asking us to move to such a far off location will affect business as we may not get buyers, said one of 87 wholesalers claimed to be affected by this. The fish market, operational since Independence, is the only retail and wholesale market in the city. It receives over 150 trucks of fish. Civic officials defended the decision saying that, as a lot of fish being sold in the market also comes via the Navi Mumbai route, creating a space for the vendors near the entrance to the city will be beneficial. BMC plans to demolish the existing structure and construct a 14-storey highrise with a parking lot. It is likely to take three years to reconstruct the structure. The civic body will submit its affidavit on January 6, following which the next hearing of the case has been scheduled on January 8.

### **Maharashtra: Vadhavan port may stir next MVA-Centre battle**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-vadhavan-port-may-stir-next-mva-centre-battle/articleshow/79820300.cms>

With locals opposed to the Vadhavan port planned in the ecologically sensitive Dahanu taluka receiving reassurances from CM Uddhav Thackeray, the project could well become the latest faultline between the Shiv Sena-led state government and the Centre. The former saffron

allies have already clashed over the location of the Mumbai Metro 3 car shed. After the Vadhavan Bandar Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti (VBVSS) met Thackeray on Friday, urban development minister Eknath Shinde said, the project is affecting livelihoods of local fishermen. We will not allow any development project to come up without their consent. Over the last month, protests against the project have sharpened, with locals obstructing a biodiversity survey commissioned by JNPT and also organising a strike of fish markets and fishing activities in Mumbai, Thane and Palghar. The CM has asked us to submit all our documents regarding the project. We are going to submit objections of the gram sabhas in 17 villages, said Aniket Patil, VBVSS working president.

However, he said the opponents would continue the protests if the MVA did not keep its word. If there is any action on the project, there will be a reaction from us, he said. The Centre granted the project in-principle approval in February, as part of its Sagarmala initiative. Slated to cost Rs 65,544.5 crore, this will be the 13th major port in the country. The project will be implemented through JNPT and the Maharashtra Maritime Board. It is to be built on a landlord model. The SPV will develop port infrastructure and connectivity. All the business activities will be undertaken through a PPP mode by private developers. Officials said the port will cater to the requirement for a deep draft port to accommodate large container ships and also handle spillover traffic from JNPT, which is the biggest container port in India. The project was initially proposed in 1998 but was shelved following local protests and objections from the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority (DTEPA) led by Justice C S Dharmadhikari.

The body had been set up by Supreme Court for protection of the ecologically fragile Dahanu region. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has sought the scrapping of DTEPA. Meanwhile, after the death of Justice Dharmadhikari, the DTEPA is now led by government officer Bhushan Gagrani. The government may have changed composition of the DTEPA, but its order objecting to the project stands. So how has the Centre cleared the project? asked Debi Goenka from the Conservation Action Trust. Locals said the project will impact the rich breeding ground for fish at Vadhavan. This is the golden belt for fish. It generates massive employment and also exports especially for Bombay Duck and Pomfret. The government says the port will employ 1.5 lakh people, but fishing activity here already employs around 10 lakh people, said Aniket Patil. JNPT officials were unavailable for comment. He also claimed the location could be a security risk. The port is located close to Anushakti Kendra and some phases of the Tarapur atomic power station, Patil said.



## **Maharashtra: Greens hail re-inspection of Uran wetlands**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/navi-mumbai/navi-mumbai-greens-hail-re-inspection-of-uran-wetlands/articleshow/79783520.cms>

The city greens have hailed the latest move by the Konkan division commissioner to form a sub-committee that will re-examine the wetland sites in Uran. This development happened after the recent controversy of Raigad district administration declaring that there are no wetlands in Uran taluka. The Bombay high court appointed Wetlands and Mangrove Committees chairman has asked Raigad collector to appoint a sub-committee to ascertain the status of the wetlands in Uran. Wetlands and Mangrove Committee member secretary Neenu Somraj has asked Raigad collector Dr Nidhi Chaudhary to have the sub-committee set up and submit report within 15 days. The committee will have representatives from the collector, environment department, police, apart from Stalin D of NGO Vanashakti.

“This is a good, positive development and we hope that the wetlands will be protected. We hope to see Panje wetland declared as a bird sanctuary as the proposal is pending action with the government, said BN Kumar, director of NatConnect Foundation. Environmentalists and local fishing community had also asked the collector and city planner Cidco to conserve Panje wetland in particular. Despite all these, there have been repeated attacks on Panje by rendering the wetland dry by blocking free flow of tidal water, construction of ten security cabins by Navi Mumbai SEZ and chopping of mangroves. “We have, therefore, requested the government to take stern action and restore the original status of Panje wetland, said Kumar. “We appreciate state environment minister Aditya Thackeray's stand on protecting the bio-diversity of Mumbai region, and would like to point out the glaring violations in broad daylight, said Kumar. Nandakumar Pawar, head of Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishthan NGO, said he was shocked to see ten security cabins springing up at Panje and a sign board proclaiming the place as private property. How can a wetland be somebody's private property, he asked and protested against the security guards preventing bird watchers and local fishing community from entering the wetland.

The State Mangrove Foundation executive director Virendra Tiwari asked for transferring Panje and other wetlands of Belpada and Bhendkhal to it to be conserved and maintained, Kumar pointed out. “But to our shock, we found that several security cabins were built at Panje wetland which is already covered by a massive, illegal compound wall, Pawar said. It seems Reliance NMSEZ is in a mighty haste to gobble up Panje wetland in particular. They do not care for any laws, he alleged. Cidco itself had declared Panje wetland as Dronagiri Holding Pond-1, yet they leased out most of it to Reliance NMSEZ, said Dilip Koli of Paramparik Machimar Bachao Kruti

Samiti. The wetland is rendered dry off-and-on by vested interests with a view to showing that it is not a wetland, he said. The district administration itself has filed FIRs against NMSEZ for the landfill destroying mangroves and wetland at Pagote and Bhendkhal, Koli said.

### **Maharashtra: Bandh call against Vadhavan port: Fishing activities come to a standstill, markets shut**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/bandh-call-against-vadhavan-port-fishing-activities-come-to-a-standstill-markets-shut-7106420/>

Fish markets and fishing activities in many fishing villages in the city remained closed on Tuesday as the bandh called by the Vadhavan Bandar Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti (VBVSS) saw participation from fisherfolk in Mumbai, Thane and Palghar. Many staged demonstrations bearing placards with the slogan “Ekach Jidduh, Vadhavan Bandar rudduh (Just one demand, cancel Vadhavan port). In Mumbai the Sassoon Dock fish market remained deserted all day and fisherwomen's tables in Badhwar Park were empty as they stood in solidarity with the fisherfolk of Vadhavan in Palghar where the new port is set to be constructed. “We can bear a day's loss of business but if the environment is destroyed because of land reclamation for the port in Vadhavan, that loss will be irreparable. It was on short notice but we managed to inform 24 allied organisations of ice suppliers, cart suppliers, weighing machine suppliers in time to observe the bandh, said Bhuvaneshwar Dhanu, special advisor to the Machichimar Sarvoday Sahakari Samiti at Badhwar Park. Members of their cooperative society, including fisherwomen who sell at Sassoon Docks, Colaba, Fort, Nul Bazaar, Dhobi Talao, Grant Road stayed away from business on Tuesday.

In Mahim, fisherfolk protested near the fishermen's colony bearing protest placards. “We also formed a human chain in the water, said Bhushan Nijai, a fisherman from Mahim. “The Vadhavan area in Palghar is suited for fish seeding. If that is destroyed there won't be enough fish in the sea and it will impact fishermen not just in Palghar but also in Mumbai. The fishing community from Madh and Versova also observed the bandh. Vikaas Koli from the National Association of Fisherman and a resident of Madh said that fisherman will have to unite to oppose the upcoming port.

“In the days ahead, we will intensify our protest, he said. At the heart of the protest in Palghar, however, human chains surfaced in many villages like Varor, Vadhavan, Chinchani, Tarapur, Bahad, Gungwada and Dhakti Dahanu. Working president of VBVSS Aniket Patil said, “These villages observed a very strict bandh. The autorickshaw and taxi unions in Palghar also supported us. Most people observed the bandh for the entire day but many got back to their activities after 5 pm. Locals in Dahanu had staged a protest in Vadhavan and Varor villages

against a biodiversity survey carried out by a team of scientists and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust officials on December 2 and 3. Consultants appointed by the JNPT carried out a biodiversity survey for the proposed port set to be India's 13th major port to be built at an estimated cost of Rs 65,544.54 crore on the two days. The JNPT and the Maharashtra Maritime Board are development partners for the port project with 74 per cent and 26 per cent equity share respectively.

### **Maharashtra: Koli community opposes construction of flyover at Vashi Creek**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/infrastructure/fisherman-koli-community-opposes-vashi-creek-new-khadi-bridge-59172>

The construction of the flyover on Vashi Creek has been strongly opposed by the Koli community. The construction of this bridge will continue for the next four to five years. The fishermen have expressed their concern that this construction may have a direct impact on the fishing industry. The decision to build another flyover here was taken by MSRDC due to huge traffic jams faced by commuters when they are entering Mumbai from Navi Mumbai. However, the Koli community fears that the construction of the bridge will adversely affect the fishing industry. According to reports, the administrated had earlier stated that the construction of the bridge would be completed by 2023-2024. Moreover, it is learned that more than INR 775 crores will be spent on this bridge. The construction of the bridge has already started and work is in progress in the space between the railway line and the present creek bridge. But now, given the opposition from the Koli community to the flyover, it is to be seen what decision would be taken regarding the construction of the bridge.

Similarly, on December 14, fishing along the western coast came to standstill as villages declared a bandh to protest against the development of a new port at Vadhavan in Dahanu taluka, Palghar, which would cost INR 65,000 crore. According to reports, the locals of 10 villages in Dahanu would be affected by the project – a joint venture of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) and Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB) had protested on December 2 and 3. The JNPT and the Maharashtra Maritime Board are growth companions for the port mission with 74 per cent and 26 per cent fairness share.

### **Maharashtra: Returning to traditional practices to save Vidarbha's 'Lake District'**

<https://india.mongabay.com/2020/12/returning-to-traditional-practices-to-save-vidarbhas-lake-district/>

During his college days, Manish Rajankar was an avid birder. Aply guided by one of his professors, he further developed an interest in conservation and his home ground proved a

perfect foil. The then undivided district of Bhandara, on the eastern border of Maharashtra, was known as the 'Lake District of India' owing to large number of traditional tanks – ancient lakes and water bodies, majority of which are now around three centuries old. There were approximately 15,000 of these tanks, locally called MaMa Talao, a short form for “Maaji Malgujari Talao in Marathi, meaning, lakes from the former malgujari system (akin to zamindari, wherein the revenue came from the lake). The MaMa Talaos, were extensively used for irrigation and fishing.

Extensive paddy plantations; lush green forests, including a National Park and a Wildlife Sanctuary; thousands of lakes (locally also known as tanks), big and small; hundreds of migratory and local birds, especially around Navegaon Bandh, the biggest lake in the area (over 500 ha); a major river, Wainganga and scores of its tributaries; and yet a perceived backwardness – that was Bhandara district then. Bifurcated into Bhandara and Gondia few years ago, both the districts, located in the Vidarbha region of the state, are no exception to the general apathy towards waterbodies across India. - The 300-year-old lakes of Bhandara face two prominent problems among others: proliferation of invasive species of fish leading to decrease in local species and habitat destruction. - A bird-enthusiast turned development worker, an older Dheevar (fisherfolk community) and a gutsy young woman from the same community have fallen back on traditional wisdom and encouraged local participation to safeguard their livelihood. - The triumvirate of Malgujari lake conservation in eastern Vidarbha has not just rejuvenated over five dozen lakes and water bodies in Bhandara and Gondia districts but have also given a new hope to the local community, especially the women, of a dignified life. About 25 years ago, regular travels from his hometown of Bhandara to remote areas of the district increased Rajankar's yearning to 'do something', prompting him to explore the development sector.

That was when one of his mentors suggested living with the community to learn from them. In early 2000s, Rajankar packed his bags, landed at Arjuni Morgaon, deep inside Gondia district, a place that had bare minimum facilities, uncertain power supply and nothing that was quick and urbane. For almost a year and a half, he spent all his waking hours following Patiram Tumsare, a member of the dheever (fisherfolk) community from a nearby village Jamhali. “That was the best hands-on training. I watched Patiram bhau (brother in Marathi) fish, prepare the nets, speak with his fellow fisherfolks, carry out work in the lake, negotiate with traders, work on the lake. Everything. That gave me huge insights, Rajankar told Mongabay-India. Slowly, Rajankar developed a clear focus: encouraging local leadership to ensure that the communities that are waterbody-dependent get a decent livelihood along with conservation of the three-century old tank systems in the two districts of Bhandara and Gondia. From what his mentors had taught him, and from what he observed and absorbed while interacting with the local communities, he

was sure that the local talaos can be rejuvenated with traditional wisdom of the Dheevar community, a local fishing community. And a major break from the tradition that he witnessed was gender parity in decision making – women from the community took a lead in the tank management and other things that affected their life by participating in the Gram Sabhas (village councils).

Along with Tumsare and others, Rajankar started the non-profit Bhandara Nisarga Va Sanskruti Abhyas Mandal (BNVSAM), around 15 years ago. Later, he also became the Principal Investigator for a project on Freshwater Biodiversity Conservation under the Maharashtra Gene Bank Programme, a project by the Department of Science and Technology of the Maharashtra Government. Lack of community investment Bhandara and Gondia districts, like other districts of Maharashtra, have a number of fisher's cooperative societies. The ownership of the lakes, though rests with different government departments, away from the community investment. This was one of the reasons why many of the lakes were in a dismal state. The government had failed to even mark the catchments properly. Without community involvement, the prized wetlands were neglected, leading to erosion of biodiversity. Further aggravating this was the government's decision to introduce invasive, alien species of fish into existing ponds and lakes. The ultimate sufferers were the traditional communities, primarily the fisherfolk, that depended on the water body. The only positive outcome was that the rights of irrigation were secured through the provision of Nistar rights, under the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code where the fish farmers got free water for irrigation.

After the Centre issued Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010, the government did come up with a database for Bhandara district with listing of wetlands briefs in part I and part II. But none of the lakes figure in the list of Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change for wetland conservation programme launched in 2019. Manju Pandey, joint secretary, MoEF&CC, said, “It is for the state governments to identify the sites. Incidentally, Vidarbha Development Board, Nagpur did prepare a comprehensive report, Action Plan for Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Vidarbha, but it does not mention anything about conservation of wetlands, fishing water bodies etc. Habitat revival for lakes the proliferation of invasive species posed to be a problem for the lakes of Bhandara. One was the problematic invasive, exotic plant species, *Ipomoea fistulosa*, called besharam (shameless) in Marathi because of its nature of occupying the entire space on the periphery of the water body. This is the area where plant species from the local ecosystem that are important for aquatic life forms and as fodder for livestock, grew.

The invasive plant, growing at a much faster rate and occupying a larger area, drew away all nutrition. And without human intervention to stop its growth, it flourished. The other ‘invasion’

was by fish, primarily the Indian major carps (IMC), which are the high yield fish species of rohu, catla and mrigal, that do not allow smaller fish to grow or sometimes, eat the small fish. After their introduction through a government scheme more than three decades ago, the IMC production went up substantially and that of local species went down. IMCs are bigger and earlier fetched a lot more money than indigenous fish. But the IMC yield was substantial only once in a year while local breeds could be fished almost round the year. Also, the fishers realised that while catching these big fishes, they needed to use dragnet, a type of fishing net, which landed up destroying aquatic plants. That in turn affected the production adversely and destroyed the tank further. Additionally, these fishes also ate different types of useful aquatic plants/shrubs. Each of the fishermen of the cooperative society used four-to-five tanks, of which, one was reserved for biodiversity conservation. “It was then that we had a discussion with Manish bhau. He asked us if anything could be done for aquatic plants? Yes, of course. Just as we plant trees on land, we can do so in water too, said Tumsare, who was equipped with the traditional knowledge.

Eleven tanks – one from each cooperative society and reserved for biodiversity conservation – were selected for habitat development. Just ahead of monsoon, the lake bed was ploughed. After initial showers, when the lake bed was completely immersed in water, they sowed local species of aquatic plants such as chila, chiul, faandh, chaura, halduli, rajuli, singiful and white lotus (all shrubs). After these was a layer of a variety of traditional grasses and tall shrubs – Submerged plants such as Hydrilla verticillata, Ceratophyllum demersum, Vallisneria spiralis, floating plants like Nymphoides indicum, Nymphoides hydrophylla, Nymphaea cristata and partly submerged plant like Eliocharis dulcis (not in that order). They decided to reserve that tank only for local fishes such as daadak, vaghur, marad, mothari, savada, shingur, katva etc. The traditional community skills worked wonders; indigenous fish production meant increased income as it fetched more value. “That, in turn, meant, increase in net profit for the cooperative society members from 200% to 700% as the fishermen did not have to invest in stocking and feeding as they did for IMC, Rajankar explained. Soon the positive results prompted the fisherfolk to carry out a similar exercise for other tanks.

Women leadership from among dheedar community all this while, Rajankar felt a gap when he interacted with various community members – the women of the community were almost non-existent. “I just had to do something. How can a community benefit if the women are not involved? He said. Fortunately for him, he met Shalu Kolhe, the daughter-in-law of the secretary of one of the fishermen cooperative society at Nimgaon in Gondia district. The smart, young lady caught his eye and he encouraged her to attend a leadership training programme at Mumbai's Committee for Resources Organisation (CORO). After getting married in 2008, Kolhe, who had completed her Class 12 education, had spent her time just like any other

Dheever daughter-in-law of the village. Up to 2014, when Rajankar first met her, she had never stepped out of the village on her own, always kept busy with household work and farming and didn't even know where the village gram panchayat was. The Dheever women worked in their own farmland or as labourers at other upper caste farm owners, especially Kohlis, the community known as “lake builders. No one had a say in the matters of their family, let alone something to do with village.

“Today, when I look back, the journey looks incredible. After much resistance from my home, I decided to attend the CORO training. Only my husband supported me. It was staggered over four installments and for the first two sessions, I was almost blank. But then things came on track and by the time I was through with the training, I was a changed person, a bubbly Kolhe proudly states about her achievements. It took a lot of time convincing other women, almost fighting the patriarchy in the village, ensuring the women's rights are not toppled at the gram sabha, getting their share of work under MNREGA for 15-20 days a month at least under the funds reserved for women. But none of these challenges deterred Kolhe, who also went on to form self-help-groups of fisherwomen. Kolhe has also ensured that she is not the lone woman in this process. Helping other women, bringing them to the forefront too has been an ongoing activity for her.

Convinced that the conservation work can be rightly understood by students at a young age, she took out a rally of school children for ‘Save Biodiversity’. Her popularity grew and so did her acceptance when, slowly, the men from her own and other communities realised that her work benefited the society at large. The Government of Maharashtra had by then introduced Jal Yukt Shivar and Gaal Yukt Shivar schemes for digging farm ponds and de-silting lakes and water bodies. Extraction of the *Ipomoea fistulosa*, was decided to be taken up and the activity was carried jointly by the women SHGs, fishing cooperative members and the biodiversity management committee members. In 2015-16, five lakes were identified to remove besharam. The work could have been done under MNREGA using JCB machines but that would damage the lakebed further, so Kolhe decided to go ahead with shramdaan (voluntary physical work) to remove the besharam shrubs manually, let them dry and remove the root too. Rajankar informed that the five tanks were monitored for two years; post monsoon study was carried out on four sites for which other species grew when besharam was absent and how it affected the growth of fishes. Yield has increased at all those sites now. Over the years, BNVSAM's work has gained popularity. As of end 2019, they work with 12 fishing cooperatives with 63 lakes across 43 villages.

## **Maharashtra: Fishermen community demands fair compensation for those affected by construction of additional bridge on Thane Creek**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/navi-mumbai-fishermen-community-demands-fair-compensation-for-those-affected-by-construction-of-additional-bridge-on-thane-creek>

The Navi Mumbai Punarvasan Samajik Sanstha (NMPSS) has submitted a memorandum of demands to the state government for the rehabilitation and resettlement of all those, especially fishermen, who could be affected by the construction of the proposed additional bridge on the Thane Creek to connect Mankhurd in Mumbai to Vashi in Navi Mumbai, parallel to the existing two bridges. At present, there are already two road bridges and one rail bridge that connects Mumbai with the Navi Mumbai. The association backed by fishermen community from Navi Mumbai said that all the affected persons should be compensated as per the provisions of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013, later amended in 2014 and 2015. Dashrath Bhagat, a former leader of opposition in NMMC and president of NMPSS says that the state government should conduct a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of the project and get sanctioned from the Gram Sabha after a public hearing.

The NMPSS also demanded that each fisherman family should be compensated monetarily during the construction period of the bridge. “During the execution period of the project, the fishermen cannot venture into the creek and this will affect their income. They should be compensated for their losses, demanded Bhagat. In addition, they also demanded that the government ensure that the construction of the new bridge does not affect the natural flow of water. “The change in the natural flow of water may result in silt accumulation and fishermen may not get fish in years to come, claims Bhagat. He added that they are pro-development and advocating another bridge. However, they will protest if affected persons, mostly fishermen, are not compensated as per the laws.

## **Maharashtra: Coastal villages to observe bandh over port project**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/coastal-villages-to-observe-bandh-over-port-project/articleshow/79732455.cms>

Fishing along the western coast is likely to come to a standstill with fishing villages observing a bandh on Tuesday to protest the proposed Rs 65,000 crore Vadhavan port in Dahanu



taluka, Palghar. Locals of 10 villages in Dahanu to be affected by the project a joint venture of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) and Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB) have been protesting this month.

### **Maharashtra: Appoints panel to phase out unsustainable fishing**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/environment/maharashtra-appoints-panel-to-phase-out-unsustainable-fishing/story-BodeIkLjx0eKJl950qT7NL.html>

The Maharashtra government has formed a 12-member committee of experts to assess the extent of unsustainable fishing practices beyond territorial waters, control overfishing, and understand the impact of marine pollution on aquatic biodiversity. In a government order published by the department of animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries on Monday, the names of the members of the expert committee were announced. The committee was directed to constitute guidelines based on their findings on the impact on fingerlings (juvenile fish species) to safeguard their population from fishing practices using purse seine nets large circular nets used to catch fish in bulk beyond 12 nautical miles along the 720km coastline of Maharashtra. Purse seine nets can stretch from 500 metres up to a kilometre, and as much as 3km if two or three nets are attached to each other.

They pull out a large proportion of fish as these nets have a mesh spanning from 25mm to 35mm, blocking juvenile fish and fish eggs from falling back into the ocean, thereby stopping them from multiplying. In 2014-15, a similar state-appointed expert committee, chaired by former director general of the Fishery Survey of India Dr VS Somwanshi, had submitted a report against purse seine fishing, detailing its impact along the coastal environment of Maharashtra, and suggested measures to phase out the use of purse seine nets. In February 2016, the state government implemented the submissions by banning the use of purse seine nets within territorial waters and brought down permits from 494 to 182, stopped issuing new licenses, and allowed the use of such nets only between September and December in certain areas along the coast. Rajendra Jadhav, joint commissioner (fisheries), said, "After a gap of five years, we have constituted another expert committee, which will now tell us how we will actually reduce the number of permits already issued for using purse seine nets, whether to continue not issuing new licenses, and the extent of boats using them in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone. There has been a major delay in constituting this committee due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but we hope its reports will be beneficial in improving fishing practices.

Jadhav added that committee would also submit reports on how pelagic fish (fish inhabiting neither the bottom nor the shore of open oceans and lakes) were being caught and the overall impact of bulk fish capture using trawlers and mechanised boats not just by Maharashtra but

other states as well (for comparison), and the extent of pelagic fish being exported. “We are also calling for details on overfishing, level of pollution in the marine environment due to oil exploration and other factors, and detailed guidelines on sustainable fishing, he said, adding, “The aim is to also ensure the traditional fishing community that uses much smaller nets in shallow waters benefits. The decisions will increase fish catch and protect the fish population. The committee is chaired by Dr Gopal Krishna, director and vice-chancellor of the Indian Agriculture Research Council (ICAR) Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE), Mumbai, and the regional deputy commissioner (fisheries), Maharashtra, as member secretary.

Along with the state chief secretary (animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries) and fisheries commissioner, the expert body includes representatives from all major national institutes involved in fishery education and research such as Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Fishery Survey of India, and Central Institute of Fisheries Technology. Ganesh Nakhawa, chairman of the National Purse Seine Fishermen Welfare Association, said it was shocking that not a single member of the fishing community or fisher leaders from Maharashtra was included in the expert committee. “The Maharashtra government continues to focus only on purse seine fishing while there are other environmentally damaging methods which use dols, bags and trawl nets by over 9,000 boats, scraping the surface of the ocean to catch rare and protected marine species. The committee's decisions would affect the livelihood of the fishing community, but no representative (from the fishers) has been selected by government officials to express such issues. We have been calling for uniform law along the west coast because by curtailing only Maharashtra fishers, environmentally damaging methods would still continue for other states, said Nakhawa. Jadhav countered that the committee was purely a government body but final decisions would not be taken without consulting the fishing community.

“Suggestions and objections will be taken into account at the district level when this committee collects on-field data. At the same time, we will be studying not only purse seine but dol and other trawling practices too. The title of the order only pertains to purse seine but it will include a wide ambit of fisheries, he said. Maharashtra fisheries There are 456 fishing villages in seven districts Mumbai city, Mumbai suburban, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg. Last year, Maharashtra witnessed its lowest annual fish catch in 45 years at 2.01 lakh tonnes with a rapid decline in all major fish species being caught, according to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). CMFRI said that environmental factors such as extreme weather events (heavy rain and five tropical cyclones) along with juvenile overfishing led to a 36% drop in number of fishing days in 2019. According to a 2018 study by CMFRI, purse seining was introduced in India between 1954 and 1958 across Kerala and Goa on an experimental basis. However, commercial purse seining was picked up by Karnataka fishers around 1975, followed by Kerala and Goa. It was not up till the late 1980s that the practice was introduced in

Maharashtra across Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts, mostly for catching oil sardines and mackerel. From 1998, a lot of trawl fishers were seen shifting to purse seining for higher profits.

### **Maharashtra: Plea for 21 hectares extra coastal road reclamation to go to Centre**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-plea-for-21-hectares-extra-coastal-road-reclamation-to-go-to-centre/articleshow/79658821.cms>

The BMC's plea for reclaiming an additional 21 hectares for the coastal road project will be forwarded to the Union ministry of environment, forest and climate change for clearance. The civic body's proposal was approved by the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) with several conditions such as strict compliance with the provisions of the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2011. In October, the BMC had submitted an application to the MCZMA to amend the 2017 CRZ clearance for the coastal road project seeking to reclaim an additional 6.5 hectares for the actual coastal road and 14.5 hectares for constructing a sea wall and rubble mound structure as protection measures to safeguard the coastal road from erosion from anticipated extreme sea waves and storm surges. Environmentalist Debi Goenka said it was shocking that the MCZMA was granting post-facto clearance when the authority in another case (Guhagar jetty proposal) had pointed out that it had no powers to do so. Goenka said BMC had already started the reclamation work before moving the application for additional reclamation. The BMC, however, pointed out it has CRZ clearance for reclaiming 90 hectares but so far has reclaimed 63.28 hectares.

The MCZMA while accepting the BMC's reasons for additional reclamation directed it to set up a full-fledged environment management cell with a specific budget allocated to implement its Environment Management Plan for the project during the construction and operational phases to ensure that the coastal environment is protected. The cell would be required to monitor the marine biodiversity conservation plan, monitor real-time changes in shoreline, erosion or accretion by appointing agencies like the National Institute of Oceanography, IIT Bombay, and Central Water Power Research Station. Real time data is to be collected for at least 15 years. It is also suggested to have a third party audit and monitoring of all such management initiatives by a government agency during and after project completion from time to time, reads the minutes of the meeting. The MCZMA has directed that the fishing community be allowed free access to operate their fishing boats. All recommendations of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), socioeconomic, disaster management and traffic studies are to be complied with. The BMC has been directed to carry out anti-sea erosion measures along Priyadarshini Park, taking into account the aesthetics of the park and in line with the local geo-morphology.

The BMC must ensure access to the seafront at convenient locations, said the MCZMA. Goenka said the MCZMA has not dealt with any of the written submissions made by the various petitioners.

### **Maharashtra: Thane fisherfolk demand desilting of mangrove ponds**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/civic/thane-fisherfolk-demand-desilting-of-mangrove-ponds/articleshow/79634872.cms>

The fishing community near Thane Creek has asked local authorities to desilt holding ponds spread across the environmentally sensitive mangroves in the area. Community members have written a letter to the local Mangroves Cell listing out the measures they have taken to preserve the mangroves and demanding official action. Thane Creek, spread around 1,000 hectares, contains more than a dozen holding ponds of 4.8 hectares each. If desilting is not done, it will have a detrimental impact on the mangroves, an environment activist told Mumbai Mirror. “Due to lack of desilting process, the fisherfolk community is facing lots of problems. Small gates are getting damaged, and fishing is getting affected, Nandkumar Pawar said. Tiffin suppliers, struggling to make a living during the pandemic, tie up with gram panchayats and local groups in Nashik and Pune. The fishermen have said they have stopped illegal killings of flamingos in Thane Creek and alert the forest officer of any encroachments. Thousands of flamingos and other types of birds migrate to the city every year. The government has given a status of flamingo sanctuary to the area in Airoli and nearby Thane Creek. From fish, birds to insects, the chain is interdependent and if mangroves are at risk then it may affect others in the chain, the environmentalist said. Thousands of acres of velvety green mangroves line the border between the Arabian Sea and Mumbai.

They act as natural buffers against coastal erosion and flooding, and store up to four times as much carbon as other forests. According to officials, the state is home to 20 mangrove species spread over 300 square kilometres across six districts. While almost half the mangrove forests under government land have been declared as reserved forests, the remaining areas are on privately owned land. Committee, which capped prices of masks in October, criticises the companies for their ‘greedy’ hikes, says they violate Essential Commodities Act and Competition Act. A senior official from the Mangroves Cell told Mumbai Mirror that desilting is not necessary. “The basic concept behind holding ponds is that the high tide water will come in and naturally these ponds will remain clean. But lately many have demanded desilting. We will hold a meeting to discuss this matter, he said. Watch: Experts predict that all 5,000 acres of Mumbai mangroves will be lush and green again by January

## **Maharashtra: Why Mumbai's Coastal Road project has run into a row**

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/why-mumbai-s-coastal-road-project-has-run-into-a-row-1747825-2020-12-08>

In a rare public appearance during the pandemic, Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray spent close to two hours on November 29 inspecting work on an ambitious infrastructure project in Mumbai the Coastal Road. It was after a month that Thackeray had travelled outside his usual route between his personal home 'Matoshree' in the western suburb of Bandra and his official residence at Malabar Hill in Mumbai's south. The Coastal Road is one of Thackeray's top priorities in upgrading Mumbai's infrastructure. It is the second most prominent road after the Eastern Freeway, which connects the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus to Chembur. The Coastal Road is the second largest commercial sea reclamation project in Mumbai, after Nariman Point in the 1970s. The other ones have been the Bandra-Kurla Complex, which came into existence in early 2000, apart from the Ballard Estate in the pre-Independence era. The Shiv Sena-ruled Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), which is constructing the first phase of the Coastal Road, has started reclaiming 90 hectares or roughly 168 football fields in the Arabian Sea. The signs of the reclamation work are visible from the iconic Marine Lines to the Bandra-Worli Sea Link, the first sea bridge in the city.

The idea of building a road in the sea between Haji Ali and Nariman Point was first mooted by a consultancy firm Wilbur Smith and Associates in 1962. In 2011, then Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan pushed for the Coastal Road project to ease traffic congestion in south Mumbai. The 29.2-km-long freeway between Marine Lines and Versova is expected to reduce travel time between the city's south and north from two hours to 40 minutes. The 10.58-km-long first stretch starts from the Princess Street flyover and ends south of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link.

Using the land repurposed after reclamation, it will have eight lanes, bridges, flyover and tunnels as well. The BMC has divided this stretch into three sections Princess Street flyover to Priyadarshini Park (4.05 km), Priyadarshini Park to Baroda Palace (3.82 km) and Baroda Palace to Bandra-Worli Sea Link (2.71 km). The construction will cost the civic body about Rs 8,429 crore. The 17.7 km portion between Bandra and Versova will be developed by the state-run Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) by August 2025, with an investment of Rs 11,332 crore. The three interchanges at Amarsons, Haji Ali and Worli will have four, eight and six outer roads each. There will be an underground parking for 1,600

vehicles on this stretch. The actual work of the Coastal Road started in October 2018 when then Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis did an extensive follow-up pertaining to clearances from the Union environment ministry.

The Covid pandemic, however, delayed the project, with only 20 per cent of the work completed so far. The first phase is expected to be completed only by July 2023. As per the original plan, the BMC was supposed to reclaim 90 hectares in the Arabian Sea, of which 20 hectares would be used for the road and the remaining land would house parks, cycle and jogging tracks, promenades and green spaces. The BMC filed two affidavits before the Supreme Court, on August 28 and September 7 this year, informing that it will require additional reclamation of six and 15 hectares, taking the total requirement to 111 hectares. The additional reclamation is required to build a submerged sea wall, which will have a sloping design. This wall, the BMC says, will be crucial for securing the road from the impact of sea waves, floods and erosion. Environmentalist Debi Goenka says such extensive reclamation will not only impact marine biodiversity but fishing activity as well. Environmental activists argue that Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance in May 2017 was only for reclaiming 90 hectares. The National Institute of Oceanography had assessed the future impact based on reclaiming of 90 hectares. Accordingly, if the BMC is changing the project plan, it should go for a public hearing and seek requisite permissions again, they say.

**The legal battle** On July 17, 2019, the Bombay High Court stayed the Coastal Road project and squashed the CRZ clearance after hearing petitions from activists and Mumbai residents. It directed the BMC to secure environmental clearance under the Environment Impact Assessment notification, 2006. The Supreme Court stayed the HC order in December 2019 after the BMC challenged it. “The petitioners were free to reclaim the land (90 hectares), build the road thereon and secure the road. They shall, however, not carry out any other development work until further orders, the apex court stated. Then, the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavasay Sakhari Society, an organisation of local fishermen, opposed the additional reclamation, alleging that it could impact fishing activity and their livelihood. The residents of slum pockets in Shivaji Nagar, Darya Sagar and Darya Nagar in Mahalakshmi have started complaining that drains in their area are getting clogged as a result of the reclamation. But the Thackeray government is pressing ahead with the project. The chief minister would want to showcase the project as one of his achievements when the BMC elections are held in early 2022.

**Maharashtra: Fishermen to receive pending diesel funds worth over INR 40 crores**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/civic/maharashtra-government-will-soon-give-diesel-return-for-fisherman-says-aslam-sheikh-58686>

Maharashtra State Fisheries Minister, Aslam Sheikh, on Thursday, December 1, 2020, stated that the fishermen who have been given diesel quota in the state will soon get a refund on the fuel from the government. The decision regarding the same was to take after discussions with discussing the matters with Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister, Ajit Pawar. Reports state that Shaikh has asked Pawar to pay the remaining INR 40.65 crore to the Fisheries Department at the earliest possibility and make this provision as the refund amount directed towards diesel fund for the fishermen for the year 2020-21. Approving the same, FM Pawar has assigned the responsibility to the concerned secretaries who will soon allocate the funds to the department. Currently, the diesel quota has been sanctioned for 9,646 mechanical boats of 160 fishing co-operative societies in Maharashtra.

The government in 2020 had approved INR 60 crore as the fund, however, only INR 19.35 crore was disbursed to the Fisheries Department due to corona virus pandemic. Addressing the issues, Minister Sheikh had written a letter to FM Pawar demanding the release of the remaining INR 40.65 crore which was approved immediately and will be distributed soon as a special case. Sheikh also mentioned that the backlog of diesel fund has been pending and hence increasing for some time now. Till date, the government has given diesel refunds of up to INR 110 crore to the fishermen and a supplementary demand of INR 189 crore for diesel refund has been made to FM Pawar. Positive discussions are being held and a decision will soon be taken to consider the demand.

#### **Maharashtra: Fisheries dept cancels contract at Yeldari dam**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/aurangabad/fisheries-dept-cancels-contract-at-yeldari-dam/articleshow/79597554.cms>

Within a year of granting a five-year fishing contract at Yeldari dam to a society, the fisheries department has cancelled it citing violation of conditions. For the dam spread over 15,500 acres of land, the five-year contract from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2024, was awarded to a Late Rajiv Gandhi Fishermen Traders' Cooperative Society situated at Jintur of Parbhani district for an annual royalty of Rs 3.10 lakh. Against the granting of this contract, a local NGO named Lal Sena alleged serious loss of revenue to state exchequer as well as violation of the contract conditions and protested against the same. Taking cognizance of the same, fisheries department carried out an internal probe and found that the society had violated the contract condition by tying up with a fisheries company based in Mumbai. State fisheries commissioner Dr. Atul Patne said that the society has violated condition number 23 of GR issued by department of animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries, on July 3, 2019. The condition in the GR states, 'If the contractor has sub-contracted the lake/reservoir to someone else, the lake/reservoir contractor's contract will cancelled prematurely and will be blacklisted for next six years. The rights to be

added to the list will remain with the concerned lake's contract committee. NGO's Ganpat Bhise told TOI, "The state is incurring serious losses to the policy of giving away fishing contracts at throwaway prices. As per an estimate, the contractor makes money running in to crores, whereas the state gets a meager of Rs 3.10 lakh per annum.

## **Maharashtra: Fishermen lose champion of cause as union leader Damodar Tandel dies at 72**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/fishermen-lose-champion-of-cause-as-union-leader-damodar-tandel-dies-at-72/articleshow/79569391.cms>

Senior fishermen's union leader Damodar Tandel passed away suddenly on Friday. The 72-year-old resident of Machhimar Nagar in Cuffe Parade was a torchbearer of the community's causes since decades. His death came as a shock not only to his peers but indeed his family. Tandel had suffered symptoms of the flu two days ago and was tested for Covid-19 Thursday. Even as the report emerged negative on Friday, he had a heart attack that caused his death, said Devendra, the elder of his two sons. Tandel's last rites were performed at Chandanwadi crematorium. Members of fishing unions from within Mumbai as well as Vasai and Palghar arrived to condole his death. As president of the Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti, Damodar Tandel made his voice heard across the corridors of power and the law courts, particularly as he fought the use of exploitative purse seine nets by large commercial trawlers. These nets are outlawed because they scour the seabed of all kinds of fish, big and small, without a care for their utility or breeding season. Small and baby fish are simply dumped as they have no value in the market. In this way, the marine ecosystem and the trade, both are harmed, he would say.

Tandel shone a light on the mistreatment of fishermen by the maritime authorities mid-sea. He rued the excessive immersion of PoP idols at Ganeshotsav, although he was a devotee who installed a clay Ganpati idol at home for one and a half days. Tandel highlighted the role of the local fisherman in coastal security. It is we who are the first to spot an unfamiliar boat and alert the authorities. We are the eyes and ears of the coastal security system, he often told this reporter. Always the voice of reason, Tandel liaised with ministers, bureaucrats, government authorities, political parties as well as media persons in his pleasant articulate manner that won him friends even if they held divergent views. Former fisheries commissioner Rajeev Jadhav said, His death comes as a shock. The fishing community has lost a rare champion of its causes. Tandel had made a few representations to me, and I was awed by the fact that he would bring well preserved documents dating back many years. He was articulate and firm in his demands, but never aggressive.



## **Maharashtra: Coastal Road Project: Two years on, BMC to appoint consultant to make compensation plan**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/mumbai-coastal-road-project-bmc-fisher-communities-7080960/>

Two years after reclamation work for the coastal road began, the BMC will appoint a consultant to make a comprehensive survey towards a rehabilitation and compensation policy for fisherfolk affected by the project. Fisher communities, however, said the study was too late as a massive portion of the intertidal sea, where they carried out fishing activity, had already been reclaimed. According to the tender issued by the BMC, the appointed consultant will work for three years and prepare a detailed report on the fisherfolk likely to be affected by the project. The consultant will be tasked to formulate Fisherfolk Rehabilitation Assessment Policy (FRAP) in relation to the Mumbai Coastal Road Project. It would be up to the consultant to do this on the basis of a baseline study conducted by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) on the impact of the coastal road on fisheries and livelihoods or it could choose to conduct its own survey. The BMC has already formed a Fisherfolk Rehabilitation Assessment Committee (FRAC).

“The consultant will have to take approval from the FRAC once the policy is ready. The committee will also have representatives of the fisherfolk community, said a BMC official. The BMC is constructing the 10.58-km coastal road from Princess Street Flyover at Marine Lines to the Worli end of Bandra-Worli Sea Link. According to the application made by the BMC to Maharashtra Coastal Zonal Management Authority (MCZMA) for seeking permission for additional reclamation, until October 15, the BMC has already reclaimed 63.28 hectares near Priyadarshini Park, Mahalaxmi Temple, Breach Candy, Haji Ali and Worli. The BMC's application has stated that it will now require total reclamation of 111 hectares. In 2017, while securing coastal regulation zone (CRZ) clearance for the project from the environment ministry, the civic body said it would reclaim only 90 hectares for building the coastal road. According to the baseline study done by CMFRI, there are 800 fisher families in Worli Koliwada with a population of 3,055. Fisherfolk from Worli and Haji Ali have opposed the coastal road project. “Most parts have been reclaimed in our fishing area. There is nothing left to study. Now if we used to do fishing in a particular area, there is nothing to show there as that portion has already been reclaimed, said Nitesh Patil, representative of Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavsay Sahakari Society Limited.

Last week, the civic body called representatives from fishing communities for a meeting. The fishing community has also demanded that the distance between two pillars should be 200 metres instead of 200 feet as proposed by the BMC, since it will not be enough for navigation of boats. The study is too late. Now, the BMC should accept fisherfolk's demand of change in design for increasing the distance between pillars. The BMC has made design changes for Worli promenade, but they are not ready to change it for Kolis, whose livelihood will get completely wiped out, said Shweta Wagh of Collective for Spatial Alternatives and one of the petitioners against the coastal road.

### **Maharashtra: Banned catfish Thai Mangur illegally breeding in over 125 artificial ponds in Thane**

<https://www.timesnownews.com/mumbai/article/maharashtra-banned-catfish-thai-mangur-illegally-breeding-in-over-125-artificial-ponds-in-thane/688545>

A shocking incident came to light in Maharashtra, where almost thousands of tons of banned catfish, Thai Mangur are illegally being bred in over 125 artificial ponds in rural Thane, according to the survey conducted by the government agencies. The main reason why the fish is reared is that locally, it has high demand as it is cheaper as compared to other fishes, seafood, or meat. According to Times of India, Taluka's sub-divisional officer said that “We inspected the forest area in Bhiwandi taluka and found these ponds in forest areas, collectively spread over 150 acres. I have instructed officials to destroy the ponds and take action against those involved within eight days. Following tip-offs, surveys were conducted by officials from revenue, fisheries, police accompanied by other activists. Thai Mangur banned Thai Mangur has been banned by National Green Tribunal in 2000 as they destroyed the local ecosystem and were considered harmful for human consumption too. The officials were surprised after finding massive breeding of Thai Mangur here.

Orders were also issued by the states to destroy the breeding spots; however, the orders have been loosely implemented. The officials stated that action was only taken in one case out of the 15 notices which were served to the offenders last year. The authorities demand strict laws to govern the breeding of banned species. All about Thai Mangur Ranging from Rs 100-150 per kg, Thai Mangur is easy and cheap to rear. The carnivorous species was introduced to India in the 1990s and it is originally from Africa and the Middle East. Artificial tanks are constructed in large farmlands by the local cultivators, rented from unsuspecting tribals. It aggressively devours all organisms in any natural pond, thereby damaging the local ecosystem and biodiversity. The banned catfish species is a low-maintenance investment for cultivators as it can feed on anything and can even survive in hostile conditions, even staying alive outside water for a long time. According to TOI reports, “Often, a joint drive is required, with teams comprising officials from

the fisheries, revenue, forest, and police departments, wherein the former identifies the species, after which revenue and police officers, along with colleagues from the public works department, demolish tanks and destroy fish stock, said an activist. “But this is a rarity, which encourages mafias to blatantly conduct these operations.

### **Maharashtra: 12 fishermen stranded mid sea as boat develops snag**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/12-fishermen-stranded-mid-sea-as-boat-engine-develops-snag/story-ooLzAz0uU6jwcnmTmsQHIN.html>

A boat carrying 12 fishermen, which had set sail from Vasai in Maharashtra's Palghar district four days back, has got stranded in the Arabian sea due to engine failure, an official said on Sunday. Palghar district disaster control cell chief Vivekanand Kadam said the fishermen from Vasai had embarked on the fishing expedition. “But when the boat was proceeding towards Gujarat, its engine developed a snag and the boat got struck midway, he said. “Help from the Navy and the Coast Guard is being sought for the rescue of the fishermen, he said.

### **Maharashtra: Uran fishermen allege indiscriminate destruction of mangroves, oppose JNPT’s park proposal**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/maharashtra-uran-fishermen-allege-indiscriminate-destruction-of-mangroves-oppose-jnpt-s-park-proposal/story-bxwKvEpe0U4L9qyzKskSnO.html>

Alleging that the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) has been indiscriminately destroying mangroves and wetlands in Uran, traditional fishermen have opposed the proposed mangrove park by the country's largest container port. JNPT last week announced that it had planned to build a 200-hectare (ha) mangrove (eco) park to protect dense mangrove patches and house visiting galleries, mangrove walkthroughs (boardwalks), a nature interpretation centre, and a nursery with rare mangrove species, at Belpada in Uran at a cost of Rs5 crore for the first phase. However, the Paramaparik Machhimar Bachao Kruti Samiti (Save Traditional Fishermen's Action Committee) said the park was planned on buried mangrove forests and wetlands of Belpada. The group wrote to environment minister Aaditya Thackeray on Tuesday, pointing out that the community had lost its age-old source of income due to projects by JNPT that had destroyed their livelihood.

“Such plans cannot be tolerated, said Dilip Koli, a fisherman leader, adding that they had been fishing in inter-tidal waters for decades but instead of protecting the community's rights, state agencies such as JNPT had put a stop to fishing within their jurisdiction owing to reclamation of natural areas. “This led to a substantial drop in even our fish catch, rendering many fishers

penniless even during this difficult pandemic phase, said Tukaram Koli, another fisher, calling it a violation of Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. In October 2013, fisherman Ramdas Koli had moved the National Green Tribunal (NGT), western bench, against development projects by JNPT that affected the livelihood of residents of Uran, Hanuman Koliwada, Gavhan, and Belpada, with 1,630 families in the area dependent on fishing. In March 2015, in a landmark order, NGT directed JNPT, City Industrial Development Corporation and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation to pay Rs95.19 crore to the 1,630 families within three months. However, the order was stayed by the Supreme Court after state agencies challenged it.

“Even the National Human Rights Commission had ruled in our favour after NGT did, yet we continue to suffer, said Koli. The memorandum to Thackeray further said that while farmers were given titles under 7/12 extract (land extract maintained by the revenue department), fishermen do not get any such title. “Thus we do not get any compensation and lose our source of income when the government acquires land, said Koli. According to the Raigad district administration, several cases of mangrove destruction were reported between November 2019 and January 2020 from areas under JNPT's jurisdiction. Around 7,000 mangrove trees (across a 6ha patch with approximately 5,500 trees and a 1.2ha patch with 1,500 trees) were found dried up and destroyed for JNPT's 4th container terminal project. In November 2019, contractors appointed by JNPT paid a fine of Rs1 lakh to the district administration for destroying 4,550 mangrove trees across 4.5ha for the same project, followed by a case filed before the Panvel court. Subsequently, another 4,000-odd mangrove trees were found destroyed during the expansion of a road leading up to the terminal.

Panvel district officer Dattatreya Navale said, “This year we have not received such serious complaints. Complaints received are either false or repetitive from previous years. The plan for the mangrove park is a welcome idea as it will provide security to eco-sensitive zones. JNPT said they were not aware of the fishing community's submissions. “The park is purely for the purpose of mangrove protection, safety, and citizen awareness. We remain a socially conscious organisation, committed to the environment, community, stakeholders, employees and the industry, said a JNPT official, requesting anonymity. Environment group NatConnect Foundation, which had campaigned for the mangrove park, said restoration was key. “JNPT should open blockages, restore tidal water flow, and remove illegally dumped debris at natural areas. They must start respecting mangroves and wetlands and pay for losses so far, said BN Kumar, director, NatConnect Foundation. “The mangrove park is reprehensible since it is planned on illegally land filled coastal regulation zone (CRZ-I) areas, said Nandkumar Pawar, head of Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishthan, the environment group highlighting the fishing community's demand. “The mangrove ecosystem is unique and it doesn't require any human intervention. It can protect itself if just left alone.

## **Maharashtra: Lockdown harsher on fishermen than monsoon storms**

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Maharashtra%3A-Lockdown-harsher-on-fishermen-than-monsoon-storms-51655.html>

Due to the pandemic, with no means to store and transport the fish, the Catholic community of Uttan struggles to survive. State intervention requested. Young people risk abandoning the traditional activity of their parents. However, local fishermen have a great faith in God, which is strengthened in every situation. After the coronavirus lockdown, about 10 thousand Catholic fishermen from Uttan (Maharashtra) have taken their boats out to sea for the fishing season. They are part of the parish of Our Lady of the Sea (archdiocese of Mumbai), which has a total of 18 thousand faithful. Deacon Godfrey Malu is assigned to the local church, pending his priestly ordination, postponed due to the pandemic. On the occasion of World Fisheries Day, he shares a reflection with AsiaNews on the devastating impact that the health emergency has had on the fishermen of his community. The fishing season opens every year on August 1st, but was postponed for two weeks due to the pandemic. On August 15, the Feast of the Assumption and Independence in India, I blessed nearly 50 boats before their departure. At this time of crisis, it is not profitable to go out to sea. Our fishermen only sell their catch at the local market - where prices are low - because they have no means of transport to take them to the larger centres. Earnings are meagre, and they struggle to support their families. However, these fishermen have great faith in God, which is strengthened in every situation.

At the opening of the season, two boats had problems at sea. One sank, leaving two fishermen dead. Another 11 were rescued by another boat: unfortunately, I don't think they received any compensation from the government. Another boat was hit by a storm; all crew members (15-20 people) were rescued by a rescue helicopter. The boat remained adrift for 5-6 days, without the authorities intervening. The local fishermen took courage and went to sea to bring it back to land: it is like the parable of the lost sheep! They succeeded in their aim and were acclaimed by the villagers. Mumbai, the financial capital of India, is home to one of the oldest fishing communities: The Koli. Fishing is a way of life as well as a means of livelihood. It is in their blood and makes them proud to contribute to the development of society. This occupation was handed down to them by their ancestors: their souls are in the ocean. The fishing community is very vulnerable to different climatic conditions, especially storms and monsoon rains. Another storm in the form of a virus has compounded existing problems. For local fishermen, Covid-19 and the national lockdown to contain it are far worse than seasonal cyclones, having effectively shut down their activity.

The fishermen believe they followed the government's directions, staying at home when required, but the authorities must now also consider their needs. During the first week of the lockdown, they had to throw 10,000 tons of unsold fresh fish overboard. These months are the most important for fishing: This is the fishing season when stocks are caught, sorted, dried and stored for the rainy season, when the activity stops. The problem is that the local fishing industry does not have available refrigeration, storage and transport systems for the fish. Unlike farmers and other vulnerable sectors of society, Uttan fishermen are not eligible for government support programs. The authorities should take action to reduce the impact of the disaster. Local families are reduced to a state of survival. With the current situation, without any income, they think that the young people of the place should perhaps no longer follow in the footsteps of their fathers, and seek other professions.

### **Indian fishermen's nightmare: 80-90% daily catch in Maharashtra is jellyfish**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/fishermens-nightmare-80-90-daily-catch-in-maharashtra-is-jellyfish-7061792/>

For the past one month, jellyfish have created a havoc for fishermen in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Fishermen from Palghar to Sindhudurg have raised complaints that nearly 80-90 per cent of their daily catch is clogged with the crown or purple-striped jellyfish or orange jellyfish. “The rise in the occurrence of jellyfish indicates rising ocean water temperature. Presence of jellyfish in the area indicates the reduction in the fish population. In addition to reduced fish catch, the jellyfish bulk also damage the fishing nets. In last one month, jellyfish swarms are caught in coastal, as well as deep water, said Ganesh Nakhwa, vice-president of Maharashtra Purse Seine Fishing Welfare Association. Jellyfish can survive increasing temperature and pollution levels. In fact, the increasing levels of pollution in coastal waters are conducive for their growth. Jellyfish eat plant plankton, the eggs and larvae of fish as well as young fish, reducing fish populations. They can eat 10 times their body weight daily. “Jellyfish presence is always in swarms/bulk. Since they sting, the fishermen cannot separate the fish catch and the jellyfish from the net. It is not that this is the first year we have recorded the jellyfish's presence, but now even small trawlers, net are catching them in bulk, pointing at the increase in the population in the state's waters, said Swapnil Tandel, a marine biologist and fishery consultant with Numer8 Analytics. Ramkumar S, scientist-in-charge, Centre for Marine Fisheries and Research Institute (CMFRI), Mumbai, who has been studying jellyfish occurrence in six coastal districts of Maharashtra, said, “The jellyfish swarms' sightings are not a new or recent phenomenon.

Our ongoing study has shown that the jellyfish swarms have been existing in the state's coastal water in the past five decades. We have recently received a complaint from Dahanu area. The

occurrence of jellyfish is at its peak between September and January. Every year, Mumbai, Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh beaches spot jellyfish swarms post monsoon. However, now, there are jellyfish invasions throughout the year, with its bloom reported off the coast of Visakhapatnam for the first time in 2018. Stretches of Goa's beaches witnessed jellyfish blooms in July 2008 and many tourists and others had to be hospitalised after they were stung by the Portuguese Man-O'-War species. The presence of bluebottle jellyfish, which is also known as the Portuguese Man-O'-War, created panic at Girgaum Chowpatty, Aksa and Juhu beaches in Mumbai in 2018. In the last one week, over 90 tourists have received treatment after they were stung by jellyfish on Goa beaches. In July, a swarm of jellyfish clogged up a cooling system and nearly suspended production at a power plant in Israel.

**Maharashtra: Fishermen's nightmare: 80-90% daily catch is jellyfish**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/fishermens-nightmare-80-90-daily-catch-in-maharashtra-is-jellyfish-7061792/>

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### **Maharashtra: Numer8 builds a 'Google map' for fishing at sea**

<https://www.livemint.com/news/business-of-life/numer8-builds-a-google-map-for-fishing-at-sea-11606051916116.html>

Like most other fishermen on the Sindhudurg coast, Akshay Haram used to head out to sea at dawn without an inkling of where he could find the day's catch. He knew some likely fishing spots but the creatures are capricious. So, he would often spend hours searching for a school of bhangra (mackerel), gobra (grouper) or squid. But now, he has help from an app called OFish. The app analyzes satellite image data to indicate concentrations of fish near the user's port as well as 'algal blooms' that are dead zones fish avoid because of low oxygen levels. Both these features help fishermen save time as well as fuel expenses, and reduce chances of returning with a meagre haul. Haram has three fishing boats, one of which is mechanized, and he is quickly reaping the benefits of using the app. "When I select my port on the app, it shows a line to a location I can target. Even if I lose network connectivity as I head out to sea, I already know the good spots of the day," says Haram. "So far, it hasn't failed. I have at least got some catch whenever I have used the app to pick a location.

He manages to haul in one or two tonnes of fish on good days now, compared to less than half of that earlier. As Haram goes along, he may explore a range of other features of the app, including market linkages. Satellite data OFish is a product of Mumbai-based geospatial data analytics startup Numer8. At the outset in 2017, it was working on a product for natural disaster risk modelling for the property insurance market. Then in early 2018, it submitted a project proposal to the European Space Agency (ESA) on coastal flooding. The idea was mainly to get deeper access to ESA's satellite data, because the Indian Space Research Organization hadn't opened up much to private entities back then, which is something that recent government reforms aim to change. It was while doing the ESA project that the Numer8 team started talking to fishermen



who bore the brunt of coastal flooding. “We soon realized that considerable focus was going to agritech but there was nothing majorly done for the marine fishing community, although there was a large potential data play from a GIS (Geographic Information System) perspective and a market connection angle, says Devleena Bhattacharjee, chief executive and founder of Numer8. She had worked as a data scientist for several organizations in India, Europe and the US before becoming an entrepreneur, and saw the possible impact of shifting focus to this side project. Bhattacharjee also realized this wasn't only an India-specific problem to solve, but applied to fishermen in several other countries with long coastlines.

So, she decided to make a pitch to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), which has an innovation accelerator. Numer8 rustled up a prototype of the OFish app around the start of 2019, working with local fishermen around Mumbai. The startup got selected for the WFP, a lifeline for the fledgling, bootstrapped startup. “The surprising bit was that we were the only ones talking about food from the sea, recalls Bhattacharjee. “We then bagged a WFP innovation pilot project in Sri Lanka and that's where we actually started in late 2019. About four months into the project, covid-19 arrived with all its restrictions. So, the project could not be completed for an impact assessment. However, as the saying goes, when one door closes, another opens. On March 25, when the first lockdown came into effect, Mumbai's Koli fishing community was one of the worst-hit. The previous evening, they had returned from sea with one of the season's biggest hauls. Suddenly, markets were closed and there were no distributors or even ice to preserve the fish until alternative sales channels could be found. Thousands of tonnes of fish had to be dumped back into the sea.

A fallout of the disruption was that the fishing community needed to adapt to survive and became more open to try new things. A fishing cooperative society started sending a vehicle to Mumbai to sell fish directly to consumers who were also desperate for fresh fish. A WhatsApp group quickly became popular and buyers would flock as the vehicle made stops at various points in Mumbai. Connecting people Numer8 connected with the fishing cooperative. Being an app-based platform, it could facilitate sales channels with large B2B buyers, including modern retail, exporters and online portals like Licious and FreshToHome, which are becoming popular in urban areas. In turn, it enhanced the value proposition and revenue stream of the startup. Now, it could make a play on the demand side apart from helping fishermen find good spots for fishing. This could give better returns to fishermen as well as fresher fish to buyers by cutting through multiple layers of distribution. Fishermen also get paid much quicker than in the traditional system, which is vital for them to go out to sea as they constantly struggle with cash flow and fall prey to moneylenders. The end-to-end linkage creates other new possibilities. Fishermen registered on the app can be tracked so that buyers can get transparency on when, where and who caught the fish.

All this information can be provided via QR codes on packages. “We are also talking to large institutions to add a financial element to the app. The fishing community hasn't been able to access formal finances, and the main reason is the problem of data validation, says Bhattacharjee. “Our next step is to validate fishermen to make them eligible for loans. Fishermen can enter details of the fish they sell and cash coming in, while the app also tracks the fishing routes they have taken. The biggest challenge is connecting with the small fishermen who constitute the startup's main focus. Numer8 has adopted a partnership model to get around this, working with cooperatives. This appears to be shaping up well in Maharashtra, but the pandemic has hampered outreach in other states. Numer8 hopes to spread out faster as the situation eases.

A positive outcome of the pandemic is that it brought the Numer8 team closer to the fishing community, giving insights into everything from fish quality and pricing to distribution. “I ended up being a regular at Sassoon Dock (Mumbai's largest seafood market) and I actually sold fish myself in the streets of Dadar in the summer, says Bhattacharjee. “I wanted to experience that to understand the dynamics of the marketplace. The startup hasn't raised institutional funding so far. “I wanted to be sure that we have a business model sketched out. I didn't want to pivot after taking funding. But now we know where we are going. Funding will help the startup at this stage to scale up and expand, not only in India but globally. Just last month, Numer8 signed a go-to-market agreement with Swiss satellite analytics company SatSure to jointly provide location-based services to fishermen in the Southeast Asian region.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen want Coastal Road extended to Worli village**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/civic/fishermen-want-coastal-rd-extended-to-worli-village/articleshow/79181962.cms>

Even as the ambitious if controversial coastal road project has exasperated environmentalists and south Mumbai residents, the fishermen from Worli want it extended to their village. Surrounded by sea on three sides, their densely populated village has just one access road, which they said is restrictive during emergencies. They have now kickstarted a campaign to voice their demand. Originally, Worli was a separate island, one of the seven in Bombay, as Mumbai was then known. Now it's connected with the city by a single narrow road, which has no BEST service due to congested lanes. The population of the area is more than one lakh and many of the villagers are dependent on traditional fishing. The Dronagiri is a node of Navi Mumbai in Raigad district and spreads over 1,250 hectares of land. The villagers had their hopes high when the coastal road project was announced. However, no map showed that it would pass through the village. Sharad Koli, one of the villagers who initiated the campaign, said, “The coastal road project will only ease the traffic in Mumbai and the burden on local trains.

We have requested that it be extended from the coast guard regional headquarter western command to Worli fort. Koli has written to various government authorities to draw their attention to the demand. Koli said if extended to Worli fort, the project can also help make the area a tourist attraction. The village comes under the constituency of Aditya Thackeray, who is also the environment and tourism minister for the state. He recently announced the beautification of Worli fort. Highlighting the problems of poor accessibility, another resident, Sunny Devendra, said that people staying near the fort have to walk at least one kilometre to the bus stop. He said villagers face extreme difficulty when someone has to be taken to a hospital. “No ambulance or vehicle can reach here.

Even school buses drop children up to a point. The coastal road would give us better access to the city and open up the sea front for us to commute, said Sunny, an event management professional. Mumbai is the richest municipality in India with a budget whose size dwarfs many state government budgets. For instance it is 50 per cent larger than the state budget of Goa. It can legitimately brag about many excellent hospitals, which provide highly subsidised Swapnil Nalawade, who is also a part of the campaign, said though there hasn't been a natural calamity, it would be difficult for people to escape in such a scenario. “It would be impossible to evacuate. Even fire brigade engines or medical services cannot reach us, said Nalawade, who works with a private firm. Assuring to take the demand to the government, former MLA and Shiv Sena leader Sunil Shinde said it's the need of the hour. “Better road connectivity is must in such areas. But at the same time, the residents and their houses should not get affected by any development, said Shinde, adding that this is a very old locality like gaothan and koliwada. “I have been pursuing various development issues with the government about such localities and will push this demand, too, he said.

### **Maharashtra: Report on socio-eco impact of Mumbai coastal road flawed: Fisherfolk**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/report-on-socio-eco-impact-of-mumbai-coastal-road-flawed-fisherfolk/articleshow/79054354.cms>

Fisherfolk residents of Worli and environmentalists have objected to the socio-economic impact report of the Mumbai Coastal Road prepared by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). The report was commissioned by the BMC and submitted to the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority last week. The study was carried out after coastal road construction had already started. The Indian Council for Agricultural Research and CMFRI carried out a joint rap-id study for five days in March-April 2019. Among the possible impacts, the report said that fishers operating from and around the proposed project are likely to irreversibly lose access to a portion of nearshore fishing area in the sea. However, access to other parts of the sea is not restricted therefore, it reduces livelihood impacts. In the intertidal areas handpicking of clams,

oysters, crabs is done. Crustaceans contribute a major part of the catch. It noted that there may be a possible reduction in fish abundance and productivity of the area due to sound disturbance and increased turbidity during the construction phase and would result in decline in revenue of handpickers.

As a mitigation measure, the report has recommended installation of artificial reefs and regular monitoring of the seawater quality in the nearshore waters so that pollution does not cause adverse impacts on fishing and environment. The report has also pointed out that there could be some hindrance to the navigation of fishing boats and a slight increase in the fishing operational cost. The experts have suggested providing adequate depth to be given to boats for navigation and improved navigation aid besides upgrading fishing vessels. However, the Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsyavyavsay Society said the report is flawed and inaccurate. In its objections to the BMC's application for additional reclamation, the society said the study was conducted in a piecemeal manner with very few site visits and no recording of nighttime catch.

The report does not consider the nearshore area as a major fishing ground. This is inaccurate as the area near the coast is a high-value productive fishing ground where deep sea commercial fish like ghol, rawas, pomfrets, tiger prawns come to breed, it said. The society added that the report claims that 60ft is sufficient for navigating boats is not true, a minimum 200ft is required. It further said it would be impossible to recreate the habitat of the intertidal zone, which is periodically inundated and exposed during low tide. Shweta Wagh, associate professor and member Collective for Spatial Alternatives, said that fishing is a seasonal activity and ideally the study should have been carried out over a one-year period taking into account findings of all seasons.

### **Maharashtra: Cabinet clears schemes to boost fisherie**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-cabinet-clears-schemes-to-boost-fisheries/articleshow/79074678.cms>

The state cabinet on Wednesday cleared a series of schemes to boost the fisheries sector. The state decided to implement the Centre's Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund. This aims for the development of jetties and landing areas for fishermen. The Centre is to provide Rs.7,522 crore to states over 5 years between 2018 and 2023. The cabinet also agreed to implement the PM's Fisheries scheme in the state. It is to be implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25. The Centre's contribution will be Rs 9,407 crore and the state's share will be Rs.4,880 crore. It aims to improve aquaculture facilities especially for prawns, crabs and shellfish.

## **Maharashtra: An architecture student's vision for a greener Mumbai: A case of coastal communities adapting to sea-level rise**

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/an-architecture-students-vision-for-a-greener-mumbai-a-case-of-coastal-communities-adapting-to-sea-level-rise-8956481.html>

Mumbai is a city with over 22 million residents, a 270 km coastline of the Arabian Sea and an additional 200 sq km under the coastal regulation zone. For these reasons and more, the city is undoubtedly exposed to the vulnerabilities of sea-level rise due to climate change. This vulnerability is exaggerated by the ever-increasing demand for land, for use in housing, commerce and industry. This has impacted natural and ecologically-sensitive areas in the city, depleting their existence in recent decades. Overexploitation of these coastal lands by spilling industrial effluents in the creek, dumping garbage and construction debris in ecologically sensitive areas and land grabbing by destroying mangroves, has left the city's ecological weapons against climatic hazards [mangroves and wetlands] under threat. More rainfall and flooding in the city is also causing the existing infrastructure – often built with little to no ecological sensitivity – to crumble. The situation is gradually making more and more people vulnerable to devastating impacts of climate change and natural disasters. Since the city's inception, negotiations have been held time and again between competing interests in ecology and land development. Higher-level decision makers or policymakers and the coastal communities and slums are at the receiving end.

This leads to continuous conflicts between the urban built environment and urban ecological environments where ecology has been losing the battle. With such immense pressure on the ecological environments and biodiversity, climate change is also pacing towards these cities at a faster rate. By 2100, the sea level is expected to rise by 1 metres all over the world. This study echoes the need for cities to become adaptable to climate change and maintain the threatened ecological balance of the city with land development, built environment. This, while also addressing the vulnerabilities of the communities that live and work in these threatened areas. Urban flooding in coastal regions of Navi Mumbai Loss of land and infrastructure, vulnerability of communities to these drastic environmental changes, lack of financial resources in many communities to recover from such disasters, loss of biodiversity or their uneven distribution, are dealbreakers for.

To understand this, the negotiations between the land and ecology and furthermore estimated its future with the climate change and effects on rising sea level in the region. For which, this article undertook the example of Thane Creek and the development of the planned city of Navi Mumbai. This included studying all the factors involved in its development from 1973 when the first development plan of the city was published up to today. The article highlights how land development for Navi Mumbai required reclamation, where a node like Vashi, required more than 50% of its area reclaimed. It undertook widening of existing estuaries and using them as storm water drain connected from the Parshik Hill to the holding ponds. This helped absorb excess water towards the creek edge to avoid flooding. While this method of reclamation was chosen to prevent flooding like in the case of Mumbai but today, the city of Navi Mumbai floods every year.

Despite the holding ponds being situated at a higher level to avoid creek water to enter, the age-old capacities of drains (60mm per hour) and holding pond capacity of 8 hours are unable to prevent flooding. Moreover, there is a decline in mangrove cover of the coastal area due to industrial effluents from the Thane-Belapur belt, and the city is now sensing the after effects of urbanization. While the city was designed for the '100-year flood' which meant that there is only 1% chance of flooding to happen in a year, but with climate change and sea-level rise the idea of '100-year flood' is far left off. My Vision for Mumbai's Green Recovery: In order to overcome this, a planning approach of land and water integration is required where land use zoning and flood plain zoning along with water resource management will help reduce the damage. Likewise, treating flood water and rising sea level as a part of the water cycle of storm water drain and wastewater systems, by designing lands and spaces which are 'meant to fail' or 'safe to fail' will prevent any life and monetary losses during heavy rains. All these should be integrated at multiple scales in the city using public spaces, open spaces, swales, stormwater and drainage systems as flood adaptive spaces that work with natural systems for development of resilient water based-urban systems.

Also, instead of using rigid methods like floodwalls and levees to protect the coast from damage we need to use ecologically adaptive ways. Therefore, this article reiterates on using water as a re-integrative, permeable member of the urban form. While also considering design of movement through space-time via circulation, dynamism and flexibility, along with combinations of work, leisure and commerce activities, ultimately supporting the communities.

**Maharashtra: Hook, line and sinker: Malwan's fisherwomen**

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/articles/hook-line-and-sinker-women-in-fisheries/>

Every morning, Himanshi Kubal dons a pair of trousers and a t-shirt and, along with her husband, pushes their small rowboat on to the water. In the evenings, she's in a colourful saree, often with an aboli (firecracker) flower in her hair, cutting and cleaning fish for customers. Himanshi, now in her 30s, has been fishing from a young age, first in rivers and estuaries in Malwan taluka with her family, and three years ago, after they bought the boat, out in the Arabian Sea with her husband. She is one of the few women working at Malwan's Dandi beach who can swiftly cast a net, and is among the 10,635 residents of the taluka's total population of 111,807, who are engaged in fishing. I used to work on other boats with my husband to sort fish, she says, "but three years ago we had enough money to buy our own small [non-motorised gillnet] boat, and since then we've been fishing together. Nearby, an auctioneer shouts "Teenshe, teenshe daha, teenshe vees! [300, 310, 320 rupees] while several fishermen haul out crates of catch from their boats and stack them up on the beach for display. Traders and agents weave their way through the crowd and haggle for the best deals. Stray dogs, cats and birds dart in and steal their share of treats.

We usually fish every morning," Himanshi adds. "And when we don't go because of bad weather or other reasons, we go to the morning market to cut and clean fish. And every evening we're at the auction. While fishing across much of India is usually done by men, it is typically women like Himanshi who are central to the other components of the trade, like the processing and selling of fish. They form around 66.7 per cent of the post-harvest workforce in fisheries across the country, and are integral to the industry. The last Marine Fisheries Census (2010) records about 4 lakh women in the post-harvest workforce (in all activities except the actual fishing process). In addition, nearly 40,000 women are involved in collecting 'fish seeds' (or eggs) for aquaculture. "It's exhausting work – buying, transporting, icing and storing the fish, and finally cutting and selling it. And we do it all on our own, says Juanita (full name not recorded), a trader and widow, sitting in her one-room brick and asbestos house on Dandi beach, where several bills from her fish purchases at the auction are threaded through a metal wire hanging on a wall. The fish auction would not be complete without traders like Juanita, who purchase a wide variety of fish that they later sell either at the local market or in small towns nearby. Haggling with auctioneers is part of their daily routine, and each has her own strategy for getting the best price – some agree to pay the final price at the end of the auction but convince the auctioneer to throw in a few extra fish.

Others quietly push for a small discount (at times even as small as Rs. 5) once the auction process is over. The long day of selling fish goes by with chatter and discussions about the diminishing catch and which fish to cook for dinner. Women here usually run the fish cleaning processes too. From washing and scaling to gutting and cutting, each fish is handled with surgical precision. "I left school after the ninth standard, and have been working with fish drying

ever since. I had to do something to fill my stomach, says 42-year-old Benny Fernandes, a labourer in Devbag village of Malwan taluka, who earns around Rs. 4,000 a month. She adroitly hoists a basket of dried fish in one arm while carrying her infant child in the other. Fish drying is also largely done by women across India, and involves long hours of labour under the scorching sun. During the monsoon we have no fish drying work, so we take on odd jobs and survive, Benny adds. Women like Himanshi, Juanita and Benny are particularly vulnerable members of fishing communities, studies have shown, and are especially affected by the present state of fisheries – hit by overfishing, the dominance of mechanised fisheries, declining catch, climate change and other problems faced by small-scale fisherfolk. And most of the women in this occupation don't receive the same benefits and subsidies as men working in fishing, though they too are equally dependent on this work. For example, during the monsoon ban on fishing, the families of fishermen in some states receive a monthly compensation from the government. But the families of fisherwomen (without fishermen) are not given the same. Back on Dandi beach, by the time it is evening, the women start off on another set of tasks – chasing their children, completing household chores and more. With the setting sun, their workplace moves from the shore to their homes.

### **Maharashtra: Coastal road length increases from 9.98 km to 10.58 km**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/coastal-road-length-increases-from-9-98-km-to-10-58-km-6907835/>

The BMC clarified that only 6.51 hectare will be additionally reclaimed, as the remaining 14.49 hectare required is for the sea wall, which was already a part of the project but “not detailed or mentioned in the 2017 application seeking CRZ clearance. “The reclamation area appears to have increased by 14.49 ha. However, this area was there in the form of physical reclamation but not detailed (in the 2017 application), the BMC said in its application while justifying reclamation for the sea wall. The civic body, in the application, formally admitted there has been a change in alignment and design of the project. “The modifications in the alignment and design of the MCRP-South (Mumbai Coastal Road Project) will not lead to any additional impacts on the environment, it added. The BMC has proposed to construct a 7.47-km sea wall along the proposed coastal road. The sea wall will provide an additional surface promenade of 11.66 hectare on the seaward side, it has stated. So far, it has reclaimed about 65 hectare. However, environmentalists and activists opposing the multi-crore project have requested the MCZMA to refuse permission for additional reclamation.

“We would like to remind the authority that granting post facto clearance has been prohibited by the Supreme Court. Already, BMC has violated CRZ clearance granted to it. We have pointed out the illegal reclamation of 4.25 hectare for the sea wall. The BMC itself had admitted in its



affidavit before Supreme Court about starting work for the sea wall, said Debi Goenka of Conservation Action Trust, who attended the meeting on Wednesday. Goenka has submitted a 12-page letter to MCZMA highlighting the violations of the clearance granted to BMC. “I have requested the authority to conduct a detailed site visit in the presence of representatives of all petitioners so that violations and facts can be verified, he said. Activist Shweta Wagh pointed out that since the BMC is now proposing changes in its original plan and there is additional reclamation, it should come up with a comprehensive plan. “The sea wall was not part of the original plan for which CRZ clearance was granted. This additional work amounts to a change in the project profile.

So, the BMC should make a fresh application for clearance, she added. Explained Activists say the additional reclamation would impact marine biodiversity and also have an effect on fishing areas in the vicinity. The CRZ clearance granted for the project in May 2017 was for only 90 hectare. A study by National Institute of Oceanography to find out the project's impact on waves, high tide line and seashore was also conducted on an area of 90 hectare. Residents have pointed out that since there is a change in the original plan, BMC should again go for public consultation.

### **Maharashtra: Misplaced priorities affect fishing and the Koli community**

<https://mumbai.citizenmatters.in/misplaced-priorities-affect-fishing-and-the-koli-community-21602>

Maharashtra currently ranks 7th in India when it comes to fishing. The government encourages inland fishing rather than promote existing traditional fishing methods. Maharashtra however is not very popular for inland fishing. In comparison to Maharashtra, other states have been aggressively supporting the fishermen by giving them coastal land to create nurseries. One such example is that of Gujarat where fishermen have been given coastal land for fishing. However, in Maharashtra infrastructural developments have been taking place which are having a direct impact on the coastal areas of Maharashtra where mangroves are being cut and coastal roads are on the rise.

### **Maharashtra: Flash flood in Uran**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/flash-flood-in-uran>

Residents from Kundegaon in Uran, who woke up to another flash flood on Monday morning, are planning to go on an agitation soon if the government officials fail to mitigate the situation. The residents from the Kundegaon are facing unseasonal floods since 2019 have been repeatedly asking the officials to take remedial action. The residents blame the flash floods to the loss of wetlands and destruction of mangroves. In fact, the residents of Kundegaon have been

facing the wrath of man-made disasters since 2008. This is mainly due to the reclamation work in the vicinity. The water outlets at most of the places have been blocked due to unchecked dumping, hindering the natural flow. During high tide, there is no outflow for water hence, it enters into the houses. “In the middle of the night, we woke up to find our house flooded. This isn't the first time this has happened. It is the tidal water that often gushes in. The government apathy to this issue is shocking, said Dilip Koli a resident.

While flash flood has been happening every year and the City and Industrial Development Corporation (Cidco) is accused of turning a blind eye to the problem. Pramod Patil, nodal officer, environment Cidco, said, “We have taken measures and installed flap gates to ensure that tidal water does not enter the houses of the locals. Will yet, again assess the issue and see what can be done. The 300-year-old village has lost the old-world charm, most of the heritage homes have been replaced with pucca houses. A self-sufficient village now depends on others. The reclamation has also taken a toll on the traditional fishing profession of the villagers. The village comes under gram panchayat, and all amenities and facilities are taken care by the panchayat only. The village is some 10-15 km from the proposed Navi Mumbai airport site. The village has also been well connected with the city and there are schools and colleges nearby. Once known for fishing the area has completely changed now many commercial and residential projects have come up.

A parking lot has been erected on wetland. The mountains have been cut and blasted to make way for various projects. Debris dumping along with mangroves areas is rampant in Uran node which is slowly killing the city's green lungs. There are 26 villages in Uran district where the livelihood of people has been widely affected. In 1971 Cidco took charge of Uran Taluka and since then mangrove areas have been reclaimed for various projects. Despite having no history of the flood, the villagers are facing flood-like situation during high tide. The roads are higher than in the village.

**Maharashtra: Hooked on to saving lives, Koli community rescuers step up to every river challenge in Pandharpur**

[https://m.hindustantimes.com/cities/hooked-on-to-saving-lives-koli-community-rescuers-step-up-to-every-river-challenge-in-pandharpur/story-XbiKpQwvPNwDCPzPq6V9cM\\_amp.html](https://m.hindustantimes.com/cities/hooked-on-to-saving-lives-koli-community-rescuers-step-up-to-every-river-challenge-in-pandharpur/story-XbiKpQwvPNwDCPzPq6V9cM_amp.html)

The first responder to any disaster is the local community of the area and over the past decades, the Koli community (boatmen and fishermen) in Pandharpur has been safeguarding 14 ghats of the Chandrabhaga River flowing through the city. It has been a routine exercise for 1,000 boatmen of the community to rescue people from the river. However, the floods of

October 14 and 15 were tragic and this team of rescuers helped more than 8,000 residents from various parts of Pandharpur to safely move out from their houses. Due to heavy rainfall activity over the past week, many regions in western Maharashtra faced flood-like situation due to overflowing rivers. In Pandharpur tehsil alone, over 10,000 people from 46 flood-hit villages have been shifted to safer places. “It is our ancestral work. We rescue people who are trapped, or by any other way fall into the river. This time, too, when the water level started rising, all our boys located at the 14 ghats started rescuing people, which included senior citizens, children, homeless and physically challenged individuals. Our swimmers are on alert 24 hours and there is no need to tell them to go rescue people. The flood-like situation was bad and if our boys didn't work to save lives in time, then, more fatalities would have been registered, said Ganesh Ankushrao, president of Pandharpur Boatmen (Koli community) community group.

There are 14 ghats on the banks of Chandrabhaga river and on each ghat there is team of 15-20 boatmen with on vigil with their boats. This riverside area is spread up to four kilometres starting from Gopalpura to Railway bridge to the other side. Sachin Dhole, sub-divisional magistrate of Pandharpur, said, “The Koli community in Pandharpur has always provided a helping hand in times of need and has led from the front in rescue operations during Wari and during other emergency situations for us. We get a lot of help during floods or any other emergencies from the Koli community members. They are very sharp and alert all the time, till now they have rescued thousands of people from the Chandrabhaga river. Another boatman Ganesh Mahadev Tarapurkar, said, “We are risking our lives to save people over the past many years and this time also, we led from the front. I personally rescued hundreds of people from various parts of Pandharpur. Once such rescue was of 15 homeless and physical challenged people who were sleeping on the old Nagar Palika road at night. They got stuck in the floods and when we came to know about them, we immediately went in with our boat and rescued them safely.

### **Maharashtra: Migrant Fishermen, unable to ‘Fish’ basic needs in the pandemic**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/migrant-fishermen-unable-to-fish-basic-needs-in-the-pandemic>

Of the thousands of migrant labourers in the city, the one's working on the fishing boats and trawlers are the ones' that are heard of the least. During the lockdown, the situation for these labourers became a dire one, with no way to return home and no steady income to survive in the city. Nishad, a 25-year-old labourer came to Mumbai in September 2019 from Uttar Pradesh and found a job on a fishing boat. When the lockdown was announced, he was stranded at sea for almost a month. Along with the rest of the crew, he hoped to return to the mainland but he felt safer out at sea. He said, “I felt like returning but I was afraid that if I return, I would contract the virus and fall sick. While boat owners refused to comment on the issue, it seemed pretty clear

that they too were hit hard by the pandemic, which resulted in the inability to pay their workers. “I have to send some money home to my family in Gujarat, said Dhinesh, a 30-year-old labourer from the town of Valsad. In spite of having a rich coastline too, fishermen often migrate to Mumbai. When I asked why this happens, he replied, “If I sell a pomfret in Gujarat I will get the minimum price which is around Rs. 250.

In Gujarat not many people eat fish so we have to sell at the lowest price because customers know no one will buy from us if the price is high. In Mumbai there are ample restaurants and hotels that are willing to purchase at high rates. Rajhans Tapke, the General Secretary of the Koli Mahasangh spoke to us about the reasons why the migrant fishermen are a problem that has not been mitigated. He says, “Fishermen all over the country have suffered due to the lockdown, but those fishing in the Arabian Sea have been hit the hardest. Last year the coast was ravaged by cyclones and this year we had both a cyclone and the pandemic. Individual fishermen have suffered losses of around Rs. 2-2.5 lakhs. According to Pravin Bhanji, the head of the Koli Samaj Trust in Versova tells us, “We have been waiting for the government to give us some help. We always think our names are on the tip of their tongue but then we get forgotten. From mending nets to filling diesel into the tanks, the most rudimentary of tasks are completed by these migrant workers, proving that they are the crucial spokes in the wheel that runs the city's fisheries industry, and many of them have returned to the boats with the advent of the fishing season

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai’s fishermen in crisis**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbais-fishermen-in-crisis>

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have hit the fishing communities of Mumbai harder than anyone expected. Fishermen had a poor catch last year due to the cyclonic winds in the Arabian Sea, but 2020 has had a worse impact on them. A variety of different factors hit them from every possible angle. Restrictions were imposed on the selling of fish in markets with the advent of the lockdown in the city. This meant, that trawlers returning from the fishing grounds were greeted with no labour to unload them or transport to carry them to the local markets in the city. This led to the fishermen dumping millions of tons of fish back into the sea. Only wholesalers, including hotels and restaurants were able to purchase whatever fish remained and at the lowest possible price. The Chairman of the National Association of Fishermen, Dr. Gajendra Bahanji described the situation as a terrible one, and fishermen are suffering financially. He says, ‘Fishing was allowed, but selling was not, which caused a lot of damage’. The losses are massive and might be irreparable, according to Dr. Bahanji. He also explained that due to the losses, migrant labourers who work on the trawlers were unable to return to their villages and are stranded in the city. He further explained how the lifting of the restrictions on 1st

August 2020, did no favours to the fishermen due to the sixty-two-day ban on fishing in the monsoons for the fish to breed.

The fishing season begins in August after Naryal Poornima, a ritual performed by the Koli community to please the sea gods, to protect the fishermen from any dangers at sea and bless them with a bountiful catch. This year, the restrictions were lifted fifteen days prior to Naryal Poornima, and customers flooded the markets only to find very few fish sold at exorbitant prices. According to the Fisheries Survey of India, the most commonly caught fish off the coast of Mumbai include rawas (Fourfinger threadfin), surmai (seerfish), pomfrets, mackerels, and Bombay duck (bombil). Prawns are also caught in abundance in Mumbai. These are very lucrative and prices of these fish are far more than freshwater fish. The Zonal Director of FSI D.K Gulati says, “We feel for the fishermen, but our authority is limited within the survey department. Although we are a government department, we do not give financial aid to the fishermen. To understand the issue of government aid, we spoke to the Chairmen of the Akhil Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samittee, Damodar Tandel. He said, “Fishermen have suffered losses of over 200 crore rupees.

If farmers can get subsidies, and their loans are paid off by the government and banks, why are we being ignored. He highlighted the issues faced by the fishermen that extend beyond the restrictions of the lockdown, such as pollution, urban development and ignorance by state civic bodies, He commented, “From such a massive state budget, why can't a little bit go into ensuring the safety and security. While it is clear that fishing off the coast of Mumbai is riskier than working alongside the railway tracks, the compensation for the death of a fishermen is 20% of the compensation a railway employee gets in case of death. The Marine Products Development Export Authorities say that the restrictions have taken a huge chunk out of the export earnings. Fish caught off the coast is exported to China, USA, the United Arab Emirates and European nations as well.

A spokesperson from the MPDA said, “Containers have remained empty and exports have stopped, local markets are being supplied but exports have stopped for the time-being. Retail stores in the city purchase fish from wholesalers in Kolkata, as the fishing season begins in June on the East coast of India. Wholesalers at Sassoon Docks and Crawford Market informed, ‘We are selling fish fresh off the boat but we have to sell at a higher price as cost of labour has risen, and then demand is too high and supply is short. It has almost become a bidding war’. A meat retail store owner spoke to us, “Pomfrets that were usually sold between the ranges of Rs. 350 to Rs. 400 are being sold between the ranges of Rs. 700 to Rs. 800. Retail prices are even higher with prices rising beyond Rs. 1000. The price of prawns has risen too, and the most commonly caught surmai fish is sold for Rs. 850, a testament to these trying times for the fishermen of

Mumbai.

### **Maharashtra: Distressed fishermen dissatisfied over Maharashtra relief package**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/distressed-fishermen-dissatisfied-over-maha-relief-package>

Distressed fishermen from seven coastal districts --Raigad, Ratnagiri, Mumbai and Mumbai Suburbs, Palghar, Sindhudurg, Thane of Maharashtra are dissatisfied with the relief package provided by the state government. The relief package of Rs 65 crore was granted to the fishermen, however, the state fishing association believes that the amount is too small to help the sector financially. Moreover, this package does not help the labourers who were largely affected. Akhil Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti President Damodar Tandel said, the state government has turned blind eye for labourers. About 90,000 labourers/workers work on 20,000 boats but no money has been given as compensation for loss of work. Due to lockdown and natural calamity only small boats were allowed to operate. On such boats there are hardly any labourers deployed.

Therefore, at least Rs 2,000 each should be given to these labourers is our demand. Deputy Chief Minister, Fisheries Minister and Speaker of Maharashtra Assembly have assured some solution post Dussera, informed Tandel. According to this relief package, boat owners can avail Rs 20,000-30,000, Konkan's Rapankar fishermen (doing fishing from shores of the sea by putting only net without boats) can avail Rs 10,000, fisherwomen can apply for Rs 5,000 but astonishingly no provision of money has been made for the labour class. Before Mahavikas Aghadi government came into power, a few cyclones had hit the sea affecting the fishing activity. Wherein, the former CM Devendra Fadnavis had asked the district collectors to prepare a report on damages incurred and during that time Rs 200 crore losses was indicated in the report. However, no distribution of money was done. Later Uddhav Thackeray became CM and Cyclone Nisarga hit Raigad, Ratnagiri, Palghar besides the lockdown but no satisfactory relief has been provided till date. Though the Chief Minister himself made visits of these affected districts, alleged Tandel. If the government can waive off loan of farmers, then we fishermen also do farming at sea. Why are we refused a similar kind of relief. We have to struggle for compensatory relief package. Expecting loan waiver for fishermen seems to be a distant dream, he said.

## **Maharashtra: Birders, fishers told to stay away from Panje as tidal water flow stopped to site**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/birders-fishers-told-to-stay-away-from-panje-as-tidal-water-flow-stopped-to-site/story-rkYWWqLDhMP0uyUwrJFNJ.html>

Fresh trouble is brewing at the Panje area in Navi Mumbai's Uran, where birders and fisherfolk who have identified several environmental violations in the past, have been told to remain clear of the site and were also taken to a local police station allegedly by landowners. At the same time, an excavator machine was spotted on Wednesday with plans to commence debris dumping on the parched wetland where only a handful of birds were spotted as high tide water ingress had been blocked, said environmentalists. Apart from being a source of survival for the local fishing community, Panje is a destination for thousands of migratory birds and an ecologically sensitive area where countless ornithologists and bird enthusiasts have been gathering over the years. However, the City Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. (Cidco) and Navi Mumbai Special Economic Zone (NMSEZ) plan to build an integrated township at Panje. Local resident and birder Parag Gharat said he was told by NMSEZ representatives and security guards placed by Cidco to stay away from the site.

“I was taken to the local police station at Nhava Sheva where I had to promise not to visit the wetland again or face action since construction is commencing and the area is not a wetland, he said. Pramod Patil, nodal officer (environment), Cidco said he was not aware of any such action. “We will look into the matter and speak to NMSEZ officials on any developments at the site, he said. “We have no information on any police complaint but a large portion of Panje belongs to NMSEZ and the site is an agricultural area, not a wetland, said an NMSEZ spokesperson. An official from the Nhava Sheva police said they had summoned three persons for taking photographs and fishing at Panje. “We have received complaints. It is private property and these acts are not allowed, the official said, requesting anonymity. Environmentalist Aishwarya Sridhar was accosted by unidentified persons on Tuesday for taking photographs at Panje. “I feel very sad to see Panje dried up and the sight of birds sitting on the dried wetland was heartbreaking. There is absolutely no value for ecosystems like wetlands and big corporations are trading our ecology for the economy.

The development has to be sustainable. If we lose Panje we lose an important flood control mechanism for Mumbai city, she said. Environment groups have been petitioning environment minister Aaditya Thackeray to declare Panje a bird sanctuary. “It is illegal to treat the wetland as private property, and even more illegal to stop tidal water flow to dry out the land for construction, said BN Kumar, director, NatConnect Foundation. HT reported last week that information obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) showed that NMSEZ had illegally started landfill at Panje wetland through a local contractor while damaging the Pagote and Bhendkhal wetlands in the Uran region in Raigad district across Mumbai harbour. “Neither the NMSEZ security nor police has any business to stop any free movement of people at Panje, said environmentalist Nandkumar Pawar.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai’s fishing community demand for justice after BMC drafts plan**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbais-fishing-community-demand-for-justice-after-bmc-drafts-plan>

The oldest inhabitants of Mumbai, the Kolis – local fishing community have demanded natural justice and sought fair demarcation of their villages. Leaders from the Koli community claim that two years after their Koliwada land was surveyed, the final plan has excluded nearly 40 per cent of areas of Koliwadadas. The BMC has invited suggestions and objections for newly demarcated boundaries of 13 koliwadadas in Mumbai. On October 1, the BMC website published plans for 13 koliwadadas with maps, giving a month's time for citizens to submit suggestions and objections in writing. The citizens views would be later forwarded to the Revenue Department for recitations based on which the final plan will be framed. The 13 koliwadadas are Charkop, Chimbai, Gorai, Juhu, Khardanda, Madh, Versova, Borivali, Mahul, Malvani, Turbhey, Bhatti and Manori. The fishermen's community has pointed out that the authorities have failed to mark open space for future extension of these koliwadadas. Expressing their disappointment, community leaders plan to file their objections on the BMC's draft plan. “Representatives of all Koliwadadas cooperated with the surveyors, which included members of the Fisheries department, collectors office and UDRI. However, two years after the survey, we see that nearly 40% areas under Koliwada have not been included in the plan.

We are yet to ascertain the reason for this. We will register our objection, said Rajhans Tapke, general secretary of Koli Mahasangh. Koliwadadas are recognised as areas where native inhabitants of Mumbai are traditionally located. “While the final Development Plan (2014-34) of the city was approved in 2018, koliwada, gaathan and adivasi pada areas were not included in it as there were no land records to identify the exact area and extent of these areas. To delineate the boundaries and their extent, the revenue department had set up a committee, Tapke added. Tapke said that the government rules say that while preparing plans for gaothans and Koliwadadas



they should leave space for future extensions. “However, this has not been done in Mumbai. Kolis are original inhabitants of the city and they are living here since ages, hence we deserve natural justice, which we have been denied from time to time, he rued. Earlier, the state government had marked many koliwadadas as slums and their redevelopment was planned under SRA schemes. Worli Koliwada and Sion Koliwada, for instance, was marked as a slum but later the decision was reverted after huge protests. Tapke added, “Government has already handed over fishermen's land for development to various agencies, at least now they should keep some space for our extension and future growth.

### **Maharashtra: Supreme Court must reconsider its stand on Mumbai’s coastal road project due to climate change and rising sea levels**

<https://www.theleaflet.in/supreme-court-must-reconsider-its-stand-on-mumbais-coastal-road-project-due-to-climate-change-and-rising-sea-levels/>

The Coastal Road Project planned and implemented by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai [MCGM]- is a road being constructed along the western coast of the island city. This project is part of a larger plan to construct a ‘ring road’ all around Mumbai and is estimated to cost around Rs. 14,000 crore. The project has faced sharp criticism from city planners and urban conservationists, for giving a complete go-by to sensible transport planning and placing a premium on private transport and, effectively, discouraging public transport. A large part of the road is being built on the land reclaimed from the Arabian Sea in the intertidal area that hosts a vast diversity of marine flora and fauna and serves as a breeding ground for fish. This intertidal area is also crucial to the livelihood of the Kolis, the indigenous coastal community of Mumbai. Joint Technical Committee Report: An effort in vain In 2011, the Government of Maharashtra appointed a Joint Technical Committee [JTC] to “examine the various options in the construction of a coastal road in Mumbai. This committee opined that a road on stilts would be too expensive and that a coastal road on the reclaimed land would be the most ‘cost-effective’ option. The JTC report bears no mention of the likely impact on coastal communities or serves other alternatives to solve traffic congestion.

Evidently, a decision had already been taken and an ‘expert’ committee was constituted to justify that decision. Amendment to the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification was promulgated in 1991 to reduce anthropogenic pressures on the coast. It is evident from the original notification of 1991, and the subsequent amendments of 1997 and 2001, that reclamation was allowed for only those activities which ‘by their very nature’ require the waterfront, such as ports, harbors, and jetties. The report further suggested that “development along the coast and short term commercial interests should not be allowed to undermine the ecological security of the coast. The CRZ Notification 2011 was based on the

Swaminathan Committee Report that suggested several guiding principles for regulating activities along the coast. In the wake of the tsunami, the report recommended a precautionary approach, especially in light of potential threats that could cause irreversible damage to the ecologically fragile coastal systems. The report further suggested that “development along the coast and short term commercial interests should not be allowed to undermine the ecological security of the coast. It emphasised the importance of protecting the livelihoods and habitation of the coastal communities and sought to prohibit land reclamation except for essential activities or those that do not require extensive reclamation.

To obviate any violation of the CRZ Notification by the construction of roads, the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai in 2015 made an application to the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority [MCZMA]. The MCZMA adopted a procedure unknown and unrecognised by law, without possessing any powers to do so. It recommended an amendment to the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change [MoEF] to allow road construction: “This option is more economical and would be easy to implement with a significantly reduced time of construction. .... there is a need to amend the CRZ Notification to accommodate the construction of the proposed Coastal Road around the coast of Mumbai. This recommendation was accepted by the Ministry and an amendment permitting roads on the reclaimed surface under the CRZ Notification 2011 was passed in December 2018. However, this was to be permitted only in ‘exceptional cases’. The MCZMA adopted a procedure unknown and unrecognised by law, without possessing any powers to do so. While the Notification itself does not define what an ‘exceptional case’ is, a holistic reading of the CRZ Notification 2011 would demonstrate its meaning. An exception to the general rule prohibiting reclamation in coastal areas could be permitted only after exhausting all other possibilities.

Notably, although this amendment was made specifically to facilitate the Coastal Road Project in Mumbai, it would apply to the entire 7500 km coastline of India. Coastal Road as “exceptional case justifies reclamation after the amendment to accommodate the Coastal Road Project, the MCGM applied for CRZ clearance. The MCZMA (of which, notably, the Municipal Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai himself is a member) recommended the project to the MoEF for CRZ clearance. An exception to the general rule prohibiting reclamation in coastal areas could be permitted only after exhausting all other possibilities. However, the MoEF remanded the application back to the MCZMA for fresh appraisal after noting that the MCZMA had not appraised the project comprehensively and had not considered, amongst other things, the impact of the project on local coastal communities. While doing so, the MoEF noted that ‘the development of coastal roads by way of reclamation is permitted only in exceptional cases.

There is no mention of the circumstance under which the Government has proposed to undertake the project.' In response to the apprehensions raised by the MoEF, the MCGM stated that traffic congestion and pollution caused due to it was in fact the 'exceptional circumstance'. Evidently satisfied with this justification of traffic congestion as an 'exceptional case', the MoEF granted final CRZ clearance for the project on May 11, 2017. The problem of traffic congestion can have cost-effective solutions that are at the same time more inclusive. It is therefore not clear as to how the problem of traffic congestion amounts to an 'exceptional case'? It is not the case that the North and the South of Mumbai cannot be connected except through a Coastal Road on reclaimed land. In fact, at the time when the JTC Report first recommended a coastal road on reclaimed land, there were other transportation solutions underway connecting the north to the south of Mumbai. The under-construction Metro 3 project runs parallel to the entire length of the proposed Coastal Road. It is estimated that the Metro shall carry a total of 186.5 lakh commuters daily, while the coastal road is estimated to carry just 1 lakh.

The problem of traffic congestion can have cost-effective solutions that are at the same time more inclusive. It is therefore not clear as to how the problem of traffic congestion amounts to an 'exceptional case'. Lack of comprehensive assessment and perfunctory appraisal by regulatory authorities. Not a single report placed before the MCZMA or the MoEF considered the impact that the project was likely to have on the livelihood of the indigenous fisherfolk community. The Social Impact Assessment Report which claimed to consider the impact of the project was primarily concerned with the impact on heritage structures, rather than people and their livelihoods. Moreover, this assessment report was not based on any consultation with the indigenous fishing community.

The Assistant Commissioner of Fisheries wrote to the Fisheries Commissioner several times to hold a consultation with the fishing community. Efforts were made to draw attention to the No Objection Certificate issued by the Department of Fisheries which needed to be reconsidered. Not a single report placed before the MCZMA or the MoEF considered the impact that the project was likely to have on the livelihood of the indigenous fisherfolk community. The fisherfolk societies have written to the MCGM, Department of Fisheries, and other authorities. They have demanded that at the very least, the provision of enough room to safely navigate their boats. These requests of the fisherfolk societies have fallen on deaf ears. Notably, the CRZ Notification 2011 affords special status to the fisherfolk community. One of the objectives of the Notification as set out in its preamble is "to ensure livelihood security to the fisher communities and other local communities, living in the coastal areas..."

Towards this end, the application form that is to be submitted for seeking clearance under the CRZ Notification 2011, requires that the applicant provides information as to how the project

will impact fisheries. As it seems, the MCGM actively concealed this crucial piece of information in its application form. A post-facto study was conducted by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute on the directions of the Bombay High Court. In the report, it was found that the intertidal area which is proposed to be reclaimed is rich in marine biodiversity and is an important breeding area for marine fauna. The report produced by NIO contained a word of caution with regard to the imminent threat of sea-level rise as a result of climate change. Another report prepared by the National Institute of Oceanography [NIO] that was commissioned to conduct a study a year after the reclamation commenced, stated that “The intertidal region that is being proposed to be reclaimed is majorly rocky in nature (except CR9 and CR10 region located in Marine Drive) and habitat for abundant marine flora and fauna... Building of these structures and reclamation may result in loss of habitats and its related biotic communities.’

Further, in 2016, NIO was appointed by the Mumbai Transportation Support Unit to study the impact of land reclamation and its influence on Mumbai's coastline, as well as, its implications for proposed projects. The report produced by NIO contained a word of caution with regard to the imminent threat of sea-level rise as a result of climate change. It noted that the entire Indian coastline and particularly Mumbai are highly vulnerable to the threat of sea-level rise. Pertinently, the NIO report was available before the MCZMA and the MoEF granted clearance for the Coastal Road Project. A study conducted by Climate Central in 2019 predicts that by 2030 a significant part of the coast of Mumbai will be submerged. Moreover, studies that would have provided a more comprehensive assessment of the impact of the project were awaited at the time when the CRZ Clearance was granted in May 2017. None of these factors seems to have been considered by the MCZMA or the MoEF while appraising the project for CRZ Clearance. In deciding whether the project amounts to an ‘exceptional case’, both MCZMA and MoEF should have critically evaluated the material placed before them. They ideally should have waited for the results of further studies.

Instead, in the final CRZ clearance, the MoEF reproduced word to word MCGM's submissions, without any independent evaluation. A study conducted by Climate Central in 2019 predicts that by 2030 a significant part of the coast of Mumbai will be submerged. In January 2019, the CRZ Notification 2011 came to be replaced by the CRZ Notification 2019. The CRZ Notification 2019 is a consolidation of all the regressive amendments made to the CRZ Notification 2011. The 2019 notification also permits reclamation for roads in ‘exceptional cases’. Mumbai Coastal Road Project in Court For the aforementioned reasons, the Bombay High Court quashed the CRZ Clearance granted for the Coastal Road Project in July 2019. The court directed the MCGM to obtain an environmental clearance under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 for the project. It also directed the MCGM to obtain several other statutory clearances such as clearance under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, before commencing any work. The MCGM

filed an appeal against the Bombay High Court order before the Supreme Court. A study conducted by Climate Central in 2019 predicts that by 2030 a significant part of the coast of Mumbai will be submerged. In December 2019, the Supreme Court stayed the Bombay High Court order and permitted the MCGM to reclaim the land that was required to build the road.

The matter has been listed and adjourned six times since then. Meanwhile, reclamation continues at breakneck speed. Even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic when the entire country came to a standstill, the MCGM granted permission to itself to continue reclamation. On October 7 this year, the Supreme Court clarified that by its December 2019 order it had permitted all reclamation that is required for the project. This means all 90 hectares and not just the 20 hectares that were required for the road carriageway is permitted. Therefore, through an interlocutory order, the court has permitted reclamation that will lead to permanent and irreversible damage to the coast. After the stay order was granted by the Supreme Court, most of the damage to the coast has already been done. But the Supreme Court's final decision will be crucial in determining what qualifies as an 'exceptional case' for reclamation, in face of climate change and rising sea levels.

### **Maharashtra: Uttan fishermen call out bias, demand equal compensation for loss during COVID-19 pandemic**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/uttan-fishermen-call-out-bias-demand-equal-compensation-for-loss-during-covid-19-pandemic>

Decrying bias in the special relief package recently announced by the state government, the fishing community from the coastal belt of Uttan, near Bhayandar, have demanded equal compensation for beneficiaries. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and sustained losses in fishing hours owing to a series of cyclones like Kyarr, Maha and Nisarg, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government has announced a relief package for the fishing community in Maharashtra. The package includes a one-time help of Rs 10,000 each for traditional fishers who use drag nets, Rs 20,000 per low-end mechanised boats, Rs 30,000 each per boat which uses one or two cylinder engines and Rs 30, 000 for boats using high-powered six cylinder engines or more. This apart from a one-time grant of Rs 3,000 to help fish sellers procure ice boxes. While the government claims to have extended a helping hand to the fishing community, which is facing challenges due to mounting losses, fishermen from the coastal belt of Uttan alleged partiality in compensation disbursement.

“In accordance to the eligibility criteria, fishermen from Sindhudurg who single-handedly conduct fishing with the help of drag nets will get Rs 10, 000 each. At the same time, fishing boats powered by multi-engines with 15 to 18 fishermen on-board will get Rs 30, 000, which

works out to around Rs 2, 000 per person. This is gross injustice, which smacks of step motherly treatment to fishermen of certain districts, including Thane and Palghar, said Bernard D'mello of the Pali-Uttan Fishermen Co-operative Society. D'mello has dashed off letters to the Fisheries Department and Fisheries Minister Aslam Shaikh, seeking justice for the fishermen. The quaint fishing villages, including-Uttan, Pali and Chowk and Manori, is home to over 750 mechanized fishing boats in the region.

### **Maharashtra: MNS Clears 'Illegal' Occupants From Fish Markets Within 24 Hours**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/politics/mns-chief-raj-thackeray-solve-problem-of-women-fish-seller-in-dongri-mumbai-56313>

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray was able to resolve the problems of fisherwomen from Koli community within 24 hours. Some fisherwomen earlier gathered outside Thackeray residence 'Krishna Kunj' to demand solution regarding illegal fishing business being carried out. On Monday, fisherwomen from Koli community in Mumbai gathered outside Thackeray's residence and raised the issue of people illegally encroaching their space in the fish markets in Dongri. They said that there was no space left for locals to resume their business on a daily basis. Thackeray stepped outside his house to meet the fisherwomen and listened to their problems. The fisherwomen had come to meet Thackeray and local MNS chief Sanjay Naik. After the meeting, Thackeray instructed Naik to clear the area for fisherwomen from Koli community to carry out their business.

The encroachment by outsiders in the fish market had affected the business of the Koli community. Therefore, a delegation had come to meet the MNS chief at his residence. With no business or source of income for many months, men and women from the fishing communities have resumed work. As many returned to their hometown for some months, other needy locals took advantage of the opportunity and started a retail business of selling fish, food and vegetables. However, MNS was able to clear the area of illegal occupants within 24 hours for fisherwomen from Koli community to carry out their business.

### **Maharashtra: BMC to mark boundaries of 13 fishing villages in Mumbai's development plan**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/bmc-to-mark-boundaries-of-13-fishing-villages-in-mumbai-s-development-plan/story-KKdlEG3zvUr1u6SP9zxQ4L.html>

In a move that will benefit Mumbai's fishing villages or koliwadadas, whose residents are among the oldest inhabitants of the city, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has

decided to give them representation in the city's development plan (DP) 2034. The civic body will mark boundaries of 13 koliwadadas – Versova, Juhu, Charkop, Chimbai (Bandra) Gorai, Khardanda, Madh, Mahul, Malvani, Manori, Turbhe, Borivli, Bhatti – in DP 2034. Residents of koliwadadas and gaothans (erstwhile villages) across Mumbai have been demanding special status for their villages by demarcating their boundaries in DP 2034, since it was sanctioned by BMC and sent to the state government for approval in 2018. Godfrey Pimenta, a city-based lawyer who has been following up with BMC, said, “As BMC had not marked boundaries of gaothans and koliwadadas, they were considered slum settlements and could be redeveloped under the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) schemes. With our follow-ups, now all gaothans and koliwadadas will be marked in DP. Koliwadadas have characteristically small houses with narrow winding lanes. Without special mentions in DP, redevelopment would be challenging. If categorised as slum settlements, developers would get a higher floor space index (FSI) of 4, which determines how tall a building can be built on any land. BMC's move comes a few months after it created Special Development Control Rules (SDCR) for gaothans and koliwadadas, which gives them the freedom to decide what to do with their settlements, whether to preserve them, or opt for self-redevelopment or tie up with a developer, in which case they also have the option to sell excess inventory of flats in the market. BMC has now called for suggestions and objections for demarcating boundaries of these 13 koliwadadas.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai’s fisherfolk, already facing low income, fear losing boat parking space to Coastal Road Project**

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/mumbais-fisherfolk-already-facing-low-income-fear-losing-boat-parking-space-to-coastal-road-project-8863671.html>

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's “ambitious Coastal Road project has affected the livelihood of the small and artisanal fisherfolk in Mumbai's Worli area with fishers claiming not just an exponential fall in catch, but also fishing equipment worth lakhs being damaged since reclamation work began in the area in 2018. The community now fears further loss of livelihood with the proposed reclamation of the Lotus Jetty near the Haji Ali Mosque in Worli as part of the Coastal Road project, damaging not just the delicate ecosystem of Worli's shoreline, but also taking away the boat parking space available to them in the area. The Lotus Jetty is one of the largest spaces for Mumbai's small and artisanal fisherfolk to dock their boats. It is currently used by over 100 fishermen. Locals say the reclamation work that has been undertaken in the last two years has already destroyed the inter-tidal pools that are rich in marine life. The noise from the heavy machinery too has driven the fish away from the area, they add. “They want a parking space for their coastal road, but what about our parking space? Does our profession have no

value? asks Sanjay Baikar, secretary of Vanchit Machhimar Haji Ali Sahkari Sangathana Maryadit, an association of the fisherfolk living between Worli and Walkeshwar.

This project has caused massive damage to our livelihood and is a threat to our way of life, adds Bhaikar. Local fishers said that on 30 August, supervisors affiliated to the civic body arrived at the Lotus Jetty and asked them to remove their boats, as reclamation was set to begin. The locals claimed that the authorities hadn't served any prior notice, and alleged that the verbal instruction was followed by "threats and abuses. Sixty-year-old Jais Khambal, a member of the association, says that the Lotus Jetty is the only space left for fishers in the area to dock their boats. Khambal informs that he started docking his boat at the Lotus Jetty after reclamation work began near his residence in Priyadarshini Park. We will have no way to earn a livelihood if this jetty gets reclaimed as well, he says. The United Nations defines 'small and artisanal' fishing as, "...traditional fisheries involving fishing households (as opposed to commercial companies), using relatively small amount of capital and energy, relatively small fishing vessels (if any), making short fishing trips, close to shore, and mainly for local consumption.

Many of the fishers using the jetty in Worli are third-generation fishers to take up the profession while others have been fishing for over four decades now. For them, fishing is the primary source of livelihood, and most of those who venture out on the sea are sole earners in their families. Waiting for the chief minister's reply Members of the fisher community are angry as well feeling intimidated by the Coastal Road project. They have rallied against the coastal road project under the Vanchit Machhimar Haji Ali Sahkari Sangathana Maryadit and have been demanding from the government to stop the Coastal Road project as it's impeding their source of income. The association, which represents over 600 people, including the fishers' families, has written to Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray several times, seeking an audience to discuss their grievances regarding the project.

However, they say that they are yet to receive a reply from the chief minister. Fishing equipment worth over Rs 20 lakh damaged, say locals the ongoing reclamation work is in the immediate vicinity of the Lotus Jetty, and the fisherfolk are incurring losses worth lakhs of rupees as their engine-powered boats, dinghies, and nets are damaged in the process. In June, 25-year-old Salman Sayyed lost an engine-powered boat worth more than a lakh due to reclamation work at the jetty. With 10 dependents in his family, he and his younger brother are the sole earners. "They (BMC field officers) gave me an hour's notice to remove my boat from the jetty. I had agreed to, but they buried the boat under rocks despite that, he alleged. Now Sayyed is left with just a dinghy. Locals say that while an engine-powered boat can venture at least 15 kilometres into the sea, the capacity of a dinghy is drastically lower. At best, it can cover a kilometre. Fifty-five-year-old Palaniswami also recounts a similar experience from two weeks ago. "They broke



my engine boat, with only a day's notice to remove it from the jetty. It seems like they destroy the boats in the night, when no one is around, he alleges.

Another resident of the area, Alauddin Khan, gives an overall figure of the financial losses the community has seen so far. “At least seven-eight such boats have been broken since 2018, and countless nets have been damaged. Overall, the fishers in the area have borne losses worth Rs 20-25 lakh, says Khan. BMC denies asking fishers to clear Lotus Jetty. Meanwhile, the BMC has denied any knowledge of having issued any order instructing the fishers to clear the Lotus Jetty. Niranjan Khanolkar, chief engineer in the BMC's Coastal Road Department, said, “Our office is not aware of any such action. Sometimes a contractor or a supervisor might give such instructions for technical reasons or on a temporary basis. The proposed 30-kilometre-long coastal road aims to decongest existing arterial roads in Mumbai by connecting south Mumbai to the northern suburb of Kandivali. The first phase of the plan includes bridges on stilts, an underwater tunnel, and road segments between Marine Drive and Worli. The 9.9-kilometre road will ultimately join the Bandra-Worli Sea Link. While the government is justifying its plan to reclaim at least 100 acres of land as a way to develop the city's infrastructure, the adverse effects of the project on the local fishing community's livelihood are concrete and manifold.

Locals face loss in income Many fishers said they are facing a severe shortage in their catch due to the disturbance caused to the coastal marine ecosystem. On 2 September, Kamlesh Soni set out with three other boat-mates at 5.45 am. In over four hours, Soni said they had managed to catch fish worth only Rs 100-250 in total, which he split with the others. “In a week, I earn Rs 2,000 while the diesel costs Rs 3,000. Even though we go fishing every day, how will we sustain ourselves with such little produce? Earlier, we could yield a good catch with one or two nets, but now we need 10 nets to catch the same amount of fish, he says. Locals say that there has been a significant reduction in their family's monthly income due to the effects of the reclamation work. A lot of them are also incurring debts of over a lakh. “Since 2018, our incomes have been reducing. We used to earn between Rs 15,000-30,000 in a month, but now we are barely earning between Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000, Baikar says. “Fishbait and other small creatures are our last resort to make ends meet, he adds.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai Coastal Road Project: Fishermen accuse BMC of illegal reclamation**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-coastal-road-project-fishermen-accuse-bmc-of-illegal-reclamation>

The fishing community of Haji Ali have shot an angry letter to the civic body accusing the BMC of illegally reclaiming parts of the sea for the Coastal Road Project. The state

government's ambitious coastal road project has affected the livelihood of the fishermen living along the Haji Ali bay. As many as 40 fishermen and their families live by the sea touching plot adjoining the road leading to the Haji Ali Dargah. The Haji Ali bay shoreline also known as the Lotus Jetty is used as a docking hangar by the fisherfolks. Nearly, 70 small fishing boats are docked over there on a regular basis. The bay adjoining the shoreline is being reclaimed by the BMC. The small marine pools are already being filled and now they are trying to reclaim the bay area where we dock our boats, said A R Jamadar, spokesperson Vanchit Macchimar Sangathana, an association of fisher folks. Jamadar added, the construction works has caused severe loss to marine ecology. He also fears that the project is going to affect their life.

“The fish have already escaped to the deep waters due to the noise. I doubt if there would be any aqua organism living in the aqua body in future, Jamadar added. Locals alleged BMC officials have threatened to cancel their licences. They also mentioned, the metal barricades set up by the civic body is causing them immense problems as it has blocked the hutments from the main road. “On August 30, BMC officials ordered us to relocate our boats.

We were not given any notice beforehand, said Allaudin Niyaz Khan, leader of the community. Khan has written to the municipal chief and chief engineer of the coastal road, demanding immediate action. The fishermen have also held protests but in vain. The civic body has denied the fishermen's allegations. Shrikrishna Satpute, executive engineer of the Coastal Road Project, BMC stated the barricades are being set up to prevent trespassing. “The local contractors and some of the residents have complained that people often trespass through the open areas near the bay. To stop this menace we have set up the barricades, Satpute explained. “The civic body is carrying out the project work adhering to the norms laid out by the government. We have received the complaints and matters would be redressed following enquiry, Satpute added.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai’s fisherfolk, already facing low income, fear losing boat parking space to Coastal Road Project**

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/mumbais-fisherfolk-already-facing-low-income-fear-losing-boat-parking-space-to-coastal-road-project-8863671.html>

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's “ambitious Coastal Road project has affected the livelihood of the small and artisanal fisherfolk in Mumbai's Worli area with fishers claiming not just an exponential fall in catch, but also fishing equipment worth lakhs being damaged since reclamation work began in the area in 2018. The community now fears further loss of livelihood with the proposed reclamation of the Lotus Jetty near the Haji Ali Mosque in Worli as part of the Coastal Road project, damaging not just the delicate ecosystem of Worli's shoreline, but also taking away the boat parking space available to them in the area. The Lotus

Jetty is one of the largest spaces for Mumbai's small and artisanal fisherfolk to dock their boats. It is currently used by over 100 fishermen. Locals say the reclamation work that has been undertaken in the last two years has already destroyed the inter-tidal pools that are rich in marine life. The noise from the heavy machinery too has driven the fish away from the area, they add.

“They want a parking space for their coastal road, but what about our parking space? Does our profession have no value?” asks Sanjay Baikar, secretary of Vanchit Machhimar Haji Ali Sahkari Sangathana Maryadit, an association of the fisherfolk living between Worli and Walkeshwar. This project has caused massive damage to our livelihood and is a threat to our way of life, adds Bhaikar. Local fishers said that on 30 August, supervisors affiliated to the civic body arrived at the Lotus Jetty and asked them to remove their boats, as reclamation was set to begin. The locals claimed that the authorities hadn't served any prior notice, and alleged that the verbal instruction was followed by “threats and abuses. Sixty-year-old Jais Khambal, a member of the association, says that the Lotus Jetty is the only space left for fishers in the area to dock their boats. Khambal informs that he started docking his boat at the Lotus Jetty after reclamation work began near his residence in Priyadarshini Park.

We will have no way to earn a livelihood if this jetty gets reclaimed as well, he says. The United Nations defines ‘small and artisanal’ fishing as, “...traditional fisheries involving fishing households (as opposed to commercial companies), using relatively small amount of capital and energy, relatively small fishing vessels (if any), making short fishing trips, close to shore, and mainly for local consumption. Many of the fishers using the jetty in Worli are third-generation fishers to take up the profession while others have been fishing for over four decades now. For them, fishing is the primary source of livelihood, and most of those who venture out on the sea are sole earners in their families. Waiting for the chief minister's reply Members of the fisher community are angry as well feeling intimidated by the Coastal Road project. They have rallied against the coastal road project under the Vanchit Machhimar Haji Ali Sahkari Sangathana Maryadit and have been demanding from the government to stop the Coastal Road project as it's impeding their source of income.

The association, which represents over 600 people, including the fishers' families, has written to Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray several times, seeking an audience to discuss their grievances regarding the project. However, they say that they are yet to receive a reply from the chief minister. Fishing equipment worth over Rs 20 lakh damaged, say locals The ongoing reclamation work is in the immediate vicinity of the Lotus Jetty, and the fisherfolk are incurring losses worth lakhs of rupees as their engine-powered boats, dinghies, and nets are damaged in the process. In June, 25-year-old Salman Sayyed lost an engine-powered boat worth more than a lakh due to reclamation work at the jetty. With 10 dependents in his family, he and his younger

brother are the sole earners. “They (BMC field officers) gave me an hour's notice to remove my boat from the jetty. I had agreed to, but they buried the boat under rocks despite that, he alleged. Now Sayyed is left with just a dinghy. Locals say that while an engine-powered boat can venture at least 15 kilometres into the sea, the capacity of a dinghy is drastically lower.

At best, it can cover a kilometre. Fifty-five-year-old Palaniswami also recounts a similar experience from two weeks ago. “They broke my engine boat, with only a day's notice to remove it from the jetty. It seems like they destroy the boats in the night, when no one is around, he alleges. Another resident of the area, Alauddin Khan, gives an overall figure of the financial losses the community has seen so far. “At least seven-eight such boats have been broken since 2018, and countless nets have been damaged. Overall, the fishers in the area have borne losses worth Rs 20-25 lakh, says Khan. BMC denies asking fishers to clear Lotus Jetty. Meanwhile, the BMC has denied any knowledge of having issued any order instructing the fishers to clear the Lotus Jetty. Niranjan Khanolkar, chief engineer in the BMC's Coastal Road Department, said, “Our office is not aware of any such action. Sometimes a contractor or a supervisor might give such instructions for technical reasons or on a temporary basis. The proposed 30-kilometre-long coastal road aims to decongest existing arterial roads in Mumbai by connecting south Mumbai to the northern suburb of Kandivali.

The first phase of the plan includes bridges on stilts, an underwater tunnel, and road segments between Marine Drive and Worli. The 9.9-kilometre road will ultimately join the Bandra-Worli Sea Link. While the government is justifying its plan to reclaim at least 100 acres of land as a way to develop the city's infrastructure, the adverse effects of the project on the local fishing community's livelihood are concrete and manifold. Locals face loss in income. Many fishers said they are facing a severe shortage in their catch due to the disturbance caused to the coastal marine ecosystem. On 2 September, Kamlesh Soni set out with three other boat-mates at 5.45 am. In over four hours, Soni said they had managed to catch fish worth only Rs 100-250 in total, which he split with the others. “In a week, I earn Rs 2,000 while the diesel costs Rs 3,000. Even though we go fishing every day, how will we sustain ourselves with such little produce? Earlier, we could yield a good catch with one or two nets, but now we need 10 nets to catch the same amount of fish, he says.

Locals say that there has been a significant reduction in their family's monthly income due to the effects of the reclamation work. A lot of them are also incurring debts of over a lakh. “Since 2018, our incomes have been reducing. We used to earn between Rs 15,000-30,000 in a month, but now we are barely earning between Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000, Baikar says. “Fishbait and other small creatures are our last resort to make ends meet, he adds.

## **Maharashtra: Government completes CZMP public consultation amid protests in Palghar, Sindhudurg**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/maharashtra-government-completes-czmp-public-consultation-amid-protests-in-palghar-sindhudurg/story-8vAJbLHq7MLicUUICT69BO.html>

Despite a large number of protests at Palghar and Sindhudurg between Monday and Wednesday, against the draft coastal zone management plan (CZMP) maps, the state government on Wednesday evening said the public consultation process had been completed. Environmentalists said the public hearing held at Palghar on Wednesday was chaotic and mismanaged. “There was strong opposition by the locals for the online hearing. Hundreds of participants were waiting outside the venue to be allowed to share their concerns. Police teams had been brought in to control the locals.

It was pointed out to authorities that the CRZ notification 2019 was published in the local language only on September 25, three days before the public hearing on the draft CZMP's of Sindhudurg and Palghar, said Prasad Khale, senior conservation officer, Conservation Action Trust. Mumbai-based environmental researcher Dhvani Shah said, “Palghar district is predominantly a tribal district with a majority of the population living in rural areas. During this pandemic, the state forced a majority of the senior citizens from fishing villages to step out for this hearing, which could have easily been deferred. What's worse, state officials said they would not answer any questions and the process was just for recording submissions, making it undemocratic. “The National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, Chennai which has been authorised by the Centre to prepare the maps was not present at the public hearing, thus putting a question mark on the legality of the public hearing. We were told that the Chennai-based agency's key personnel have contracted Covid-19 and were unable to attend.

We questioned the haste with which the government was carrying out the public hearing, which could have been easily postponed to a later date when the pandemic scare is over, said Bhushan Bhoir, social activist. A complaint was filed by environment group Vanashakti before the Palghar collector stating the entire procedure was conducted haphazardly. “People in Palghar mostly fishermen and coastal farmers affected by this CZMP are not tech-savvy, and they should be given a physical public hearing at large public halls rather than such farcical proceedings, said Stalin D, director, Vanashakti. Meanwhile, a simultaneous online hearing was underway remaining suggestions for Sindhudurg on Wednesday as well. “A large number of participants were not admitted through the online proceedings during Sindhurug's hearings and our long list of objections remains unheard as the state has completed their namesake hearing process, said Nandan Vengurlekar, district coordinator, CZMP awareness committee, Sindhudurg. Collector

prevented entry Dr Manek Gursale, Palghar district collector was unable to enter the venue as the protestors sat on the road to block his official car.

The collector tried to convince the protestors to let him pass as he was there to present a report to the Centre in regard to the public hearing. Finally Dr Gursale had to take an alternative route to reach the venue. Draft CZMP maps were prepared by the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) under the Union environment ministry in 2019 for all coastal districts in Maharashtra based on the 2019 Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms. The maps were published on January 22 this year. Using distinct colour codes, these maps demarcate CRZ areas (I to IV), high tide and hazard line, fishing zones, intertidal areas, mangrove forests and buffer areas, turtle nesting sites, cyclone shelters, koliwadadas and gaothans. These also identify coastal areas that can be opened up for infrastructure development. Holding public consultation, especially with local communities, calling for suggestions and objections is compulsory before finalising the maps. The public consultation process for all districts was completed by March 6 except Palghar and Sindhudurg. It was later slotted for March 21 for the two districts but owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was deferred. “Based on the Union environment ministry's memorandum, an online public consultation was promulgated along with receiving submissions through offline means. Both would be considered. We are just following the simple process as directed by the Centre, a senior state government official said.

### **Maharashtra: 200 fishermen oppose CZMP public hearing**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-200-fishermen-oppose-czmp-public-hearing/articleshow/78421917.cms>

Around 200 fishermen from Palghar district on Wednesday protested against the public hearing of the draft Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMP) in the wake of Covid-19. The district administration had planned an online hearing. Following protests by fishermen, online and offline hearings were held but protestors demanded cancellation of the hearing till the Covid situation improves. The fishermen prevented collector Dr Manek Gursale from heading to Dandekar college in Palghar, where the offline hearing was held. The draft CZMP seeks to open up the coastline for construction and tourism.

### **Maharashtra: Arambol fishermen urge govt to take action on Maharashtra fishing trawlers**

<https://www.heraldgoa.in/Goa/Arambol-fishermen-urge-govt-to-take-action-on-Maharashtra-fishing-trawlers/165768>

Fishermen from Arambol on Saturday urged the government to take action on Maharashtra fishing trawlers. A meeting was convened by Coastal Police Inspector Dattaram Raut with the fishermen from Pernem coastal belt. During the meeting, the fishermen highlighted the issues that they are facing to carry out the fishing activity their jurisdiction. Fishermen claimed that the fishing trawlers from Maharashtra enter into the jurisdiction of local fishermen due to which they do not get expected quantity of fish which cause them loss in thousands of rupees every day. Fishermen said that these trawlers from Maharashtra stay in water throughout the day and take away all types of fish due to which local small time fishermen do not get enough quantity. Fishermen demanded that these trawlers should not be allowed to operate within five kilometre of jurisdiction of coast. They also said that these trawlers move around haphazardly and further destroy their nets and other fishing equipment which again add to their loss. Fishermen demanded that these trawlers should not allowed to enter jurisdiction of five-km from Goan coast as well if any trawlers crosses the line then they should be fined or action should be taken on the same by the coastal police.

**Maharashtra: Biodiversity by the Bay: Mumbai’s green gems plotted on a map**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/biodiversity-by-the-bay-mumbai-s-green-gems-plotted-on-a/story-82a15YWKL72mqA4CSJ4IIO.html>

The Karvi flower that blooms once in eight years, flamingo-watching spots, a new species of scorpion – there are among the many natural treasures that often go unnoticed in the hustle and bustle of Mumbai's dense urban sprawl . Now, you can discover these wonders for yourself, with a first-of-its kind biodiversity map that has been created by illustrator and cartoonist Rohan Chakravarty as part of a campaign to highlight sustainable development. Conceived by Purpose Climate Lab (PCL), the map is part of the Biodiversity by the Bay campaign, run by citizens' collective, Ministry of Mumbai's Magic and other partner organisations. “The campaign was designed to inspire citizens to use their creativity and collective power to fight for Mumbai's biodiversity. This map is intended to inspire pride in all of Mumbai's treasures, said Sonali Bhasin, senior strategist, PCL. The map shows urban and forest spaces in the Mumbai metropolitan region (MMR) and contains pointers to forest patches, intertidal spaces, mangrove areas, as well as animal species that can be found, like the two spiders, a scorpion, and a lizard species that were discovered in recent years in Aarey Milk Colony.

“The motive behind producing this map, which will also be an interactive webpage, is to empower young Mumbaiites with a visual resource of their biodiversity, to instil a sense of pride and ownership in the city's wildlife, and to drive responsible governance, said Chakravarty. It took dentist-turned-cartoonist Chakravarty a month to make the map, which provides an index of

intertidal wildlife hotspots – Girgaum Chowpatty, Haji Ali, Carter Road, and Juhu Beach – as well as urban green spaces, mangrove forests, and wetland patches. He used information from experts, marine enthusiasts and scientific reports in addition to information provided by the PCL team. “Usually I conduct field visits before taking up such projects but because of Covid-19, this time I had to rely on secondary information, said Chakravarty, who, as a wildlife and conservation enthusiast, has previously done nature walks in Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) and along the Mumbai coastline.

In addition to the city's flora and fauna, the map also identifies spots for photography, nature trails, and other recreational activities. “I have laid emphasis on state symbols, animals discovered from Mumbai and also tribal heritage, with the compass paying tribute to the indigenous Warli art, said Chakravarty. Among the green gems plotted on the map are the Karvi flower that blooms at Sanjay Gandhi National Park once in eight years; Mumbai's infamous beach stinger, the Portuguese Man-o-war; and the two species of flamingo that come to the city. “When we think of Mumbai, we immediately think of a fast-paced city with its vibrant film industry and endless opportunities. This iconic map highlights the flora, fauna, green spaces and indigenous communities of this region which remain hidden in the hustle and bustle of our city of dreams, said Suma Balaram, senior designer, PCL.

### **Maharashtra: HC asks govt to submit plan of action to ban LED fishing**

<https://www.heraldgoa.in/Goa/HC-asks-govt-to-submit-plan-of-action-to-ban-LED-fishing/165723>

The High Court of Bombay at Goa has asked the State government to submit plan of action to effectively enforce the ban on use of LED fishing lights on boats. The Division Bench of Justice M S Sonak and M S Jawalkar, in response to a petition filed by Joaquim Mendes has asked the Fisheries Department and Coast Guard to file response to the petition indicating the manner in which they propose to enforce their own orders dated May 10, 2016 and November 10, 2017. “These orders, prima facie, ban fishing in the specified area by bull or pair trawling and the use or installation or operation of surface or submerged artificial lights/LED lights, fish light attractors or any other light equipment with or without generator or mechanised fishing vessel or motorised fishing craft for trawling, purse-seining and gill netting operation. The effect of these orders is that such operations, prima facie, stand banned, both within as well as beyond the territorial waters of India (in EEZ), the Bench observed adding, “

Prima facie, it appears that such ban is in place. However, there appears to be difficulty in enforcing the ban. Therefore, the Director of Fisheries as well as the Coast Guard Authorities, to place on record the plan of action for effectively enforcing such ban in case, such ban, according



to them, is in operation. The Bench further stated that if according to both the authorities such ban is in operation, then, it is expected that they take action to the best of their ability to enforce such ban. “In particular, such authorities, should inspect the trawlers of the newly added respondents and see whether such lights have been affixed to their trawlers, or otherwise, such newly impleaded respondents are making use of such lights or undertake bull or pair trawling, reads the order. The court has adjourned the matter for next hearing on October 20, 2020.

### **Maharashtra: Amid coastal reclamation, 2,000 sq metre foreshore off Juhu beach goes under water**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/amid-coastal-reclamation-2000-sq-metre-foreshore-off-juhu-beach-goes-under-water-6597648/>

Life as he knew it has literally gone under water for 61-year-old Shankar Mangela, as he rows his boat through what used to be a sandy beach where he and other fishermen docked their boats and dried their fish until a few months ago. At a time when Mumbai authorities are reclaiming portions of the sea for big ticket infrastructure projects, the sea has come into a 2,000 square metre strip of the foreshore land at Juhu on the west coast. “You would find seven to 10 boats anchored here before. The (Juhu) foreshore took a pounding during the Nisarga (cyclone) storm (in June) and within a few days, the sea reclaimed this entire portion, said Shankar, as he and his friend Shashikant Tandel (56) rowed their boat around the area. In Moragaon, an old fishing village off Juhu beach where Shankar and Tandel live, residents are on edge as the water laps a few metres away. “Some of us moved our boats in the nick of the time, others were not that lucky. A couple of boats have suffered damage, Shankar said.

On Tuesday, Dashrath Mangela, chairman of Juhu Moragaon Macchimaar Vividh Karyakari Sahakari Sanstha Limited, wrote to the suburban collector, the Maharashtra Maritime Board and the state fisheries department, bringing the erosion to their notice and demanding that steps be taken to prevent the sea from coming in further. “We are feeling the impact of the changes in tidal patterns first hand. We are more vulnerable now than ever before, said Dashrath. His brother Rajesh, who is also a member of the Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti that fights for the rights of coastal communities, said that the now submerged portion is a part of a 45,000 sq m land on the foreshore that was earmarked for fishing activities. Rajesh fears that the erosion may not be localised but part of a larger fallout triggered by a rise in the sea level due to coastal reclamations. “Back in 2001, the point where the creek met the sea was far away from the beach. Since then, Juhu and Versova have seen a lot of reclamation for high-rise buildings. This has significantly affected the tidal activity, now causing the scouring of the channel from the portion of the foreshore itself, said Rajesh, armed with before and after satellite images of the recently-submerged area. Local fishermen also pointed out that as part of a beach nourishment plan, the

Maharashtra Maritime Board had last year installed tetrapods across an adjoining portion of the beach, near Seven Bungalow, to prevent sea waves from hitting a slum that has sprung up on the foreshore land.

“The water was bound to come out from somewhere else, Rajesh said. Godfrey Pimenta, lawyer and trustee of NGO Watchdog Foundation, agreed. “There is enough evidence to suggest that coastal erosion is often a result of the reclamation of the sea bed and building tetrapods or sea walls cannot be seen as a solution to this problem. Water will find its way out, he said. The NGO has been at the forefront of protests against reclamations. Shweta Wagh, an associate professor of the Kamala Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture, who has been mapping the impact of reclamations on coastal communities, said: “According to geomorphologists, changes in tidal activity due to reclamations may not be localised. Ongoing reclamation for the coastal road project in south Mumbai will also impact tidal activity to the north of the island city. Wagh is also the founder member of Collective for Spatial Alternatives (CSA), which has filed a public interest litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court against the Rs14,000-crore coastal highway project. The PIL is being heard. Both Pimenta and Wagh alleged that coastal reclamations had also played a role in the severe flooding witnessed in south Mumbai this monsoon. In 2019, the CSA had prepared a report on the impact the project will have on coastal communities, which has now been tendered in the SC.

Pimenta cautioned that much of the shoreline at Dadar Chowpatty had similarly been lost to reclamation for the Bandra-Worli Sea Link project. When contacted, Principal Secretary (Environment) Manisha Mhaiskar said her department would look into the erosion issue. So did Fisheries Commissioner Atul Patne. While senior officials from BMC, which is implementing the highway project, argued that the work was being done following a social impact assessment and that mitigation measures will be taken up, Wagh claimed the “so-called assessment report “neither acknowledged the existence of traditional fishing zone nor the customary use of the nearshore and foreshore areas for artisanal fishing activity. Pimenta demanded that fishermen be seen as “project-affected people for reclamation projects. Zaman Ali, an independent environmental lawyer, said: “The government should urgently examine the relation of coastal communities and fragile ecosystems. Seated in his boat, Shankar, meanwhile, cited the irony of it all. “Land that was originally earmarked for us (fishermen at Moragoan) for fish drying and the docking of boats have been encroached by big bungalow owners. And now, the sea has consumed the part of the beach we had been using as an alternative.

**Maharashtra: Need dedicated road from sea: Worli Koliwada villagers**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/need-dedicated-road-from-sea-worli-koliwada-villagers>

Pointing to the urgency with which the Coastal Road project is being executed, residents of Worli Koliwada village have urged the government to address their needs too, and have demanded a road on stilts over the sea to connect the village to the Worli Sea Face road. The area is home to a population of about 60,000, primarily from the fishing community. Residents said they have been deprived of good roads for several years. Despite a large population, the urban village is facing a problem of civic amenities, they added. Sharad Koli, activist and social worker, who is also a resident of the area, said, the government (BMC) is building a coastal road which will benefit the privileged class and those who have their own cars. But what about the poor working-class staying in Worli Koliwada village, who are one of the original dwellers of this island city? We do not have proper road connectivity. “

At present, we have only five metres of road for both motorists and pedestrians and that cannot be made bigger due to the existing houses on both sides. The only option is to construct it through the sea. The road can be built on stilts causing minimum damage to marine life, unlike the Coastal Road project. If the road is built, it will benefit the villagers as it will be connected to the existing main road of the Worli Seaface. Due to a lack of a proper road, in case of an emergency like a fire, no large fire tenders can enter the area quickly to carry out a rescue operation, said Koli. Similarly, another resident and fisherman of Worli Koliwada Village, Nilesh Patil, expressed his concern over the existing narrow roads. Patil said, If a bigger road is available, there won't be any traffic chaos in the area. Moreover, earlier a road was constructed partially for the work of Worli Jetty, but the road got submerged under the sea and nothing was done thereafter. Now that the state environment minister Aditya Thackeray is also the local MLA, residents' hopes are high that Worli Village will see the much-awaited developmental change, they said.

**Maharashtra: Fishermen’s body seeks action against govt officials for allowing unregistered boats at sea amid Covid restrictions**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/fishermens-body-seeks-action-against-govt-officials-for-allowing-unregistered-boats-at-sea-amid-covid-restrictions-6594882/>

The Bombay High Court has directed the state government to respond to a plea filed by the fishermen community seeking action against Fisheries department officials for allegedly violating Covid-19 lockdown restrictions and allowing hundreds of boats without authorised licenses to freely manoeuvre along the shores of Maharashtra while targeting registered fisherfolk. A division bench of Justices R D Dhanuka and Madhav Jamdar on September 10 heard, through videoconference, a plea filed by Damodar Tandel, chairman of the Akhil Maharashtra Machchimar Kriti Samiti, a state-level association of fishermen, through senior counsel Sanjay Singhvi and advocate Rahul Kamerkar. Tandel contended, “Despite the stringent

curfews and restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 lockdown, hundreds of boats without authorised licenses were found to be manoeuvring and trawling using purse seine nets and LED-lights along the shores of Maharashtra.

The plea said while the authorities in Ratnagiri district had taken prompt action against alleged violations by individual and marginalised fisherfolks, it “blatantly continued to ignore complaints by the petitioner against illegal trawling by large boats. On the other hand, thousands of traditional fishermen, who followed rules and regulations imposed by law during the pandemic, “were targeted by authorities, the plea added. The petitioner also alleged that due to the “negligence, ignorance and selfishness of the authorities, Covid-19 situation in Ratnagiri has worsened beyond control. Tandel further said despite filing several complaints since April and serving notice under the Disaster Management Act, he had not received any relief and no inquiry or action was initiated against the offenders, hence he had moved the high court. Stating that the “neglectful behaviour of fisheries authorities and officials amounted to “favouritism and clear violation of laws during an unprecedented time of global health and economic crisis, the petitioner sought directions to the state government to take action and initiate inquiry against its Fisheries department officials.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen leader moves Bombay HC, complains about lack of action to stop banned purse seine nets, high-density LED lights**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/environment/fishermen-leader-moves-bombay-hc-complains-about-lack-of-action-to-stop-banned-purse-seine-nets-high-density-led-lights/story-19Un9RBHo7c40bdGXt06TP.html>

The Bombay High Court on Friday directed the Centre and the Maharashtra government to respond within three weeks to a petition against inaction in stopping the use of ecologically dangerous and banned purse seine nets and high capacity LED lights for fishing. In his petition, Akhil Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samittee chairman Damodar Tandel said no action has been taken to stop the banned activities reported mostly off the coast of Ratnagiri despite repeated complaints. Purse seine nets are used to capture large amounts of fish and high-capacity LED lights are used to attract them. The petition said notifications issued in November 2017 and April 2018 banned both. “In addition to being a highly ecologically damaging method of fishing, these purse seine boats require considerable manpower-- ordinarily 30 to 40 individuals on board to handle the operations, thus making it impossible to follow the Covid-19 lockdown norms. Tandel said despite stringent restrictions imposed in view of Covid-19 lockdown, hundreds of boats without authorised licenses were found to be manoeuvring and trawling, using purse seine nets and LED lights in Maharashtra. He added a number of fishermen, who fish for the sustenance of their families, were targeted. “

These illegal fishing activities allow the lawbreakers to unjustly profit at the expense of the entire fishing community which was forced to suspend operations, said the petition. “This lack of action, especially considering the mandates banning purse seine trawling and the usage of LED-lights for fishing, is extremely disappointing to the fishermen community at large who are collectively fighting to curb this destructive practice.

### **Maharashtra: BMC wants to reclaim additional six hectares of land for coastal road project, submits affidavit in SC**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-bmc-wants-to-reclaim-additional-six-hectares-of-land-for-coastal-road-project-submits-affidavit-in-sc>

While fishermen and environmentalists have been opposing coastal road project, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has now has informed the Supreme Court through an affidavit that it wants to reclaim an additional six hectares of land from the sea for the project. According to a report by Loksatta, the civic body submitted an affidavit on August 28 and informed the Supreme Court that the original estimated reclamation for the project was supposed to be 90 hectares, it will have to reclaim a total of 96 hectares now. The BMC has so far reclaimed 52.35 hectares and another 44.16 hectares were yet to be reclaimed. In the affidavit, the BMC has stated it has the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance for reclamation of 90 hectares for the project. The affidavit states that the additional reclamation would be required for construction of partially submerged sea wall for protecting the road from wave impact, floods and erosion. The ambitious Rs 14,000-crore coastal road project, proposed to connect south Mumbai with north western suburbs of the metropolis, is one of the flagship infrastructure schemes of the Maharashtra government. The 8-lane and 29.2-km long Mumbai Coastal Road would run along Mumbai's western coastline connecting Marine Lines in the south to Kandivali in the north. The Coastal Road is expected to reduce travel time between South Mumbai and the Western Suburbs.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai's coastal road: Making land in a drowning city**

<https://scroll.in/article/971791/mumbais-coastal-road-making-land-in-a-drowning-city>

This year, as the monsoons unleashed severe flooding in South Mumbai, we were presented with standard narratives of the disaster. The bureaucracy blamed the high-intensity rainfall and outdated infrastructure; the people blamed it on a lack of “political will and an absence of planning. After the devastating 2005 floods in Mumbai, the Madhav Chitale Committee report pointed out that even if the entire system had been upgraded as per its new stormwater drainage project or BRIMSTOWAD, it would not have been adequate for the rainfall of such high

intensity. BRIMSTOWAD was designed to deal with “normal occasions of rainfall, not high intensity rainfall events. The Chitale report came out 14 years ago. Since then, extreme rainfall events have become more frequent. Meanwhile, natural water courses are being filled up and diverted (disrupting drainage patterns), permeable areas are being paved and built upon (increasing run-off), coastal areas are being reclaimed to create new land (displacing water elsewhere).

Mumbai is drowning because its land is being made more impermeable, ecological systems are being built upon, and extreme weather events are becoming “normal. Yet, instead of examining the relations between coastal communities and delicate ecosystems, Mumbai's planners are looking for ways to make more land. The proposal to build a land-filled 9.8-kilometre Coastal Road along the western shoreline has attracted strong criticism: from public transport advocates, who decry the neglect of overburdened public transport infrastructure; environmentalists, who scorn the authorities' ignorance of a fragile coastal ecology; residents, who worry about the traffic mayhem it will create in their neighborhoods; and from the artisanal fisherfolk, who point out that the project will decimate their traditional shallow water fishing grounds and coastal commons.

The city government and highway builders have circumvented coastal protection regulations, evaded democratic process, skirted public debate, and outmaneuvered legal opposition to continue “reclaiming the coast exclusively for motorists and developers. Already, a significant amount of work – mainly land-filling – has been completed, without requisite environmental and wildlife clearance. Although slowed by the flight of construction workers due to Mumbai's poor handling of the coronavirus pandemic, work on the project continued even during the total lockdown in the months of April and May – the municipal corporation claimed that the reclamation was “essential pre-monsoon work. Curiously, the city's stormwater system did not get such attention. And so, even as Mumbai sees the number of Covid-19 cases rise, with tens of thousands needing food and healthcare, frontline workers lacking safety equipment, and health infrastructure unable to cope, the government continues to invest in a project that will serve no more than 0.54% of its daily commuter trips.

Inertia of infrastructure in the early 1990s, city planners were gripped by dreams of a “world class Mumbai modeled on the fossil-fuel addicted American metropolis. Based on these outmoded recommendations and an increase in access to infrastructure financing, highway building became an obsession. In two decades, Mumbai built 50 flyovers, multiple arterial links, a freeway on the eastern coast and a 5.6 kilometre sea-link – all meant predominantly for cars. The latest link of this high-speed expressway network is the Coastal Road, which, estimated at a cost of Rs. 14,000 crores, is set to become the most expensive freeway ever built in the country.

People don't use cars – as transport planners like to believe – simply because they can afford them; people use cars because we continue to invest in them. Public transport advocates often point out that car-oriented infrastructure projects take away both investment and road space from mass-transit modes like buses and railways, and non-motorised modes like walking and cycling.

This is undoubtedly true. We must add: like other mass-transit modes, cars require fossil fuels to run; but while public transportation gets people around, cars are more efficient at converting fossil fuels into CO<sub>2</sub>. The behavioral shift towards private automobiles is encouraged by a vast infrastructure that makes car use possible and profitable – road networks, fuel-stations, oil terminals, construction plants, automobile factories – which embody the interests of economic and political groups who own and control them. Each time the city builds a freeway, this infrastructure is strengthened, making it more entrenched, making carbon mitigation more difficult, and making alternatives less likely to succeed. This inertia of certain kinds of infrastructure is called “carbon lock-in – the tendency of fossil-fuel based technologies to persist and perpetuate behavior that accelerate emissions, “lock-out alternatives, and tether future generations to a path they did not choose.

One of the fundamental tenets of climate science is that emissions are cumulative, which means that every tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted is more lethal than the one released before. And therefore, as the city pours money and concrete to build a freeway inducing more car traffic, it endangers the future of generations to come. In the words of the climate historian Andreas Malm, the emissions produced by cars are “so many invisible missiles aimed at the future. Sea-level rise and flooding over more than a century, the average temperature in Mumbai has risen, and extremely heavy rainfall days have increased. The warming Arabian Sea is generating high-intensity storms in the region. But with wetlands and forested areas indiscriminately sacrificed for real-estate development, the coastal city's ability to absorb and drain storm water has been severely damaged. On the other hand, basic infrastructure suffers from appalling deficiencies. As a result, almost every year as the monsoon hits Mumbai, the city floods – and hundreds of people living in low-lying areas of the city lose their lives.

The human and socio-economic impacts of Mumbai's neoliberal development policy become obvious each year as new disasters strike the city. The denial of the risks posed by climate change and denial of the causal links between “development and devastation is staggering. For instance, the technical studies for the Coastal Road project systematically underestimate sea-level rise due to global warming - a nothing-to-worry-about assumption of 1.27 mm per year. This, despite the recorded correlation between global temperature and sea-level rise of about 3.4 mm per year. Meanwhile, the conservative Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates sea-level rise by 1.1 meters by 2100, while other institutions estimate anything

between 0.5 to over 2 meters by 2100. According to the US military, scenarios of 1.5 meter rise by 2100 cannot be ruled out for planning adaptation measures. Mumbai's average coastal line is fairly low, and in many areas it is just 1 meter above the mean sea level.

Undermining the role of ecosystem services from an ecological perspective, the coast is a highly productive zone comprising diverse interconnected ecosystems: rocky shores and sandy beaches intercepted at various points along the coastline by creeks or estuaries where freshwater streams meet the sea. The geomorphic formations of the nearshore (intertidal) and foreshore (subtidal) areas of the rocky coastline determine the nature of coastal habitats that harbor and support various communities of organisms. The submerged rocky seabed is a rich breeding ground for a variety of fish that converge in this area at the end of summer during the monsoons to lay eggs; and the tidal pools in the intertidal area which is currently being reclaimed, is a nursery for juvenile fish. Yet the Environmental Impact Assessment report for the Coastal Road project seriously underplayed the rich ecology of the rocky shore.

When obtaining clearance for the project from the expert appraisal committee, the Mumbai municipal corporation denied the existence along the shoreline of protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna for breeding and nesting. It is not surprising, that the Bombay High Court declared that the studies carried out for the project were inadequate, and that the clearance was granted with nothing more than “lip service to the requirement of the law. When citizens' groups pointed out the presence of corals in the intertidal area – a Schedule 1 species protected under the wildlife protection Act – the municipal corporation commissioned studies after reclamation had already begun, now paying lip service to the requirement of ecological protection. The post-facto studies propose “mitigation measures: quasi-ecological interventions that eschew a systemic grasp of ecological processes that sustain biodiversity as well as of intertidal ecologies which absorb and hold excess tidal water, act as a buffer against tidal currents and help in flood mitigation. In fact, unaltered coastal ecosystems can often provide better and less expensive flood and storm protection.

According to geomorphologists, reclamations for the project will significantly affect tidal activity and cause an increase in wave and tidal attack on structures along the shore, resulting in damage to human establishments, and endangering lives. Social ecology, customary rights and ocean grabbing it is revealing that the Mumbai municipal corporation hired consultants to prepare both the project and implementation plans as well as the social and environmental impact assessment studies of their own plans – a practice that is inevitably prone to a whole range of evaluation biases. For instance, in the Social Impact Assessment for the project, there was neither an acknowledgement of the existence of the traditional fishing zones, or of the customary use of the nearshore and foreshore areas for artisanal fishing activity. For artisanal fisherfolk,



the coast is a productive landscape – the intricate fabric of economic, social and cultural life, rooted in the interface between land and water.

The health of the ecology of these shallow coastal waters are thus critical to the livelihoods of the artisanal fishers, who have adopted methods of fishing suited to various ecological and geomorphic conditions of the coast; their customary practices ensure the preservation of coastal biodiversity. The fisherfolk follow distinctive social arrangements of apportioning these marine and intertidal commons - areas that are now being snatched away from them for coastal real-estate. Land-filling for the Coastal Road will decimate the coastal ecology of the intertidal and shallow waters and the livelihoods of the artisanal fisherfolk. Reclamation for the Coastal Road, is thus “ocean grabbing – defined as “capturing of control by powerful economic actors of crucial decision-making around fisheries. It involves the violation of economic, social and cultural rights of coastal communities, especially small fishers, that depend on the sea for livelihood. The project will lead to the dispossession of the artisanal fishers, and appropriation of the use, control and access to the fishing waters and marine resources from its existing users and right-holders.

**Environmental deregulation and marketable nature** When confronted with the various criticisms of the project, the city government quickly recast the Coastal Road project as “coastal protection infrastructure. Coastal ecology will be supplanted with Miyawaki forests. Biodiversity will supposedly thrive in eco-concrete. Nature is now available as marketable technologies – and every system “viable. Climate change mitigation, after all, can also be made profitable. Since the 2005 floods in Mumbai, environmental experts have predicted many such events unless planners realise the role of natural areas and permeable land in providing ecosystem services. Yet, planners continue to act with the assumption that Mumbai's most urgent priorities are freeways, not storm water drains; cars, not clean air; real-estate development, not environmental protection. This is a mindset shaped by land economics and hydraulics, not life systems and hydrology. In its original form, the Coastal Regulation Zone of 2011 only permitted roads on stilts to ensure free flow of tidal waters and minimise ecological impacts. Months before the Coastal Road project was cleared, however, the CRZ was amended to permit reclamation of the seabed for constructing roads – frustrating the very intent of the law it was introduced under.

As we see the social and economic costs of planning failures multiply each year, the only legal protections to ecological systems are being relaxed and dismantled. The storm is picking up speed, the rainfall is gathering intensity, the oceans are rising, but the authorities continue to talk and act as though the worst is behind us. If business-as-usual continues, Mumbai will soon be untenable. Sea walls will not hold back storm surges, Miyawaki forests on reclaimed land will not absorb surface water, eco-concrete will not revive lost livelihoods. Our cities urgently need

progressive environmental action rather than schemes that help some people profit from crises. Ecological planning, environmental restoration, investment in basic infrastructure, retrofitting for climate mitigation: these are some steps that may help us cope and endure. But the “window of opportunity is shrinking.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai Coastal Road Project Affects the Local Fishermen Of Haji Ali**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/civic/mumbai-coastal-road-project-affects-the-local-fishermen-of-haji-ali-54733>

The coastal road project at the Haji Ali coast has worried nearly 600 fisherfolk as it has started reclaiming the Lotus Jetty overlooking the Haji Ali Dargah. The Haji Ali Dargah is a mosque and a dargah located on an islet off the coast of Worli in the southern part of Mumbai. As a consequence of the coastal project, in the last three days, fishermen were asked to leave their boats and vacate the place. Moreover, their anchors were buried as a result of the heavy developmental work which the fishermen association has stated will destroy their sh breeding area. As per reports, they are to submit their plea in the Supreme Court, as well as to the state Chief Minister. Environmentalist had earlier suggested the roads be made on the stilts in regions like Haji Ali as there are eco-sensitive corals. This entire coastal road project which started earlier in 2018 stretches over 30 km from Marine Lines to Kandivali. Floating in the middle of the sea, the Haji Ali Dargah is an architectural wonder with a perfect blend of the Indo-Islamic and the Mughal style. Withstanding storms and age, the mosque has survived around 400 years. Miraculously during the 1949 floods, where the city faced the wrath of the sea, Haji Ali remained unharmed despite being located right at the seashore.

### **Maharashtra: Fisher folk community feels farmers are getting special treatment**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/fisher-folk-community-feels-farmers-are-getting-special-treatment/articleshow/77853908.cms>

The Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti has raised questions over the different treatment given to farmers and fisher folk community in the state. Kiran Koli, the general secretary of the Samiti, told Mumbai Mirror, On August 26, the state cabinet has announced a Rs 65 crore package for the fisher folk community, but this is nothing but an eye wash. This is not enough. We are disappointed as we were expecting more financial aid. We welcome that government has at least announced some package. Due to the cyclone and other natural disasters, 105 days of the fishing season have gone to waste. We have already written to the various authorities picturing the reality -- from Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to the Governor. We were demanding at least a Rs 1,000 crore package and we have been demanding it

since the last few days as the community never faced such a loss before. Pandemic plus natural calamities have left a double impact, the Samiti has said. Till December 2018, the government was supposed to reimburse Rs 187 crore as diesel subsidy. We have got only Rs 32 crore. Rs 155 crore is pending since January 2020.

The government must pay our diesel subsidy reimbursement, Ramkrishna Tandel, the president of the Samiti, demanded. The Samiti further demanded that female fish sellers should get cash compensation. Engine mechanicals and others are not covered in this package, they complained. Fisher folk are not getting benefits of the Kisan credit card either. The fishing community should be made eligible to get cash credit too. Farmers and fisher folk are both producing food but only farmers are getting subsidies and financial aid packages. This discrimination and special treatment must end, Koli demanded.

### **Maharashtra: Mangroves destruction to blame for flooding in Mumbai: Experts**

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/mumbai/2020/aug/06/mangroves-destruction-to-blame-for-flooding-in-mumbai-experts-2179916.html>

Destruction of mangroves and unplanned constructions are responsible for flooding in Mumbai every year after heavy rains, say environment activists and town planners. Mangroves absorb excess water but they are being destroyed in Mumbai in the guise of infrastructure development, city-based environmentalist Debi Goenka told PTI. Destruction of mangroves has definitely been one of the major causes of flooding, since the land reclaimed from mangroves is now blocking the rainwater from flowing out into the sea. The capacity of mangroves to absorb floodwater has also reduced, he said. The biggest problem today is that government agencies that are responsible for the protection of mangroves are busy destroying them in the guise of infrastructure development, he claimed. To construct a road, transmission lines, or a freight corridor, the natural infrastructure - mangroves - provided to us free of cost by nature is being destroyed, he rued. We need to seriously review our priorities in this era of climate change, global warming and sea level rise. Do we need more roads or do we need to keep the mangroves intact? Goenka said. Similar concerns have also been raised by agencies like the Mangrove Society of India (MSI), which in its 2019 report stated that 75 cases of mangrove destruction have been reported on Maharashtra's coastline, of which the maximum share is of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

The society has been documenting and conducting various researches on mangroves since 1990 across the country. When it comes to destroying mangroves in the name of some development work, there is never an alternative or any plan to compensate it. The approach of the government or other agencies is- it's a waste land, an official from MSI said. They completely ignore the fact that destruction of such land or the vegetation will have some consequences on our lives, the official said. Town planner Sulakshana Mahajan said Mumbai does receive excess rains, but with some use of technology, solutions can be sought. Mangroves play a vital role in reducing floods and the corrosion of land from sea waves. But, someone needs to understand it and work accordingly, she said. She said there is technology available that can simulate the impact of a proposed construction at a particular site and help in understanding possible problems it may lead to. But, the government and political forces choose to ignore such approach and simply go ahead with constructions, she said. Mangroves sequester carbon, provide oxygen, clean the sewage, absorb heavy metals, provide breeding grounds for fish and other biodiversity, and also protect the land from extreme climatic events. Can we afford to keep cutting our mangroves? I think not, Goenka said. He said the damage being caused to the natural drainage systems, and ill-planned projects such as BRIMSTOWAD (Brihanmumbai Storm Water Disposal) are actually making the flood situation worse. The Bandra Kurla Complex is a classic example of what should never have been allowed, he added.

### **Maharashtra: Uttan fishermen get credit boost via govt's Kisan card**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/uttan-fishermen-get-credit-boost-via-govts-kisan-card>

In addition to the farmers, the government had extended the Kisan Credit Card scheme to the fisheries sector, with an aim of helping fishermen to meet up their short-term working capital requirements. Fishermen from villages in the coastal belt of Uttan near Bhayandar have finally started becoming beneficiaries of financial assistance in the form of affordable loans through the central government's ambitious Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme. Around seven fishing boat owners from the region fared in the first batch of beneficiaries last week. In addition to the farmers engaged in traditional agriculture, the government had extended the KCC scheme to the fisheries sector, with an aim of helping fishermen to meet up their short-term working capital requirements. A large section of fishermen secure loans from local moneylenders who not only charge an exorbitant amount of interest, but also force them to sign undertakings pledging to sell their entire catch to a particular trader at lower than market rates, source said.

“This scheme will free small farmers from the clutches of money lenders and loan sharks. However, branches of banks in rural and coastal areas should be tasked with providing the KCC benefits to fishermen in accordance with government guidelines. Several banks are very rigid

when it comes to giving KCC for fishermen, said fishing community leader- Bernard D'mello. Under the scheme, fishermen can avail concessional credit limits for working capital, fuel, ice, repairing boats and purchasing fishing nets. The 5-year revolving cash credit limit scheme will attract 7% interest with subvention interest of 2% percent per annum in case of timely repayment. The quaint fishing village's including-Uttan, Pali and Chowk and Manori is home to over 750 fishing boats in the region. While the KCC will help fishermen expand their business with better cash flow and credibility, banks will periodically review the account to decide the future course of action including- continual, withdrawal or scaling down the facility based on the performance of the borrower.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen to get up to Rs 30,000 cash as one-time compensation**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/maharashtra-fishermen-to-get-up-to-rs-30000-cash-as-one-time-compensation-fishermen-to-get-up-to-rs-30000-cash-as-one-time-compensation-6571512/>

Fishing boat owners from Maharashtra will receive a one-time cash compensation up to Rs 30,000. In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and sustained losses to the fishing business in the last couple of years, the Uddhav Thackeray-led government on Wednesday handed out a special relief package to the community. Under the package, licensed fishing boat owners will be entitled for a cash dole ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 20,000, depending on type of boat and fishing. The government has also announced a one-time grant of Rs 3,000 to help fish sellers procure ice boxes. Government statistics show that 76,345 households in the state are directly dependent on fishing, while another 9.93 lakh indirectly benefit from it. The government has contended that the relief package would benefit 54,573 households at a cost of Rs 65 crore to the state exchequer. State Fisheries Minister Aslam Shaikh, who is from the Congress, said: “The government has tried to extend some relief to fishing community facing challenges due to mounting losses.

Giving out details of the package, he said the state has 19,703 licensed fishing boats, including 18,009 mechanised and 1,564 non-mechanised ones. The government has announced a one-time help of Rs 10,000 each for traditional fishers who use drag net, Rs 20,000 each for fishing using non-mechanised and low-end mechanised boats that use one or two-cylinder engines. Three and four cylinder engine boats will get Rs 30,000 each, while high-powered (six cylinder engines or more) boats will receive Rs 40,000. Of the 15,402 registered boats, records show that 7,671 or nearly 43 per cent fall in the high-powered category and would, therefore, stand to receive Rs 40,000. Another 48 per cent of boat owners (8,712) either own non-mechanised or low-end mechanised boats. They will be entitled to Rs 20,000 each. The government has anticipated 35,000 fish sellers to opt for relief for ice box procurement. The Maharashtra Machimaar Kruti

Samiti (MMKS), an apex representative body of all fishermen societies, had written to Thackeray, complaining that several fishing families were faced with a survival crisis. While welcoming the announcement, MMKS general secretary Kiran Koli said there was a need to widen and enhance the package. “The fishing sector is in a shambles.

There has already been a significant dip in the catch due to increased water pollution, but repeated tropical cyclonic events, erratic rainfall pattern, choppy seas, and restrictions on venturing into the sea due to seismic surveys, terribly hit peak season fishing in 2019-20. The damage caused to boats during Cyclone Nisarga and lockdown has worsened matters, he added. The MMKS has been demanding that a state declared a “fishing drought and hand out a Rs 1,000-crore package to the community, which the government has ruled out for now.

### **Maharashtra: Burdened by debt and loss of livelihood, fisherfolk in Maharashtra’s Palghar struggle to stay afloat**

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/burdened-by-debt-and-loss-of-livelihood-fisherfolk-in-maharashtras-palghar-struggle-to-stay-afloat-8755531.html>

Ever since fishing resumed in the first week of August, Pankaj Patil has been receiving incessant phone calls. None of them bearing good news. “Every day, fisherfolk are meeting with accidents, their boats are breaking down in the middle of the sea, he says. “The other day, a fisherman lost balance and drowned. The weather has been rough. But fisherfolk are risking their lives because they are desperate to get back on their feet. Patil runs a fishing cooperative society in Satpati, one of the largest fishing villages in Maharashtra. It is located on the west coast about 80 kilometers north of Mumbai in the tribal district of Palghar. The fishers in Satpati, who belong to the Koli community, fish in Maharashtra's waters. There are also Adivasi khalaasis in talukas closer to Gujarat border like Talasari and Dahanu. They fish in Gujarat waters. Together they make up for a significant fishing community with thousands of livelihoods dependent on it in the district of Palghar, which has a population of 3 million.

The community is trying to get back on its feet after the losses they incurred during the lockdown enforced on 24 March to contain the spread of coronavirus. But the seas have not been welcoming. In the first week of August, hundreds of boats from Palghar were hit due to

rough weather triggered by incessant downpour. At least 341 were stranded, and had to return midway through their journey. Some even suffered serious accidents. Jitu Chaudhary, 31, a fisherman from Satpati, says his boat dashed against a rock near the shore because he couldn't control it in the ominous weather. "Luckily, I survived, he says. "But the boat did not. I could not salvage a single plank of wood. I don't know if I can ever recover from the loss. Jitu took a loan of Rs 15 lakh to fix the boat – about 7 feet tall, 50 feet long and 15 feet wide. "I don't know what to do, he says. "How am I going to repay the debt? I had to go in the sea once fishing resumed in August because for two months after the lockdown we couldn't do anything. Several activists believe it is unwise to restart fishing in the first week of August after the 61-day annual ban, which starts on 1 June.

"The weather begins to settle down after 15 August, he says. "These days, because of climate change, the weather isn't stable even after 15 August. The profession has become more precarious. We risk losing lives, and the accidents pile up debt. Activists working with the fishing community, like Patil, have been calling for the extension of the annual ban period for a while. Until 2012, it was a 75-day period, which started on 1 June and lasted until 15 August. "The purpose of the annual fishing ban is also to preserve the fish species during monsoons, says Patil. "It is a breeding period for various species of fish along the coastline. Netting the small fish is not the smartest thing to do. According to Patil, catching the small fish means the fisherfolk reduce their chances of netting a bigger one in the future. "A bucket of small fish can be sold at Rs 2,500, while a big pomfret fetches us a few times more, says Jitu. Therefore, reducing the ban period defeats the purpose, and is counter-productive in the long run, the fisherfolk concede.

"There won't be anything to fish near the coastline, which would push fisherfolk deeper into the seas, says Patil. "Those who do not have bigger boats would not be able to do that. Ever since the lockdown, the fisherfolk in Palghar have been dealt with one blow after another. The initial period restricted them from selling their catch. Once the restrictions relaxed a bit by the end of May, some of those who had resumed fishing had to return because of Cyclone Nisarga which hit the coastline of north Maharashtra and south Gujarat in June. About 455 boats had to turn around mid-journey to make it safely back to the coast. And now, even with the annual ban over, the weather is not congenial for fishing as the district has been experiencing consistent and torrential downpour, deepening the crisis further. Fishing, Jitu says, had become an unviable profession even before the lockdown. "You may think the fishers are doing great because pomfret is selling for Rs 500 a kilo. But that is not how it works, Jitu explains.

The overhead costs have increased dramatically. The fuel costs have gone up. We barely manage to secure meals for our families after the overhead costs and salaries of our khalaasis. Given the

situation, number of fisherfolk quitting the profession has been on the rise, says Patil. “You will find them working as watchmen or drivers in Tier-II or III cities, he says. “Every fisher is in heavy debt. They have been mortgaging their gold to stay afloat. The plight of these fishers has made the lives of some of the Adivasi khalaasis living in Talasari look relatively stable. They work for a businessperson who owns the boat. They earn a modest salary but the payment is stable regardless of how many fish they net. Nitesh Bhurkul, 25, a khalaasi from the Warli tribe from Paraspada in Talasari, located 75 kilometers from Satpati, is all set to resume work. “I will go to the Veraval port in Gujarat and get on the boat, he says. “The boat is owned by the seth. He pays me Rs 8,500 a month. Once Bhurkul starts the season, he says, they make at least 25-day trips in the deep sea.

“We carry enough rice, enough water that lasts until we return, he says. “We hand over our catch to our boss. They sell it at the fishing harbour and make profits. Every year, Bhurkul migrates out of the village around the same time and returns eight months later. This year, though, the lockdown forced him to change plans. “We were at sea when the lockdown was enforced, he says. “We returned to the port to go back home but our Aadhaar cards had Maharashtra address. Authorities in Gujarat did not allow hundreds of such khalaasis to alight on their side of the border citing coronavirus-induced lockdown. “We lived on the boat that was pulled over at the port for a month, says Bhurkul. “We were 135 of us in one boat. It was horrible. We were worried if we would have enough food so we used more water in our rice and made it watery. A month later, the khalaasis, after an intervention from the state government of Maharashtra, finally returned home to their families. But Bhurkul can't afford to be scarred by the experience. About three months after being stuck on the boat, he is all set to return to the sea. “My parents have a two-acre farmland but they barely survive on the rice we cultivate. My salary helps us sustain a livelihood, he says.

### **Maharashtra: A month after clearing it, Maharashtra seeks answers on seawall project**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/a-month-after-clearing-it-maharashtra-seeks-answers-on-seawall-project/story-a4uAMJsFFROo7aX8ygFftM.html>

The Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority has sought clarification from the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) on the need to construct seawalls along coastal areas at Panje village in Uran and Elephanta Island (Gharapuri), home to tourist destination Elephanta caves, in the Mumbai harbour after environmentalists alleged it was an impractical venture. The proposed seawalls are meant to protect the coast and prevent erosion. The move comes almost a month after the authority had cleared the proposal on July 7 and recommended it to the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), while listing six conditions to be complied with before commencing construction. The JNPT had proposed a 3.2-km wall from Shetbunder



to Rajbunder jetty at Elephanta Island and a 270-metre wall, less than 300 m from Panje village, along the shoreline. Additionally, a 45-m boat landing jetty and 20-m approach trestle has been planned at Nhava (Uran). The construction of the walls was proposed to protect the coast from rising seas and prevent erosion, said JNPT. But four complaints by environmental groups - Vanashakti, Shree Ekvira Aai Pratishtan (SEAP), NatConnect Foundation, and a consortium of Uran fishermen - over the past week alleged it was being done to make land available for reclamation and future construction.

“The JNPT's plan is to obstruct free flow of natural tidal water to mangrove areas, leading to flooding and impacting traditional fishing activities, said Dilip Koli, Uran fisherman. The MCZMA issued a letter to JNPT's chairman (port, planning and development) on Wednesday to provide a detailed report on points raised by complainants. HT has reviewed the letter sent to the JNPT. “Complainants have asked us to revoke permissions issued by us. We have asked the JNPT to file a compliance report on conditions laid out, and verify whether these allegations are true, said a senior MCZMA official. On March 3, 2017, the Union environment ministry had granted the JNPT environmental clearance (EC) for deepening and widening of Mumbai's existing harbour channel and JNPT's port channel (Phase II) project. One of the conditions under the EC was to hold a public hearing. “The request for seawalls was made during the public hearing conducted by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board in presence of the Raigad district collector for the EC based on requests from concerned gram panchayats. There is no mangroves destruction and diversion due to proposed construction.

The seawalls are essential to protect the coast and prevent erosion. These projects were proposed under Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER), said the JNPT in a statement to HT. The JNPT also has no-objection certificates from Panje, Gharapuri and Nhava gram panchayats. The CER does not mean funding an environment violation, said Stalin D, Director, Vanashakti. “There are vested interests who want to engage in landfilling of all wetlands and coastal regulation zone (CRZ) areas. This reclamation mafia is pushing destructive agendas and the JNPT is providing cover for them directly or indirectly. The MCZMA has completely washed off its hands from CRZ conservation, he said. Panje village has close to 450 homes with 1,684 residents. It is situated atop a hill overlooking the sea to the north, mangroves to the west and south, and open flat land where cricket is played towards the east. Karishma Haresh Bhoir, sarpanch of the Panje gram panchayat, said they had requested the seawall construction. “Excess tide water during heavy rain is making its way to our village. Homes are being flooded, especially at the bottom of the hill. We need this wall to protect us, she said. However, Panje resident Manish Bhoir denied the sarpanch's claim.

“They are lying. Our village cannot flood because it is elevated on a hill, he said, adding, “this is a ploy to conveniently block water channels and dry out surrounding areas where industrial and housing projects have been planned. “Panje has already been divided into sectors 16 to 28 as a part of the Dronagiri development plan. The seawall will facilitate this plan and gobble up the wetland. It is a sponge to absorb rainwater but their burial is the reason why the Mumbai region witnesses annual floods, said BN Kumar, director, NatConnect Foundation. SEAP's complaint alleged that the Mumbai harbour had already lost 875 hectares of mangroves, wetlands and small water bodies through land reclamation on JNPT areas. “We request the state to study the extent of ecological damage and loss of livelihood across this region, and then consider project approvals, said Nandkumar Pawar, head, SEAP. In November 2019, the MCZMA had instructed the state mangrove cell to inspect whether mangroves were being destroyed for these projects. After site inspection, the cell had said no mangrove destruction was involved but all three projects fell within the 50-m buffer zone of mangrove forests.

The seawall at Panje is being constructed across 270m in CRZ 1A (requires highest protection) and at Elephanta island across 185 m at CRZ1A. The HC in September 2018 had ordered, “Regardless of the ownership of the land having mangroves and the area of the land, all constructions within 50 m of all sides of the mangroves shall be forthwith stopped. The area of 50m shall be kept free from construction except compound wall/fencing for its protection. While environmentalists alleged that the wall, which did not have any culverts proposed, would block all high tide water even as tide water regulation (holding pond and barrages) was already being undertaken by the City Industrial Development Corporation Ltd, JNPT said no there was no mangrove destruction proposed at the site.

COASTAL AUTHORITY'S 6 CONDITIONS THAT JNPT MUST COMPLY WITH - JNPT to ensure no construction allowed in mangroves - JNPT to obtain permission from Bombay high court since part of the walls within 50-m mangrove buffer area - Natural course of creek areas should not be hampered - No reclamation of coastal water bodies is allowed - All other permissions from different statutory authorities be obtained - Proposed construction to be done strictly as per Coastal Regulation Zone 2011 norms, guidelines and clarifications issued by the Union environment ministry from time to time

**Maharashtra: Govt asks fishermen of mechanised boats to install CCTV cameras at own expense, draws flak**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/govt-asks-fishermen-of-mechanised-boats-to-install-cctv-cameras-at-own-expense-draws-flak-6557725/>

The state department of fisheries has directed fishermen who own mechanised boats to install CCTV cameras at their own expense. The order, however, has been criticised by fishermen bodies, who claim that a fisherman will be unable to bear the added costs of installing and maintaining security cameras. The move was among a host of measures first discussed between members of Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti and Fisheries, Ports and Textiles Minister Aslam Shaikh in February, in a bid to curb illegal fishing along Maharashtra's 720-km long coastline. At the meeting, the government noted that indiscriminate illegal fishing by local fishermen and those from neighbouring states in Maharashtra's waters posed a danger to endangered marine species. On July 24, the department had issued a circular ordering all mechanised fishing boats with one to six cylinder engines to install CCTV cameras and share their security footage every 15 days.

“Through the use of CCTV cameras, we will be able to observe every boat's catch, the manner of fishing, keep an eye on other boats in the sea and control illegal fishing, the order read. Fisheries Commissioner Atul Patne later relaxed the order and exempted fishermen owning boats with one to three cylinder engines. Damodar Tandel, who heads the Samiti, said that his expectations from the department were different. “At the meeting in February, we had requested the minister to install CCTV cameras at 173 active landing points in Maharashtra. We have been demanding this ever since the 26/11 terror attacks. Had there been CCTV cameras on the docks, the government could have immediately identified the trawler that brought the whale shark on shore in Mumbai earlier this week, he said. Tandel added that fishermen owning boats with four to six cylinder engines, which are typically between 10 and 20 feet in length, would find it difficult to incur the additional expenses.

“These fishermen usually earn between Rs 15,000 and Rs 20,000 a month. Installing a CCTV camera and another electric dynamo to power it will cost between Rs 35,000 and Rs 40,000. How can they afford it? he asked. Tandel added that small mechanised boats would also find it difficult to find space to fix CCTV cameras and store recording devices. There are over 14,000 mechanised boats registered in Maharashtra, he said. However, Patne said that fishermen operating mechanised boats have no choice but to install the cameras. “The whale shark incident has made it especially important for boats to have CCTV cameras and fishermen to share their data with us regularly, he said, adding that he left out smaller boats with one to three cylinder engines as they are not large enough to accommodate cabins where the cameras can be fixed. He further said that the department had accepted the Samiti's demand of installing CCTV cameras at landing points. “We have identified 70 landing points where cameras are required and have sent a proposal to the principal secretary. The system will require 24/7 monitoring and regular maintenance, Patne added.

## **Maharashtra: Thackeray bats against EIA 2020 draft, calls it unacceptable**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/thackeray-bats-against-eia-2020-draft-calls-it-unacceptable/articleshow/77512944.cms>

Maharashtra environment minister Aaditya Thackeray has opposed the draft environment impact assessment (EIA) 2020 in its present form and said it dilutes nature and scope of scrutiny of environmental impacts of proposed projects. In his representation to Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar, Thackeray said the draft exempted several environmentally destructive activities such as coal presetting, crushing and screening of ore, seismic surveys for oil and gas exploration etc from EIA. “Up to 50% expansion of any existing project does not require public consultation. Besides, up to 25% does not require an EIA process at all. Moreover, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries will no longer be safe as appraisal is no longer needed for some B2 category projects to which various hazardous industries in (red & orange) category have been added, Thackeray said. According to Thackeray, Western Ghats is listed in world's 8th hotspot of biological diversity.

They spread across Maharashtra and five other Indian states and are home to 325 globally threatened flora, fauna, birds and many other species. “Large parts of these Western Ghats are eco-sensitive areas (ESAs). However, the draft EIA narrows down the definitions of ESAs defectively excluding villages, forests, wetlands, coast etc, he said. Citing example, Thackeray said Konkan region is home to more than 28 million people. If projects are passed in this ecologically sensitive region without extensive public deliberations, it will have an adverse impact on the region's biodiversity, livelihood of fishermen and agriculture. It allows old data as baselines for environment assessment and not multi-season studies. Draft EIA report will not be openly accessible to the public, but be made available only on written request and that too for electronic inspection at a notified place, during office hours.

The draft notification allows for granting of ex-post facto EC to project proponents who are in clear violation of the law. This is not recognized under environmental jurisprudence and is also against the precautionary principle, Thackeray stated. Another flaw is that violations will be legally recognized only when reported by project proponents or government officials and not project-affected persons (PAPs). National defence and defence related matters are significant and therefore protecting such projects' core information is realised. However, other projects, which would be considered as strategic by the Central government, should not be excluded from public intervention, he said.

“Also, over 40 types of harmful industries are exempted from public consultation and EIA process. These include mines, petroleum etc. The draft gives power to the Centre to appoint State

EIA Assessment Authorities, Thackeray said. “Such centralization in environmental clearances would only lead to hurdles of clearances without taken into account the local issues, he remarked. “Therefore, reducing state's control will have direct consequences on environment protection efforts. Further, it absolutely undermines the nature of cooperative federalism that is embedded in our constitution. “The voice of the citizens, PAPs and the unheard voice of ‘Mother Nature' must be heard by the governments, said Thackeray. “Climate change is there for real, and while the world prides in steps towards environment protection, we cannot dilute our environment laws, Thackeray pointed out.

### **Maharashtra: Marine biodiversity to get boost as Angria Bank to be notified as ‘designated area’**

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/west/marine-biodiversity-to-get-boost-as-angria-bank-to-be-notified-as-designated-area-872008.html>

In what would give a major boost to marine biodiversity, the Maharashtra government has decided to notify the Angria Bank, located in the Arabian Sea as a designated area . At the 15th meeting of the State Board of Wildlife, presided over by Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, held last week, it was decided to recommend to the Centre to notify Angria Plateau or Angria Bank as a designated area under Maritime Zones Act, 1976. If the Centre gives approval, it will be the first such marine protected zone in India located in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The Angria Bank is a submerged plateau situated 105 km off the Sindhudurg district in the coastal Konkan belt of Maharashtra. This 2,011 sq km region ranges from depths of 20 m to 400 m. It supports a large extent of coral reefs and algal habitats, spanning 650 sq km that harbours a high diversity of associated flora and fauna. The reefs also host diverse functional groups that are necessary for a stable ecosystem representing a resilient reef.

This unique ecosystem makes it among the last strongholds of marine diversity in the northern Indian Ocean, according to a statement of Wildlife Conservation Society-India. In order to explore the region, in December 2019, a 10-day joint expedition was conducted by the Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE), Wildlife Conservation Society-India (WCS-India) and Mangrove Foundation along with partner institutes using the Fishery Oceanographic Research Vessel (FORV) Sagar Sampada, commissioned under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES). During this expedition experienced marine biologists and trained professional SCUBA dive instructors surveyed a total area of 3500 square meters by conducting 66 individual dives at 12 sites. In particular, the team employed coral reef monitoring protocols and collected data on ethnic composition, coral community structure, abundance and diversity of reef fish and

invertebrates. During the expedition, the team recorded exceptional diversity of reef fish with representation from all functional groups that are essential for a stable ecosystem.

The Bank is not only a stronghold for marine life within the Northern Indian Ocean but also bears an immense potential to act as a source habitat for populations for several ecologically important marine species. India is signatory to Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and is thus committed to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, which prescribes conservation of 10% of coastal and marine areas. Once the Centre approves it as a designated area, Angria Bank will not only help India in achieving its international commitments, but also help in conserving the unique marine biodiversity occurring in its open ocean and deep seas.

### **Maharashtra: State department to investigate illegal fishing practices**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/state-department-to-investigate-illegal-fishing-practices/story-67lpuss4jHhUHqvxhobCIK.html>

The state fisheries department on Tuesday initiated an investigation and called for action regarding unauthorised fishing practices affecting rare and endangered marine species along the Maharashtra coastline. The fisheries commissioner ordered the inquiry based on a report by marine biologists from the Mangrove Foundation (under the state mangrove cell), which documented how unsustainable fishing practices, excessive juvenile by-catch, and illegal shark fin trade were leading to a rapid decline of threatened, vulnerable, and critically-endangered sharks and allied species.

HT had reported the details on Monday, elucidating how such practices along seven commercially important landing sites, including three in Mumbai, with high-density of elasmobranch (sharks, skates, rays, and sawfish) population, were leading to overall habitat degradation at fishing grounds. “In view of the seriousness of the matter highlighted by national and regional media, I have called for a detailed investigation across all 173 marine fish landing centres across seven Konkan districts as well as inspections to be undertaken at markets, said Atul Patne, state fisheries commissioner, adding, “Strict action needs to be taken against fishing boats, sellers, buyers, and boat owners under the Maharashtra Marine Fisheries Regulation Act, 1981, and the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, for unauthorised capture and sale of rare and endangered elasmobranch species. Reports on action taken have been called for at the earliest.

The fisheries department plans to set up an enforcement cell and increase manpower to address the issue. Under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, the assistant commissioner of fisheries (ACF) is empowered to take action for the protection of rare and endangered marine species. “We have reiterated this in an order issued on Tuesday, said Patne. “Presently, the department is facing a

staff crunch with more than 60% vacancy, with 23 licensing officers managing 173 landing centres. Even if the ACF manages to track down cases, he is unable to prepare the required documents, present submissions in court, and track investigations. Patne said that along with additional manpower, he plans to rope in non-government bodies or marine respondent groups involved in curbing such violations (sagar rakshaks) to assist his staff. “If shark fin trade is operational in the domestic circuit, it will be tracked to the source, and we will identify how it is operating, he said. The Mangrove Foundation report also identified a fish landing centre at Satpati in Palghar, where the capture of eight shark species, including some part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, saw their fins removed and kept out to dry. Shark fishing is not illegal in India.

However, catching 10 species protected under the Wildlife Act is prohibited and considered illegal. Shark fin import and export was banned by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in 2015. The mangrove cell study identified 34 elasmobranch species – 14 sharks, 15 rays, and five species of wedges, sawfish and guitarfish – being caught across Satpati, Sassoon Dock, New Ferry Wharf, and Versova in Mumbai; Alibag in Raigad, Harnai in Ratnagiri, and Malvan in Sindhudurg. Of these, 24 species each fell under the vulnerable, endangered, and near-threatened categories of the IUCN Regional Red List, while one species of guitarfish (schedule I under WPA) was critically endangered. Eighteen of the 34 species caught were juvenile elasmobranchs. “We appreciate that the fisheries department has taken cognisance of the report. If such a study has made any contribution towards marine conservation, it has achieved its purpose, said Virendra Tiwari, additional principal chief conservator of forest (Mangrove cell).

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**Maharashtra: India: Low fish catch along India’s western coast hints at impacts of climate change**



<https://india.mongabay.com/2020/08/low-fish-catch-along-indias-western-coast-hints-at-impacts-of-climate-change/>

Fish catch from the western coast of India has declined, according to the Marine Fish Landings Report 2019 by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). Climate scientists attribute this drop to the increasing pollution, global warming and a decrease in phytoplankton population. In 2019, Maharashtra, on India's west coast, witnessed the lowest annual catch in 45 years, reveals an estimate from previous CMFRI reports, with a steep decline in all the fish species being caught. The total estimated fish landings (fish catch that arrives at the ports) in the state stood at 201,000 (2.01 lakh) tonnes in 2019 against 295,000 (2.95 lakh) tonnes in 2018, marking a 32% decrease, the latest report, released last month, added. Most of the fish catch came from Mumbai city district, followed by Raigad and Ratnagiri.

Apart from the non-penaeid prawns, every other fish species showed decreased landings in comparison to 2018. K.V. Akhilesh, a scientist with CMFRI Mumbai, stated that extreme weather patterns, extended rainy season and continuous large-volume exploitation of young fish/juveniles are the major reasons for low catch. These extreme weather events are the result of climate change and are likely to increase in the coming years, he said. - Maharashtra witnessed lowest fish catch in 45 years in 2019. Fishers have also reported a 50% decline in their annual fish catch, attributing recurring cyclones for reducing their fishing window. - Nationally, the estimate of marine fish landings in India shows a marginal increase of about 73,770 tonnes (2.1%) for 2019 - Fish migrate from warm waters to cool waters, a phenomenon that has already begun as the Indian Ocean is warming up is one of the reasons for lower fish catch. - The marine algae that is the base of aquatic food web has been disappearing in the western Indian Ocean owing to rising sea temperatures. The report by the Fishery Resources Assessment Division of ICAR-CMFRI used data collected from all the 1,265 marine fish landing centres along the Indian coast through the stratified multistage random sampling design and estimates of species wise, fishing zone wise and gear-wise landings were made for all the maritime states.

**Decline in phytoplanktons** Global warming has given rise to a host of problems such as a decline in phytoplankton population and migration of fish, which affects the fishing industry, indicate experts. Roxy Mathew Koll, a scientist with the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, told Mongabay-India that the decline in the number of fishing days on the western coast was owing to extreme weather events like heavy rains, weather in the Arabian Sea and overfishing, while highlighting that the weather issues are a consequence of climate change. The ocean surface warming in the Indian Ocean during the past century is up by 1.2 degrees Celsius, compared with a global surface warming of up to 0.8 degrees Celsius during the same period, according to a study by Koll. Koll explained that fish migrate depending on the

temperature and they usually migrate from the tropical waters (warm) to the north (cool), and that trend has already been observed in the Indian waters. Another study led by Koll showed a significant decline in the marine phytoplankton (microscopic marine algae which are food for whales, shrimp and jellyfish) in the Indian Ocean. Phytoplanktons absorb the solar radiation and modulate the upper ocean heat flux, thereby influencing climate processes, according to the study.

The study indicated that the marine phytoplankton population has decreased by 20% in the last six decades and it has declined by 30% in the western Indian Ocean during the last 16 years because of rapid warming. A decline in the marine phytoplankton population can affect the marine food chain, turning a biologically productive region into an ecological desert and impact the food security in the countries bordering the Indian Ocean, the study noted. Almost 90% of the extra heat owing to increased greenhouse gases has been absorbed by the oceans, and it is taking a huge toll on the marine ecosystem. West coast shows declining trend, India shows marginal increase in fish catch India is the second-largest producer of fish in the world, contributing to 5.43% of global fish production. Generally, about 60-75% of India's marine catch comes from the country's west coast.

Apart from nutritional security, Indian fisheries also provide livelihood support to over 14 million (1.4 crores) people. Not just Maharashtra, the entire western coast has shown a declining trend in annual fish catch. Goa, Kerala and Gujarat witnessed a drop in fish landings of 44.4%, 15.4% and 4% respectively. Species like the Indian mackerel (*Rastrelliger kanagurta*) and the Indian oil sardine (*Sardinella longiceps*) were among the species which saw the highest drop in 2019. However, nationally, the estimate of marine fish landings in India shows a marginal increase of about 73,770 tonnes (2.1%) for 2019, an estimate of 3.56 million tonnes in 2019, compared to 3.49 million tonnes in 2018. The upwards trend here was witnessed due to increased fish landings in the eastern coast, with Tamil Nadu taking up the top spot in terms of fish landings. In 2019, India faced six severe cyclones Fani in April, Vayu in June, Hika in September, Kyarr in October, Maha in October-November and Bulbul in October-November which adversely affected the fishing calendar days, especially in the west coast, the CMFRI report mentioned. Ganesh Nakhawa, a member of the Karanja Fishing Cooperative Society in Raigad, told Mongabay-India that the fishers are stressed as they suffered a decline of almost 50% in their annual fish catch and attributed this decline to global warming and climate change.

“Last year, the western coast witnessed many cyclones due to which the fishing days were less and the cyclones are increasing from the last three years, he added. The El Niño concern In 2019, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report where it observed that climate change was the reason behind increased precipitation, winds and extreme sea-level

events associated with some tropical cyclones. The report also listed that the average intensity of tropical cyclones is related to the 2°C increase in global temperature rise and rising mean sea levels will contribute to higher extreme sea levels associated with tropical cyclones. Satellite observations in the report revealed that marine heat-waves (short period of abnormally high temperatures in a sea or ocean) doubled in frequency between 1982 and 2016 and have become more intense, and extreme phenomenon like El Niño and La Niña are projected to likely increase in frequency across the globe, mainly in the Indian Ocean.

According to the CMFRI report, in addition to the declining trend of common resources that were once prevalent in the western coast, unusual formations of frequent cyclones occurred in the Arabian Sea was one of the major reasons for the reduced landings and caused a 36% drop in fishing days. Koll mentioned that the Indian Ocean is warming rapidly due to which these severe cyclones are projected to increase and the only way to deal from these cyclones is to reduce carbon emissions.

#### **Maharashtra: Mumbai-Vadodara Expressway gets CRZ nod, 1K mangrove trees to be lost**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-vadodara-expressway-gets-crz-nod-1k-mangrove-trees-to-be-lost/story-AK3KlvS0K0G94zEiQUfefM.html>

The state has granted coastal regulation zone (CRZ) clearances to the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) to cut 1,001 mangrove trees for the eight-lane Mumbai-Vadodara Expressway, which will pass through the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). The details of the clearance came to light earlier this week when the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) published the minutes of its June 11 meeting, during which the proposal was discussed and accorded conditional clearance. It has now been recommended to the Union environment ministry. The 379-km Greenfield expressway connecting Mumbai to Vadodara expects to reduce the travel time between the two cities to four hours instead of the current seven through national highway (NH)-8. Of the 379-km, 78.1km (phase II) extends from Vasai to Talasari across 4km CRZ area, encompassing 32.4 hectares (ha) crossing the Vaitarna River. Of this, 3.2ha is CRZ1A (the most protected coastal zone), which is home to 1,001 mangrove trees, while 2.68ha is mangrove buffer. The maximum mangrove losses would occur at Navghar and Vadiv villages in Palghar, falling under the Safale forest range.

“As the project proponents (NHAI) have decided to build much of the road through the mangroves on stilts and considered the least damaging alignment to forest cover, the project was issued conditional clearance, said a senior MCZMA official. On September 17, 2018, the Bombay high court (HC) had said that no development permission shall be issued by any authority in Maharashtra for any area under mangroves. “Regardless of ownership of land having

mangroves, all constructions taking place within 50 metres (m) on all the sides [of mangrove stretches] shall be forthwith stopped, the HC had said. According to Neenu Somraj, deputy conservator of forest and member, MCZMA, NHAI will need permissions from the HC to cut the trees. “Minimal mangrove areas will be affected. However, the planning body will need permissions from the HC, and apply for forest clearance under the Forest Conservation (FC) Act, 1980. An area for compensatory afforestation will be identified during the forest clearance process.

The exact loss of mangrove trees was identified by the Dahanu forest department, but NHAI has not been asked to obtain any clearances from the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority. According to the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) report for the project, which HT has reviewed, the project is likely to have an impact on a total forest area of 191.58ha across Vasai, Palghar, Talasari and Dahanu (including Dahanu taluka eco-fragile zone across 28 km) would lead to the diversion of 13% reserve forest, 2% mangrove forest, 71% protected forests and 14% private forests, and a total of 69,095 trees are expected to be lost. The expressway would pass at a distance of 1.28 km from the boundary of the Tungreshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and 0.45 km away from its eco-sensitive zone boundary, the EIA read. NHAI had applied for clearances under the FC Act for 94.5ha forest diversion for phase II in 2018 but retracted the proposal as a much larger forest area is involved.

“We welcome the CRZ clearance. Based on the clearance, we will be applying for FC for the entire 191.58ha. All the conditions proposed by the authorities concerned will be followed. We are ready to ensure compensatory afforestation as much as 10 times the number for the mangroves lost, said B Mukhopadhyay, general manager, environment, NHAI. Meanwhile, during MCZMA's meeting on Tuesday, a conditional clearance was accorded to the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) to construct sea walls (anti-sea erosion bunds) at Gharapuri Island, Panje village in Uran, and a boat landing jetty at Nhava. The proposal was deferred last year by the coastal authority over concerns of mangrove loss. “Loss of mangroves is yet to be ascertained but JNPT needs to obtain the HC's clearance, said Somraj. Environmentalists were upset with the latest decisions. “At a time when we need to protect the remaining mangroves and wetlands in MMR, such clearances defeat the purpose of having an environment and climate change department, said BN Kumar, director, NatConnect Foundation, a not-for-profit environment group. Debi Goenka, a petitioner before the HC in the matter of mangroves, said, “A short-sighted approach under the guise of creating artificial infrastructure is destroying natural carbon sinks without any realisation of how it will impact us in the future.

### **Maharashtra: Govt mulls geo-tagging locations in the sea to help protected species**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/maha-govt-mulls-geo-tagging-locations-in-the-sea-to-help-protected-species>

In a first-of-its kind initiative, the Maharashtra government is planning to geo-tag locations in the sea where rare and protected mammals and fishes are found. The fisheries department will create awareness among fishermen asking them to stay away from those areas. At present, the state forest department's Mangrove Foundation compensates fishermen who cut their nets to free protected species such as Olive Ridley turtles, dolphins and saw fish that get caught in them. These fishermen are granted an amount of up to Rs 25,000 to compensate for the damage to their nets. However, they have to produce photographic evidence to claim this compensation. “Based on approvals that have to be granted by the state government, we are planning to identify and geo-tag the latitude and longitude of the locations where these fish and other animals are caught. Awareness will be created among the fisher-folk against fishing in these areas where frequent sightings take place to prevent protect these endangered species, Atul Patne, the Commissioner of Fisheries told FPJ.

Patne said that in case of frequent sightings of protected species like dolphins in a particular area or zone, that location could be promoted as an eco-tourism site and perhaps even an ocean sanctuary. Tourism and water sports operators could perhaps organize tours to these areas. “We are planning to involve the local community in this conservation effort to make this a participatory effort and boost this initiative further, he explained. Patne said that similar to the marine response group of the mangrove cell, the fisheries department was planning to set up treatment facilities for such endangered species in each district. These could be created in the department's ponds and hatcheries. The Maharashtra Animal and Fishery Sciences University (MAFSU) will be roped in for getting veterinary doctors for these facilities. Maharashtra has a coastline of 720 km with 173 fish landing centers. The area suitable for marine fishing is 1.12 lakh sq km. The state has around 17,238 marine fishing boats in operation, of which 13,613 were mechanised.

### **Maharashtra: Fishing Community Seeks Help from BMC as Mumbai Witnesses Incessant Rainfall**

<https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/city-news/colaba-koliwada-seeks-help-from-bmc-as-mumbai-witnesses-incessant-rain.html>

With heavy rains lashing the city for the third consecutive day, the Koli fishing community in Mumbai has sought help from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) as rains threaten to flood their low-lying homes. This comes shortly after the BMC issued a warning asking people to stay away from the Colaba coast which is likely to witness choppy high

tides. Amid the flooding-scare, the fishing community of the Colaba Koliwada revealed that while their business had been terribly affected due to COVID over the past two months, the onset of heavy rains had only added to their woes. We have not been operating for the last two months because of the COVID-19 guidelines and our business has been terribly affected. That along with the heavy rains has made it really difficult, said Jayesh Bhoir, a fisherman who lives in the Colaba Koliwada to news agency ANI.

The government should at least take care of our community during natural calamities like these. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation hasn't yet cleaned the gutters and it usually happens before the monsoon season, he added. Amid the incessant rainfall in Mumbai, Mahesh Palawat, Managing Director of Skymet, has said that the rainfall in Mumbai will continue for next five to six hours. He also advised citizens to stay at home for 24 hours whenever there is an alert from the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) or Skymet. Speaking with Republic TV, Palawat said that the weather forecasting agency expects the rainfall to continue in Mumbai till Sunday evening. Meanwhile, the Mumbai Police on Sunday cautioned the local residents against venturing in the waters or around the sea. Hindmata, Sion, King Circle, Mahalakshmi, Dadar are some of the worst affected areas in the city owing to being low lying areas.

### **Maharashtra: Bad weather nets worst fish haul in 45 years**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/bad-weather-nets-maharashtras-worst-fish-haul-in-45-years/articleshow/76720777.cms>

Last year, Maharashtra saw its lowest fish catch since 1974 due to bad weather, including unusual cyclones in the Arabian Sea that kept boats ashore, as well as generally lower stocks. Fish landings in Maharashtra declined 32% between 2018 and 2019, falling from 2.9 lakh tonnes to 2 lakh tonnes, shows data released on Tuesday by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). This is the second continuous year of decline as 2018 also saw a 22.5% decline. While fish catch usually fluctuates year to year due to oceanic conditions, experts say that with climate change bringing extreme weather, more action is needed to make fishing sustainable. Long monsoon, cyclone alerts in '19 saw 36% shrinkage in fishing days in Maharashtra. Bad weather saw 36% dip in the number of fishing days in the state in 2019 from

the previous year, said Anulekshmi Chellapan, scientist in charge of CMFRI's Mumbai centre. The community lost an estimated 50 days of fishing between August and December, said Chellapan, as prolonged monsoon and several depression and cyclone alerts kept fishermen at home in the usually productive post-rain period. Low catch even on good weather days led to fewer trawlers going out, reflecting in the relatively low trawl catch. Fishing effort in the state shrank 48% in 2019, according to CMFRI measures.

Cyclonic activity hit the catch along most of the west coast in 2019, with Maharashtra and Goa the worst affected. The latter saw a 44% fall in fish catch with Mumbai district contributing 40% to the catch followed by Raigad and Ratnagiri. The Arabian Sea usually gets far fewer cyclones than the Bay of Bengal, but a 2015 Princeton study found a rise in cyclonic activity in the region due to warming waters. A historic five of eight cyclones in the Indian Ocean formed in Arabian Sea last year. Among the most important catch declines was the high export-value penaeid prawns, which fell 46.2%. Among other declines, croakers or dhoma fell 45%, lobster 70%, crabs 40%, sardines or taarla 79%, mackerel or bangda 34%, and threadfin large quantity of juvenile catch in recent years, which can't be sold at full price, indicates fishermen are catching more than is sustainable, said K V Akhilesh, a scientist at CMFRI. State regulations on fishing through monsoon bans, net size limits, and tracking devices are breems or rani fish 52%. The popular Bombay duck and silver pomfret saw only small decline in catch of less than 1% and 3%, respectively.

Catch of lower value non-penaeid prawns saw an increase of 13%. Extreme weather is not the only factor in the decline. The not always implemented well, he added. "Monitoring needs to improve both at sea and ports. Improving the quality of fish with better storage is needed. Fish catch in India rose 2.1% in 2019 with 3.56 million tonne. Tamil Nadu displaced Gujarat from the top spot in catch.

### **Maharashtra: Bombay HC seeks State help for fishermen**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/hc-seeks-state-help-for-fishermen/article31879753.ece>

The Bombay High Court on Friday directed the State Disaster Management Authority to ameliorate the grievance expressed by fishermen to the extent possible, upon due assessment of the loss and damage that might have been suffered by them due to Cyclone Nisarga, within three weeks. Fishermen in distress A Division Bench of chief justice Dipankar Datta and justice K.K. Tated was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Damodar Tandel, a fisherman and the chairman of Akhil Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samittee, a registered association of fishermen. The PIL, filed through advocate Rakesh Bhatkar, said there has been large scale destruction in

the coastal districts owing to Cyclone Nisarga, leaving several fishermen in extreme distress. Mr. Tandel's grievance is that the State authorities assessed the damages due to the cyclone and issued guidelines for providing standards of relief to persons affected on June 10, and declared the amount of compensation on June 11.

The State has considered damage caused to farmers, residential damages and small scale sellers however; there is no relief for fishermen. Even though the fisheries department of each districts separately carried out survey to asses damage/losses sustained by fisherman. The PIL said fishermen are not included in the list of beneficiaries though they have sustained considerable damage due to the calamity and are the most affected as the cyclone has directly affected their livelihood. It seeks for a direction to National, State and District Disaster Management Authority, to carry out survey to assess damages/losses sustained by the fisherman across Maharashtra due to the cyclone and submits reports regarding the same. Mr. Tandel also sought compensation and relief to fisheries community.

The court noted that Mr. Tandel is the chairman of an organisation for fishermen and a representation had been made on June 13 to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. However, the representation, according to the petitioner, is yet to receive consideration. The court directed the State authority to ameliorate the grievance by fishermen upon due assessment of the loss and damage that might have been suffered them within three weeks.

### **Maharashtra: State gives more funds for Raigad relief**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/state-gives-more-funds-for-raigad-relief/article31879804.ece>

The State government has increased the relief package to the districts affected by Cyclone Nisarga on June 3. Guardian Minister for Raigad, Aditi Tatkare during a visit to the district on Friday said the State government will get an additional Rs.301 crore. Earlier, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had promised Rs.100 crore cyclone relief to the district of which Rs.72 crore has been released. “Till now, we have disbursed Rs.373 crore for relief work, said Nidhi Choudhary, Raigad district collector. Of the relief granted, Rs.278 crore is for repair work of houses and for loss of crops, cattle and fisheries. Of the 1,976 villages affected, electricity has been restored in 1,350 villages. “Power has been restored at all the tehsil offices, also for 73% of



the residents. The restoration work at Shrivardhan, Murud, Mhasla and Tala will take some more time as the transmission plus distribution network has been affected there.

The hilly terrain and heavy rain is also posing a challenge in reaching the interiors. Power is yet to be restored in 626 villages, Ms. Choudhary said. Meanwhile, a six-member team from the National Disaster Management Authority visited the cyclone-affected areas on June 16 to assess the damage. “The central government procedures are prolonged and it will take time for them to let us know the amount that would be granted for the damages, Ms. Choudhary added. Fishermen will now get Rs.5,000 instead of Rs.2,500 for damage to fishing nets, and Rs.25,000 instead of Rs.9,000 for damage to boats. Private schools, not receiving grants, will now be eligible for compensation. Small scale businesses too could be considered for relief package, she added.

### **Maharashtra: How farmers in Maharashtra are enhancing their income amid Covid crisis**

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/how-farmers-in-maharashtra-are-enhancing-their-income-amid-covid-crisis/article31857960.ece>

They sell fish and milk products directly to consumers to sustain losses in farming The Centre has set an ambitious target to double farmers' income by 2022 but many farmers in drought-prone regions of Maharashtra are already close to the target, that too amid the Covid-19 crisis. Washim district in Vidarbha is known for freshwater fish farming and fish farmers usually sell their produce to brokers at Rs.70 per kg. But during the Covid-19 crisis, as the chain of brokers broke down, fish farmers sold their produce directly to consumers at Rs.200/kg, which fetched them Rs.130 extra per kg. Fish farming is a secondary enterprise for farmers here and the income they got from fish farming will help them sustain the losses in farming. The Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) has documented innovative experiments of farmers in Maharashtra's suicide zones of Marathwada and Vidarbha.

The document, titled Innovative Agri-Solutions During Covid-19, also covers the efforts taken by farmers elsewhere in India. The battle against Covid-19 by farmers in the drought zone is significant considering the series of natural disasters causing damage to crops and pushing farmers into distress. Devastated by a severe drought last year followed by unseasonal rains and then the pandemic, farmers in Marathwada and Vidarbha regions have put up a resilient fight during lockdown. Milk producers: For milk producer farmers in Takli in Amravati district, the lockdown came as a blessing in disguise. About 1,600-litre milk is produced daily in the village. With the direct connection with consumers, farmers got a price of Rs.60 per litre for buffalo milk and Rs.40 per litre for cow milk. Farmers are also trying their hand in producing milk products.

“Farmers of Takali village are getting Rs.80,000 daily and Rs.24 lakh a month by selling direct to consumer and making value-added products, the ICAR report said. Farmers in Beed came up with the idea of ‘markets on wheels’ as traditional mandis stopped operations during the lockdown. With the help of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) scientists and local officials, farmers got licences to sell their goods to consumers. Hundreds of farmers in Aurangabad joined hands to form a supply chain connecting to consumers. ‘Farm to Kitchen’: The alternative marketing and supply chain proved valuable for farmers in Nanded, who reaped the benefits of the direct sale of vegetables. KVK in Jalna developed the ‘Farm to Kitchen’ e-commerce website for online purchase of fruits and vegetables. “Covid has taught many lessons and the important lesson for us is that one has to find solutions to problems instead of complaining and succumbing to the situation, said Kaka Thote, a farmer in Aurangabad. Even as farmer suicides continue in Marathwada and Vidarbha, there are many farmers who have shown the way forward, Thote added.

**Maharashtra: Survey pegs Cyclone Nisarga losses in Maharashtra at Rs 1,000 crore. Plantations uprooted, houses flattened and fishing boats damaged**

<https://en.gaonconnection.com/survey-pegs-cyclone-nisarga-losses-in-maharashtra-at-rs-1000-crore-plantations-uprooted-houses-flattened-and-fishing-boats-damaged/>

A joint survey by the National Fishworkers' Forum and Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti has recorded extensive damages in the coastal districts of Raigad and Ratnagiri due to the Cyclone Nisarga. But, timely warning and evacuation helped save lives. Two weeks back, on June 3, coastal Maharashtra was hit by the severe cyclonic storm Nisarga, the the first-ever cyclone in recorded history to hit the state's coast in the month of June. This cyclone had another unique feature there was very little time between the formation as the cyclone and its landfall less than 24 hours. The cyclone made a landfall in Diveagar, Raigad district, about 175-km south of Mumbai, and caused extensive damages in the coastal districts of Raigad and Ratnagiri.

Both the National Fishworkers' Forum, a federation of state-level trade unions in India, and the Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti have just completed a field survey of the coastal areas in both the districts and pegged the losses due to the cyclone at Rs 1,000 crore. “We have surveyed the coastal belt of Raigad and Ratnagiri districts where Cyclone Nisarga made maximum impact. As per our estimate, the damages to fishing boats alone is Rs 25 crore, Kiran Koli, secretary of Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti told Gaon Connection. “If we consider total damages to houses, plantations, farming, fishing nets and gears, power supply and communication infrastructure, then the losses are at least Rs 1,000 crore, he added. Meanwhile, official survey by the Raigad district collector has estimated Rs 200 crore losses due to Cyclone Nisarga in 13

tehsils of the district. These include damages to 1.4 lakh houses, 1.6 lakh trees uprooted, and over 20,000 hectares farmland affected.

“Even after two weeks, there are villages, such as Bharadkhol, Junabandar and some other surrounding villages in Ratnagiri, where the power supply has still not been restored, Ulas Vatkare, the Alibag representative of Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti told Gaon Connection. He was also part of the survey team. “A large number of houses of fishers, who live on the coast and are the first ones to face the storm, are roofless, he added. According to Koli, fishers are not the only ones affected by the Cyclone Nisarga. “People living along the coast of Raigad and Ratnagiri have suffered huge losses. Majority of the houses are roofless, some houses have suffered wall and slab collapse, too. A large number of plantations of coconut, betel, mango are flattened, he said. “There are farmers whose only source of income is coconut or betel plantations. Even if they plant new trees now, they won't get any fruit for the next six to seven years. How will such farmers survive? he asked. Both the Central government and the state government have finished their survey and made big announcements of relief package. But so far, affected people have received nothing, claimed Koli.

‘Never faced such a storm’ Vatkare, a fisher leader from Alibag, is 56-year-old and has witnessed several storms. “But, never have I ever faced a strong storm like Nisarga in Maharashtra. The wind speed on June 3 was so high that it blew away whatever came in its way electric poles, mobile towers, houses, trees. There are farmers who own five acre plantation of betel and have lost 2,000 trees, he said. For instance, in Junabandar village, almost 90 per cent houses are roofless due to the cyclone. In Alibag koliwada (fishing village), 60-70 per cent fisher houses are roofless and damaged. “The place where landfall of the cyclone happened, all the trees are gone, as verified during our recent survey. The winds had such strength that electric poles were bent and fell down, said Koli. “If such a storm had hit Mumbai, which was the initial fear, several tall buildings in Mumbai would have collapsed and death toll would have been very high, he warned. According to Vatkare, because of the timely warning of the weather department [India Meteorological Department], and evacuation of the people by the local authorities, no lives were lost in Cyclone Nisarga.

“Had evacuation not been carried out, many people would have died in both the coastal districts, as the cyclone winds would have swept them off, he said. Relief only on paper? The state government has announced financial relief to the cyclone affected districts and people. Apart from an immediate relief of Rs 100 crore for Raigad, Rs 75 crore for Ratnagiri and Rs 25 crore for Sindhudurg, cyclone-hit families whose houses have fully collapsed will be given Rs 1.5 lakh instead of Rs 95,100 as per the existing National Disaster Response Fund norms. The aid for partial loss of homes has been increased from the existing Rs 6,000 to Rs 15,000. Similarly, the

amount of the financial aid for the loss of perennial crops is raised to Rs 50,000 per hectare from the existing Rs 18,000 a hectare. Cash compensation for losses of household material, like clothes and utensils, has been increased to Rs 10,000 from the existing Rs 5000. But, Koli alleged these were just ghoshana (announcements).

“So far, local people have not received a penny of the promised financial relief. They need to rebuild their houses and their lives, he said. Both the National Fishworkers' Forum and the Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti have demanded Rs 25 crore as compensation towards the fishing boats damaged due to the Cyclone Nisarga. Apart from this, they have also demanded strict action against illegal fishing activities using LED lighting and purse seine nets. “In February 2019, the Central government had announced giving Kisan Credit Card to fishers in the country. But, the same have been not issued to any fisher in the state. This must be addressed, reads the letter of fishers associations. Both the organisations have also demanded an interest free loan of Rs 5 lakh each fisher in the state for a period of two years. Since last September, fishing activities in the state have been affected due to the recurring bad weather, followed by the lockdown and the ongoing 61-day annual fishing ban.

“Last September, October, and November, there were rains and storms on the west coast because of which we could not fish. December, January and February are cold months and we not get much fish. It is only in March, April and May months that we get good fish catch. But, all that was lost due to the lockdown, Dhanashree Dhakle, a fishing boat owner from Versova fishing village in Mumbai told Gaon Connection. India has at least 16 million fishers and fish workers who are dependent on fisheries sector for their livelihood, half of which are women. “Since the beginning of the lockdown, we have been requesting the Central government to announce a special relief package for the fishing community. But, in spite of several letters, not even a penny has been released for the traditional fishers and fish workers, T Peter, general secretary of National Fishworkers' Forum told Gaon Connection. Cyclone Nisarga has added to the woes of the fishing community which was already finding it extremely hard to remain afloat.

### **Maharashtra: From slim pickings to plum sales, how a fisherman used tech to beat lockdown**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/ht-salutes-from-slim-pickings-to-plum-sales-how-a-fisherman-used-tech-to-beat-lockdown/story-P10lb8EvYIeRsK5yQBVVIN.html>

Five days into the lockdown, fisherman Ganesh Nakhawa, 32, was sitting down to a lunch of fish curry and rice, and sent a picture to a friend in Mumbai. ‘You should sell these in the city. We have no fish here,’ the friend texted back. Luckily, that fisherman in Karanja, Raigad, had a degree in business studies from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland; and his friend, Myron

Mendes, was communications manager at an NGO where he helps run campaigns for a living. Mendes got permission from his housing society to coordinate orders and connected with other housing societies to offer that cherished thing in Mumbai and rare treat in the lockdown fresh fish straight from the fisherman. Two days later, Nakhawa, armed with an e-pass (fish was an essential service in the food category) loaded 25kg of the day's catch into the boot of his car and drove 90 minutes to Mumbai.

Two hours on, as Nakhawa puts it, his car was empty and his pockets full. Back home, he spread the word and 15 other families joined in. He drove back later that week with 100kg of fish, then 150 (he had to take out the back seat to make room). At a time when fisherfolk all along the coast were being forced to stay home or dump the bulk of their catch because supply chains had shut and more crucially the ice factories had closed, he had found a way for his community to thrive. There were so many orders that Nakhawa got to indulge his love for Excel spreadsheets orders placed, orders filled, orders pending, orders for next week. Customers began calling from so far away, they had to turn some down. By the second week, Nakhawa realised this could be scaled up further. As director of the Karanja Fishing Co-operative Society, he took his model to the people. Earnings had fallen by now, by about 25%, and most fisherfolk were taking their boats out only every two or three days. Given the already-slim margins of their business, many were becoming desperate. Nakhawa suggested they throw their lot in with him, leverage technology to balance supply, demand and pricing, and create an entire supply chain on their own.

The co-operative society partnered with Numer8, a data analytics firm. All orders were funnelled through a single WhatsApp number. They called themselves BluCatch a name that Nakhawa had trademarked in 2017, when he first tried to use a similar online model, but saw it fail due mainly to lack of scale. This time, using their own vans and cars (and later a few rented tempos) and tying up with online delivery platforms, they rushed their fish to homes across the city. By the third week of April, BluCatch had around 600 fisherfolk across Raigad and Mumbai selling over 3,000 kg of fish a day. Eliminating the middleman has meant they can keep more of their margins, and earnings have risen by as much as 35% over pre-lockdown levels. Earnings from each carload are transferred back to each fisher family on the same day. "I don't have to worry. And I don't have to wait for weeks for my money to come in.

They are working more to be ready for a post-pandemic world and I am going to be with them, says Karanja fisherman Vinayak Patil, 41. If there's one downside, it's that managing the whole supply chain is exhausting. "Most of us haven't slept in two months, Nakhawa says. "I've slept in my car, at the harbour, at friends' homes. But for Nakhawa, it is a dream coming true. He quit a job in investment banking in the UK in 2011, to return to his Koli community and become a

seventh-generation fisherman. “What the lockdown has done is show us that it is sustainable, he says. “Right now, only about 5% of Koli men with another career choice opt to go into fishing. The number is higher among women, but still no more than 30%. I want more youth coming in. And now I hope they will.

### **Maharashtra: Three fishermen rescued from sea near Maharashtra’s Uttan after boat overturns**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/three-fishermen-rescued-from-sea-near-maharashtras-uttan-after-boat-overturns>

Three fishermen who had set out from the sea coast of Killa-Bunder in Vasai on their small fishing boat had a miraculous escape on Sunday afternoon. The incident was reported off the sea coast in Uttan at around 12:30 pm. The fishermen who have been identified as Nasreth Maanya (61), Sandesh Maanya (34) and Rupesh Baankul (26) were on their way to buy fishing nets in Uttan when their engine operated boat apparently caught a late wave and turned turtle, throwing them into the choppy waters. “After being informed about the incident our team from the nearest fire station reached the spot and rescued the trio with the help of local fishermen. The boat was also pulled out with the help of a long rope and other equipment, said chief fire officer Prakash Borade. Despite a ban on fishing during the monsoons, some fishermen continue to venture into the deep seas. These fishermen however were not catching fish, but had chosen the sea route to Uttan en-route to buying nets, sources said. Considered a mandated strategy for conservation and management of fisheries resources, the 61 day ban from June 1 to July 31 has been in existence since 2012. Earlier the term of the ban had lasted 75 days from June 1 to August 15.

### **Maharashtra: Fighting COVID-19: Mumbai’s fishing community in distress**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/coronavirus/videos/fighting-covid-19-mumbais-fishing-community-in-distress/videoshow/76361097.cms>

First, they had no permission to step out in the lockdown. Then they couldn't get diesel and ice required for fishing. And then the workers left. If that problem was tackled, they found it tough to get the fish to the market. Now lenders have started calling. It's been a difficult season for the fishing community. The lockdown came in the middle of the fishing season. And even when the restrictions were somewhat eased, it hardly solved any of their problems.

## **Maharashtra: How a bunch of Mumbai's fishers kept their businesses afloat amid coronavirus lockdown**

<https://scroll.in/article/964307/how-a-bunch-of-mumbais-fishers-kept-their-businesses-afloat-amid-coronavirus-lockdown>

The members of Mumbai's fishing community, the Koli community, have found a sustainable answer to their economic woes brought forth by the lockdown. The lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24, to control the spread of the coronavirus, left many, especially those in the marginalised sectors, without any means to arrange for their daily survival. However, with disruption in the traditional methods of fishing and moving towards sustainability, the fishing community from Mumbai is adapting during the lockdown. "There were hundreds of fishers reaching the coast on March 24 when the lockdown was announced, suspending all activities. Since fish or meat didn't fall into essential commodities, none of the fishers were allowed to get fish at the port for sale by the authorities, said Ganesh Nakhawa, a fisherman from Karanja near Mumbai.

Nakhawa mentioned he read that 15,000 tonnes of fish had to be dumped, causing a loss of crores of rupees to the industry, and this prompted him to take action. Determined to survive the crisis and get the community back on its feet, Nakhawa, who is the director of Karanja Fishing Co-operative Society in Raigad district, advocated getting fish included in the essential commodities category. By the first week of April, he had managed to get some fishers back to the sea. He highlighted that they had to fix the supply chain as distributors weren't available and they started selling the catch to people directly. Relying on the distributors would also mean that the fishers would have to wait to get money, whereas they were in an urgent need of money, he added. Nakhawa highlighted that in the new practice, they moved away from the popular fish varieties, such as the pomfret, mackerel and Bombay duck, and started supplying local varieties of fish such as groupers, tuna, red snapper, trevally and the Indian sea bass. "What is majorly different here is the industry isn't driven by customer demand anymore. Instead, it has become a fishers-driven venture.

We supply what is available in the ocean and not go out to hunt for what is demanded in the market, he said. Starting with a 50-kg delivery in his hatchback car, Nakhawa mentioned that they deliver around 3,000 kg of fish every day in areas such as Dadar, Mahim, Bandra, Khar, Santacruz and Andheri. This practice helped them cut the middlemen and directly reach the customers. They made B2C or business-to-customer and B2B or business-to-business connections to sell their produce, Nakhawa said. Currently, there are 600 fishers and 50 boats on board this network, from the 6,000 members of the community alone, in the vicinity of Raigad and Mumbai. "We care for the fishers and we care more for the fish. We have ensured that the

fish doesn't lose its value. We bluntly tell customers that the way they cannot expect strawberries in summer, it is wrong to expect a particular fish that's odd for the season, Nakhawa mentioned. Climate change impact Over-exploitation of natural resources by human beings is one of the greatest pressures affecting the structure and functioning of marine ecosystems over short-time scales, according to a 2017 study. Short-term weather changes and climate change also impact the marine ecosystem, the study added.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the changing climatic conditions contribute to ocean warming, rising sea levels, increased extreme weather events, and changes in the chemical makeup of the aquatic environment that impact the world's fisheries and aquaculture sector. Nakhawa said that to ensure sustainable practices, they partnered with Numer8, a data analytics firm working to bring sustainability and traceability in the fishing industry. Devleena Bhattacharjee, the founder of the firm, stated that such a practice helps solve problems faced by two sides of the ecosystem, the fishers and the fish. For small-scale fishers to get a good catch, they need the help of weather safety guidelines and where exactly to fetch, and that is how Numer8 has been helping them, she stated. She added that climate change and heavy industrialisation has disturbed the fish pattern with lesser catch and rough weather, resulting in them having to spend more time at sea. “By burning more fuel, the operating costs have skyrocketed, said Bhattacharjee.

“The bigger aspect is that along with providing fishers with vital weather information, we collect the data about the fish caught, the fishing zones, the owner and teaching to use the right net sizes as prescribed by the government. We are emphasising that fish are allowed at least to breed once in their lifetime before they are caught. Since the details of the catch location and methods along with registered fishers are known, they are being shared with the customers. “We are providing a QR Code on the fish packets sold that displays information on the time where the fish was caught, the location, the fisherman and bring a traceability factor in the fishing industry, Bhattacharjee added. “If we educate the customer, it will change their mindset to take fish from proximity and not from the Indian Ocean or any distant waterbody. At present, the customers don't know where the prawns come from, where they were caught and the freshness aspect of it, she said. Roxy Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, told Mongabay-India that climate change is affecting the fish population and causing fish to change their natural residing location.

“The fish species are migrating Northwards while some species show the Southward trend of the Arabian Sea in search of cooler areas, he added. Koll mentioned that the major reason behind migration is the stress caused by industrial fishing practices owing to the absence of sustainable practices and climate change is only adding to it. “With more popularity, sardines are caught



even before they mature and hence there is a dire need for sustainable practices to evolve soon, he added. Nakhawa highlighted that through the new system, fishers don't have to loan money or pawn off jewellery to survive. While the demand for organic vegetables have grown and farmers have benefitted, he wishes the same for the fishers, helping achieve food security.

### **Maharashtra: Konkan needs help from both, state and central government, says Pawar**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/konkan-needs-help-from-both-state-and-central-government-says-pawar/story-Gd9icHujncHpO3Fq4JQgaM.html>

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said that Konkan is in a bad shape as it was badly affected by Cyclone Nisarga. The people here need immediate relief by both, the state and central government. Pawar said that he will also meet the authorities in Delhi to get all the necessary relief for the affected people at the earliest. Pawar is on a two-day tour to assess the situation in the wake of the damages caused in the region owing to Cyclone Nisarga. On Tuesday, he visited areas such as Mangaon, Mhasla, Diveagar of Raigad. He interacted with villagers to understand their issues and resolve them. He also held a meeting with local MLAs (members of legislative Assembly), members of parliament and senior officials from district administration to assess the damages and relief measures. “Farming and fishing are the two major source of livelihood for the people staying here. I found farmlands were damaged, mango and cashew orchards etc. have been destroyed, a huge number of trees, especially of coconut, have fallen, fishing boats and other equipment of the fishermen have been damaged.

All this at a time when they were already sitting at home for more than two months due to the lockdown, the NCP chief said during a press interaction. At many places, there is no power supply as electricity poles have fallen down. People are also not getting drinking water as pipelines have been damaged. Both need to be restored in the next five to seven days. People should also be provided with food grains, kerosene etc. Those who have already been distributed under Public Distribution System (PDS), should be provided with it again as the stock has been destroyed, Pawar said. “To provide immediate relief to the affected people, the process of conducting panchnama (damage assessment by the local authorities) should be completed as early as possible. I heard a team from central government is also coming to assess the damages. We will take the support of both the state and central government.

We will also meet the concerned authorities in Delhi to provide relief to the affected people, the veteran leader said. On Wednesday, the NCP chief would be visiting Ratnagiri district. On June 3, after the cyclone made landfall in Alibag; Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Thane and Palghar reported severe damages. On June 5, chief minister (CM) Uddhav Thackeray had visited Raigad. He has also announced an immediate relief package of Rs.200 crore for Raigad, Ratnagiri and

Sindhudurg districts. In a review meeting held on June 7, Thackeray said Thane and Palghar did not suffer as much damage as compared to the other districts and relief packages for them will be declared after assessments. On Tuesday, Shiv Sena has declared to start a helpline for the affected people. Those affected can call on 1800228595 and 02224398366 between 11am and 6pm and share damage details.

### **Maharashtra: How Mumbai's fishers adapted in the lockdown, kept their sales alive**

<https://india.mongabay.com/2020/06/how-mumbais-fishers-adapted-in-the-lockdown-kept-their-sale-alive/>

The members of Mumbai's fishing community, the Koli community, have found a sustainable answer to their economic woes brought forth by the lockdown. The lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24, to control the spread of the coronavirus, left many, especially those in the marginalised sectors, without any means to arrange for their daily survival. However, with disruption in the traditional methods of fishing and moving towards sustainability, the fishing community from Mumbai is adapting during the lockdown. "There were hundreds of fishers reaching the coast on March 24 when the lockdown was announced, suspending all activities. Since fish or meat didn't fall into essential commodities, none of the fishers were allowed to get fish at the port for sale by the authorities, said Ganesh Nakhawa, a fisherman from Karanja near Mumbai. Nakhawa mentioned he read that 15,000 tonnes of fish had to be dumped, causing a loss of crores of rupees to the industry, and this prompted him to take action.

Determined to survive the crisis and get the community back on its feet, Nakhawa, who is the director of Karanja Fishing Co-operative Society in Raigad district, advocated getting fish included in the essential commodities category. By the first week of April, he had managed to get some fishers back to the sea. He highlighted that they had to fix the supply chain as distributors weren't available and they started selling the catch to people directly. Relying on the distributors would also mean that the fishers would have to wait to get money whereas they were in an urgent need of money, he added. Nakhawa highlighted that in the new practice, they moved away from the popular fish varieties, such as the pomfret, mackerel and Bombay duck, and started supplying local varieties of fish such as groupers, tuna, red snapper, trevally and the Indian sea bass.

"What is majorly different here is the industry isn't driven by customer demand anymore. Instead, it has become a fishers-driven venture. We supply what is available in the ocean and not go out to hunt for what is demanded in the market, he said. Starting with a 50-kg delivery in his hatchback car, Nakhawa mentioned that they deliver around 3,000 kg of fish every day in areas

such as Dadar, Mahim, Bandra, Khar, Santacruz and Andheri. This practice helped them cut the middlemen and directly reach the customers. They made B2C (business-to-customer) and B2B (business-to-business) connections to sell their produce, Nakhawa added. At present, there are 600 fishers and 50 boats on board this network, from the 6,000 members of the community alone, in the vicinity of Raigad and Mumbai. “We care for the fishers and we care more for the fish. We have ensured that the fish doesn't lose its value. We bluntly tell customers that the way they cannot expect strawberries in summer, it is wrong to expect a particular fish that's odd for the season, Nakhawa mentioned.

Impact of climate change Overexploitation of natural resources by human beings is one of the greatest pressures affecting the structure and functioning of marine ecosystems over short-time scales, according to a 2017 study. Short-term weather changes and climate change also impact the marine ecosystem, the study added. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the changing climatic conditions contribute to ocean warming, rising sea levels, increased extreme weather events, and changes in the chemical makeup of the aquatic environment that impact the world's fisheries and aquaculture sector. Nakhawa said that to ensure sustainable practices, they partnered with Numer8, a data analytics firm working to bring sustainability and traceability in the fishing industry. Devleena Bhattacharjee, the founder of the firm, stated that such a practice helps solve problems faced by two sides of the ecosystem, the fishers and the fish. For small-scale fishers to get a good catch, they need the help of weather safety guidelines and where exactly to fetch, and that is how Numer8 has been helping them, she stated.

She added that climate change and heavy industrialisation has disturbed the fish pattern with lesser catch and rough weather, resulting in them having to spend more time at sea. “By burning more fuel, the operating costs have skyrocketed. The bigger aspect is that along with providing fishers with vital weather information, we collect the data about the fish caught, the fishing zones, the owner and teaching to use the right net sizes as prescribed by the government. We are emphasising that fish are allowed at least to breed once in their lifetime before they are caught, Bhattacharjee said. Since the details of the catch location and methods along with registered fishers are known, they are being shared with the customers. “We are providing a QR Code on the fish packets sold that displays information on the time where the fish was caught, the location, the fisherman and bring a traceability factor in the fishing industry, Bhattacharjee added.

“If we educate the customer, it will change their mindset to take fish from proximity and not from the Indian Ocean or any distant waterbody. At present, the customers don't know where the prawns come from, where they were caught and the freshness aspect of it, she further said. Roxy

Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, told Mongabay-India that climate change is affecting the fish population and causing fish to change their natural residing location. “The fish species are migrating northwards while some species show the southward trend of the Arabian Sea in search of cooler areas, he added. Koll mentioned that the major reason behind migration is the stress caused by industrial fishing practices owing to the absence of sustainable practices and climate change is only adding to it. “With more popularity, sardines are caught even before they mature and hence there is a dire need for sustainable practices to evolve soon, he added. Nakhawa highlighted that through the new system, fishers don't have to loan money or pawn off jewellery to survive. While the demand for organic vegetables have grown and farmers have benefitted, he wishes the same for the fishers, helping achieve food security.

### **Maharashtra: CM announces ₹100 cr ‘first-aid’ for Nisarga-ravaged Raigad**

<https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/national/maharashtra-cm-announces-indian-rupee100-cr-first-aid-for-nisarga-ravaged-raigad>

Two days after Cyclone Nisarga claimed 6 lives and wreaked havoc in over a dozen districts, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday visited Raigad - the worst-hit in Maharashtra and announced an initial aid of Rs. 100 crore. Addressing the media, the CM made it clear that this is not an aid package but just a preliminary amount given to the district for relief works pending completion of formalities before the full package is announced. Thackeray said that priority is being given to restore power and tele-communication lines besides repairing the damaged houses of people. After taking a whirlwind tour of some of the most devastated areas in the district, Thackeray said the work of preparing the 'panchnama', which was ordered within two days may be prolonged as the extent of damage is too widespread.

However, as an immediate relief, he announced Rs 100-crore financial assistance through the district collectorate. We tried our best to ensure there was no loss of lives, but unfortunately, 6 people were killed in the cyclone, said Thackeray. He also assured full help to the farmers and fisherfolk who have suffered huge damage to their crops or fishing boats, and assured nobody would be left in the lurch by the government. Earlier, Thackeray took a Ro-Ro boat for the hour-long ride from Bhaucha Dhakka in south Mumbai to Alibaug on the mainland, accompanied by Ministers Aditya Thackeray, Aslam Shaikh, Additional Chief Secretary A. K. Singh and other senior officials. At Raigad, he went around some of the most ravaged villages along with Guardian Minister Aditi Tatkare, Collector Nidhi Choudhari, Superintendent of Police Anil Paraskar and others, and thanked the people for their support and courage in facing the natural calamity. On Thursday, Energy Minister Dr Nitin Raut had visited Raigad to take stock of the prevailing situation and direct the efforts to restore power supply in the district on top priority.

Simultaneously, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar took a tour of the worst-affected areas in Pune district accompanied by senior officials.

In Raigad, an estimated few lakh homes have been damaged, while around 13,000 'kutcha' houses reduced to rubble; over 100,000 trees uprooted; thousands of electric poles; 14 electric substations and 1,962 transformers were razed; 500 mobile towers have fallen; 10 fishing boats damaged; over 5,033 hectares of farmlands besides 12 acres of fish farms have been destroyed. Thackeray on Thursday held a video-conference meeting with all the District Collectors and Divisional Commissioners for an assessment of the situation and directed that all 'panchnamas' must be completed within 2 days to enable the government extend aid to the affected people. Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Vijay Wadettiwar has said that around 13-14 districts - or more than one-third of Maharashtra's 36 districts - were affected by Nisarga and he would go on a tour from Saturday for a spot assessment of the damages. Nearly 76,200 people from low-lying or risk-prone areas were shifted to safer locations to avoid the cyclone fury which claimed 6 lives and injured another 16 in different parts of the state.

#### **Maharashtra: Cyclone Nisarga: Indian Coast Guard ships relay weather warn**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/cyclone-nisarga-indian-coast-guard-ships-relay-weather-warnings-to-fishermen-mumbai-alert/articleshow/76152331.cms>

The Indian Coast Guard is actively reaching out to fishing trawlers, fishing boats and merchant vessels warning them about Cyclone Nisarga and urging them to return to the shore as soon as possible. As per IMD reports, Cyclone Nisarga currently lies as a depression 490 km from Mumbai, 280 km from Panjim and 710 km from Surat district in Gujarat. Cyclone Nisarga, is expected to cross north Maharashtra and adjoining south Gujarat coast between Harihareshwar (Raigad, Maharashtra) and Daman during Wednesday afternoon. The IMD has issued a Red Alert warning on June 3 for Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Palghar, Nashik, Dhule, Nandurbar. For now it is 490 km away from Mumbai, but when Cyclone Nisarga will cross Mumbai there are chances of very heavy rainfall.

We have issued a red alert for Mumbai as extremely heavy rain is expected at isolated places in Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Nasik, Nandurbar and Dhule on June 3, Shubhangi Bhute, scientist, IMD Mumbai, informed Mirror Online. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday said that the tropical storm Nisarga also called Cyclone Nisarga, which is heading towards Gujarat and Maharashtra, is likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm in the next 24 hours and is expected to make landfall close to Mumbai on June 3. As boats of fishermen from Palghar are still out in the sea, efforts have been stepped up to bring the fishing boats to the nearest harbour so that there is no loss of life at sea during Cyclone Nisarga. As many as 600

fishing boats from Arnala in Palghar had returned, Collector Kailas Shinde told Mirror Online. He said while the rescue operations are on at sea, the district administration has started implementing the plan to evacuate an estimated 42,000 people by Wednesday afternoon before the cyclone's likely landfall later in the evening.

For now it is 490 km away from Mumbai, but when Cyclone Nisarga will cross Mumbai there are chances of very heavy rainfall. We have issued a red alert for Mumbai as extremely heavy rain is expected at isolated places in Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Nasik, Nandurbar and Dhule on June 3, Shubhangi Bhute, scientist, IMD Mumbai, informed Mirror Online. Fishermen are advised not to venture into the Arabian Sea off Maharashtra and Gujarat coasts for the next few days. National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have been deployed in different parts of the state. At least 10 teams are in Maharashtra and 11 teams are in Gujarat. "NDRF is deployed in both the states, 10 teams are in Maharashtra and 11 teams are in Gujarat. However, Gujarat has asked for five more teams so we're getting them airlifted from Punjab. They should be able to reach Gujarat by today night, NDRF Director General SN Pradhan told news agency ANI.

#### **Maharashtra: Utan fishermen seek safe spot to berth 350 boats**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbai-utan-fishermen-seek-safe-spot-to-berth-350-boats/articleshowprint/76168055.cms>

The fishing community is worried about their boats in case Cyclone Nisarga strikes. Fishermen in Utan in Bhayander (West) are running around to find a safe spot to berth around 350 big and small boats. Utan does not have a jetty and boats are berthed on the shore itself. "Boats can be severely damaged if left on the shore when the cyclone strikes. We have been talking to the villagers of Gorai and Manori for space to berth our boats but they are worried about Covid, said Malcolm Kasugar, Thane district president of Akhil Maharashtra Machimar Kriti Samiti. He said while villagers are being told to move to safer and higher areas, authorities are mum on boats, which are their livelihood.

#### **Maharashtra: Cyclone Nisarga: Landfall process begins near Alibaug with strong wind speed of 120-140 kmph**

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/cyclone-nisarga-live-updates-mumbai-on-high-alert-6-feet-waves-expected-2239732?>

Cyclone Nisarga is making landfall in south of Alibaug now with strong wind speed of 120-140 kmph. IMD says it will affect the coastal districts of Maharashtra, including Mumbai, Gujarat and other neighbouring states. Tropical storm Nisarga, which intensified into a severe

cyclonic storm this morning, has made landfall on the Maharashtra coast. This is the second cyclone to strike India in two weeks and the first such storm that will impact Mumbai - the worst-hit city in the country by coronavirus - in over 100 years.

**Maharashtra: Will be most affected by Cyclone 'Nisarga', warns IMD**

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2020/jun/01/maharashtra-will-be-most-affected-by-cyclone-nisarga-warns-imd-2150848.html>

Cyclonic storm 'Nisarga' will affect the coastal districts of Maharashtra, including Mumbai, more than Gujarat and other neighbouring states, the India Meteorological Department said on Monday. The IMD said that the depression in the Arabian Sea is slated to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm 'Nisarga' and cross north Maharashtra and Gujarat coasts between Harihareshwar in Raigad district and Daman on June 3. IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said: Monsoon vortex or cyclonic circulation has formed in the Arabian Sea. As per our predictions, Maharashtra coastal districts like Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Thane, Raigad, Mumbai and Palghar will be more affected by it. This depression is currently 690 km away from Mumbai. There could be inundation in low-lying areas, townships, and city areas. Wind speed could also cause damage to trees, telephone, and electric poles, he added. He said that the rainfall in Maharashtra's coastal districts will increase on June 2 and intensify further on June 3. We are expecting extremely heavy rainfall of more than 20 cm here on June 3.

The current depression is likely to intensify into a deep depression by evening on Monday and become furious and turn into a cyclonic storm in the early hours of the morning on June 2. It will then amplify into a severe cyclonic storm by evening or night of June 3 and make landfall. The Director General said that the severe cyclonic storm will have a wind speed of 90-105 kmph when it crosses the coast. We are accessing it continuously. Central and state government agencies have been informed and are taking the steps, he added. Dr Sunitha Devi, scientist in-charge for cyclones, said that the depression is currently located about 340 km southwest of Goa's Panjim, and 850 km south-south-west of Gujarat's Surat. Maharashtra and Gujarat are on pre-cyclone alert as very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is expected in parts of the states on June 3 and June 4. Due to its influence, the east central Arabian Sea and south east Arabian Sea is currently rough. Fishermen in Kerala, Lakshadweep, coastal Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, and Gujarat are advised not to venture into the sea till June 4.

**Maharashtra: Palghar: Massive evacuation plan underway as cyclone 'Nisarg**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/palghar-massive-evacuation-plan-underway-as-cyclone-nisarga-approaches-100-boats-still-at-sea/articleshow/76137793.cms>

Massive evacuation and preparedness plan is presently underway in Palghar district in view of approaching cyclone 'Nisarga' which is likely to hit the Maharashtra coast in the evening hours on June 3, even as efforts have been stepped up to bring 100 fishing boats, which are still at sea, to safety before they get caught in the cyclone. District Collector of Palghar, Kailash Shinde told Mirror Online on Monday that 577 of the 677 fishing boats from the fishing hamlets dotting the Thane and Palghar district coasts have so far returned to the coast after receiving the alerts about the approaching cyclone. However, 100 of those are still at sea and the district administration is coordinating with the Coast Guard to trace them and bring the people on them back to safety. Each boat is carrying 8-10 fishermen on board, he said. We are using all means to reach out to them. They should be back home before the storm catches up with them, Shinde added. Meanwhile, two teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have arrived in the district to help the district administration in the evacuation and relief works arising out of the cyclone which is likely to be accompanied with heavy downpour and wind speed touching a maximum speed of 105 kmph as per the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast till Monday afternoon.

The district administration took a review meeting with the police and other stakeholders in the disaster management committee to assess the preparedness to meet exigencies. Shinde said that a population of over 45,000 who are living in kuchha houses at various vulnerable areas in the district have been identified and their evacuation to safe locations will begin from Tuesday. These people live in the villages at Arnala, Dahanu and Palghar. He said various schools, Ashram Shalas and halls have been kept ready to accommodate the population while food and other facilities are being arranged for their stay. As the district has been facing repeated instances of earthquakes, the disaster management plan is well in place, Shinde said adding that the existing 100 volunteers in each village will come handy in the present evacuation and rescue plans, along with the police and NDRF personnel. Meanwhile, the district administration is constantly monitoring the IMD updates to decide the closure of the large industrial areas in the Boisar-Tarapur belt in view of the cyclone. If need arises, we will announce the closure of all industries on June 3 so that people won't travel for work at these industries, he said.

**Maharashtra: Cyclone Nisarga likely to become 'severe cyclonic storm' in 24 hrs**

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/cyclone-nisarga-live-updates-cyclone-in-mumbai-maharashtra-gujarat-weather-latest-news-imd-warning-arabian-sea-120060101789\\_1.html#.XtXymHPJTm0.twitter](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/cyclone-nisarga-live-updates-cyclone-in-mumbai-maharashtra-gujarat-weather-latest-news-imd-warning-arabian-sea-120060101789_1.html#.XtXymHPJTm0.twitter)



Ten teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been deployed for rescue operations in view of the 'Nisarga' cyclone, which is likely to hit the west coast of Maharashtra on Wednesday, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said on Tuesday. Elaborating about the government's preparedness for the approaching cyclonic storm, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) tweeted that an alert has been issued for Mumbai city and suburbs, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts. It also said precautions will be taken during relief work given the prevalence of COVID-19.

### **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.

### **Maharashtra: Cyclone expected to hit Maharashtra; CM Uddhav warns fishermen against venturing into sea**

<https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/accidents-and-disasters/cm-uddhav-warns-fishermen-against-venturing-into-sea.html>

After reports that a cyclone is expected to hit the Arabian Sea, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday requested fishermen to avoid venturing into the sea. Addressing a press conference, CM Uddhav said, In the next 2-3 days, a cyclone is expected to hit us. I request fishermen to avoid fishing in the sea for the next 3-4 days. A low-pressure area developing over the Arabian sea is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm in the next 48 hours and hit the coasts of Maharashtra and Gujarat, warned the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The cyclonic storm is set to hit north Maharashtra and south Gujarat coasts around June 3 morning. Fishermen out at sea are advised to return to coasts by May 31.

They are advised not to venture along and off south Gujarat coast on June 2, and along and off north and south Gujarat coast on June 3-4, it added. The cyclonic storm will be accompanied by heavy rains with strong winds in places like Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Palghar, Vapi, Valsad, Surat, Diu-Daman from Tuesday night to Thursday morning. Seas will be very rough, added the weather body. Cyclone 'Nisarga' expected to hit Mumbai Currently, this low-pressure area is situated along the Karnataka-Goa coast and is said to move northward within the next 60 hours and intensify into Category 1 Cyclone Nisarga. There is a chance of further intensification of the cyclone into Category 2. After that, it is said to recurve northeast and cross Mumbai and Diu between Wednesday and Thursday. Reportedly, in view of the developing Cyclone situation in the Arabian Sea, NDRF teams are also being deployed in the State of Maharashtra. The build-up of a cyclonic storm in Gujarat and Maharashtra comes just days after super cyclone Amphan wreaked havoc in West Bengal and Odisha.

Colour-code warnings The IMD has four colour-coded warnings as per the intensity of any weather system -- green, yellow, orange and the last one being red. It has issued an orange-colour coded warning to Kerala, coastal Karnataka, Goa and coastal Maharashtra for June 1. The same warning applies to coastal Maharashtra and Goa for June 2. For June 3, a red-coloured coded warning has been issued to coastal Maharashtra and Goa and an orange coloured warning to Gujarat. The red-coloured warning has been issued to coastal Maharashtra, Goa and entire Gujarat for June 4, Sathi Devi, the head of the National Weather Forecasting Centre, said.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai's fishing community to stage protest against Union Minister Giriraj Singh over contentious order**

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/mumbai-s-fishing-community-to-stage-protest-against-union-minister-giriraj-singh-over-contentious-order-1684017-2020-05-31>

Mumbai's fishing community was issued a warning three days ago by the weather bureau about a cyclonic storm developing off the coast of Karnataka. The warning said that the storm will be heading towards the Maharashtra and Gujarat coast in a day or two. Damodar Tandel, President of the Akhil Bhartiya Machchimar Kruti Samiti said, Annually, May 31 is the last day of fishing. With the arrival of monsoon, the sea becomes choppy and very dangerous. Also, the cyclone was coming so we had been warned well in advance. So, almost every boat is back and no fishing is happening anymore. Fishermen had suffered huge losses during lockdown. To override that, by an order dated May 25, the government amended the uniform fishing ban to 47 days, from June 15 to July 31 on the west coast. The order reasoned that shortening the ban by 14 days this year would help make up for business lost due to restrictions in marine fishing activities during the lockdown.

The National Fishworkers Forum and other fishing organisations had written to Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairy to withdraw the order dated May 25. This, they said was for two reasons. First, fishing at this time would disturb the breeding cycle and second, that the sea is extremely rough and this could lead to loss of life. However, the circular was reportedly not taken back which has led to the fishermen community's decision to stage a protest at 10 AM on Monday morning. We will maintain social distancing but we need to protest against this brainless minister who wants to put our lives at stake and is asking us to go fishing in dangerous water. If fishing boats go into the sea, will Giriraj Singh be responsible for accidents? Asks Damodar Tandel. Through this protest on Monday, the fishermen in Mumbai are also seeking compensation from government-owned ONGC which, they claim, has not paid their dues for many years.

### **Maharashtra: Cyclone Nisarga will cross close to Mumbai, shows IMD track**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/cyclone-nisarga-will-cross-close-to-mumbai-shows-imd-track/story-HYfFLJYska6HuSLXG8SLuM.html>

The well-marked low-pressure area over the south-east and adjoining east-central Arabian Sea and Lakshadweep area has concentrated into a depression on Monday morning. It is located about 370 kilometres (km) southwest of Panjim; 690 km south-southwest of Mumbai and 920 km south-south-west of Surat. The depression likely to intensify into a deep depression over the next 12 hours and a severe cyclonic storm, called Nisarga, by Wednesday. The cyclone track -- issued by India Meteorological Department (IMD) authorities -- show that Nisarga will cross very close to the Mumbai coast while entering the land. Maharashtra and Gujarat are on pre-cyclone alert as very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is expected in parts of the states on Wednesday and Thursday. Initially, Nisarga is likely to move towards northwards till Tuesday morning and then recurve north-northeast wards and cross north Maharashtra and south Gujarat coasts between Harihareshwar (Raigad, Maharashtra) and the union territory of Daman on Wednesday evening. When it crosses the coast as a severe cyclonic storm it will have a wind speed of 105 to 115 km per hour (kmph) gusting up to 125 kmph. Very heavy to extremely heavy rain is expected in Konkan, Goa, parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat till Thursday, according to IMD.

Fishermen are advised not to venture into the south-east Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep area and along and off Kerala coast during next 48 hours; the east-central Arabian Sea and along and off Karnataka-Goa coasts till Wednesday; the east-central Arabian Sea along and off Maharashtra coast and the north-east Arabian Sea along and off Gujarat coast on Wednesday and Thursday because the sea is expected to be very rough. Conditions are favourable for intensification of the cyclone because the sea surface temperature is about 30 to 32 degrees Celsius, as compared to a

normal of 28 degrees Celsius during this season. “We're expecting rapid intensification of the cyclonic system once formed, because sea surface temperature is high, wind shear (variation in wind velocity) is low and ocean heat potential is also high, said Sunita Devi, who is in-charge of cyclones at IMD, on Sunday.

### **Maharashtra: Mumbai’s Bandra-Worli Sea Link is a symbol of aspiration – and reckless development**

<https://scroll.in/article/962964/mumbais-bandra-worli-sea-link-is-a-symbol-of-aspiration-and-reckless-development>

The Bandra Worli Sea Link is an ubiquitous symbol of 21st century Mumbai. The 5.6-kilometre cable-stayed bridge is a remarkable technical feat, the first of its kind built over open seas in India. To Mumbai's elite, the Sea Link epitomises connectivity and a jet-setting lifestyle. To the city's aspiring classes, it is bound up with dreams of dignity and escaping the crushing commute of overcrowded local trains and buses. Visuals of its towering pylons have become staples for photographers, Bollywood films and even some of the city's design iconography. But while the Sea Link has become a prominent architectural landmark, it caters almost exclusively to Mumbai's privileged car-owners. It was not designed for travelling by foot, two-wheelers, three-wheelers or public transport – modes of transit that encompass the majority of trips in the city every day. It is worth examining how the Sea Link has become such a defining feature of the city, its spatial and social impact, and whether similar infrastructure projects should be prioritised in the future.

**Exclusive ridership** The Sea Link is the first major operational part of the planned 36-km Western Freeway from Nariman Point to Mumbai's Western suburbs. Its eight lanes of well-paved tarmac offer a temporary reprieve from Mumbai's potholes and crawling traffic. Many Mumbaikars have grown used to speeding along the Sea Link, only to spend anywhere between 15 and 45 minutes stuck in traffic at Haji Ali while heading south, or idling at interchanges near Lilavati Hospital and Swami Vivekananda Road in Bandra while heading north. As of 2017, data from the toll-collecting entity, MEP Infrastructure Developers, reflects that in contrast to the expected daily traffic of 1.2 lakh vehicles, 37,336 use the Sea Link each day.

The Mumbai Mobility Forum notes that traffic growth on the Bandra Worli Sea Link is only 1% per year. Increases in the toll, the lack of complementary infrastructure and poorly-planned approaches at both ends could explain why the Sea Link caters to less than one-third of the original estimate of the daily average users. This has important financial implications. After initially being estimated at Rs 400 crore, the project cost escalated to more than four times that amount. The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation is yet to recover the Rs 1,634-

crore cost for building the Sea Link and will need to continue charging toll for the next 40 years. Perhaps this planning and accounting failure has prompted the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai to make the Mumbai Coastal Road, for which the southern section alone will cost Rs 12,700 crores, toll-free. Instead of following a users-pay principle, the cost of the coastal freeway will be incumbent on all of Mumbai's taxpayers while catering to one out of 50 citizens – those who own a car and commute along the city's western coast. Over the past year, the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai and its contractors, Larsen & Toubro and Hindustan Construction Company, have been irrevocably transforming the city's western waterfront to build the 9.8-kilometre Coastal Road from the Princess Street Flyover on Marine Drive to Worli Sea Face, where it will connect with the Sea Link. This plan has been contingent on controversial recommendations from a 2006 transportation study.

The report's suggestion to invest in more roads was questioned by several transportation experts and urban planners. In the time that has elapsed since, the nature of mobility in Mumbai has also changed dramatically. In spite of investments in a series of flyovers and freeways, the city's roads have grown even more congested. According to a 2018 study by TomTom, drivers in Mumbai expected to spend an average of 65% extra time stuck in traffic, making it the most congested city in the world. The pattern of land use has also altered considerably as commercial zones are no longer concentrated in the southern business district. This has presented the opportunity to combat the housing and spatial inequalities along Mumbai's North-South axis and invest in East-West connectivity. Most significantly, the city has commissioned 12 Metro lines to reduce traffic congestion and supplement the network of local trains. Metro Line 3, connecting Colaba–Bandra-SEEPZ, in particular, has an expected daily ridership of nearly 14 lakh passengers.

Beyond the glamour The Sea Link quite literally dwarfs what is being left behind and looms large over considerations about what constitutes progress. The bridge is the pride of the city, and to visitors, reflects the idea of Mumbai being modern and developed. Some view its neighbouring fishing village and Grade-I heritage listed Worli Fort as a hindrance to “development. With the sea on three sides, a medieval bastion, and residents who continue to practice artisanal fishing, the Worli Koliwada has much to say about the city's past. The Sea Link has transformed the Kolis' relationship with the sea. Unlike large-scale, commercial trawling, the Kolis' limited resources and sustainable, small-scale practices make them entirely dependent on the tide to harvest catch from the shallow seas.

According to urban researchers Shweta Wagh and Hussain Indorewala, in addition to siltation from the project's construction, the narrow width between pillars of the Sea Link's southern viaduct have made it dangerous for fishermen to navigate their boats. This has considerably

decreased the window in which they can make safe passage to their nets just beyond the Sea Link, as there is the danger of crashing into submerged rocks or the bridge's supporting pillars. To add to the fishermen's woes, the dumping of debris for the Coastal Road could entirely decimate their livelihood by destroying the rocky intertidal shore that fish use as their breeding grounds. In the last decade, marine biologists and enthusiasts have paid closer attention to Mumbai's coastal ecology, which supports a range of aquatic species including corals.

It would be a grave injustice to destroy these social practices and marine life to facilitate a car-centric model of urban development. No after-thoughts, such as compensation to the Kolis or transplanting of corals, would make up for the damage to Mumbai's social and environmental fabric. The Mahim Bay has also been collateral damage. According to some scientists, alteration in tidal patterns because of reclamation for the Sea Link has led to the erosion of beaches at Mahim and Dadar. Largely out of sight to the city's elite and tourists, the beach lies strewn with trash. Recently, citizen groups such as Mahim Beach Clean Up have taken it upon themselves to sort, separate and clean the waste that washes up on the shores. Perhaps Mahim Fort will also need similar attention from citizens in order to battle the forces of tide and time. Built in the 16th century, the fort was established as a strategic stronghold to protect the city from pirates and invaders. But its foundations are crumbling and after years of willful neglect, the structure is imperiled by the misplaced priorities of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai...

### **Maharashtra: Jobs for 600 with 3,000 kg fish sold direct-to-home**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/jobs-for-600-with-3000-kg-fish-sold-direct-to-home/articleshow/76049224.cms>

Like vegetables and grains, why hasn't there been enough fish on our plate during the lockdown? That's because though seafood is on the list of essential commodities, ice isn't. And by the time the Centre announced its fifth addendum to lockdown guidelines on April 10 and exempted marine fishing and related activities from restrictions, lakhs of desperate workers had already left the city's docks, leaving behind an ominous silence. Determined to weather the storm, Ganesh Nakhawa, a fisherman from Karanja, has started running a mini fish market out of his home. Armed with a business degree from Edinburgh's Napier University, not only has he designed a unique direct-to-home model, he has also generated revenue for 600 fisherfolk and engaged scores of out-of-job fisherwomen for cutting and cleaning. Small-scale fishing had already crippled within days of the lockdown being announced and hand-to-mouth workers had started pawning gold jewellery for one square meal a day.

A distressed Nakhawa started airing their grievances on social media and posted pictures of fresh catch brought in by some fishermen from his community. One such post caught the attention of

Andheri-based Myron Mendes, who works with the Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change. Mendes asked Nakhawa if he would deliver fresh catch to him and his neighbours. Nakhawa jumped at the chance and carried 50 kg of fish on that first trip to the city in the second week of April. It took him an hour to drive the distance that usually takes three hours. The entire catch, which included pomfret, prawns, white prawns, barracuda and squid, sold out. To clean 50 kg of prawns, we need to employ 20 women. Ganesh Nakhawa The next order from Mendes was 175 kg. Nakhawa's Instagram posts also attracted other customers, and by April 18 his car was proving to be too small to fit in the increasing orders.

He pulled out the rear seats, got a member of his community to revamp the vehicle to carry cold storage boxes, and labelled the car with his Insta handle, 'The Last Fisherman of Bombay', inspired by a mural he'd seen during an art festival at Sassoon Dock. By April 22, he was delivering 200 kg of fish every day to Dadar, Mahim, Bandra, Khar, Santacruz and Juhu, in addition to Andheri. Directly selling the catch by early May, Nakhawa and his team were directly selling the catch from 25 fishing boats, helping bring back to business almost 500 fishermen and 20 women from the community.

To clean 50 kg of prawns, we need to employ 20 women, he said. Nakhawa's home in the Karanja fishing village has now turned into a small fish market. The 400-sqft ground floor is a godown packed with storage boxes ready for delivery, other 200-sqft-rooms are being used for cleaning fish (some of his team clean the seafood outside their own homes to strictly maintain physical distance), and a small living area has become a 'tech room', where youngsters from the community manage the delivery logistics, sitting two metres apart from each other. Never in my wildest dreams had I thought that this would be possible, said Nakhawa, with a touch of pride. His LinkedIn profile says he is on a mission to make fisheries sustainable, and he has now engaged the services of a tempo-owner to meet the current demand of 3,000 kg of fish every day for retailers, wholesalers and endconsumers.

### **Maharashtra: Never seen such difficult times in 45 years**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/never-seen-such-difficult-times-in-45-years-6424518/>

At the Koldongri fish market in Andheri (East) this week, a middle-aged fisherwoman tried to convince a customer to buy two lots of fresh prawns instead of one and promised a good price. Manda Maushi (aunt), as she is fondly called by the other fisherwomen in the market, located very close to a traffic junction, says they have only a few more days of business. “Ata June mahina aala ki sagla bandh (Once June arrives, everything will be closed), she says. For those who take their seafood seriously, the market is open three days a week is a much-needed service. While no one enforces or monitors distancing norms, even in one of the busiest suburbs of Mumbai, the city with the highest number of Covid-19 cases in India, buyers self-regulate, every so often redefining ‘safe distance’ as it suits them.

There are men and women, wearing face masks, some wearing face shields and everyone taking extra care to ensure they don't brush past each other. Unlike a quintessential fish market, the Koldongri crowd of buyers was thin and the market rather quiet. In 45 years that she has been selling fish at the market, Manda Maushi says there hasn't been a time more restless. Reshma Shaikh, a younger fisherwoman, who travels from Madh Island to Andheri to sell her catch, supports a family of four. “Monsoon is almost here. Now for three months I'll have to sit at home. Not that I want to but what option do I have? I am selling whatever little I can and hoping that this money and our savings will somehow help us tide over the next three months, she says. The economic relief package announced by the Centre for fisheries means nothing to the woman in the yellow saree, covering her face with a green cloth mask. “Is any money going to come into our bank accounts? If not, then the scheme is of no use to us, Shaikh says. Two cyclonic storms last year kept fishermen off the sea for about 60-65 days, almost halving their catch.

While there were no curbs on fishing even during the lockdown after April 15, logistical problems and closure of major markets in Mumbai had dented business forcing many to pull their trawlers ashore. Purse Seine Fishermen Welfare Association chairman Ganesh Nakhwa feels the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) under which the Centre made an allocation of Rs 20,050 crore for fisheries and aquaculture recently may just be old wine in a new bottle. “I am still awaiting a loan under the three year old (Blue Revolution) scheme. Who designed the new scheme? Do they even have knowledge of what can really help fishermen at a time like this, he laments. Nakhwa has now taken 50 fishermen on board and started reaching consumers directly through e-commerce platforms.

“We have done this on our own and we have been able to send 50 tonnes of fish directly to consumers, said Nakhwa. The state fisheries commissioner had last month estimated the actual loss of fish production over March, April and May to be 80 per cent of the expected production. State government officials said to avail the PMMSY, it will first have to go through the rigours of procedures that may take up to five months. The scheme will implemented in a two-pronged



way – Central Sector Scheme in which the Centre will have a 100 percent share and the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) in which the burden will be borne by the Centre and state in a 60:40 arrangement. For the CSS, three heads will have to be created and approved by the finance department, presented before the assembly and it would take four to five months to obtain all clearances, an official said.

He, however, added that although fishing activity may have been hit amid the lockdown, with reduced water pollution, it has been a good time for fish breeding and fish seeding that, he said, would ensure there is no shortage of seafood in the markets in the months ahead. Damodar Tandel, president of Akhil Maharashtra Machcimar Kriti Samiti, however, said the state government has time and again announced relief packages for distressed farmers will now have to do the same for its fishermen. “What happened to the Blue Revolution scheme? We haven't received a penny under it. We are sourcing ration supplies for poor fisherman through our society. What have fishermen got in all these years from the state government? It will have to think of us now.

### **Karnataka: Govt bans entry of people from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, and 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.

### **Maharashtra: In less than a year, 59 fishermen awarded Rs. 11.9L for rescuing protected marine animals**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/in-less-than-a-year-59-fishermen-awarded-11-91-for-rescuing-protected-marine-animals/story-W7UDDDsuijFDPLexdzNtKI.html>

In less than a year, the Maharashtra fishing community has rescued 64 protected and endangered marine mammals caught in their fishing nets. The state mangrove cell on Sunday said 59 fishermen were compensated with Rs.11,94,350 for the safe release of these marine species over the past 10 months. Within the last seven days, 19 fishers were compensated with an amount of Rs.3,65,000 across Thane, Raigad and Palghar. The compensation scheme for the conservation practice was launched by the mangrove cell and fisheries department on December 21, 2018, and was subsequently passed by the state Cabinet. Endangered marine animals, protected under various schedules of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, get caught in large trawler fishing nets and are rescued by cutting these fishnets. However, while the animals survive once the nets are cut, the fishing community endures a loss due to damaged nets. Hence, for such rescues a monetary compensation of up to Rs.25,000 was proposed if the fisher can submit evidence of the rescue and damaged nets to the state. “Through several awareness drives and local outreach programmes, we managed to convince 1,100 members of the fishing community along the Konkan coast about the value of endangered marine species. The efforts have resulted in mutual benefit of marine life and the community, said Virendra Tiwari, additional principal chief conservator of forest (mangrove cell).

So far, 27 olive ridley turtles, 17 whale sharks, 16 green sea turtles, one case each for hawksbill turtle, leatherback turtle, Indian Ocean humpback dolphin and giant guitar fish, all majorly Schedule I species under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, have been rescued. While maximum cases have been reported from Thane district (23), Sindhudurg reported 16 cases, Raigad 13, Palghar 9, Ratnagiri 2, and one case in Mumbai. “Of the total of 64 cases reported so far, five fishermen are yet to be compensated as we are still verifying the evidence, said Tiwari. “Our researchers are also benefiting from this scheme as the fishing community has been sharing vital information about habitat preferences and occurrences of rare marine life along the state's coastline. We are planning detailed conservation studies across such zones. The state's coastline had witnessed a surge in marine mammal deaths and stranding incidents (143 cases) between 2016 and 2019. However, the frequency of such cases has reduced over the past year.

**Maharashtra: COVID-19 pandemic takes the wind out of fisherfolk's sails**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/covid-19-pandemic-takes-the-wind-out-of-fisherfolks-sails/article31597814.ece>

Sarita Koli and her mother have been selling fish at Lalbaug market all their lives, each bringing in Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 a day. Ever since the COVID-19 lockdown began, their entire family in Worli Koliwada is at home with no income. Her son Sunil is worried about the uncertainty. “We don't even know if fishing will resume after the monsoon. If this goes on, some fisherfolk might commit suicide, he says. Two cyclones ravaged the beginning of their season, followed by a slack winter, COVID-19, the economic slowdown. And now, with the approaching monsoon, Maharashtra's fishermen stare at the loss of an entire year's business. Even though fishing has been exempted from the lockdown, unions and marine research institute scientists estimate only about 30% to 40% fishing has taken place in the State. In Mumbai, Koliwadās in Worli, Juhu and Khar are under the grip of COVID-19. As the monsoon approaches, fisherfolk are staring at a period of another three months of no income.

Dry season the fishing year typically starts in August. In October 2019, Maharashtra's fishermen could not venture into the sea due to Cyclone Kyarr and in November, due to Cyclone Maha. With the beginning of their season ruined, fishermen headed into the slack season of December and January when the catch diminishes due to the cold. They were hoping to salvage the year in the February to May period, when COVID-19 hit them harder than both these cyclones combined. “My family has been in the fishing business for generations and I have never seen such a year, says Devendra Kale, member of Vesava Koli Nakhwa Machhimar Mandal. “In Versova, for every fishing boat, the owner has suffered losses of Rs. 15 lakh to Rs. 20 lakh this year.

In April, a month after the lockdown took effect, the Central government exempted the fishing and marine aquaculture industry, on condition that maintain physical distancing and hygiene norms. Soon after, the Maharashtra government issued rules for fishing activities wherein roadside stalls were banned but home delivery was allowed. Despite the order, little to no fishing has taken place off the coast of Maharashtra in April or May. Soon after the lockdown, social media was abuzz with images of fishermen dumping their catch back into the sea. Hundreds of fisherfolk remained stranded at sea after the lockdown and had to be brought back to safety. Once that happened, a majority of fisherfolk have not ventured into the sea, be it in Mumbai or anywhere in the rest of the State. Kiran Koli, secretary of the Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti (MMKS), pegged the losses at Rs. 1,000 crore in Mumbai alone. “Even though fishing has been exempted, where do we take the catch? The market, cold storage and export is shut, said Mr. Koli. China, he said, imports 80% of the fish, and small fishermen have suffered the most as they live hand to mouth. “People have loans from fishermen's societies and banks, why aren't these being waived? If farmers are given aid after a failed season, why doesn't anyone talk about fishermen? If this persists, fishermen might starve to death.

On May 14, the MMKS wrote the CM demanding the State compensate boat owners and workers for their losses, provide rations to all fishermen for the next few months, release the pending diesel subsidy and provide Rs. 5 lakh in loans to every boat owner for the next season as well. Parshuram Meher, a fisherman from Cuffe Parade and the Mumbai unit head of MMKS said while the government has allowed fishing, “the 43 conditions imposed on them are so stringent that nobody can follow them. “If we buy diesel on the open market, we will get no subsidy. We have a large outstanding in terms of the earlier diesel subsidy. Exporters have suffered terrible losses as well. Fishermen have taken loans from fishing societies or banks which they cannot repay this year. Besides, they also have no capital for the next season. The COVID-19 scourge In Mumbai, the problem has been compounded by the fact that most Koliwadass or fishing villages had COVID-19 cases.

The first case in Mumbai was reported in Worli Koliwada in March, and the G South ward that consists of Worli, has more than 1,000 cases so far. The fishing village's architecture and the congested shanties made containment of the virus impossible, resulting in the compounding of cases. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation recently declared large portions of the fishing village decontaminated, and even allowed fishing in small numbers. “The new order to allow fishing is too little, too late. In Koliwada, most people are dependent entirely on fishing. We are being provided dal or rice as part of our rations or khichdi as cooked food, but that is not all one can live on. People have rent, loans, pending fees to pay. And who is to say fishing will resume after the monsoon? Even if it does, will people come to fish markets? Asked Mr. Koli from Worli Koliwada. Several COVID-19 cases have also emerged from Juhu Koliwada, Versova, Khar Danda, Uttan, Gorai and Madh all of them traditional fishing villages.

Narendra Patil, a fisherman from Satpati (Palghar) and President of National Fishworkers Forum said the government needs to at least waive interest on earlier loans, and give zero interest loans for the coming year. There are 22,000 mechanised and non-mechanised fishing boats in Maharashtra and on an average, 10 people work on each boat, he said. “There has been no fishing this season. Among the last boats that came to Satpati, we had around 10-12 tonnes of fish, which we struggled to sell. This year, only 30% fishing has happened at best, he said. A fishing drought, he said, can be declared only if there is less than 50% fishing for three years in a row. There could be at least four lakh beneficiaries of relief in the State, said Rajendra Jadhav, joint commissioner (fisheries) in Maharashtra.

“Fishing is less than usual, but we don't have the exact loss figures. For the next season, we have started issuing the Kisan Credit Card and they will get loans through these. Dr. Akhilesh K.V., a scientist from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mumbai pegged the reduction in fishing activities since January at more than 60%. Generally speaking, he said, there has been a

significant dip in fishing during the lockdown, which has impacted mainly small fisherfolk and women vendors. “The sector's running depends not only on fishing but an entire chain of activities, and for this, there is need for labour, ice, transport and so on, which is limited during a lockdown. This is expected to be a tough year, he said. For the fisherfolk, it looks like an uncertain future.

### **Maharashtra: Cops punish women for catching clamps on Satpati seashore**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/palghar-cops-punish-women-for-catching-clamps-at-satpati/articleshow/75742473.cms>

A video of policemen punishing women for catching clamps on the seashore in Satpati in Palghar district of Maharashtra has gone viral. The central fisheries department has directed the Palghar police to investigate the matter. The video shot by Satpati coastal police shows the women from the village being made to do sit-ups for catching shellfish from the shore. The video shows the cops threatening to make the video viral. The video that was widely circulated among the fisher folks has led to unrest among the community. Fishermen said that despite the lockdown, there is no ban on fishing. While deep sea fishing has come to a halt, small and medium-sized boats are carrying out fishing in the shallow waters. Fishing has reduced as fishermen are finding it difficult to stock the catch and transport it to the market. Fishermen said that it is a regular practice for women to go to the seashore in the morning (after high tide) to pick up shellfish. The women from the Satpati village were up in arms after the video of the punishment went viral on social media platforms. Satpati is one of the biggest fishing village in Maharashtra. Fishermen said that they are facing massive losses as stocking and transportation of fish during the lockdown has become a problem.

### **Maharashtra: No respite for Worli Koliwada fishermen as BMC allows only 5 boats into waters**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/sea-of-woes-for-worli-koliwada-fishermen-as-bmc-allows-only-5-boats-into-waters>

The Worli Koliwada area was the first to go 'under' after being declared a containment zone on March 29, when some residents tested positive for Covid-19. Though the area has been partially unsealed now, there is no respite for fishermen. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) notification of May 11 only allows five boats to venture into the sea daily and restricts fishermen in the 16 red zones from going to work. Besides this, the civic body has stipulated that their catch cannot be sold in the market but should be dried and sold only when the situation returns to normal. Most of the fishermen are upset by these restrictions, as they

reside in the 16 red zones in Worli Koliwada. They are worried about how they will take care of their daily needs, as May has begun and in June, once the rains set in, they cannot venture into the sea for a while.

The Worli Koliwada Nakwa Masya Vyavsay Society Limited (fishermen's association) has demanded compensation from the government for the loss of business amid the lockdown. Nitesh Patil, secretary of this association said, there are about 150 boats in Worli Koliwada alone. Since the BMC is now permitting only five boats daily, who can go and who cannot? This will lead to fights amongst us as we are all equally affected. Therefore, we have demanded that all of us be permitted to venture into the sea because not all boats leave and return at same time. Moreover, we have less than a month left for business. How are we going to survive? If they don't want us to go to sea, then every fisherman's family should be given Rs 15,000 per month as compensation until the lockdown is lifted. Another problem is that during the rainy season, when the seas are rough, fishermen must make frequent visits to check on their boats. If the boats are flooded with water due to rise in sea level, we remove this excess water, to prevent it from getting submerged or otherwise damaged. But, if the area remains sealed, how are we going to check on our boats this rainy season? Patil questioned

### **Maharashtra: Lockdown renders Mumbai's fisher folk jobless**

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/lockdown-renders-mumbais-fisher-folk-jobless/slideshow/75690545.cms>

**Out of business:** The lockdown has put a majority of Mumbai's fishing community out of work. With fish markets closed, many are finding it hard to sustain their livelihood. Thousands of fishing boats are lying useless and the community members are staring at a financial crisis. **Markets fall silent:** Some of the busiest fish markets, including at the Sassoon Dock in Colaba, Crawford Market in south Mumbai, Bhaucha Dhakka, or ferry wharf near the Dockyard, the Kasara fish market in neighbouring Thane and others, which used to be bustling with activity and business every day are shut. **Fight for survival:** The fish market at the Sassoon Dock alone used to clock a daily turnover of about Rs two crore, but is devoid of business activity these days. Over one lakh fishing community members, who were largely dependent for their livelihood on fish sale at the Sassoon Dock and other markets, are finding it difficult to survive.

**From colonies to containment zones:** The civic health authorities have so far declared three fishing colonies as 'containment zones' and imposed lockdown by barring all entry-exit points there. They are: Versova fishing colony, Mahim fishermen colony, both isolated this week, and earlier last month, it was the Worli Koliwada. The drastic move was implemented after more than a dozen fishermen have been detected Covid-19 positive in both Versova and Mahim

colonies. The lion's share of India's tally: Maharashtra continues to be the worst-hit state in India, with Mumbai alone reporting 528 deaths and over 14,500 cases, as on May 12. Dharavi slum alone continued to be a major hotspot in Mumbai, notching 57 new cases, taking the total number of patients to 916, and 29 deaths till now.

### **Maharashtra: BMC offers Worli fishermen soft start to fishing activities**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/bmc-offers-worli-fishermen-soft-start-to-fishing-activities/story-kYxbYdOSovhEMm9IgWonEJ.html>

With the onset of monsoon just a month away from leaving a small window for fishing activities, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) may allow fishermen from Worli Koliwada to venture out to sea for fishing. According to preliminary discussions between BMC, Mumbai Police and a fishermen association's in Worli Koliwada, a maximum of five boats from each of the three jetties will be allowed to venture out to sea one at a time. However, fishermen will not be allowed to sell their catch in the market. They will only be allowed to dry and stock the fish to be sold later. Alongside the five-boat daily limit, the BMC has put several conditions on the fishermen to maintain social distancing. The Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavasay Sahkari Society confirmed that fishing is being allowed but the stock can only be sold during monsoon, but not before July.

The Worli fishing community is yet to respond to the offer by BMC to allow five boats to conduct fishing activities daily. An officer from Dadar police station, under which Worli Koliwada falls, said, "Under no scenario, permission for selling of fish will be allowed, for now, considering there are containment zones in Worli Koliwada. BMC has agreed to allow fishing with several conditions, but the fishermen have not responded yet. Currently, no fishing activity is permitted. However, Nitesh Patil of the fishermen's association, said, "We have two associations in this area and there are around 200 fishermen owning boats. If BMC limits the number of boats that can ply daily, everyone will not get a chance to fish. Starting June 1, there will be restrictions on venturing into the sea due to the onset of monsoon. Patil said that allowing only five boats per day from each jetty would cause internal fights among fishermen. "Several other conditions put by BMC, like only having two persons on fishing boats, are all impractical. One person is required to handle the engine; two are required to handle the fishing net. Fishermen from Worli Koliwada said that in 2019, on two occasions they were restricted from venturing into the sea due to cyclone alerts. It was only in January 2020 when they started full-time fishing.

However, starting March 24, all fishing activities were restricted, causing financial distress for a majority of the fishing families. "We could not do any business last year, this year, and even for

the period during monsoon, we are not being allowed to venture into the sea. This will ruin our finances considering even small boat owners will require at least 50,000 in hand for dry docking and maintenance of the boats for when we start fishing post-monsoon. For this, we need money and BMC has to allow everyone to venture into the sea for fishing. We are ready to take all precautions of social distancing. If not fishing, the government should give us monetary compensation, said Patil. Worli Koliwada and its surrounding areas like Janata Nagar, Worli Sea Face, and Prabhadevi fall under BMC's G South ward – one of the areas most affected by Covid-19. Worli Koliwada alone has reported close to 95 coronavirus cases.

When contacted, Sharad Ughade, assistant municipal commissioner of BMC's G South ward, was not available for comment. However, local Shiv Sena leader Sachin Ahir from Worli, said, “We have given them the option that on a rotational basis they should venture out to sea and do fishing, but it seems they have not agreed to it. It is always better to start with something rather than starting everything at one go and risking lives. If we allow movement as we did earlier, there are chances of fresh cases. Health safety is of top priority in the phase we are going through.

### **Maharashtra: India’s environment ministry has hit the brakes on Mumbai’s Rs 364-crore marina project**

<https://scroll.in/article/961536/indias-environment-ministry-has-hit-the-brakes-on-mumbais-rs-364-crore-marina-project>

Expressing concern over the route of migratory birds, an expert panel of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has, for now, refused to consider a proposal from the Mumbai Port Trust, related to the development of a marina in Mumbai. The proposal of the Mumbai Port Trust, also known as MbPT, which sought Coastal Regulation Zone clearance, was considered by the environment ministry's Expert Appraisal Committee for projects related to the Coastal Regulation Zone in its meeting on April 28. This project was one among the nearly 200 projects that the ministry's expert panels considered in its meetings via video conferences for green clearances or Terms of Reference during the Covid-19 lockdown. These are the guidelines for conducting environmental studies of projects after which a project is considered for clearance by the Expert Appraisal Committees, or EACs. In some of the meetings, the expert panels admitted they are facing a time crunch in properly discussing the project. The marina project during the meeting on April 28, the EAC dealing with Coastal Regulation Zones was informed that the Mumbai Marina project is proposed at “Princess Dock by restoring water bodies by re-excavation of existing part basin, for providing sheltered yacht berthing and marina ancillaries. The plan is to create a “much needed and “iconic marina for Mumbai along with its supporting ancillary activities.



Considering the historical-cultural importance of India's financial and commercial capital, the idea is also to look at the marina from the perspective of opening the “city to tourism by sea. At present, India's only functional marina is in Kochi in Kerala. According to the information provided to the EAC during the meeting, the Mumbai Marina project includes 8.02 hectares of land area – 5.20 hectares for the marina basin, one hectare for an ancillary center, 0.84 hectare for the walkway, and 0.98 hectare for yacht repair and maintenance. The project's cost is estimated to be about Rs 364.84 crore. The Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority has already recommended the above proposal for clearance in December 2019. The Authority, while recommending the proposal to the environment ministry in December 2019, had noted that earlier there was a plan for construction of an offshore container terminal project at Princess Dock, based on a ministry clearance in 2006. Accordingly, the reclamation work had also started and completed in 2015-'16, with a few pockets not fully reclaimed. The MCZMA letter noted that since the terminal project is shelved, the MbPT's marina project envisages excavation of the 2.5 lakh-cubic metre reclaimed area.

This point was further stressed upon during the EAC's meeting in April. According to the minutes of the meeting, the project proponent informed that “due to de-industrialisation in the Mumbai region, there is a general decline in all kinds of port activities at the Mumbai Port. For decades, Mumbai Port has been the principal gateway to India and remained India's premier port. It played a pivotal role in the development of the national economy and prosperity of Mumbai city. Even though Mumbai Port is facing challenges posed by competition from adjoining ports and private ports, changing traffic patterns, inherent physical constraints and continuing labour intensive operations, etc, it still caters to 10% of India's sea-borne trade handled by major ports of the country in terms of volume. It caters about 19% of Point of Loading traffic handled by major ports. Leisure activities The Princess Dock at Mazgaon in South Mumbai was built in the 18th century during the British rule in India to manage the increase of maritime traffic in Mumbai.

In 2013, it was filled up to create a new container terminal in the Mumbai Port. Following that, in 2017 after a container terminal was developed at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Navi Mumbai, the Mumbai Port Trust decided to develop the Princess Dock area for leisure activities more suitable with urban uses. During the April meeting, the EAC was told that the rise of the new Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust across the bay, in the second half of 1980s, has resulted in the diversion of almost the entire container cargo segment to the new container port. The MbPT stressed that further said that large parcels of land along the Eastern waterfront that have become redundant for port purpose can be put to good use for meeting the urban development needs of the city and thus, the “masterplan carried out from the MbPT proposes the development of a great part of the Mumbai Port in an urban waterfront. While making a case for the marina

project, the detailed project report said that “a considerable fact for a marina in Mumbai is the high number of yachts that visit or are based in the city. Moreover, the fleet anchors the Gateway of India monument, requiring owners to step on-board via a small slipway or, in the case of larger yachts, hire tenders to ferry them around, added the report.

“Having the most number of privately owned leisure boats, it is a ready market for the marina. Due to unavailability of a designated marina of Mumbai, at any given time, around 200 small leisure boats can be seen moored near the Gateway of India. The panel was informed that the excavated earth will be utilised for Jawahar Dweep reclamation work which is under progress. Jawahar Dweep is a small island off the coast of Mumbai where land reclamation work of MbPT is going on. However, the environment ministry's expert panel was not fully convinced about the excavation at Princess Dock and had concerns regarding migratory birds. The EAC “desired to know the impact of such reclamation on near shore areas for migratory birds and roosting sites if any, with focus on whether such reclamation and subsequent impact on migratory birds will affect Navi Mumbai International Airport air safety. Impact on birds The EAC noted it has received a representation from a non-governmental organisation, which contains “few valid concerns and therefore the project proponent shall provide its written response.

It observed that as indicated in the representation received, information on avian fauna [migratory birds] in the region may be submitted for the perusal of the committee. Shashank Dalvi, who is an ornithologist and director of Eco-Connect Ventures, an environmental think tank, said a proper study is required to understand the correct behaviour of the birds at Princess Dock area and surrounding areas. “Though a good part of Mumbai falls in the migratory birds' route, it is better to conduct a multi-season and multi taxa study to correctly understand the behaviour of migratory birds. That will give a correct idea of the impact of the project on the route of the birds and vice versa, Dalvi told Mongabay-India. A recent news report highlighted that wetlands along the Thane creek and Mumbai harbour have been included in the Central Asian Flyway, which is one among nine migratory flyways identified under the international Convention of Migratory Species. Additionally, the expert panel also noted that the project envisages the establishment of a yacht repair facility, including handling of bunker water and therefore oil spills and management of waste oil and other hazardous materials should find elaborate details in the environmental impact assessment report.

“The committee was of the opinion that the project proponent need to be mindful of the increase in traffic volume due to the recreational facility now envisaged and details on the same need to be presented, noted the committee as per the minutes of the April meeting. “The detailed design of marina such as its water spread area, navigational requirements and impact during floods/storm surge should be submitted. In view of the above and considering that such details as

noted above could not be forthcoming from the project proponent during the course of the video conferencing presentation, the Committee decided that these details can be submitted and a view can be taken at a later stage. It “deferred the proposal “for reconsideration at a later stage. Other deferred projects while the EACs have cleared many projects – including the controversial one related to India's new Parliament building – some sector-specific EACs have deferred clearances for others due to environmental concerns, violations of previous clearance conditions or incomplete information. For instance, the expert panel on coastal regulation zone projects also discussed Gujarat government's proposal seeking a clearance for 3,400-megawatt of the solar project at Dholera Special Investment Region near ecologically sensitive Gulf of Khambat in Gujarat. It is part of 4,400 MW solar power park.

Last year, in January 2019, this EAC had recommended clearance to the first phase of this project by giving a go-ahead for 1,000 MW. The panel had asked for a series of studies focusing on erosion, sea-level rise and impact on migratory birds. However, the EAC noted that “the studies/reports desired by the committee in its earlier meeting held on January 25, 2019, are yet to be submitted and the recommendation made while agreeing to the 1000 MW was very explicit. The panel noted that “it would be premature and would be perfunctory to proceed further and appraise/recommend inclusion of the remaining 3,400 MW at this stage. It “declined to consider the request of the Gujarat government and deferred the project. In another example, the expert panel on thermal power projects plants deferred environment clearance for 2,400-megawatt Talabira thermal power project of NLC India in Jharsuguda, Odisha.

The panel noted that the environmental impact assessment report does not address important points and asked the company to revise the EIA report which is missing socio-impact assessment study, water sustainability study and study on cumulative impacts of existing industries within the study area. The EAC on coal mining in its April meeting deferred environment clearance for Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation Limited's Suliari coal mining project of five million tonnes per annum in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh. The panel returned the proposal and noted that they had “very limited time to go through the detailed proposal. In another example, the EAC on industry projects returned a proposal regarding the expansion of a rolling mill in Ludhiana, Punjab, observing that the project area is in a “critically polluted area and the project proponent “don't have any definite plan for surface water availability and acquisition of land for 40 percent green belt development. The EAC on non-coal mining deferred a diamond mine proposal in Panna, Madhya Pradesh, as the project proponent didn't have “recommendation of the Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court or “valid forest clearance among other things.

### **Maharashtra: Fishing community hit hard by lockdown**

<https://www.businessinsider.in/india/news/mumbais-fishing-community-hit-hard-by-lockdown/articleshow/75688604.cms>

The coronavirus-enforced lockdown has severely affected Mumbai's fisher folk as many of them have been rendered jobless and are finding it hard to sustain their livelihood since fish markets are lying closed. Some of the busiest fish markets, including at the Sassoon Dock in Colaba, Crawford Market in south Mumbai, Bhaucha Dhakka, or ferry wharf near the Dockyard, the Kasara fish market in neighbouring Thane and others, which used to be bustling with activity and business every day are shut. Thousands of fishing boats are lying useless and the community members are staring at a financial crisis. The fish market at the Sassoon Dock alone used to clock a daily turnover of about Rs two crore, but is devoid of business activity these days. Over one lakh fishing community members, who were largely dependent for their livelihood on fish sale at the Sassoon Dock and other markets, are finding it difficult to survive. Maharashtra Akhil Bhartiya Koli Mahasangh women's wing member Naina Patil said over 20,000 women from the community sell fish in the city to run their families. I also sell fish at the Kalina market. But in the wake of the lockdown, all markets are closed and our businesses have stopped. We are now spending our savings to survive. If the markets open in future, from where will we get the money to procure fish for sale?

A few NGOs have come forward to help the fisher folk by providing them essential items, she said. But, this is not enough. We demand that the state and the central government do something for us, Patil said. Akhil Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti president Damodar Tandel said all the major fish markets and 20 to 25 fishing jetty points in the city are shut. He claimed the fisheries commissioner has laid some conditions for fishing to resume, which are not possible for them to follow. Earlier, we used to earn about Rs 1,000 per day, but now we are doing some odd jobs to survive as the fishing activity has almost stopped, a fisherwoman said.

### **Maharashtra: Boost for greens' drive to save Navi Mumbai wetlands, mangroves**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/navi-mumbai/boost-for-greens-drive-to-save-navi-mumbai-wetlands-mangroves/articleshow/75672012.cms>

As the world celebrated the Migratory Bird Day last Saturday, environmentalists campaigning to save mangroves and wetlands in Navi Mumbai have received a big boost as the Union environment ministry amended CRZ norms protecting mangroves, while the State Mangrove Cell has proposed to protect and conserve five wetlands including Panje under the wildlife protection Act. TOI had recently reported that chief minister Uddhav Thackeray has already asked the state environment department to look into the complaints of destruction of Panje and other wetlands in this region. Virendra Tiwari, additional principal chief conservator of forests

in the Mumbai-based Mangrove Cell, has written to Cidco vice chairman and Raigad and Thane district collectors proposing that the organisation would like to conserve the wetlands at TS Chanakya and Talawe in Nerul and Panje, Bhendkhal and Belpada in Uran taluka, informed activist BN Kumar, director of NatConnect Foundation. In another major development, the union environment ministry has amended the CRZ norms to ensure protection of mangrove forests that grew landward after 1991 due to salt water flow.

“This move will help protect the mangrove zones allotted to NMSEZ, said Kumar, who has been running a concerted campaign, in association with other NGOs, to save the biodiversity. This should stop Cidco's development plan for Dronagiri that covers wetlands and mangrove zones, he added. We treat these positive developments as the World Migratory Bird Day gifts to nature lovers and the people of Uran, said Kumar pointing out that the Mangrove Cell letter is a very significant development as the letter clearly mentions five places as wetlands and describes their importance as destination for migratory birds but flood control mechanism for the city. Tiwari, in his communique with Cidco, also mentioned the BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society) report on the avifauna of the wetlands. Cidco has proposed a golf course on the Talawe wetland, while it transferred the Panje and Bhendkal wetlands to Navi Mumbai SEZ. Belpada wetland is supposed to have been given to the JNPT SEZ. “We request IAS officer Virendra Tiwari to strongly take his proposal forward and take all necessary steps to protect the wetlands, Kumar said. “With chief minister Uddhav Thackeray positively responding to our request to protect Panje and other wetlands, we feel upbeat about saving the nature, he added.

“We see connivance of certain agencies and authorities in systematically finishing wetlands and show them as dry spots for converting these eco-sensitive areas into concrete jungles, said Nandakumar Pawar, head of Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan (SEAP). Tidal water flow to the wetlands is blocked due to the landfill. The water has already started playing havoc by flooding several villages and even paddy fields about which the authorities do not bother, he said. There have been frequent attempts to block water flow to Panje, he complained. “The burial of wetlands has destroyed fishing which is our lone source of livelihood, said Dilip Koli of the fishing community forum Paramparik Machhimar Bachao Kruti Samiti. “We pin big hopes on the Mangrove Cell to save our trade, he said. At the instance of the environmental groups, state environment minister Aditya Thackeray has also called for protecting Talawe wetland as a flamingo sanctuary and ordered for stopping all construction at Panje. The Mangrove Protection and Conservation Committee has ordered the restoration of Bhendkhal wetland more than half of which has been filled with debris and sand by NMSEZ. The district administration has already filed an FIR against NMSEZ officials in this case.

**Maharashtra: Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti sends ultimatum to state government, warns legal action**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/akhil-maharashtra-machhimar-kruti-samiti-sends-ultimatum-to-state-government-warns-legal-action>

Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti (Fishermen Association) has written to the state disaster management authority, led by Chief Secretary (CS) of Maharashtra Ajoy Mehta, to take action against alleged fisheries department officials over its failure to take action against illegal purse seine fishermen despite repeated complaints. Damodar Tandel, president of the association, told the Free Press Journal, In spite of the lockdown, purse seine fishing is being carried out without any fear even though it is banned. We have proof of videos to show that, on such boats, the fishermen are violating the lockdown norms. Therefore, we have demanded action under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, section 60(b), which empowers the authorities to fix the responsibility and suspend the guilty officials. He accused that, at the Mirakwada and Sakhrinate ports in Ratnagiri, illegal fishermen boats are selling tonnes of fish to dealers without following any social distancing norms.

In Maharashtra, there are about 20,000 boats, of which 2,000 boats are involved in banned purse seine fishing activity. At these ports, videos have captured 300 to 350 boats carrying out fishing activity. Despite sending proof, the concerned district officers have not taken any action till date, he asserted. Following this, the association president wants the state CS to conduct a probe in the matter and take action. Moreover, the association has warned that if the authority fails to take action, they will move the Bombay High Court. We have already sent the notice under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, section 60(b). We will wait for 30 days and if they fail to fix responsibility of alleged officers, we will file a plea in the court. He said. "Right now, traditional fishermen are unable to carry their business and are facing a lot of difficulties. On the other hand, illegal fishermen boats are allowed to operate? he questioned. In a fresh case, the Indian coast guard recently took custody of 38 fishermen and seized two purse seine fishing boats at Karwar. The state fisheries' commissioner was unable for any comment when called by this newspaper reporter.

**Maharashtra: Coronavirus: Fishermen, labourers affected as fishing activity halts at Mumbai's Sassoon Dock**

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/coronavirus-india-lockdown-fishermen-labourers-affected-fishing-mumbai-sassoon-dock-1675585-2020-05-08>

While some Mumbaikars are missing fish on their plates, the shutdown of the biggest fish market in Mumbai at Sassoon docks has left several unemployed. Barring two months of the Monsoon season, the iconic market in South Mumbai's Colaba never sees a dull moment across the year. However, the place now dons a deserted look due to the lockdown. For close to 150 years, the Sassoon dock has been the place for fish lovers and fishermen or the Koli community - the original inhabitants of Mumbai. Almost 1,500 trawlers operate at the Sassoon dock bringing almost 200 tonnes of catch. The dock witnesses a turnover of over Rs 2 crores daily. It also provides direct and indirect employment to almost one and a half lakh people. Sixty-year-old Vandana Koli has been accompanying her parents since she was 8-year-old. For the first time, she has witnessed such disturbing silence at the docks. I used to earn at least Rs 1,000 a day. But, I have never seen such silence here ever in my life.

Now, we are left to do some odd jobs like collecting dry fish, she told India Today TV. Thirty-two-year-old Jayawant Dhanu is eagerly waiting for the activity to resume soon. I work in a company as well as run a fish business. Even if fishing is allowed, due to lockdown, our people will not be able to come here. Some are even scared to come here due to the fear of the novel coronavirus. The entire activity has come to a standstill, he said. From small fish vendors to suppliers, from loaders to cold storage owners, the lockdown has affected the fishing industry badly. And what is even scarier for them is the fact that at the onset of monsoons, the fishing activity will again stop for two months. So this halt in the activity for almost 5 months is not just expected to hit the industry but the daily wage labourers and small-time fish sellers.

**Maharashtra: Fishermen up in arms against LED-aided fishing; call it 'destructive', 'threat to deep sea marine life'**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/fishermen-up-in-arms-against-led-aided-fishing>

Irate over the government's apathy in taking penal action against fishing vessels involved in illegal practices like usage of light-emitting diode (LED) lights, as artificial fish attractors, the fishing community in Uttan near Bhayandar and other coastal areas, have decided to fight a collective battle under the aegis of Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti led by Damodar Tandel to end the menace. Traditional fishermen have been opposing this destructive way of catching fish as usage of LED posed a threat to deep sea marine life. Although a notification aimed at putting an end to this illegal practice was passed in November-2019, the authorities were shying away from taking action against the offenders, despite photographic evidences.

“Just by issuing GR's won't solve the purpose. It is equally important for the law enforcing agencies to set up a proper mechanism to punish the violators as they did in Karnataka by registering criminal cases against the erring boat owners and slapping a heavy penalty. We will soon move court against the exploitation said, working president of the Samiti- Bernard D'mello. In fishing using lights, fishes are attracted by holding up a light above water or suspending it below water. Fishes are then caught using nets. Apart from cancellation of certificates and licenses, the boats found with LED lights are also liable to seizure, in accordance to punitive provisions in the GR. The LED fishing ban encompasses a radius of 12 nautical miles, which is the boundary of jurisdiction for state.

### **Maharashtra: Environment ministry's CRZ amendment ends debate on inland mangrove protection in Mumbai Metropolitan Region**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/environment-ministry-s-crz-amendment-ends-debate-on-inland-mangrove-protection-in-mumbai-metropolitan-region/story-zVWhyRWH3TYXGF06rtzZ9L.html>

The Union environment ministry's latest amendment to the coastal regulation zone (CRZ) norms ends speculations by planning agencies in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) that claimed artificially created “inland mangroves need not be protected. The notification dated May 1 was published by the ministry of environment, forests and climate change (MoEFCC) on its website on Wednesday amending the CRZ 2011 norms stating mangrove forests developed towards the landward side due to saltwater flow from sluice gates or bunds, mainly identified as inland mangroves, need to be protected under the coastal protection notification.

“Provided that in case there exists a bund or a sluice gate constructed in the past, prior to February 19, 1991, the high tide line (HTL) shall be restricted up to the line along the bund or sluice gate and in such a case, area under mangroves arising due to saline water ingress beyond the bund or sluice gate shall be classified as CRZ-IA irrespective of the extent of the area beyond the bund or sluice gate. Such areas under mangroves shall be protected and shall not be diverted for any developmental activities, the notification said. The notification could protect mangrove forests in Uran and Dronagiri where the Navi Mumbai Special Economic Zone an integrated industrial township has been planned. A Bombay high court (HC) order from September 2018 had made it clear that mangroves anywhere in Maharashtra cannot be destroyed and the notification reiterates the declaration.

In 2015, the City Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. (Cidco), the planning agency for Navi Mumbai, had claimed that mangroves that had grown in holding ponds (for high tide water



connected to sluice gates mainly at Panje, Karanje and Koparkhairne) were not protected under the CRZ notification since they were “inland mangroves. Cidco had filed an application in the HC in the public interest litigation (87 of 2006) originally filed by environmentalist Debi Goenka where the claim was made. “This notification, once and for all, settles the issue that all mangroves are protected under the CRZ notification and that all embankments and sluice gates built without valid permissions after February 19, 1991, are illegal, said Goenka. “Hopefully, the Panje wetlands and all the other mangroves in Navi Mumbai will have to be protected by Cidco. Pramod Patil, nodal officer (environment), Cidco said, “The sluice gates in Uran were constructed sometime during 1994-95.

The case was made at the time in 2015-16 due to rapid mangrove growth that was happening post-construction of the bunds and gates, which was causing inconvenience during monitoring of the holding ponds under our jurisdiction. However, following the HC order from September 2018, mangroves, irrespective of their location, are provided the highest protection status within our jurisdiction. Goenka alleged that since the construction of the gates happened post the CRZ 1991 notification, they had been illegally built. “While the sluice gates had not been properly maintained (by Cidco themselves), the planning agency made several efforts to destroy mangrove trees within Navi Mumbai and Uran. Pursuant to the notice of motion, the HC in 2016 had directed the MoEF to give us a hearing and had asked the MoEF to decide on this issue.

However, despite the hearing held February 29, 2016, no formal order was passed by the ministry then, he said. Meanwhile, the state mangrove cell welcomed MoEFCC's amendment. “It is a good development and gives legal protection to especially those areas where safety measures were proposed to be reduced due to the claim that they were inland mangroves, said Virendra Tiwari, additional principal chief conservator of forest (Mangrove cell). Why the amendment? MoEFCC's amended comes after the Goa government made a request to demarcate the HTL (the extent to which coastal waters can reach the farthest on land) along embankments even if they were breached. Independent experts said the consequences of the amendment need to be studied for all other coastal zones to check the impact it would have on constructions planned in the future across CRZ areas.

### **Maharashtra: Covid-19 fallout: Economy in Konkan region takes a big hit**

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/covid-19-fallout-economy-in-konkan-region-takes-a-big-hit/article31497678.ece>

Local sources of income dry up; people depend on remittances by relatives to get by. The economy in the coastal districts of Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg in the Konkan region of Maharashtra has taken a major hit due to the pandemic lockdown. All local sources of income

have dried up pushing the locals to depend on the remittances and fund transfers sent by relatives staying in other states and overseas. The former member of Maharashtra Horticulture Board, Vivek Bhide, said that the local economy depends on the four spokes of tourism, fisheries, mangoes and cashews. March, April and May are crucial months for making money. These months also coincide with the holiday season in the country. The local economy gets a big boost in these months as tourists from other cities come to Konkan to relish its beaches and scenic destinations. The same is the case with the fisheries business as the sea is calm and most conducive for fishing. In fact, the three months are crucial for making profits in the fishing business before the boats have to be anchored for the monsoon season. However, due to the lockdown, both March and April turned out to a total washout, and May could also be going the same way, he said.

A faculty member at the Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, which is the local agriculture college, at Dapoli, said that due to the excess rainfall last year, the crop had got affected as it delayed fruit setting. The delayed crop was expected in May but last week's rains all but destroyed the hopes of ever recovering the money. The moisture in the air will trigger a fungus attack damaging the fruits. The Covid-19 pandemic has destroyed the export market too, the faculty member said. Today, a box of four dozen Alphonso mangoes are being sold by the farmers for less than ₹1,000, while last year they were getting ₹2,000 or even more for a similar box. The faculty member added that the cashew business has also been impacted because while the excess rains last year had impacted the crop and yield, today, when the cashew is ready for being dispatched to the processing units, there are no takers since cashew does not fall under essential commodity. Soon, these cashews will start rotting if they are not sent to processing units, he said. Local businessman Amol Kambali from Mithgavane village in Ratnagiri district said that all his vehicles used to ferry tourists and transport mangoes are idling in the garage as there is no business. However, the EMI needs to be paid to the banks eventually. Without income, the local businessmen will find it very difficult to pay back even the interest, he said.

### **Maharashtra: CM steps in to save Panje wetland**

[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75556825.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75556825.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

Swiftly responding to a series of complaints from environmentalists against fresh bids to grab the disputed Panje wetland in Uran across Mumbai harbour, chief minister Uddhav Thackeray has asked the environment secretary to examine the pressing issue. Despite the state environment minister Aditya Thackeray's orders not to undertake any construction work at Panje, the Navi Mumbai SEZ has reportedly built security cabins there. At the same time, some miscreants have built a bund blocking the free flow of tidal water to the wetland, with a bid to

render it dry for obvious land grab, said the environmental groups Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan and NatConnect Foundation in their complaint to the chief minister and the environment minister. “Panje has been a bird-rich wetland area. It will be a great loss if illegal activities continue here. The unscrupulous elements are obviously taking advantage of the absence of any surveillance as the environment and district officials are tied up with corona care elsewhere in the region, said B N Kumar, director of NatConnect Foundation. “We are happy that the chief minister managed to find time despite his busy schedule attending to the Covid-19 epidemic and responded to our emails almost instantaneously, and marked them to principal secretary (environment), Anil Diggikar, Kumar said.

Following a series of complaints against destruction of Uran wetlands, environment minister Aditya Thackeray had on March 3 ordered to stop all construction activities at Panje. NMSEZ had earlier built a massive compound wall around the wetland and Cidco put up sluice gates and a huge wall stopping free flow of tidal water which is essential for the area. Kumar pointed out that there have been all-out efforts to grab this wetland which must be checked at any cost. Panje used to be destination for 10,000 to 1,50,000 birds not very long ago and the area has turned into a massive dry patch with the blocking of tidal water flow by sluice gates erected by Cidco. Today, not a single flamingo flew into Panje, he said and pointed out that the environmentalists have also cautioned the government that the systematic destruction of wetlands such as Panje could lead to bird hits to flights in and out of the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport. “We have been informed that the Prime Minister's Office has taken up our complaint in this regard, Kumar added. The Bombay high court-appointed wetlands and mangrove committees have noted that Panje has all characteristics of a wetland and asked Cidco to ensure that the eco-sensitive zone is maintained, free of development.

“We are not against any development that can bring in progress, Kumar said and asked: “should it happen at the cost of human lives and environment destruction? “The new illegal construction at Panje may be an indication of the plan to develop an integrated industrial township, said Nandakumar Pawar, head of Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan. The ownership of Panje is with the state government and the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) has submitted to Bombay high court that wetland falls under CRZ-1 due to the presence of mangroves. So what is the mighty hurry to grab the area, Pawar said.

Moreover, indiscriminate burial of wetlands will lead to floods in the region endangering the lives of the people. In fact, Uran's 20 villages have experienced floods for the first time during the last monsoon. This is evident from the district administration's response to applications under the RTI Act. The restoration of the water body will also lead to the return of fish and will help the local community, which has been denied our constitutional right to practice their trade as the

major projects such as JNPT, ONGC, NMSEZ have all taken over the fishing zones, said Tukaram Koli of Paramparik Machhimar Bachhao Kruti Samiti. The groups have requested Aditya Thackeray, who also holds the Tourism portfolio, to develop Panje as bird tourism spot. This will lead to socio-economic development of the backward area, while the fishing community could depend on fishing once again, Pawar said.

### **Maharashtra: 38 held for illegal fishing off Karwar**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mangaluru/38-held-for-illegal-fishing-off-karwar/articleshow/75560726.cms>

The Indian Coast Guard took into custody 38 fishermen for their alleged involvement in illegal fishing off Karwar in the early hours of Tuesday. It also seized two purse seine boats which were fitted with high capacity generators and bright electric bulbs to attract fish. Light fishing is banned as it led to the extinction of many fish species in the west coast. In this type of fishing, the fish get attracted to the light fitted to boats and are caught using heavy nets. Of the 39 fishermen, one is from Karwar and four from Ankola. The rest are from other state, said fisheries department officials. They were later handed over to the Coastal Security Police. The seized boats -- Sea Rose and Concip – belong to Betul in Goa. The Coast Guard was on high alert after complaint by local fishermen that boats from outside the state were enter the waters of Karnataka to carry out illegal fishing.

### **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, Yarayian 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.

### **Maharashtra: Their village sealed off, Worli's small-scale fishers lose livelihood**

<https://thewire.in/rights/worli-small-scale-fishers-covid-19>

We have no food or way to leave the koliwada (fishing village), but we can hear and see the shore being dumped with mud every day, an indigenous fisher, or koli, from the Worli koliwada tweeted last week. His village had been sealed off after 10 people tested positive for COVID-19 on March 30, 2020. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had assured the community at the time of sealing them off that it would provide essential supplies. But after ten days without any supplies, the fisherfolk took to the social media requesting the city's help. On April 10, the Ministry of Home Affairs included fishing, sale of fish and related activities in the essential commodities list, indicating some relief. However, the Worli koliwada is still a 'red zone', which means the community's members still have no way to earn a living nor feed themselves in the coming months. As the indigenous fisher community struggles, the coastal road reclamation and construction work, twenty meters away from the fishing village continues, day in and night.

India's small-scale fishers have had restricted access to the shore across the country's 7,516-km coastline during the nationwide lockdown. Small-scale fishers, a.k.a. artisanal or traditional fishers, are noted for their sustainable practices. They fish based on tidal patterns and the seasons, use small boats, fish for short periods and don't make more than a few trips each time. The principles of physical distancing don't clash with their fishing habits either, since most small-scale fishers operate solo or in small teams of two to five people. They live off a daily catch, for home as well as community consumption and local sale. When the Worli koliwada was sealed off on March 20, state officials did so in the dead of night, without any notice period to brace for the aftermath. About 86 people were also quarantined.

A week later, the first social media posts from community members appeared online, considering there was no other way for messages to leave or enter the koliwada. And after a massive response from several citizen groups, a Ketto donation page and suppliers ready to provide supplies the community needed, they received a meagre amount of goods from the state a few



days later. There was another problem. In all this time, the BMC had also allowed the coastal road reclamation project work to continue only ten meters away from the koliwada. In December 2019, the Supreme Court stayed the Bombay high court's order quashing the coastal road zone clearance granted for the project, and allowed construction work to continue but not other development activities. The apex court did hear applications in February 2020 demanding a stay based on claims that the BMC didn't get clearance under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 although it was supposed to.

Citizen groups in South Mumbai have also reported that the BMC has fast-tracked the construction work and that the project could in fact be completed before the court takes up the issue again. This is a threat to the koliwada because the work encroaches on the intertidal shore – in effect threatening, if not eliminating, their ability to catch fish and also endangering workers' lives. The first of the ten people tested positive only five days after the lockdown began. Construction workers form one of the many occupational groups most at risk of transmission of diseases during epidemics. However, contractors and the BMC have resumed reclamation work before the next Supreme Court hearing, and it appears that it will continue. In its official press releases, the BMC has called the reclamation work necessary, especially as pre-monsoon precautions. At the same time, Mumbai is perhaps the most affected city in India vis-à-vis the coronavirus epidemic, so unilaterally continuing reclamation work as well as not attending to the health, safety and wellbeing of both the workers and the fishers seems reckless.

This said, the koliwada is evidently worse off because the fishers don't have a way to make a living, and their futures are becoming more and more uncertain as their fishing grounds are being destroyed for a project that has no value to them and, indeed, will reportedly cater to only 1.25% of Mumbai's transit population. Small-scale fishers around the world are already reeling from a dearth of policy protection, political representation and poor documentation. Thus they are poorly represented, are losing fishing grounds and are being severely marginalised. Even now we are witnessing an indigenous community on the cusp of fading away, and must act quickly to prevent that from happening – as well as to restore their livelihoods and futures.

### **Karnataka: Corona scare: Fish trucks from Maharashtra cause of concern for Udupi**

<https://www.dajjiworld.com/news/newsDisplay.aspx?newsID=703555> Trucks

laden with fish arriving from outstation states are causing concern in the green zone district of Udupi. People are urging the administration to ban these trucks in order to contain the spread of coronavirus pandemic. Unscientific light fishing is being conducted in the deep seas of Ratnagiri of Maharashtra and Goa, due to which the fishermen are getting huge cache of fish. Fish merchants of Udupi are competing with one another for that fish. Trucks from Kundapur, Trasi,

Gangolli and Udupi are going to fetch fish from outstation states and sell the same in Uttara Kannada and Udupi districts. The drivers and cleaners of these trucks are locals. The public of Udupi is scared that these drivers and cleaners may bring the infection from outstation states. Goa state does not allow trucks carrying fish from Maharashtra. Now the trucks are entering the district of Udupi through Kolhapur-Hubballi-Yellapur-Ankola-Bhatkal-shirur route. Goa trucks are entering the district through Karwar. Nearly 60 outstation trucks are entering the district carrying fish from outstation states.

In Maharashtra, till Friday, 11,506 people have been infected with coronavirus. The drivers and cleaners of these fish trucks are in the ice plant in the day time and visit their houses in the night. In some areas locals have had arguments and fights with these people also. The locals are accusing that the owners of fish trucks are offering double salary and perks to drivers and cleaners and that is why they are going to outstation states to bring fish to the district. Raghavendra Ganiga, member of Gujjadi gram panchayat says, all connection with a red zone state like Maharashtra which is hit hard by coronavirus should be snapped. Traditional boat fishing is being carried out in the district. That is enough for local consumption. We are under panic from the local drivers and cleaners who bring fish from outstation states. We have given information to MLA as well as local administration. Mumbai fish truck movement should be banned within the district.

**Maharashtra: Community toilets main reason behind the rise of coronavirus cases in Mumbai: BMC**

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/mumbai/2020/may/03/community-toilet-main-reason-behind-the-rise-of-coronavirus-cases-in-mumbai-bmc-2138756.html>

Mumbai is one of the major hotspots for the COVID-19. Reason - community toilets, says officials. According to Maha Vikas Aghadi minister Aslam Sheikh, the community toilets in the slum and chawl areas are the major reason behind spreading the coronavirus in Mumbai. "Mumbai has a high density of population and particularly in slums. We are providing the mobile toilet facility to these localities as per the recommendations by the central government delegations that recently visited Mumbai's Worli and Dharavi, said guardian minister of Mumbai city. Mumbai has a total of 8,613 COVID-19 patients while 343 deaths were reported. The majority of COVID-19 cases are being reported from the slums and congested chawl areas of Mumbai. These areas are mainly fishermen colonies from Worli, Byculla, Mazgaon, Matunga, Dharavi, Kurla etc.

Asia's largest slum Dharavi has reported a total of 590 cases and 20 deaths while Mahim area has got a total of 68 cases and two deaths. Sources in BMC said that the IIT engineer had done the

study of these area and sewerage line where they found the large quantum of COVID-19 virus particles in fickle materials. “We have asked to keep these community toilets clean. The BMC has deployed its additional force in the slum areas and decided to shifted the high risk and suspected patients in isolations wards, said senior BMC official requested anonymity. However, another senior BMC official who worked in the solid waste department said that this is the myth that has been deliberately created for some excuse if the coronavirus patients continue to increase in Mumbai. “The BMC should admit that they have inadequate infrastructure and lack efficiency while dealing with pandemic situation therefore the cases are rising. The COVID-19 has exposed the BMC's crumbling infrastructure, said official requested anonymity.

### **Maharashtra: Locals fish at Worli Koliwada village; catch gets seized by Mumbai Police**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/locals-fish-at-worli-koliwada-village-catch-gets-seized-by-mumbai-police/story-jPaUNewtXlcehHguTAOz3J.html>

Locals at the city's largest containment zone, Worli Koliwada village, have been sending small boats within a one-kilometre radius over the past four days to fish, however, residents alleged that the catch is being confiscated by the Mumbai Police. Police seized over 200 kg fish during inspections to avoid crowds, alleged locals. The fish was meant to be sold within the village. The fishing village, with 80,000 residents across 220 hectares, was declared a containment zone (entry and exit points sealed) on March 30, after six persons tested positive for the Sars-Cov-2 virus. “Supply of vegetables has been stopped from entering this containment zone for six days now. Suspected cases are few, and most of the residents have tested negative. A few boats are getting 20-30 kg daily catch, said Royal Patil, resident and member, Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavasay Sahkari Society. “All larger boats are docked at the village and commercial fishing is strictly prohibited, he added.

A fisherman, on condition of anonymity, said, “We are sending 10 boats (two persons on each boat) to catch small fish, shrimps and prawn for sale within the village. Despite following social distancing norms, our entire catch was confiscated. Mumbai Police said fishing was not allowed till the cluster remained a containment zone. “No catch has been confiscated by us. The civic body has stated that fishing is not allowed within a containment area. This needs to be followed by residents. Locals have approached the ward officer on this issue. We will implement the final decision by the ward office, said Divakar Shelke, senior inspector, Dadar police station. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said a decision on allowing fishing will be considered after May 3. “This is a high-risk area and it is not advisable for citizens to crowd either on boats or within the village to sell fish, said Rajesh Mule, assistant engineer, G-South ward in-charge of operations at Koliwada.

Marine conservationists, requested the BMC on Wednesday to allow artisanal fishworkers from the village to fish for their self-consumption. “The community has been earmarked as a ‘red zone’, however with required precautions and guidelines of social distancing they have been requesting resumption of their fishing activity (which occurs only in the intertidal and subtidal region, in low numbers of one to five) and sale (wholesale being sold for local and community consumption), said Sarita Fernandes, coastal policy researcher and marine wildlife conservationist.

### **Maharashtra: Condition like Marathwada farmers, say Konkan fishermen**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/condition-like-marathwada-farmers-say-konkan-fishermen-6379737/>

At Jivna Bunder, a fishing jetty in the coastal town of Shrivardhan, fishermen are unhurriedly bundling up swathes of fishing nets of varied shapes and colour. The nets have been drying in the sun for days since the lockdown kicked in on March 24, when the coronavirus pandemic prompted a nationwide closure. At other times, the scene at the jetty on an April morning would have been much different. Fishing boats of all sizes would be bringing the day's fresh catch from eels, lobsters and sting rays to the more popular pomfret, seer fish and prawns to be put on display to be auctioned off. A crowd of fisherfolks, bulk buyers from restaurants and locals would immediately break into hard, cacophonous bargains and in minutes the catch would be out of the jetty, making way for more as boats continued to pull in. In this daily unfolding, the resident felines would hop from one fish basket to another, never going hungry.

Chandrakant Chougule, a fisherman who owns one six-cylinder fishing trawler and a single cylinder small boat, says “We have pulled our big trawlers ashore. What will we do by sending them into the deep sea, spending on diesel and workers when the catch we bring back won't even reach the markets in the big cities? Seafood is perishable, and in this lockdown, we have not been able to send it to the markets in Mumbai and Pune. They are all closed. Since the lockdown, fishermen have stopped large-scale fishing. Only small fishermen, who sell locally and feed their families, have been continuing to venture into the sea. Theirs is a hand-to-mouth kind of situation. Fisherfolk in the Konkan region three districts of Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg say that business has been ‘eclipsed’ first by the cyclonic storm in November last year and now the lockdown. Fishing activities had to be suspended following cyclone warnings and just when it was time for business to pick up, the nation-wide lockdown to contain the spread of the COVID-19 kicked in. With the arrival of monsoon in June, they will have stay off the water until the end of August, they rue.

The state Fisheries Commissioner has estimated the actual loss of fish production over March, April and May to be 80 per cent of the expected production. Earlier this month, the Commissioner of Fisheries, Rajeev Jadhav, in the letter to the principal secretary of Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries (ADF), stated that fishermen in the state had suffered on account of the “huge economic crisis in view of the “extraordinary situation prevailing due to COVID-19 virus spread. He stated that the average fish production from March to May was expected to be 67,840.40 metric tonnes for marine fish production (fishing in seas) at the rate of 1,696.01 metric tonnes per day; however, the actual production of marine fishing was 13,568 metric tonnes. Similarly, for inland fishing (fishing in lakes, ponds, reservoirs) the expected production during the 40 days of lockdown was 14,685.2 metric tonnes, but actual fishing was 2,937.04 metric tonnes, that is only 20 per cent.

This, the Fisheries Commissioner stated in his letter, had translated into a monetary loss of Rs 652.27 crore and Rs 117.48 crore in the marine and inland sectors, respectively. Jadhav said the loss estimates were drawn up following directions from the Centre. “...to mitigate the problem of livelihood and lack of income of fishermen community, it is proposed that the government of India should consider some relief amount to the affected fishermen in view of the loss of livelihood due to COVID-19 lockdown, the letter stated. He requested for a special relief package or a monetary allowance from the Centre for the fishing community. In Shrivardhan, however, Mohan Waghe, former chairman of the Shri Krishna Machchimar Society, said, “We have never asked the government for anything till today. A koli (fisherman) may be in debt, but he will fight to feed his family.

But we have never seen a time like this before. At this rate, many of us fishermen may have to go the Marathwada farmer way. At least the government has extended some help to them, but now it will have to think of us too. We don't want doles, but we may need a hand to make us self-reliant again. Waghe said owners of big fishing trawlers need about five to 10 khalashis (workers) to fish in the deep seas. Moreover they were unable to send their products out without the usual availability of ice boxes and trucks ferrying the catch to the market. Although fishing activities were exempted from the lockdown, social-distancing requirements prohibited fishermen from employing too many workers on their vessels. Minister of State for Tourism and Shrivardhan MLA Aditi Tatkare said, “Fishing was exempted from the lockdown but fishermen have themselves been reluctant. Last week, Shrivardhan had its first COVID-19 case. It was a person who had come from Mumbai. We will observe the situation for the next 14 days and if there are no further cases, we will request the government to make it a green zone so that all activities can be resumed. At the moment, she said, most of the state funds were being diverted to the health and food and civil supplies departments, but once the situation improves, they may draw the state government's attention to the need for compensating fishermen.

The popular Alibaug beach that overlooks the Alibaug Fort, too, is far removed from its usual summer vacation hubbub. Missing from the scene are tourists milling around the water, families making sand castles, vendors selling coconut water and ice popsicles, water sport activities, leaving only its five lifeguards with almost no one to watch over. On the sweltering afternoon, however, stray dogs get comfortable under a colourful canopy erected by the Alibaug Municipal Council. An oar over his shoulder, Pankaj Navkhande emerges from his boat after the day's catch. A traditional fisherman, he would usually bring back 7-8 kg of fish, but today it has shrunk to 2-3 kg. Walking behind him is Vitthal Bandri, another fisherman, who has covered his nose and mouth a handkerchief, "In 30 years that I have been going into the sea, never have I had to cover my face. This is such a strange time. We would sell lobster at Rs 1,500 a kg and now we can barely get Rs 700 for it. May was the only month for us to make some money. Once monsoon arrives, we will have to sit at home again, he says.

According to the fisheries department, Maharashtra accounts for 1.60 lakh metric tonnes of marine fish production of 4.67 lakh metric tonnes produced by India. The state also makes a 34.26 per cent contribution to India's marine fish production exports, government officials said.

#### **Maharashtra: Fisheries department bans sale of fish at roadside markets**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/maharashtra-fisheries-department-bans-sale-of-fish-at-roadside-markets/story-AbMNSuBhu9KIwM4yK7yyVL.html>

The Maharashtra fisheries department has issued restrictions on the fishing trade, including a ban on retail sale at roadside markets, even as restrictions are being slowly lifted. Earlier this week, the department published a 43-point standard operating procedure (SOP) to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. Among major directions, wholesalers can sell their catch while maintaining social distancing norms but retail fish sale by vendors across markets has been banned until further notice, to avoid crowds. "Safety of citizens is of utmost importance. The decision is mainly focused on fishers who set up stalls at sections of the market, landing sites or main roads, to avoid overcrowding and chances of community transmission, said Rajendra Jadhav, joint commissioner, state fisheries department. "It comes as a difficult decision as lots of fisherwomen are employed in such activities across the Konkan but we were left with no option following overcrowding incidents being brought to our notice by the police, he said. Fishermen have opposed the restrictions.

"Fisherwomen across 350 such sites in the Mumbai region will be directly affected due to this decision. No such decision has been taken for vendors selling agricultural produce. We demand that the fisheries department withdraws this SOP, said Damodar Tandel, president of a fishing group in Mumbai. While the department has banned retail fish vendors, it has approved door-to-

door supply of fish while maintaining social distancing norms. Other restrictions include medical screening of fishing boat staff and monitoring of boat movements. A committee, chaired by the district collector with fisheries department members, will issue permits based on valid identity proof, health documents, and information of family members, submitted through the Aarogya Setu mobile app. “This is being done across 91 fish landing sites and three major harbors [two in Mumbai and one in Ratnagiri] functioning currently, said Jadhav. “A proposal for mandatory thermal testing is in its final stage of approval from the state, and will also commence soon. Other rules include ‘social distancing during fishing at sea’.

“Not more than three people as crew will be allowed for smaller boats or vessels. If any crew member has reported sick or developed any flu-like symptoms, fishing activities need to be abandoned and the boat will return to the jetty immediately, said Jadhav, adding that the fish caught should not be consumed or touched. The catch will be disposed of as per bio-medical waste disposal norms after ‘arrival at landing centres’. “If any crew member tests positive, the entire crew will undergo mandatory isolation for a minimum of 14 days, said Jadhav. “Overall sanitation, disinfection of boats, wearing masks and gloves under all four scenarios is mandatory, he said. According to the National Purse Seine Fishermen Welfare Association (NPSFWA), Maharashtra fishers have incurred losses over ₹800 crore over a month and had dumped 15,000 tonnes of fresh catch into the sea during the first two weeks of the lockdown. “The present guidelines are confusing and developed haphazardly. The state needs to first support the market by designing a supply-chain of how fish will be sold before drafting guidelines for fishing. By banning retail vendors, a source of income has been destroyed, said Ganesh Nakhawa, chairman, NPSFWA, who is developing a supply-chain model for door-to-door delivery for vendors. The Centre has also announced that there will be no relaxation for the annual fishing ban along the west coast from June 1 to July 31 – during the breeding season – for the conservation of fisheries resources.

### **Maharashtra: Bans roadside fish stalls, wholesale allowed amid Covid-19 crisis**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/maha-bans-roadside-fish-stalls-wholesale-allowed/story-bs0EmzGaMnh816MD3Kty5L.html>

The Maharashtra fisheries department has banned retail sale of fish at roadside markets in a 43-point standard operating procedure (SOP) for the trade on how to operate during the Covid-19 pandemic. Wholesalers can sell their catch while maintaining social distancing norms but retail fish sale by vendors across markets has been banned until further notice, to avoid crowds. “Safety of citizens is of utmost importance. The decision is mainly focused on fisherfolk who set up stalls at sections of the market, landing sites or main roads, to avoid overcrowding and chances of community transmission, said Rajendra Jadhav, joint

commissioner, state fisheries department. “It comes as a difficult decision as lots of fisherwomen are employed in such activities across the Konkan but we were left with no option following overcrowding incidents being brought to our notice by the police. Fisherfolk have opposed the restrictions.

“Fisherwomen across 350 such sites in the Mumbai region will be directly affected due to this decision. No such decision has been taken for vendors selling agricultural produce. We demand that the fisheries department withdraw this SOP, said Damodar Tandel, president of a fishing group in Mumbai. While the department has banned retail fish vendors, it has approved door-to-door supply of fish while maintaining social distancing norms. Other restrictions include medical screening of fishing boat staff and monitoring of boat movement. A committee, chaired by the district collector and with members from the fisheries department, will issue permits based on valid identity proof, health documents, and information of family members, submitted through the Aarogya Setu mobile app. “This is being done across 91 fish landing sites and three major harbours [two in Mumbai and one in Ratnagiri] functioning currently, said Jadhav. “A proposal for mandatory thermal testing is in its final stage of approval from the state, and will also commence soon. Other rules include social distancing during fishing at sea.

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## **Maharashtra: Coronavirus: Mumbai's Dharavi slum records sharp drop in new cases as Maharashtra tally nears 7,000**

<https://scroll.in/latest/960195/coronavirus-mumbais-dharavi-slum-records-sharp-drop-in-new-cases-as-maharashtra-tally-nears-7000>

The number of new coronavirus cases in Mumbai's Dharavi slum has reported a sharp drop, even as Maharashtra's cumulative tally reached 6,817, NDTV reported on Saturday. In Asia's largest slum that saw its first positive case on April 1, authorities have embarked on an ambitious screening process because of the density of the population and poor sanitation in the area. Dharavi reported six new coronavirus cases and one death on Friday, compared with 25 on the previous day. This is the lowest single-day rise after April 15, The Hindu reported. So far, the total cases have risen to 220 and 14 fatalities have been reported from the area. New cases were found in Gopinath Nagar, Kalyan Wadi, Janta Nagar, Banwari compound and Maulana Azad Nagar localities on Friday, according to PTI. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has undertaken aggressive contact tracing, placing certain contacts in institutional quarantine and setting up fever clinic in the slum area, where nearly seven lakh people live in cramped lanes. However, authorities said it is "too early to predict if they have flattened the curve of new Covid-19 cases.

Maharashtra bans sale of fish at roadside markets meanwhile, the Maharashtra fisheries department has issued restrictions on the fishing trade, including a ban on retail sale at roadside markets, Hindustan Times reported. The department published a 43-point standard operating procedure on how to operate amid the coronavirus pandemic. Wholesalers can sell fish while maintaining social distancing guidelines, but retail fish sale by vendors across markets has been banned until further notice. "Safety of citizens is of utmost importance, Rajendra Jadhav, joint commissioner, state fisheries department said. "The decision is mainly focused on fisherfolk who set up stalls at sections of the market, landing sites or main roads, to avoid overcrowding and chances of community transmission. It comes as a difficult decision as lots of fisherwomen are employed in such activities across the Konkan but we were left with no option following overcrowding incidents being brought to our notice by the police.

Maharashtra has the highest number of coronavirus cases in India and 18 fresh fatalities took the toll to 301 on Saturday. While Friday's numbers were considerably less than the over 700-case

rise on Thursday, Mumbai's tally touched 4,447, with 242 of the 394 new cases reported from the financial capital.

### **Maharashtra: Bhigwan villagers nix reopening of market for fish of Ujani dam**

<https://punemirror.indiatimes.com/pune/civic/bhigwan-villagers-nix-reopening-of-market-for-fish-of-ujani-dam/articleshowprint/75334741.cms?>

Bhigwan police on Thursday imposed a ban on transporting fish from the backwaters of Ujani dam the largest fresh water fish supplier in the state although the state government ordered resumption of agriculture and fisheries on April 20. The reason cited by the cops is that local villagers don't want services to resume, fearing coronavirus infection through truckers from cities like Mumbai and Pune. Following this, local fishermen were forced to dump hundreds of tonnes of fish. Bhigwan and Takrarwadi have the best sweet-water fish markets thronged by hundreds of traders daily from across Maharashtra. But local villagers claimed that since there is no COVID-19 case reported in the area, and they don't want to jeopardise this by conducting business of a few days. Bharat Mallav, convener of Ujani Fishermen Organisations, said, "Locals raised the issue at Bhigwan police station about the possible threat of infection through truckers.

These transporters may come in contact with the people of Pune, Mumbai and Baramati, identified as most vulnerable areas. To avoid this threat, cops asked us to shut operations till further notice. With this sudden cancellation, we are going to face huge loss. Already, there is a loss of Rs 20 lakh per day. The local market doesn't have that much demand. Now we are again forced to stop fishing. Rahul Nagare, another fisherman, said, "We have already stopped fishing since a month. With renewed hope, we had started catching fish. It is disappointing. Assistant police inspector Jeevan Mane, in charge of Bhigwan PS, said, "Legally, there is no ban on trade of fish as it comes under essential services. But with outsider traders will keep visiting fish markets here to purchase the produce. Several transporters will also visit markets. They may come in contact with coronavirus positive patients in Pune and Mumbai. We also considered requests of villagers, traders and fishermen by conducting a joint meeting. All parties unanimously decided to suspend trade till the next orders from the district administration. But we have allowed fishermen to sell in local markets only. The elusive catch Prawns, mrigal, silver carps, rohu, gavtya, maral, chilapi, khadrya, kanas, katla, cha-lat, shingada, shiwada, ghogrya and gugali are mostly found in Ujani. Small-sized dried fish are very popular in Bihar, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, and local consumption is also huge.

**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.

### **Maharashtra: Hotspots in Mumbai: 3 Major fishing colonies declared as 'containment zones'**

<https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/coronavirus-hotspots-bmc-seals-3-mumbai-fishing-colonies-containment-zones-609409>

The civic health authorities have so far declared three sprawling fishing colonies in Mumbai as 'containment zones' and imposed lockdown by barring all entry-exit points there, official sources said. They are: Versova fishing colony, Mahim fishermen colony, both isolated this week, and earlier last month, it was the Worli Koliwada. The drastic move was implemented after more than a dozen fishermen have been detected COVID-19 positive in both Versova and Mahim fishermen colonies. All fishermen are voluntarily cooperating with the authorities, they have already stopped all fishing activities since the lockdown started and now they are remaining indoors, said Vijay Bhandarkar, Chairman of Bhai Bhandarkar Maharashtra Machhimar Vishwastnidhi Trust. The three fishing colonies - all on the west coast of Mumbai - account for more than 65,000 fisherfolk, besides a non-fishing population of another 50,000, said Bhandarkar. Earlier, the Worli Koliwada has been under lockdown since March 30 after 4 positive cases were found, but the situation is under improvement there. Bhandarkar said that in Versova, the authorities have also shut the ferry service linking it with Madh Jetty across the Versova Creek as a precaution. Besides Worli, Andheri, Mahim, the other prominent fishing colonies in the city are Cuffe Parade, Khar-Danda, Marve, Madh, Manori and Gorai.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen among 94 booked in Dahanu for defying lockdown**

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/maha-fishermen-among-94-booked-in-dahanu-for-defying-lockdown/1806715>

Police have registered cases against 94 people- fishermen and owners of fishing boats- at Dahanu in Maharashtra's Palghar district for allegedly violating the prohibitory orders during the lockdown, an official said on Saturday. Groups of fishermen were carried in fishing boats from Gujarat to Dahanu jetty even as the lockdown is in place to curb the spread of coronavirus, Palghar police spokesperson Hemant Katkar said. While some fishermen were brought to Dahanu from the neighbouring state on Thursday, some others came on Friday, he said, adding

that two separate cases were registered. All the boats carried Gujarat registration numbers, he said. Offences have been registered under IPC sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 and 270 (negligent and malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), the Disaster Management Act and others, police said. However, nobody has been arrested in this connection, police said. Meanwhile, in neighbouring Thane district, a case was registered against 12 persons for the alleged violation of prohibitory orders after they were found together in an office in Bhiwandi town on Friday, an official said.

### **Maharashtra: Coronavirus in Mumbai: Govt to focus on exporting fish, streamlining markets**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/coronavirus-in-mumbai-maha-govt-to-focus-on-exporting-fish-streamlining-markets>

Maharashtra government is awaiting Centre's notification to announce compensation to fishermen affected due to lockdown. Aslam Shaikh, cabinet rank minister of fisheries, textile and port development and Mumbai's guardian minister commented. As the fund reserved to provide subsidy on diesel and other products has been diverted due to coronavirus, we have asked the Centre to give compensation, especially to the fishing sector. Fishermen who had ventured into the sea before the first lockdown was imposed faced several difficulties after their return. Though the state exported nearly 200 tonnes of fish, huge quantity of fish had to be disposed of due to the unavailability of cold storage. Therefore, the sector has incurred losses, said Shaikh. The minister also asserted that from April 12, normal fishing related activities will resume. However, more focus will be given on exporting fish to different districts.

Rajeev Jadhav, commissioner of state fisheries department said, Currently, in compliance with police authorities, district collectors and municipal corporation commissioners, fishing activity in sea will be closely monitored. In line with the rules applicable to vegetable markets, which are allowed to open for a designated period of time, fish market too will be allowed to be operated, Jadhav asserted. Meanwhile, the Akhil Macchimar Kriti Samiti president Damodar Tandel said, We have suggested the officials and minister to allow small fish markets across the city to remain open. While wholesale markets setup at Sassoon Dock, Bhaucha Dakka, Dadar Market, Crawford market, where there is a possibility of huge crowd, should be kept shut. Besides this, Tandel said, vendors could be asked to sell fish in rotations like if 100 fish sellers are allowed in the morning, the other 100 should be allowed to do business in the evening. Such measures can help 12,000 fish sellers to retain their livelihood, who are badly affected amid this pandemic, he explained.

## **Maharashtra: Coronavirus: Fishermen at sea over State's terse notification**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/coronavirus-in-mumbai-fishermen-at-sea-over-states-terse-notification>

State fishermen are finding themselves at sea for lack of proper directions from the fisheries department on fishing-related activities in this extended phase of the lockdown, said Damodar Tandel, president of the Akhil Macchimar Kriti Samiti (fishermen's association). The notification dated April 13, permitting the carrying out of fishing activities, comprises two lines but no directions or dos and don'ts, Tandel informed. A detailed notification, with more clarity on selling, transporting catch across Maharashtra and venturing into the sea is awaited, he said. Tandel pointed to the Raigad district collector's notification issued on April 9, giving guidelines to fishermen, which specifies that not more than four people are allowed on one fishing boat. Moreover, there should be strict adherence to precautionary measures such as compulsory wearing of masks by fishermen on the boat.

Only non-motorised boats and those operating on one or two cylinders may be used for fishing during the lockdown, the notification said. Comparing these two notifications, Tandel said the state of creating confusion among fishermen. He insisted on a common notification for all districts to be issued in this critical situation. Meanwhile, Rajeev Jadhav, commissioner of the fisheries department, said, In March, the Centre issued a detailed notification, with guidelines for transportation and sale of essential commodities. Since fishing was not included in this, a revised notification was issued following a demand to this effect and fishing was also included in essential commodities. Therefore, fishing related activities must follow the same guidelines as those applicable to essential commodities.

## **Maharashtra: Covid-19: Lockdown in a Mumbai slum**

<https://www.livemint.com/mint-lounge/features/covid-19-lockdown-in-a-mumbai-slum-11586535588884.html>

It had only been minutes since I arrived outside Worli Koliwada, a fishing village in Mumbai, when a resident from the neighbourhood stopped me on the street. "Are you from the press?" he asked. "Yes. "People from Koliwada have been breaking the curfew and coming to our slums for groceries. If we get infected (by the coronavirus), who's responsible? Four days earlier, on 30 March, the Brihanmumbai municipal corporation (BMC) had placed the fishermen's colony under complete lockdown after four of its residents tested positive for covid-19. The police had since barricaded the two major exit gates from Koliwada. Over a dozen

personnel deployed at each point sweated in the April sun, rejecting the residents' requests to go out, fending off the persistent few with their long wooden sticks. Maharashtra has emerged as India's epicentre in the covid-19 pandemic, with 97 dead and 1,385 testing positive as of 10 April. Across the city, the BMC has declared 381 "containment zones" and sealed off the residential complexes where there have been cases of coronavirus. These range from tony residences in Malabar Hill to chawls in Prabhadevi.

In Worli Koliwada, an estimated 80,000 people live in tiny houses spread over 2 sq. km. The restrictions on movement were meant to control the spread of the virus within and outside. The civic body had said it would take care of supplying essential commodities like milk, groceries, medicines and cooking gas. But going by this man's account, it wasn't going quite as smoothly. I strapped on a face mask and followed the man into Janta Colony, a slum cluster next to Koliwada. We negotiated its narrow by-lanes, crossing its one-room houses, taking in the smells of the meals being cooked, and emerged into an open expanse that overlooked the sea. The beach in front of us doubles as a toilet and a garbage dump. A narrow path along the shore connects the colony to Koliwada, whose triangular landmass juts nearly a kilometre into the sea. Halfway down the path was a police constable. Next to him, a young man stood holding his ears, doing sit-ups. "The cop has just come here, someone filled us in. Rule-breakers weren't going unpunished. Three women and a man stood around us, eyeing the policeman anxiously. They wore handkerchiefs around their faces and carried bags filled with bread, biscuits and vegetables. "We were nearly out of food," 75-year-old Laxmibai Shinde explained. "The grocery shops inside Koliwada are either shut or empty." Sunad Patil, 58, had an ID card pinned on his shirt. He works as a driver in the BMC's Worli office.

"I have been working day and night since the nationwide lockdown was announced and they are still not letting me in," he said, visibly agitated. "I am a diabetic. My daughter is prone to seizures. The chemists inside Koliwada didn't have our medicines. He took out a strip of tablets and waved it at me. "What choice did I have but to come out and get some?" This seemed to touch a nerve with the small crowd gathered around us. They raged against the abruptness of the lockdown, the inefficient handling of its aftermath. Some pooh-poohed their MLA Aaditya Thackeray's assurances of restoring normalcy, made in a video released online on 2 April. Worli Koliwada has long been a Shiv Sena bastion. "But if they are to go asking for votes tomorrow, people will certainly hit back," one said. Over the next hour and a half, the residents of Janta Colony made frantic phone calls to local political leaders, imploring them to help the four stranded around us.

After a brief stand-off, Patil was allowed to return. Shinde and her companions decided to chart their way through the garbage and muck on the beach. The sight of them plodding through knee-

deep dirt probably moved the policeman standing by the shoreline. He called out to them and asked them to return to solid ground. As the four made their way home, their figures getting more distant by the second, the man who had taken me there heaved a sigh of relief. The possibility of coronavirus spreading to chawls and slums has been one of the biggest worries of health experts. The small living spaces in such areas, along with shared amenities like bathrooms and toilets, make social distancing the most important preventive measure against the virus near impossible.

One in every six urban Indians lives in slums, according to the 2011 census. In Mumbai, around 42% of its 22 million population does. Worli Koliwada is one such highly vulnerable area. A quiet fishing village for hundreds of years, it had seen a population boom in the last century, when its residents started building small rooms to rent out to the cotton mill workers migrating from rural Maharashtra. The mills shut down eventually but most of the workers had already settled in with their families. Today, Koliwada is a vibrant cluster of houses both big and small, with migrants old and new. Its iconic settings often serve as a backdrop in films and music videos, like they did a few years ago for Hymn for the Weekend, by the British rock band Coldplay. So when the coronavirus started making inroads in the last week of March, there was fear of community transmission. The government as well as the World Health Organization continue to classify most of India at “stage 2” of the pandemic, meaning local transmission. “But in Koliwada the houses are so small and close together the virus could have spread everywhere,” said Hemangi Worlikar, the Shiv Sena corporator from Worli Koliwada.

“Many people were not taking the curbs on movement seriously, a trend that continues till date. A strict lockdown was thus necessary. A little before midnight on 30 March, a team of Mumbai police personnel went around Koliwada with a megaphone. Some people from the village had tested positive for covid-19, they announced. The BMC planned to disinfect the village. All residents were to stay indoors until further orders. The next morning, residents woke up to an eerie quiet. All milk booths, grocery stores, medicine shops and other establishments providing essential services were shut. Fishermen were forbidden from going into the sea. The police were patrolling the streets. No one was allowed to come in or go out. “They wouldn't even allow me to attend the funeral of my grandmother in Panvel,” recalled Nitesh Patil, a fisherman from Koliwada. “They said, ‘Itkya lamb corona gheun challa ka (You want to spread the virus that far)?’” The civic officials had two major tasks ahead of them: to identify the people who had come in contact with coronavirus-positive patients and restore essential services in the area. As the infected lanes in the village were identified, a handful of shops in the other lanes selling milk, groceries and medicines were allowed to open.



The officials had drawn circles outside the shops for people to stand in and maintain distance from each other. But it wasn't long before crowds thronged the shops, buying in bulk, social distancing forgotten. Demand outstripped supply. “I have had 200 calls since the morning complaining about lack of food, Babu Koli, a Shiv Sena leader from the area, told me on the phone on 1 April. “Corona baju rahila, upasmarichi vel aalie (the virus aside, people are starving at starvation). Sachin Gawane, a resident who works in the production team of a Marathi news channel, said it was a case of mismanagement. “In the first few days, the police weren't letting trucks with essential items come in. People didn't receive milk and food as promised, even doctors living inside our village weren't allowed to work.

Unavailability of essential items and uncertainty about the lockdown led to anxiety and panic, he added. “My mother started crying while watching the news on TV the other day. “Koliwadyatach ha rog aalae. Aapan jagnaar ki naahi (It's come to Koliwada now. Will we survive this)? Amidst this confusion, Worli MLA Aaditya Thackeray released his first video address on the crisis in his constituency. “I am sorry for the inconvenience this has caused, he said in Marathi. “I hear of a shortage of milk and vegetables still and we are working to fix that. But we will have to put up with it for now because this is a question of our lives. We need to prevent a repeat of what we see happening in the US, Spain or Italy. The only way to do this is to stay indoors. By the end of the first week, civic officials, helped by local NGOs, had ramped up supplies of essentials. Sharad Ughade, assistant commissioner in the BMC, told Mumbai Mirror on 5 April that they had surveyed a total of 40,000 residents in the village. The areas around the houses of covid-positive patients were marked out as “containment zones ; 225 “high-risk individuals were moved to a quarantine facility at the state-run Poddar Hospital a few kilometres away.

By 8 April, Worlikar told me, a total of 22 people from Koliwada had tested positive. The scale of the exercise and the urgency of its implementation offered a stark contrast from other clusters in the city. “It certainly helped that Worli Koliwada is part of Aaditya Thackeray's constituency, said Gawane. “If Aaditya's image is affected due to mishandling, it directly affects that of the chief minister (Aaditya's father, Uddhav Thackeray). So far, the Shiv Sena chief has largely been praised for his calm, efficient handling of the pandemic, a radical departure for a party once known more for its right-wing rabble-rousing than setting a benchmark for good governance....

### **Maharashtra; Government exempts fishing related activities from restrictions amid coronavirus lockdown**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/government-exempts-fishing-relatedactivities-from-restrictions-amid-coronavirus-lockdown>

In a major relief, the Union Home Ministry in its clarification has exempted operation of fishing (marine), aquaculture industry during the lockdown, which is expected to be extended beyond April 14 up to April 30. "Operations of the fishing and aquaculture industry including feeding and maintenance, harvesting, processing, packaging, cold chain, sale and marketing, hatcheries, feed plants, commercial aquaria, movement of fish and shrimp and fish products, fish seed and feed and workers for all these activities are exempted under the consolidated guidelines issued with regard to lockdown," said Ajay Bhalla, Home Secretary in his communication to the states and Union territories.

However, the Home Ministry said it will be the responsibility of the head of the organisations and establishments to ensure compliance of norms with regard to social distancing and proper hygiene practice. The district authorities have been tasked to ensure strict enforcement. Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti president Damodar Tandel said even though the Centre has exempted fishing and related activities, the state and district authorities will have to provide permission for the commencement of fish markets in the cities and districts in two shifts. "The district and civic authorities need to supply masks, hand sanitisers and gloves to the fisherfolks and the police should provide passes for the transportation of fish in such markets," added Tandel. Apart of Tandel, various associations had said the fishing industries need to be given assistance to stay afloat, especially during the lockdown and economic downturn. The share of fisheries sector in the total GDP (at current prices) rose to 1.03% in 2017-18 from 0.40% in 1950-51. The sector contributed Rs1,75,573 crore to the GDP (at current prices) during FY 2017-18.

**Maharashtra: Fishermen colony of Worli, Prabhadevi and Lower Parel. Mumbai's D Ward, has the second-highest number of cases**

<https://www.shethepeople.tv/news/covid-19-mumbai-enters-the-phase-of-community-transmission>

One of its biggest corona hotspots is Mumbai. The Municipal Corporation of Mumbai has said that the city has entered the stage of community transmission. This means that COVID-19 positive cases that are now surfacing in Mumbai are not from coming due to connect with those who have travelled from overseas into India. Coronavirus cases in Mumbai Currently, Mumbai has crossed the 500 mark for patients testing positive with the disease. Mumbai has also reported 34 deaths so far. Moreover out of the 34 patients who died from Coronavirus 11 of them had no pre-existing history of ailments. On Wednesday morning 44 new cases have been found of COVID-19 in areas that are under the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). Areas that have been affected the most in a report given by BMC, the majority of cases of Coronavirus

have been recorded from the tightly packed centres within Mumbai. The G south ward of the BMC has reported the highest number of Coronavirus infected cases, that is 78.

The maximum numbers of patients that have been reported from this ward are from the fishermen colony of Worli, Prabhadevi and Lower Parel. Mumbai's D Ward, which has Byculla in its limits, has the second-highest number of cases. “Concerns about health workers and doctors A BMC senior official said that “We are more worried and concerned about the health workers and doctors. Who has been tested coronavirus positive. In Mumbai, more than 50 people from the medical fraternity are detected as virus-positive. Just a day ago Wockhardt hospital was shut down as 22 nurses tested positive. He also went on to add that therefore the community spreading has started due to which we see a surge in a number of cases from various parts of the city. Also, they have neither international travel history nor immediate contact. We are declaring these areas as contaminated cluster and subsequently sealing them. Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope paid a visit to Dharavi and other slum areas in Mumbai on Tuesday to check and assess the situation.

“I have asked to increase the number of ventilators and testing, he told reporters. It will help detect more cases and subsequently taken quick measures to prevent the outbreak of coronavirus. The situation is under control, he added. Maharashtra's Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has now made it compulsory to wear masks for stepping out for any essential service. Overall in India, the total number of cases that have been recorded is 5,194. The death toll has been 149 and there have been 352 recoveries according to the latest data given by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

### **Maharashtra: Vedanta distributes monthly ration to 14,000 fishermen in Mumbai**

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/vedanta-distributes-monthly-ration-to-14000-fishermen-in-mumbai/article31278000.ece>

Vedanta, a diversified metal and mining company, had distributed dry ration for a month to 14,000 families of daily wage earners from the fishermen community in Mumbai's Worli Koliwada area. With the coronavirus cases rising at an alarming pace in that neighbourhood, the fishing hamlet there has been completely cordoned off since last week. Anil Agarwal, Executive Chairman, Vedanta Resources, said: “The area is very close to where I live and we decided to do something to help the fisherman community. It is critical that corporate houses assist the government in the fight against this deadly virus. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has remarked that several corporates and NGOs have been aiding the State government in its relief work.

## **Maharashtra: No Clarity in Rules Leaves Fishermen Struggling During Lockdown**

<https://www.newsclick.in/Clarity-Rules-Leaves-Maharashtra-Fishermen-Struggling-Lockdown>

Sugandha Sadashiv Mhatre is a fish-seller and is always found selling her wares in the same corner of Dombivali's main market. The market is right in front of the city's police station. As more than five persons are not allowed to gather, the market has been shut since March 23, the day the lockdown began in Maharashtra. According to the government's rules, Sugandha is allowed to sell fish. How? Where would she sell it? So, Sugandha does not go to the fish market anymore, and is bearing losses between Rs 1000 and Rs 1500 on a daily basis. This will go on for longer, even if one assumes that people would come to buy fish on the day that the lockdown is revoked. Will Sugandha then be applicable for government compensation given her losses due to the lockdown? No. Because the government has not banned fish selling. This is the story of every fish-seller and the fisherman of Maharashtra. The government has given one permission to fish and sell but has not allowed people to gather. So, there is no business at all. Who will go out and start selling fish? Haven't you seen police toppling the vegetable carts on the roads? If they did this with our fish basket, will anyone but that fish? It is better to sit home and bear the loss, said Sugandha.

Rules and policies that are in constant conflict are a feature of the lockdown and similar regulations are hurting the fishery business in India. As per the circular issued by Central Government on March 24, fishing is allowed. However, more than five people cannot gather at one place. A fishing trawler always has more than ten people and if they are caught, who will pay their legal fees? So, bigger trawlers have stopped going to sea altogether. Export of fishery products is also down and no one outside India is taking fishery goods. Fishermen from Mumbai and Palghar district catch around one thousand ton of fish. There is no facility to preserve all of it on a daily basis. Given the cost of diesel used in the trawlers and payments for the workers, the owners of the trawlers have decided against them venturing out during lockdown. Damodar Tandel is the leader of Mumbai's fishermen community. He has been following up with the state and the centre's fishery departments.

We are requesting them to take a clear and proper decision. If this continues, we will neither get business nor compensation, he said. Tandel gave another example of the government's chaotic handling. People who are below poverty line (BPL) are supposed to get rice for Rs 2, and Tandel demanded a similar scheme for poor fishermen. He wrote a letter to the centre's fishery department. It accepted the demand and said that the fishermen had to submit their Aadhar cards and ration cards with the letter from their community to the fishery department within two days. How it is possible to do all this in just two days? The government is not allowing us outside our

homes. Offices have minimum presence. In such a situation, the government asked us to submit the documents within two days. It should have given us more time, he said. Small fishermen from Maharashtra's coastal regions are also facing losses. Their two to three cylinder boats are allowed to go into the sea but local markets are shut.

So, they are stranded on land. I have a loan and heard that the EMIs could be postponed but that there would be interest on stalled EMIs. If there is no business for two months, then how does a small fisherman pay his EMIs? Shouldn't the government restructure the loans?, asked Dashrath Bhagat from Raigad's Alibaug. He has one boat and there are three people who work on it. It means three families are in loss and not getting any relief from either the state or the central government. With India under lockdown, different sectors now face financial crises. But, the central government has not come up with a plan to make sure that the slowdown does not hit them hard.

**Maharashtra: Lockdown enforced when they were at sea so more than a lakh of fishers now wait in deep waters**

<https://en.gaonconnection.com/lockdown-enforced-when-they-were-at-sea-so-lakhs-of-fishers-now-wait-in-deep-waters/>

As you read this piece, at least a hundred thousand fishers and migrant fish workers are stranded in their fishing boats in the Arabian Sea off the Maharashtra coast. A large number of fishers in the state practice deep-sea fishing, which requires them to be in the sea for days or weeks together. They carry food supplies with them when they leave the coast for a fishing trip. “Like their regular practice, these fishers left the coast for deep-sea fishing. While they were in the sea, in response to the coronavirus lockdown, Prime Minister Modi announced nation-wide lockdown and now these fishers cannot return to land. They are living in their boats in the sea, Kiran Koli of Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti told Gaon Connection. “As per our estimate, about one-and-a-half lakh fishermen and fish workers are stranded in the sea. We have supplied them with dry ration and drinking water. They can now get off their boats only after the 21-day lockdown period gets over on April 14, he added. A large number of these stranded fishers are migrant fish workers hailing from land-locked states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand. They come to coastal Maharashtra to earn a livelihood by spending weeks in the sea catching fish to earn money.

“If these over a lakh stranded fishers return to the land, how do we ensure no over-crowding? Where do we house the migrant fish workers? Trains and buses are not plying, so they cannot return to their home states. They have no choice but to be in boats in the sea, lamented Koli. The government is not unaware of the plight of stranded migrant fish workers. In its letter dated

March 28, the Central Department of Fisheries noted “a large number of migrant workers from different states have been stranded on fishing vessels and fish-landing sites across the country... such migrant fish workers do not have any avenue to return to their villages, and thus are stranded in unfamiliar locations. The department has directed the states to ensure “adequate food, water, shelter, essential sanitary supplies in the light of COVID19 and wages are continued to be made available.

It has also told the state administrations to ensure a tally of migrant workers with their full names, residence details and a contact number are made available in order to communicate back to their families about their condition. The families of these migrant workers should be supported with ration and essential supplies in their respective states, the letter reads. The nation-wide lockdown has thrown lives of over 16 million fishers and fish workers in the country out of gear. Of these, half (5,570,217) are women, as the sale of fish is most undertaken by fisherwomen in the country. “Fishing activities along the coastline of India have come to a standstill. None of the fishers are venturing out into the sea to catch fish, as there is no availability of ice, fish workers and transport facilities, T Peter, general secretary of National Fishworkers' Forum, a federation of state-level trade unions in India, told Gaon Connection.

“All the 1,547 fish landing centres in the coastal states are shut. Fisher families are staring at starvation and need a supply of ration and financial support, he added. “Please tell the government to help us. Whatever food we had at our homes is finished. We do not know from where our next day's meal will come, Rehman, a fisher attached with the Traditional Fishworkers Trade Union in Andhra Pradesh pleaded with Gaon Connection. “It is only now the government has started giving five kilogram rice and one kilogram dal [lentil] per person. But, the ration shop gives this dry ration to only 50 people in a day, he said. The worries of Rehman and other fishers in the eastern coast of the country do not end here.

On April 15, the first day post 21-day lockdown, 61-day fishing ban period [an annual practice] comes into force in the eastern coast of the country. “We haven't been able to fish in the month of March. Half of April will also go in lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak. Thereafter, another two months we cannot fish due to the fishing ban period, said hapless Rehman. “Like farmers, we fishers may also have to commit suicide, he added. Similar voices emerge from the western coast of the country. “Last year, from August 1 until November 15, there was an excess rainfall and several storms in the Arabian Sea because of which fishers could not do regular fishing. The first fishing season was lost and fishers suffered huge losses, said Koli. The second fishing season from December is always a lean period when 50 per cent of the boats remain idle. “Post Holi, the third fishing season is our peak season, but coronavirus has killed that season for

us. And now, the 61-day monsoon fishing ban period will come into force on the western coast from June 1.

We cannot cope with any more disasters. The government must support us, he added. Maharashtra has a total of 28,000 registered fishing boats, while 15,310 boats have a fishing licence. About 9,310 fishers in the state are eligible for fuel (diesel) subsidy to carry out fishing activities. Shockingly, the Maharashtra government owes fishers Rs 187 crore towards diesel subsidy. “We buy diesel for our fishing boats and the government later returns us a part of the money as a subsidy, informed Koli.

“However, it's been more than four-five years, the state government hasn't paid this money to the fishers, which now stands at Rs 187 crore for 9,310 fishers in the state alleged Koli. On February 14 this year, representatives of Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti had a meeting with the state fisheries minister Aslam Shaikh requesting release of the diesel subsidy. The state claims to have released Rs 78 crore. But, according to Koli, the money is yet to reach the bank accounts of beneficiaries. Lockdown has added to the woes of fishers who are seeking relief from the Centre. On March 24, soon after Modi announced the 21-day nationwide lockdown, National Fishworkers' Forum shot off a letter to Pratap Chandra Sarangi, minister of state, Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying. The letter informed the minister that “many boats with fish who ventured to the sea prior to the lockdown were forced to forgo their catch in the harbour across the coastal states. As per news reports, fishers in Maharashtra had to throw away 10,000 tonnes of fish catch back into the sea owing to lack of ice and transport facilities. Similar reports are pouring in from other states.

In its letter D.O. No. 12035/1/Fy (WU) dated March 24, 2020, the Central department of fisheries requested all state chief secretaries to issue directions “to the law-enforcing authorities to include fish and shrimp in the list of commodities to be exempted from the lockdown and allow for the movement of fish and fish products. However, shutting down of ice factories and lack of transportation has meant rotting of fish stocks and huge losses to the fishers. National Fishworkers' Forum has demanded the Central government to announce an economic package specifically for the fishing community “keeping in mind that the monsoon ban season is arriving and will also affect the livelihoods of crores of fishworkers and ones who are dependent on the occupation. The Forum has also demanded a monthly allowance of Rs 10,000 per fisher family for three months period to be paid in advance. It has also demanded an adequate supply of ration with cooking fuel to the fish workers. In its letter dated March 30, the Central department of fisheries has indicated it is proposing financial assistance to the fishers with pre-requisite of Aadhaar linked bank accounts of the beneficiaries. Coronavirus pandemic is not just a health

crisis. It is a livelihood crisis for millions of fishers and fish workers in the country whose survival is threatened.

### **Maharashtra: COVID-19: Worli worst-affected area in Mumbai**

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/west/covid-19-worli-worst-affected-area-in-mumbai-822315.html>

From chawls to sky-scrapers to a cosmopolitan mix, Worli, in a way represent what is often described as the spirit of Mumbai. The Worli Sea Face adores the statue of Common Man, the creation of legendary cartoonist R K Laxman, and in front of it is the Bandra-Worli Sea Link that signifies the hustle-bustle of India's financial capital. Follow live updates of coronavirus cases in India here the richest of rich and poorest of poor stay here. The spectrum here is wide, right from vadapao to continental dishes to a neighbourhood barbar's shop to world-class saloons. Today, the G/South Ward, that covers large parts of Worli, Lower Parel, Tardeo, Prabhadevi has emerged as the hotspot of COVID-19 crisis in Mumbai. In fact, the Worli Koliwada, the fishermen's colony was the first place on Mumbai where the containment exercise was carried out by the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The Worli seat is represented by Tourism, Environment and Protocol Minister Aaditya Thackeray, the son of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. According to records of the BMC, there are 68 COVID-19 positive cases. More than 150 persons have been quarantined. We have contained large areas of this ward as a precautionary measure, Health and Family Welfare Minister Rajesh Tope said. More than 50,000 people have been screened - and contact-tracing is being done. The Worli Koliwada itself has more than a dozen positive cases, who are undergoing treatment in hospitals. It is one of the earliest fishing villages in Mumbai, and been host to the original settlers of Mumbai - Kolis, Agris and Bhandaris for hundreds of years, according to historical records. One of the major reasons of spread could be a 65-year-old woman who ran a lunch stall near Elphinstone Road. Some people from her building too had turned positive. We will win the fight if we stay at home, says Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar, who is a Corporator form G/South Ward.

### **Maharashtra: Fisherfolk to get separate landing point at Karanja jetty**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/fisherfolk-to-get-separate-landing-point-at-karanja-jetty/article31242472.ece>

The State Fisheries Department is working to set up a separate landing point at the busy Karanja jetty in Uran for unloading the day's catch of fish, keeping in mind the social distancing norms that are to be mandatorily followed as per State guidelines. The decision, officials said,

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was taken in the wake of crowding at the jetty a few days ago, giving rise to fears of infection. The Maharashtra Fisheries Department, through a public notice released on March 26, declared fish as an essential commodity to facilitate its supply and export, and ease the burden on fishermen. However, local fishermen have still been facing inconvenience due to the abruptness of the lockdown announced across the country. To save fishermen from facing extreme losses, the Vasai Fishermen's Cooperative Society offered to purchase their stock and created an hourly token system in their office building so that social distancing could be practised and fish could be sold to local consumers.

“The problem was of crowds. We had volunteers to ensure that a minimum distance was maintained and had given hourly time slots to facilitate the sale of the fish, said Sanjay Koli, chairman of the society. However, a bigger problem was observed at Karanja and Sassoon docks, where the fishermen complained of excess fish having to go to waste due to the lack of cold storage facilities, stoppage of auctioning in wholesale markets and absence of exporters willing to purchase stocks at the usual price. Rajendra Jadhav, Joint Commissioner of Fisheries, Maharashtra said, four days ago, the massive crowds that gathered near the Karanja jetty for auctioning were deemed a hazard considering the spread of the coronavirus, because of which the gram panchayat and co-operative society together took a decision to shut down the wholesale market. “At Karanja, there was such a large crowd four days ago that a decision had to be taken to close the jetty where the fish were auctioned after being caught. We are now working to develop a separate spot for landing in Karanja, as well as storage, but this is still in process, he said. Amol Roge, chairman of the Martanda Prasanna Colaba Matsyodyog, a society working for welfare of fishermen in Colaba, said about 60% of his catch at Sassoon Dock will have to be disposed of, 10% was sold to local residents upon arrival of the boats while 25-30% was picked up by middlemen or suppliers.

“These middlemen who supply to the company did not inform us of the rates or weights of the stock. They said they will let us know as soon as they hear from the companies that they were buying for. It has been seven to eight days since they took our fish but I haven't heard from them, said Mr. Roge. For every trip he makes, Mr. Roge has to spend around Rs.3 lakh on diesel and wages of 16 to 17 crew members on each boat. He said distribution of fish to local residents is becoming difficult as it leads to crowding, which in turn invites a police crackdown. In Palghar district, trucks of exporter companies are being allowed to carry fish to Porbandar in Gujarat, where they can be preserved in cold storage for about two months. “However, this facility is not accessible for local fishermen from villages spread across the vast coastline of India, said Ganesh Nakhawa, a fisherman from Karanja. Mr. Nakhawa said it is also easier for the ports in the North, which have better connectivity to Gujarat. Asked whether measures such as construction of landing sites or provision of cold storage would be available for docks such as Sassoon, Mr.

Jadhav said, “I don't have information from my staff, of crowds gathering or problems with sales there. Measures are only being taken at Karanja as of now.

### **Maharashtra: Centre developing lockdown relief package for fishing community**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/centre-developing-lockdown-relief-package-for-fishing-community/story-m8BXktOVSjd7ecwQ0i6iMI.html>

The Centre has directed all coastal states to submit bank details of affected fishers, fish farmers, and vendors during the COVID-19 lockdown to develop a relief package. The Maharashtra fisheries department said the list of affected fisher folk and allied activities had already been sent to the Centre, and now their bank details were being collated. The move comes after reports of over 10,000 tonnes of fresh fish catch being dumped at sea and over Rs. 300 crore losses recorded so far by the community in Maharashtra. “The Centre is putting together a lockdown relief package for affected persons in the fishing community. On one hand the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has directed the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute to submit details of estimated loss of fish catch during the lockdown while we are collating the bank details to provide immediate relief to the affected community, said Rajendra Jadhav, joint commissioner (fisheries).

### **Maharashtra: Five areas declared as containment zones**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/in-pictures-five-areas-declared-as-containment-zones-in-mumbai/photostory/74925072.cms>

Maharashtra has reported 320 positive cases of coronavirus so far with 12 fatalities, out of which Mumbai has the maximum number of victims. With a sudden spike in numbers, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has now marked five areas across the eastern and western suburbs as well as the southern region of Mumbai as 'containment zones' and is conducting door-to-door screening at these locations. All the roads leading to these areas are being strictly monitored by the Mumbai police who have put up barricades to regulate the movement of each and every person moving in and out of the area. The five containment zones are -- Worli Koliwada, a chawl in Prabhadevi, Jambhlipada slum in Kalina and Bimbisar Nagar in Goregaon, Kandivali Lokhandwala, and Ghatkopar's Neelkanth Regent building. Photo by

Nilesh Wairkar/MMCL Worli Koliwada, with 11 cases, is one of the biggest such containment zones, where the movement of around 35,000 residents is now restricted.

With the fishing village's first death reported on Tuesday, it now has clearly identified epicentres, buffer zones and clusters (cases). On Monday, Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh visited the Worli Koliwada -- one of the original seven islands of Mumbai and now a part of state Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray's constituency -- to oversee the arrangements.

### **Worli Koliwada in Maharashtra sealed due to coronavirus pandemic**

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/north-and-central/worli-koliwada-in-mumbai-sealed-due-to-coronavirus-pandemic-819776.html>

The Worli Koliwada in Mumbai that comes under the constituency of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's son Aditya has been sealed. Aditya, the state Tourism, Protocol and Environment Minister, is the MLA from Worli. The Worli Koliwad, the earliest fishing villages in Mumbai, Worli Koliwada has been host to the original settlers of Mumbai - Kolis, Agris and Bhandaris for hundreds of years. Late last night 2 am onwards, Koliwada and Janta Colony have been sealed off further. Disinfection and fumigation are on along with contact tracing, Thackeray tweeted. At least four suspected COVID-19 patients from Worli Koliwada are undergoing treatment.

### **Maharashtra: 10K tonnes of fish dumped back at sea during lockdown**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/10k-tonnes-of-fish-dumped-back-at-sea-during-lockdown/story-LiXZ1wRpOKmwcSieHs9OVK.html>

Around 10,000 metric tonnes of fresh fish catch has been dumped back into the sea during the first week of the lockdown, imposed owing to the coronavirus outbreak. Lack of refrigeration facilities, packing and transportation or acquisition of ice are said to be the reasons behind the step. The estimates have been revealed by the National Fishermen's Forum (NFF) and National Purse Seine Fishermen Welfare Association (NPSFWA), based on information from leaders of the fishing community from every coastal district in Maharashtra, from March 22 to Sunday. After collating the data, the two fishermen bodies submitted the details to the state fisheries department on Sunday. The fisheries department said a circular would be issued on Tuesday to all district collectors to ensure that there is no wastage of fish. "The decision was taken in Mantralaya on Monday, and all the fishing activities will continue. We have received reports of fresh catch being dumped.

All help will be provided to them. Our request is that consumers and fisher folk must maintain social distancing during this crisis, said Rajendra Jadhav, joint commissioner, fisheries. On Sunday, the Centre published a notification, clarifying that the transportation of all goods – essential and non-essential – have been allowed during the lockdown. However, experts believe the notification has come quite late in the day. “It is too late now. All the labourers employed in the market have left. There are no cold storage services. Boats are idling and do not have enough manpower, said an NFF member from Mumbai. “While the safety of citizens is of utmost importance, the planning involved in the execution the lockdown has been poor. The entire fishing industry is on the verge of collapse. We are looking at losses worth ₹1,000 crore for the next two months, followed by fishing restrictions during monsoon, said Ganesh Nakhawa, chairman, NPSFWA. Maharashtra is one of the leading marine fish capturing states in the country with 2.95 lakh tonnes worth of catch in 2018.

### **Maharashtra: ‘Declare fishing as an essential service’**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/declare-fishing-as-an-essential-service/articleshow/74837206.cms>

Fish is out of stock in the city. As Sassoon Dock wore a parched look, Akhil Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti requested the state government to declare fishing an essential service and arrange transport to fish markets. Fishing activity has halted right from Colaba to Versova, Vasai, Nalasopara and Palghar, said Damodar Tandel, president of the samiti. In Thane's Vasant Vihar, fish has not been available for the past three days. While none of the local fisherwomen are setting up stalls, stores are not receiving supplies. “We are getting phone calls from our regular customers for seafood and meat. We are open only because we still have some frozen meat available, said the cashier at an outlet named Chic and Fish. Retail supermarkets such as More, Star Bazaar and Nature's Basket, too, do not have seafood or meat.

### **Maharashtra: Versova fishing harbour stuck for want of land**

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-versova-fishing-harbour-stuck-for-want-of-land>

The Versova fishing harbour in Mumbai is stuck up for want of confirmation on availability of land and environment clearance, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Friday during the question time. Minister for Fisheries Giriraj Singh said the Maharashtra government has not submitted the availability of land and the environment clearance for the harbour, even while submitting its detail project report. In a reply to Congress member Husain Dalwai, the minister said same is the status of eight other fishing harbours and 16 fish landing centres as his ministry

has not received the proposals together with confirmation of the availability of land and environment clearance from the state government. He said the ministry has, however, approved three projects received from Maharashtra in the last five years for construction of fishing harbours at Karanja and Anandwadi and modernisation of the Sassoon Dock harbour as the proposals were complete.

He said these projects were cleared under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Blue Revolution, integrated development and management of fisheries. In addition to these, the central funds have been also released for the ongoing Phase-II expansion of the Mirkarwada fishing harbour under the blue revolution scheme, the minister added. Fishermen covered by insurance The minister disclosed in reply to another question by BJP's Dr Vikas Mahatme that an insurance scheme covering the active fishermen who are licensed or registered with the state government ensures Rs 2 lakh to a fisherman on death or permanent total disability and Rs 1 lakh for partial permanent disability. He said the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) under which the insurance is provided does not cover pond fishing, damage to sea cages and loss of fish crops like the crop insurance. He said the group accident insurance for fishermen is implemented under the CSS, in alignment with the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana

### **Bombay high court raps Maharashtra govt, Centre over 'faulty' CRZ maps**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/navi-mumbai/bombay-high-court-raps-maharashtra-govt-centre-over-faulty-crz-maps/articleshow/74646632.cms>

Bombay high court has sought the responses of the state and the Centre on the accuracy of the final Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) maps for Greater Mumbai. Your clients will proceed on defective maps? Perhaps your clients are not bothered, a bench of acting chief justice Bhushan Dharmadhikari and justice Nitin Borkar said on March 12 after told the Union's advocate for the Ministry of Environment and Forest said instructions would have to be taken from the National Centre for Earth Science Studies, Kerala. The court heard a petition by NGO Vanshakti that the maps, prepared in 2018, under Coastal Regulation Zone notification, 2011, were erroneous, inaccurate and incomplete. The NGO's advocate, Zaman Ali, argued that such defective maps were going to form the basis of new maps that are required to be updated under the 2019 CRZ notification. He said the whole exercise would be redundant if the present maps were not corrected. Asked by the judges to point out one defect, Ali answered different colour codes were required within CRZ-I areas such as mudflats, mangroves, sanctuaries and heritage sites. He showed the final coastal maps for the eastern coast of Mumbai and said, The entire CRZ-1 A (eco-sensitive areas) is given one colour.

The Thane creek flamingoes sanctuary has not been given a distinct colour code as required by the 2011 notification. The petition states various plots/lands which would fall under different categories of CRZ are now marked as 'non-CRZ' without any justification and that existing authorised development on the seaward side are not demarcated. Pointing to further lapses, the plea says relief centres for disaster management during cyclones, rain, storms and tsunamis have not been indicated. The petition informs that suggestions and objections to the draft Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) maps were ignored and that authorities have failed to take into account the danger of natural hazards in the sensitive coastal stretches of Maharashtra. The NGO has urged for a stay on the operation of the CZMP maps in their present layout and sought a directive for publication of fresh maps. It wants Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority to stop all ongoing construction/landfilling activities in CRZ areas until then. Miffed at the Centre seeking time to reply, the ACJ also said, your clients are not co-operating with the court. The court gave a last chance and adjourned the hearing to March 27.

### **Maharashtra: Environmentalists cry foul over destruction of mangroves covered by CRZ I**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/environmentalists-cry-foul-over-destruction-of-mangroves-covered-by-crz-i/articleshow/74575800.cms>

Environmentalists are crying foul over destruction of mangroves, wetlands and lands covered by Coastal Regulatory Zone I (CRZ I) in sector 12 of Ghansoli in Navi Mumbai. They claim that land is being reclaimed by dumping debris and are as high as eight metres. In an email sent to environment secretary Anil Diggikar on Saturday, D Stalin director of environmental group Vanshakti has asked immediate stoppage of dumping debris and mud over 30 acre of land. The email points out those three issues are involved in the whole process, reclamation of CRZ land, destruction of mangroves and reclamation of water bodies for construction activities. The mail says, If one compares google earth maps of 2005 and present day, then it is quite evident that, already buildings have come up in the vicinity by destruction of mangroves and further reclamation of land will lead to more construction activity in the area. And this can cause disaster in monsoon as flood waters will have no place to spread out. The mail points out that, “At many places, there is reclamation and dumping of debris in the buffer zone of Mangroves which is CRZ 1.

The High Court in its judgement of 2013 has clarified that the 50 metre buffer zones of Mangroves is also CRZ 1 along with the Mangroves. The entire region is CRZ 1 but has been gradually and very clandestinely destroyed and townships/residential/commercial buildings have been constructed on them. No occupancy certificates must be issued for incomplete buildings

and we seek a complete stop to all construction inside the high tide line (HTL) as of today. Stalin also demanded, “There are many aquaculture ponds created by locals on the creekward side. These ponds are filled by channelizing the tide water through sluice gates seen at many places. Now these ponds are being filled up which clearly means that intertidal areas are being filled up. Please direct that the sluice gates be demolished and the tide water allowed to freely enter and leave the land. The mail requests environment secretary to CIDCO, Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation, state forest department and local police station to ensure that the status quo is maintained at the site till the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) gives its decision

### **Storms, Winds and dearth of fish distress Maharashtra fishermen**

<https://www.newslick.in/Storms-Winds-Dearth-Fish-Distress-Maharashtra-Fishermen>

Nisar Panjare, a fisherman from Mirkarwada village in Ratnagiri, who owns a traditional wooden boat, was talking a walk on the jetty. He was worried as he could not take his boat out for two weeks in January for fishing due to the rough weather and strong winds. Panjare, who generally catches fish worth Rs 50,000 per week, has not earned a penny this week. Like Panjare, many fishermen in Ratnagiri have not been able to go for fishing, owing to the weather. Even when they go when the weather permits they say that they are struggling catch fish. Over 50 mechanised trawlers (40-50 feet in length and 10-20 feet in width) and more than 100 traditional boats (15-20 feet long and 5-7 feet wide) remain anchored at Mirkarwada alone due to rough weather. Fishermen can be seen fixing the huge nets used for catching fish and while others are simply strolling or chatting around, at the beach. Rafique Vasta, a fisherman who owns a traditional boat also a member of All India Fishermen Committee said, “Fishing season begins in August-September as soon as monsoon is over. But last year, monsoon extended till October end and we could not go for fishing. Then, two cyclones hit the Konkan coast one after the other in October and then in the first week of November.

These kept us from going to the sea. “So, either storms or rough winds are making it difficult for the fishermen to go to the sea. Even when we take small boats, we catch less than 10% of what we get generally. Traditional boats employ 9-10 people while mechanised trawlers employ over 35-40 people. Thus, over 15,000 people depend on fishing here at Mirkarwada alone. They all are struggling to get sufficient livelihood this season. Fishing is a source of livelihood of lakhs of fishermen in Konkan region of Maharashtra that comprises five districts along the Arabian Sea coast Ratnagiri, Sindhudurga, Raigad, Palghar and Thane. The total marine fish production of the country in 2018 was recorded at 3.49 million tonne, which is lower by 3.47 lakh tonne (9%) as

compared to the previous year, mainly due to the reduced catch in West Bengal, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Though data for this year's marine fish production is not out, authorities say that catch has been low across India, including Maharashtra. A few vendors, sitting on the street perpendicular to the jetty, can be seen selling fish. Fatima Begum, who sells fish caught by her brothers and husband, said, "Generally, over 100-150 vendors sell fish along this road. And hundreds of customers come to buy fish in the evening. But now, you can see only 10-12 vendors and a few buyers.

Aslam Darve, who also owns a traditional boat, told NewsClick, "Traditional boats require 100 litre of diesel while mechanised trawlers require 500 litre. Traditional boats generally get catch worth Rs 10,000 and income of each mechanised trawler is over Rs 1 lakh per day. But currently, both types of boats are not getting catch. All fishermen come here every day hoping that the weather would be better and they can go for fishing. But they get disappointed. Vasta added, "What is worrisome is that whenever weather permits to go to the sea, fishermen are not getting catch. This means that there is not much fish in the sea. Besides, mechanised trawlers have been doing fishing in deep sea and they catch young breed. Fishing using technologies like LED light and advanced nets is banned. But mechanised boats continue to use advanced technologies, causing reduced fish production in the sea. This is rendering traditional fishermen jobless. Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), via email communication, told NewsClick that marine fish export from Maharashtra has decreased between 2017-18 and 2018-19. As per MPEDA, Maharashtra exported 1.8 lakh tonnes of fish worth \$772 million in 2017-18, but it was decreased to 1.6 lakh tonnes worth \$739 million in 2018-19. Damodar Tandel, president, All India Fishermen Committee, said, "Government introduces welfare schemes for farmers and also comes up with loan waivers. Government needs to pay money to the fishermen as well; otherwise, we will find it difficult to survive. Experts point out that studies should be conducted to find out how climate change is affecting the marine life or if it is the effect of excessive fishing even for the young catch that has made fish disappear.

### **Maharashtra: New rules for redevelopment of gaothans and koliwadadas to allow 7-13 storey towers**

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/cover-story/upward-mobility-for-sons-of-the-soil/articleshow/74349715.cms>

The residents can decide to preserve the colonies as they are, go for repairs and expansions if they so wish, or opt for redevelopment. Mumbai could be in for a new spurt in construction with the BMC ready with its Special Development Control Rules (SDCR) for gaothans and koliwadadas. Mumbai has over 200 gaothans and koliwadadas – a majority of them at prime locations – and the special DCR could interest a lot of developers. Gaothans (small



villages) and koliwadadas (fishermen's enclaves) are the oldest settlements of Mumbai and were left out of the redevelopment boom because their residents had objected to being categorised as slum-dwellers and the development control rules gave them a raw deal. The Special DCR, however, gives them the freedom to decide the fate of their settlements. The residents can decide to preserve the colonies as they are, go for repairs and expansions if they so wish, or opt for complete redevelopment. Under the third option, the residents will be allowed to build mid-rise buildings – 7 to 13 storeys – by either going for self-redevelopment or by tying up with a builder.

In either case, they will be allowed to sell excess inventory in the open market to raise funds for the redevelopment. For areas like Worli and Juhu koliwada, this could mean a massive building potential. Koliwadadas and gaothans that have been designated heritage precincts - Khotachiwadi and Bandra Village - will have stricter restrictions on land use and will not be allowed to tinker with the original character of the settlement. Koliwadadas are out of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms but redevelopment of gaothans, which fall under CRZ, will have to follow the norms. Urban Design Research Institute's Pankaj Joshi, who worked with the BMC to frame the Special DCR, said the focus was on making the residents of gaothans and koliwadadas the masters of their fate. “This cooperative model is based on self-redevelopment and will give the community control over its land.

The Special DCR will actually be very democratic and the consent of the residents will be required for choosing what category they want for their gaothan or koliwada, Joshi said. Ujwala Patil, chairperson, Koliwada Gaothan Vistar Kruti Samiti, said in most cases residents are likely to vote for self-redevelopment. “We will only sell flats to the residents of koliwadadas and gaothans. We will ask the government to give us aid to finance the redevelopment, Patil said. She said the selfredevelopment model has already been tried at Mahim koliwada with encouraging results. Joshi said the special DCR goes beyond houses and allows residents to plan infrastructure for fishing, storage spaces and even restaurants and cafes. “The idea is to make koliwadadas and gaothans financially sustainable and preserve the community, he said.

A draft of the special DCR was submitted to Municipal Commissioner Praveen Pardeshi on Wednesday. Shiv Sena member of Parliament from southcentral Mumbai Rahul Shewale, who has been pushing for the redevelopment of gaothans and koliwadadas, said: “The redevelopment of gaothans and koliwadadas is a pressing issue. Since they are the original sons of the soil, redevelopment of their homes is a priority. Municipal Commissioner Praveen Pardeshi on Thursday said that he has accepted the draft Special DCR in principle. “This is the way forward for the development of koliwadadas and gaothans. We will execute a pilot project soon, he said.

**Maharashtra goes in for eco-friendly but longer, costlier sea link**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-goes-in-for-eco-friendly-but-longer-costlier-sea-link/articleshow/74327909.cms>

To avoid complexities such as heavy damage to coastal environment and human habitation during or after its construction, MSRDC, the state infrastructure arm, will extend the upcoming Bandra-Versova sea link up to Virar, via Charkop and Vasai, from a kilometre into the sea, instead of building it along the coast. The link's "pure construction cost is pegged at Rs 21,000 crore. The eight-lane 57.8km link aims to reduce travel time by one-and-a-half hours, during peak hours. MSRDC, said its MD Radhyesham Mopalwar, rejected options by consultants of building the link as a coastal road abutting the sea, or as a road on stilts above mangroves jutting the coast. Avoiding coastal road and stilt road options will help it minimize damage to marine ecosystem, such as mangroves, creeks and coastal habitations, including fishermen's villages and hamlets, as land acquisition will be minimal.

The link will have interchanges at Charkop, Uttan, Vasai and Virar, which make the link's distance for construction purposes to 84km. The 84km Versova-Virar link will take 60,000 vehicles in 2026 when it is expected to be ready. But one-way toll for a car to travel from Versova to Virar will be around Rs1,000 in 2026. The decision to go for a sea link came based on options given by Tata Consulting Engineers (TCE) in its pre-feasibility report, ordered by the government via MSRDC in 2019. There was an option to build the Vasai-Virar (around 11km plus Virar interchange) stretch of the link later, to cut "pure construction cost by Rs6,000 crore. If loans and land acquisition are considered, the Rs21,000 construction cost for Versova-Virar goes up to Rs32,000 crore. If the Vasai-Virar portion is postponed, the cost for Versova-Vasai will come down to Rs 22,000 crore. MSRDC has asked for a detailed project report with a final financial and technical feasibility study before floating tenders.

"The detailed report and tendering will take two to three years, before putting developers in place for construction. But, to come up with the detailed report, the permission of state government headed by chief minister Uddhav Thackeray will be necessary, which we are seeking now, officials said, pointing out that the prefeasibility study had set the ball rolling for the project.

### **Maharashtra's fisherfolk remind govt of promises**

<http://www.asianage.com/metros/mumbai/250220/fisherfolk-remind-govt-of-promises.htm>

Ahead of the Maharashtra budget, the fishing community has reminded the state government of its promise to compensate fishermen for the losses incurred last year due to back-to-back cyclones. They also said that the budget should stress on reviving the blue economy in

the state. Fishermen said that losses to the tune of Rs 1,000 crore were incurred last year due to unseasonal rain and four cyclones in the state. Following its formation in November 2019, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government said that the ruling party would look into the plight of fishermen in the state. “The fish catch was drastically reduced due to the absence of fishing for three more months till November post the monsoon last year. Our delegation met Jitendra Ahwad and Ajit Pawar to apprise them of our problems and we were promised action on the losses incurred. We expect that the budget will provide compensatory allocation for fishermen in case of natural disasters, said Damodar Tandel, president of the Akhil Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti. The fishermen's group demanded that each fisherman be compensated at least Rs 25,000 and around Rs 1 lakh for losses incurred in boats.

The fishermen also demanded that the subsidiary amount for diesel which was promised and has been pending for an average three months be provided. Ganesh Nakhawa, president of Purse Seine Net Fishermen Welfare Association, said, “The state government should clear the diesel subsidiary pending since three months or more in some cases. We have been giving the money to oil companies like Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum, from whom we take diesel for boat operations. They take money from us in advance, based on which subsidy is provided to us. According to the group, approximately Rs 240 crore is expected in subsidy across Maharashtra. The state government had earlier provided Rs 30 crore in this connection. The group further stated that there should be an elaborate study on the impact of climate change on the marine environment and fisheries. “In case of crop failure, there are provisions laid down for compensation per hectare in matters like damage to cotton, grapes etc. Similar resolutions should be passed in case of bad fishing days and marine drought, Mr Nakhawa added.

### **Stop The reclamation work at worli seaface: Maharashtra’s fishermen community of Worli**

<https://www.mumbailive.com/en/environment/stop-the-reclamation-work-at-worli-seaface-fishermen-community-of-worli-to-aaditya-thackeray-and-uddhav-thackeray-45690>

As the work of Coastal Road project is going on in full swing, the Worli Koliwada Nakhawa Matsya Vyvsay Sahkari Society has urged Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Environment and Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray to stop the reclamation work at Worli sea face as it is affecting their livelihood. They stated that the reclamation work should stop till the Supreme Court gives its final judgement. The fishermen have suggested that the road be supported on stilts, instead of the authorities pressing ahead with reclamation at Worli seaface, to minimise damage to active fishing zones. Last month the fishermen had also written a letter to Uddhav Thackeray and Aaditya Thackeray and requested them for a meeting to discuss the damage caused by reclamation for the Coastal Road. However, the meeting has not happened till

date. The project has not only caused inconvenience to the fishermen community but also to the residents of Bhulabhai Desai Road.

Earlier this week, when the residents were at Tata Garden for their regular morning walk, they saw notices on trees that around 140 trees will be cut for Coastal Road construction. In addition to this 140,500 trees will be cut between Worli and Marine Drive for this project. The resident's concern was that the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had not mentioned anything about hearing public suggestions before putting up the notices. Out of the 140 trees that will be chopped down near Bhulabhai Desai Road, the BMC stated that it will transplant trees. Further, the trees will be cut for the widening of the road as well. Notably, Coastal Road is an 8-lane, 29.2-km long freeway that would run along Mumbai's western coastline connecting Marine Lines in the south to Kandivali in the north.

The Coastal Road is projected to be used by 1,30,000 vehicles daily and is expected to reduce travel time between South Mumbai and the Western Suburbs from 2 hours to 40 minutes. The estimated cost of the project is 12,000 crores. The first phase of the project is expected to be completed by 2022.

#### **Maharashtra govt cracks down on illegal sale of catfish, seize 30 tonnes in 10 days**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/maharashtra-govt-cracks-down-on-illegal-sale-of-catfish-seize-30-tonnes-in-10-days-6281787/>

The state fisheries department has launched a crackdown on Thai catfish (Magur) breeding and has confiscated and buried 30 tonnes of Magur 15 tonnes in Mumbai, 8 tonnes at Indapur near Pune, and 7 tonnes in Bhiwandi in the last 10 days. A carnivorous-freshwater fish, Magur feeds on water organisms that reportedly has an adverse impact on indigenous biodiversity and reduces food base for water birds. Known to grow up to 3-5 feet long, the species is also suspected to cause diseases like Argulosis, commonly known as fish lice. The central government had banned breeding, transportation and sale of the invasive species in 2000. However, as the species grows to a good size, when compared to their smaller indigenous counterparts, farmers have found it more lucrative and reared them on the sly.

“We have found that some people were breeding the species in their ponds and illegally selling them. We are immediately destroying all Magur catch and also urging people to report if they spot breeding of these species, fisheries commissioner Rajiv Jadhav said. The state government is also planning to launch an awareness campaign in the local fish markets, to educate consumers on its adverse impact on ecology and health. In Maharashtra, traditional fishermen from villages around Ujjani Dam, near Indapur, Shirur and Daund, had registered a complaint with the state

fisheries department on the breeding of Thai Magur. “It is not just Magur which is an issue. There are many such invasive species that are destroying the ecosystem but are readily available in the market. These species are called aquatic invasive species and the government should come up with a policy regarding its breeding and sale in the Indian market, K V Akhilesh of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute said.

### **Maharashtra’s Coastal Road: Worli Koliwada fishermen urge Aaditya to stop reclamation at Worli seaface**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/coastal-road-worli-koliwada-fishermen-urge-aaditya-to-stop-reclamation-at-worli-seaface-6278692/>

Fearing risk to their livelihood, fishermen from Worli Koliwada have urged state Environment and Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray to stop reclamation at Worli seaface for the ambitious Coastal Road project until the Supreme Court gives its final judgment. The fishermen have suggested that the road be supported on stilts, instead of the authorities pressing ahead with reclamation at Worli seaface, to minimise damage to active fishing zones. The fishermen claimed that for more than a month, they were trying to meet Aaditya but there has been no response from his office. Aaditya, who is the youngest minister in the state cabinet, is also the MLA from Worli. The Worli Koliwada Nakhawa Matsya Vyvsay Sahkari Society, which has filed a petition in the Bombay High Court against the reclamation, said they were not opposed to the project but only want the authorities to work with the community to arrive at sustainable alternatives that allows development while safeguarding biodiversity and the livelihood of fishermen.

Last month, the fishermen body had written to CM Uddhav Thackeray and Aaditya, seeking a meeting to discuss their concerns over the project. “We had written on January 6 to Uddhav and Aaditya. On January 10, Aaditya came to Worli Koliwada for a festival. I met him and requested a meeting to discuss the damage caused by reclamation for the Coastal Road. He told me he had received the letter and they were discussing it with the chief minister and soon a meeting will be called, said Nitesh Patil, a fisherman. The Rs 12,000-crore Coastal Road will connect Princess Street flyover with the Worli-end of the Bandra-Worli sea link. The BMC will reclaim about 95 hectares of sea at Priyadarshini Park, Tata Garden, Haji Ali and Worli seaface. Work on the road was halted by the Bombay High Court in June last year. However, in December that year, the Supreme Court lifted the stay. Next hearing is in April.

### **Maharashtra’s govt to destroy breeding centres of Thai Mangur fish**

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/maha-govt-to-destroy-breeding-centres-of-thai-mangur-fish/1740099>

The Maharashtra government has launched a special drive to destroy the cultivation centres of the exotic Thai Mangur fish. The decision is outcome of a meeting held last week between fish traders and officials of the Maharashtra fisheries department headed by Minister Aslam Shaikh. After a detailed review of the situation, Shaikh has ordered a ban on sale of Thai Mangur fish and asked officials to destroy its breeding centres, officials said. The fish is popularly known as Thai Mangur or African Mangur or foreign Mangur, as appearances is somewhat like fresh water Mangur. But the Thai Mangur is cultivated in highly unhygienic conditions, which may lead to people falling sick after consuming it, said an official from the fisheries department. The National Green Tribunal banned it in 2000 and a fresh order was also issued regarding the same in January last year. Unfortunately, it was not implemented effectively, he said. The state fisheries department has now decided to carry out a drive to destroy its cultivation centres, he said. So far, the state government has destroyed stocks of some 32 tonnes of Thai Mangur - three tonnes in Sakoli (Bhandara district), 15 tonnes in Bhiwandi (Thane dist), eight tonnes in Indapur and six tonnes in Shikrapur (both in Pune district). The action will continue as we learn about more such cultivation centres, said the official.

#### **Maharashtra's records 64.5 pc decrease in wetland area**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/maharashtra-records-64-5-pc-decrease-in-wetland-area-6249760/>

The state has recorded a 64.5 per cent decrease in wetland area documented in the National Wetland Atlas 2011 (Maharashtra). The Atlas, mapped under the 2010 wetland rules, had marked 44,714 wetlands across the state, which covered an area of 10 lakh hectare. However, on January 30, the state submitted a list of only 15,865 verified potential wetland zones in the Bombay High Court. The reasons for this sharp drop, said officials, are one, the amended 2017 Wetland (Conservation and Management) rules that do not incorporate wetlands in coastal regulation zones (CRZ) and de-recognised salt pans as wetlands; two, wrong mapping in 2010 which did not stand up to the scrutiny of "ground proofing; and three, encroachments that have swallowed some wetlands. In the list submitted to the court, Mumbai has 59 verified potential wetland zones 10 in the city and 49 in the suburbs. Of the nearly 16,000 sites in the list, 759 sites across the state are still pending verification through ground inspection. According to UNESCO, wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They are important for flood control as they store excess water and ensure its quality, providing resilience against drought. They play a central role in sustaining fresh water sources. According to RAMSAR Convention, wetlands include:

“All lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peat lands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and salt pans. The list submitted in the High Court will now be scrutinised and a final list of wetlands will be notified by the state. “This is a primary list which is prepared by the district collectors and tehsildars by ground proofing. Now this list will be studied by the state wetland committee headed by the state environment minister. Following that, a final list of wetlands will be sent to state department for final notification, said Sanjay Sandanshiv, under secretary, environment department. According to an earlier affidavit by state government, there were no wetlands in Nandurbar, Parbhani and Nagpur districts, based on reports from the respective district collectors. However, in the affidavit submitted on January 30, the state has verified 164 wetlands sites in Nandurbar, 78 in Parbhani and 561 in Nagpur.

### **Maharashtra’s Govt to consider loan waiver for fishermen, says Uddhav Thackeray**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/govt-to-consider-loan-waiver-for-fishermen-says-uddhav-thackeray-6273084/>

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday said the state government is considering waiving the loans of fishermen, similar to how farmers' loans are waived. Thackeray, who was in Sindhudurg district, held a review meeting. “The government has announced a farm loan waiver of up to Rs 2 lakh. The government is considering waiving the loans of fishermen... All such fishermen should be surveyed and they should be classified accordingly, he said. “Detailed information about loan amount, types of loans taken by fishermen and who can be eligible for the waiver should be given. The decision will be taken after studying all these details, Thackeray added.

### **The rise in fish consumption has led to indiscriminate trawling of juveniles in Maharashtra**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/for-every-1kg-of-usable-fish-4kg-of-other-marine-life-are-killed-study/story-krJR88vPKwNYSUxnGLQD6K.html>

The rise in fish consumption has led to indiscriminate trawling of juveniles of commercially important fish and a significant increase in the removal of non-target fish, says a study, adding that the practice could have long-term consequences such as depletion of targeted fish species and, in turn, marine biodiversity. Researchers, led by ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Mumbai research centre, analysed 3,561kg of subsamples from 236 hauls operating at a depth of 10 to 60mts found that for every kg of targeted catch, shrimp trawlers

operating in the commercial trawl fishing grounds off New Ferry Wharf (NFW) landing centre ended up with 4kg of non-targeted by-catch comprising juveniles, non-commercial fish and benthic debris, which is either dumped into the sea or discarded at the fish landing site. “The abundance of juveniles throughout the (fishing) seasons shows the behaviour of year-round spawning and recruitment patterns of tropical fish.

Continuous removal of juveniles of commercially important species will result in reduction in their mean size that can lead to growth in overfishing, said Sugumar Ramkumar, principal investigator, CMFRI. Ramkumar said, “The reasons for discarding by-catch in multiday trawlers are non-availability of space for storage, fear of spoiling of high-valued or large fish and non-edibility of the catch. Of the average catch rate of 178.64 kg per haul (kg/h) every year, the target catch was only 39.6 kg/h (21.4%), while the non-target catch comprising 145 species stood at 139.04kg/h (78.59%) of the total trawl catch. Catch rate is the number of fish caught per fishing trip. A 1983 study had reported 68.7% by-catch of the total catch in Mumbai waters. Although the five-member team's assessment of non-target by-catch from multiday shrimp trawlers (with a duration of 7-15 days) spanned between January 2013 and December 2014, based on collected samples since then researchers have estimated an average 10% increase in by-catch till 2019.

With NFW landing centre alone accounting for 33% of the total trawl landings in Maharashtra, researchers said the study is important because the trawl net – considered one of the most destructive type of fishing – is dragged across the ocean floor which, in addition to catching targeted fish or shrimps, also traps a wide range of marine life that can have a negative impact on the entire ecosystem. Of the 35,228 trawlers that go in Indian waters, 71.2% operate in the west coast, while the remaining along the east coast. In 2018, trawl fishing contributed to 57% of the total marine fish production in Maharashtra. In the present study, the average discarded by-catch every year was 33.25% of the total catch, and 42.19% of the total by-catch. Juveniles of commercially important species comprised 52.44% of the by-catch with an average catch rate of 73.3 kg/h/year for juveniles – highest in December (95.43kg/h) and lowest in March (40kg/h). Reason being, trawlers of the west coast that mostly sweep shallow waters with 10-50mts depth is a fertile ground for food that supports juvenile population. “Continuous removal of predators, irrespective of seasons, with a wide diet spectrum feeding on squilla, crabs, gastropods and 20 families of finfishes throughout the year pave way for aggregation or increase in the population of non-commercial/non edible species in trawl grounds, stated the study.

To address the issue of handling non-target discards, Mangalore and Calicut have shown a decrease in discards at sea between 2008 and 2011 owing to the high demand for raw material demand from fish meal and fish oil plants in Mangalore, Karnataka driven by aquaculture and



poultry feed factories. “In our study also, 43.7% of discard consists of crabs, gastropods, bivalves and stomatopods that could similarly be utilised as raw material for low-cost fish meal preparation in order to decrease the discard trends in the sea of Mumbai trawlers, said Ramkumar. “The quantum of juvenile catch should also be limited within a regulatory framework. The study has also recommended restrictions on fleet size and fishing days per trip, strict enforcement of use of mesh size by trawlers, and closure of entry permits of boats in to sea once their catch limit on by-catch is reached. “A suitable market chain for permissible by catch landings needs to be established.

Awareness among fishers on destructive nature of trawl fishing, sustainable harvest of fishery resources and participation of fishermen in the decision-making process can sustain the stocks of Maharashtra fishing grounds forever, said Vinay Deskmukh, co-author and former principal scientist, CMFRI.

### **Maharashtra: Cabinet approves setting up a major port in Maharashtra at a cost of Rs 65,000 cr**

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/shipping/-/transport/cabinet-approves-setting-up-a-major-port-in-maharashtra-at-a-cost-of-rs-65000-cr/articleshow/73959963.cms>

The government on Wednesday approved setting up a new major port at Vadhavan near Dahanu in Maharashtra at a cost of Rs 65,544.54 crore. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Cabinet gives in-principle approval for setting up a new Major Port at Vadhavan in Maharashtra. Total cost of the project is likely to be Rs 65,544.54 crore, an official statement said. Vadhavan port will be developed on landlord model, it said, adding a special purpose vehicle (SPV) will also be formed with Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) as the lead partner with equity participation equal to or more than 50 per cent to implement the project. The SPV, the statement said, will develop the port infrastructure, including reclamation, construction of breakwater, besides establishing connectivity to the hinterland, and all the business activities will be undertaken under public private partnership (PPP) by private developers. The position of JN Port, the biggest container port in India, is 28th in the world with a traffic of 5.1 million TEUs (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units).

### **Maharashtra: Civic budget talk: Coastal Road a misplaced priority?**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/civic-budget-talk-coastal-road-a-misplaced-priority/story-I7EzWhh35xlEwX7F25EIRO.html>

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) budget presented this week is a good indicator of how politics directly affects governance and administrative priorities. The Rs 33,441 crore budget, equalling the size of nearly eight Indian state budgets, makes two laudatory and unnecessary references to chief minister Uddhav Thackeray and prioritises allocations to big-ticket projects that his party, Shiv Sena, has backed in recent years. This includes the grand and super-expensive Mumbai Coastal Road project for which municipal commissioner Praveen Pardeshi set aside Rs 2,000 crore in the budget. The allocation, when seen in the context of the civic body's finances, begins to tell a story of misplaced priorities. It is a massive 25% increase from last year's budget at a time that the BMC, by its own admission, is facing a severe cash crunch and proposes to earn a few hundred crores by regularising misused spaces in residential and commercial complexes.

It comes at a time that the civic body explored “innovative income-boosting measures such as 5% increase in birth certificate fees and vendor licences. It comes at a time when the BMC has slashed the meagre Rs 100 crore budget (2019-20) for pavements by half and delegated the critical infrastructure issue to the wisdom of assistant municipal commissioners in every ward. This is at the crux of how Mumbai's needs are evaluated, projects prioritised, and allocations made: the Coastal Road is somehow sold to the city as an urgently necessary piece of infrastructure and public money diverted to what will essentially serve a section of private car owners and cab users while pavements which see upwards of a staggering 15 million walking trips in a day are not seen as vital or critical infrastructure that they actually are. Studies through the last ten years have shown that the largest group of commuters killed on Mumbai's streets are pedestrians; one study put the figure at a whopping 78%.

Pavements either do not exist in large parts of the city – the tony south Mumbai and high-end townships like in Powai are exceptions – or are improperly and dangerously laid out or have been occupied by various players of the city's informal economy and now increasingly are used by two-wheeler riders to dodge traffic on streets. But pavements do not produce the excitement that the Coastal Road or a similar big-ticket show-sha project does, pavements do not get prioritised in the BMC's tasks lists perhaps because its movers-and-shakers do not use them, pavements are not even discussed as necessary infrastructure but merely as an afterthought to a road. The Coastal Road, though, is a different ballgame. The nearly 35-kilometre eight-lane freeway running the length of the city on its western coast, proposed as a panacea for the monumental traffic congestion issues in the city, will be simply the most expensive piece of infrastructure built in Mumbai. Only the 10-kilometre stretch at the southern end is estimated to

cost Rs 12,900 crore -- that's a stupendous Rs 1,300 crore per kilometre or between 1.5-2 times the cost of Mumbai's expensive underground metro now being constructed -- but, by the BMC's admission in the Supreme Court, will carry around 60,000 cars a day which is less than two per cent of the city's traffic.

How exactly is it supposed to solve Mumbai's monumental traffic problem? There are tens of reasons ranging from social to economic and health to show why the Coastal Road is not what Mumbai urgently needs; the most pressing of these would have to be the environmental one. Roughly half of the length of the Coastal Road is planned on land reclaimed from the sea. This, it is easy to appreciate, fundamentally changes the topography of Mumbai and its relationship with the sea. Studies of Climate Change crisis and rising sea levels have already placed Mumbai in a high-risk category alerting that large parts of its western and eastern coasts could be submerged by 2050. Reclamation makes the city more vulnerable to flooding, besides there is little in the Environmental Assessment Report to show that planners have correctly estimated sea level or budgeted for the rise in sea level.

All this begs the question: Why are the Thackerays so keen on the Coastal Road especially when Aaditya Thackeray stood against the decimation of thousands of trees in Aarey, has spoken in favour of environmental issues, and now heads the state's environment department? It goes without saying that a large majority of Mumbaiites will be better served if the civic body were to re-allocate the Coastal Road funds to roads and pavements across the city. And the city itself may be better placed to face climate change disasters.

### **Maharashtra: Fishermen move Bombay HC opposing environmental nod for JNPT's expansion**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/fishermen-move-bombay-hc-opposing-environmental-nod-for-jnpt-s-expansion/story-K064Q6JUv6BHL2J2GHPf3O.html>

Fishermen in Navi Mumbai filed a petition before the Bombay high court on Monday opposing the environment clearances (EC) given to the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) to expand its container facilities. The petition, filed by Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan (SEAP), said that reclamation across 110 hectares by JNPT for its 4th container terminal violated their right to livelihood as the work is destroying fishing areas. The petition was filed against JNPT, the Union environment ministry and various departments of the state government. The petition, which HT has reviewed, identified that the construction has reduced fishing areas, destroyed wetlands and has forced villagers to relocate. Nandkumar Pawar, head, SEAP said, "The site has been identified as an ecologically sensitive area by the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management

Authority, and falls within coastal regulation zone (CRZ-IA) where such construction activities are not permitted.

However, the EC identifies the zone as CRZIV where construction is allowed. On July 29, 2008, JNPT obtained EC from the union environment ministry to reclaim 200 hectares to build storage yards, roads, railway, depots, parking areas and office buildings, etc. In phase 1 of the project, construction work was done across 90 hectares, including 19.5-hectares of mangrove forest. JNPT claims only 16.5 hectares mangroves were destroyed. On October 9, 2019, JNPT obtained fresh CRZ clearances from the state's coastal authority to start work on the second phase. JNPT claims no mangrove trees will be destroyed in the second phase. Last month, HT had reported on January 18 that close to 7,000 mangrove trees were found destroyed across two locations falling within the project area found by the Raigad district administration. The petition pointed out that the mandatory public consultation while obtaining an EC under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification, 2006, had been done away with.

“We have never objected to development but in this case, JNPT's construction has edged into our creeks, mangrove forests, salt pans, which flooded 20 villages in Uran during monsoon 2019 affecting 1,236 families, said Parmanand Jaywant Koli, sarpanch, Hanuman Koliwada village and one of the petitioners. Flooding of 20 villages affecting over 1,200 families was confirmed by the Raigad district collector through a right-to-information (RTI) response. According to the EC and the Maharashtra Project Displaced Persons Rehabilitation Act, 1976, project affected persons (Uran residents) were to be provided 16.8 hectares of which 10.5 ha would be used for livelihood activities while 6.3 ha would be used for construction of houses. However, the petition argued that an area of only 2 hectares was allotted, of which, possession was handed over of only 0.91 hectares for construction of homes, which was done in a haphazard manner.

The petitioners' counsel said this was not the first time that the fishermen had approached courts. In October 2013, fisherman Ramdas Koli moved the National Green Tribunal, western bench, against development projects by JNPT that affected the livelihood of residents of Uran, Hanuman Koliwada, Gavhan, and Belpada villages which have around 1,630 families that depend on fishing as the main occupation. In March 2015, in a landmark order, the western bench of the NGT ordered JNPT, City Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) to pay Rs. 95.19 crore to 1630 families within three months. However, the matter was challenged in the Supreme Court by the state agencies, and the final hearing is yet to take place. “Since JNPT is already tied up with litigation, issuing any EC for future projects is another violation of the EIA notification, said advocate Meenaz Kakalia. Destruction of mangroves is illegal under the Environment Protection Act, 1986. The Bombay high court banned destruction of mangrove forests across the state and construction within 50

metres of mangroves on September 17, 2018. A bench of Justice Abhay Oka and Justice Riyaz Chagla in its final order said, “Destruction of mangroves offended the fundamental rights of the citizens and hence it was a mandatory duty of the state and its agencies to protect and preserve the mangroves.

### **Maharashtra: Ahead of World Wetlands Day, greens cry foul over vanishing wetlands of Mumbai**

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/ahead-of-world-wetlands-day-greens-cry-foul-over-vanishing-wetlands-of-mumbai-798072.html>

Ahead of the World Wetlands Day on February 2, environment groups have begun to aggressively brace for focusing attention on the increasing threat to biodiversity and vanishing water bodies in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). The annual World Wetlands Day is observed to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and our planet. This day also marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Environment groups such as NatConnect Foundation, Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan and Save Navi Mumbai Environment and fishing community forum Paramparik Machhimar Bachhao Kruti Samiti have aligned themselves with the official World Wetlands Day 2020 as the City is reeling under its worst ecological crisis.

Wetlands are land areas that are saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally. Inland wetlands include marshes, ponds, lakes, fens, rivers, floodplains, and swamps. Coastal wetlands include saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons and even coral reefs. Fish ponds, rice paddies, and salt pans are human-made wetlands. “All these aspects are unfortunately ignored in MMR where large scale destruction of wetlands is happening under the guise of development, said B N Kumar, director of NatConnect Foundation. While salt pans and floodplains are under constant attack in Mumbai for real estate development, Special Economic Zones in Navi Mumbai have dealt a death knell for wetlands. During the last year alone, hundreds of acres of wetlands have been buried in the eco-sensitive Uran region across Mumbai harbour, said Kumar. The ecological threat to Mumbai is real, said Nandakumar Pawar, head of Shri Ekvira Aai Pratishtan.

While the City and outskirts such as Badlapur, Kalyan Vasai reeled under floods due to the disappearance of floodplains, at least 20 villages have suffered waterlogging for the first time as water bodies have been blocked, Pawar said. What is worse, said Kumar, the local city planner CIDCO has covered all wetlands and mangrove zones under its development plan for the upcoming Dronagiri node. CIDCO has also allotted wetlands and mangrove areas and JNPT's

SEZ. Residents at Nerul in Navi Mumbai have been waging a battle to save a wetland at Talawe at Seawoods NRI Complex where CIDCO planned a golf course. “We have won the case at Bombay High Court which asked CIDCO to scrap the golf course idea and the government agency has since moved the Supreme Court, said Sunil Agarwal of the Save Navi Mumbai Environment. Without waiting for the SC verdict, CIDCO allowed a builder to hack over 700 trees in the real estate project that covers the golf course and all objections from the residents fell on deaf ears.

The green groups has planned a Run For Flamingos on Sunday next (Feb 2) to increase awareness about the wetland that attracts hundreds of birds. The fishing community which thrives on wetlands is one of the biggest victims of the urban and infrastructure development as their source of survival has been consistently diminishing. “While the wetlands are vanishing, we are not even allowed to go for fishing in the sea around JNPT, ONGC and other projects, lamented Tukaram Koli of the fishermen's forum. “The compensation meant for the Koli community still remain a far cry as none of us have seen the colour of the money, said Dilip Koli, another local activist.

**Maharashtra: Invitation for suggestions and objections on draft Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMPs) of Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Thane & Palghar Districts under CRZ Notification, 2019, dated 22nd January 2020**

<https://mczma.gov.in/content/invitation-suggestions-and-objections-draft-czmps-raigad-ratnagiri-sindhudurg-thane-palghar>

The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, New Delhi vide G.S.R. 37(E) dated 18th January, 2019 published new CRZ Notification in supersession of earlier CRZ Notification, 2011. As per para 6 of CRZ Notification, 2019, Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) framed under CRZ Notification, 2011 shall be revised or updated through agency authorized by the MoEF&CC, New Delhi. Accordingly, the work was entrusted to National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai by the State Government. NCSCM, Chennai has completed the work of preparation of draft CZMPs, 2019 of the Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Thane & Palghar district area. Therefore, as per annexure IV, paragraph 6 of CRZ Notification, 2019, the said draft CZMPs of the Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Thane & Palghar district area are hereby published for inviting suggestions/ objections.

The said draft CZMPs are available on following Websites 1) Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) - <https://mczma.gov.in> 2) Maharashtra Pollution Control

Board (MPCB) - <http://mpcb.gov.in> 3) District Collector Raigad - <https://raigad.gov.in> 4) District Collector Ratnagiri – <https://ratnagiri.gov.in> 5) District Collector Sindhudurg – <https://sindhudurg.nic.in> 6) District Collector Thane – <https://thane.nic.in> 7) District Collector Palghar – <https://palghar.gov.in> All are requested to submit suggestions/ objections if any in writing in English / Marathi to Environment Department, Mantralaya, Mumbai; concerned District Collector, concerned Regional Officer, MPCB, on the said draft CZMPs within 45 days from the date of publication of these draft CZMPs. No suggestion / objection will be accepted after 45th days from the date of publication of draft CZMP. Concerned District Collector & regional Office MPCB will Schedule Public Hearing at district level.

### **Maharashtra: The myth of sustainable development in Mumbai’s infrastructure projects**

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2020/3/commentary/myth-sustainable-development-mumbais.html>

Over the past five years, India has seen a rapid and frenzied execution of projects, mostly classified as infrastructure projects. This category of projects is like a bottomless pit, which keeps sinking the environment deeper and deeper into its abyss. Never before in the history of independent India has there been such a brutal assault on the ecology and environment. The undeniable truth that ecosystems were being permanently decimated did not ring alarm bells in the minds of the planners, the executors, the proposed ultimate beneficiaries or losers. Even if they did, few mustered the courage and conviction to speak for the environment and nature. “Go away, Go away, Go away, or else force will be used against you read the banner. For a moment, I thought that I had travelled back in time to the British era when the British would use similar boards to warn Indians not to assemble in public. I wondered if I was dreaming, and pinched myself only to find that I was not.

This was a banner in the Aarey Milk Colony, put up by the local police station against the ordinary peace-loving citizens who were engaged in the longest battle anywhere in the world to save an urban forest. The young and old, rich and poor, educated and illiterate had all closed ranks and presented a united resistance to the government of the day that was hell-bent on destroying Mumbai's green lungs, the Aarey Milk Colony. Biodiversity in Aarey The forestlands of 1,280 hectare (ha) that stand today, giving Mumbai lower temperatures, more oxygen, and a recreational space, while simultaneously accommodating an array of flora and fauna, were listed and protected under the Indian Forest (Conservation) Act and Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1974. A service centre for a metro project (The Colaba–Santacruz Electronic Export Processing Zone [SEEPZ] Metro 3) was extended beyond its last stop at SEEPZ to about a kilometre into a no-development zone and a forest area. The explanation given for this

transgression was that there was no other space in the city for this service centre except in this “green forested area as described in the project proponents' own order.

The land that was selected was a mixture of a densely wooded area, with grasslands, marshes, and three rivulets, right on the banks of one of Mumbai's longest rivers, the Mithi river. With 86 species of trees found on the plot, the land was also a favourite spot to sight wildlife like rock pythons, leopards, about 76 types of birds, and medicinal plants, all of which have been documented by eminent academicians like Rajendra Shinde, who heads the botany department of St Xaviers College. The rebuttal by the government denying the ecological importance of the land was summed up in one sentence: “The land does not reflect as a forest as per government land records (Times of India 2019; Telegraph 2019). This counterargument is akin to identifying the data from a radio-collared tiger as that belonging to a civet cat because the records said so, and that since the data said that the radio-collar was of a civet cat, the tiger should stop being recognised as a tiger.

This absurd argument was put forward, and troll armies on social media gleefully spread this misinformation, defaming citizens and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) protesting against the government's decisions. What were the citizens trying to do? They were pleading with the government to correct its records and declare the area as a forest. A series of litigations and scores of protests on the ground have been going on for the last five years. The courts have treaded with extreme caution to ensure that all sides and issues have been heard and the case decided on merit. The legal battle has finally landed at the apex court's doorsteps. This perfectly avoidable litigation has dragged on simply because of the government's adamant and arrogant attitude, one bordering on indignation and pompousness. This litigation was avoidable if the state accepted its mistake in not identifying the Aarey lands as forests. If that was done, all these battles would not have to be fought. The citizens' call for a public debate for over five years was never accepted. Instead, a whole new approach, which was unheard of during the history of earlier governments, was adopted. Exorbitant amounts of public money were recklessly spent to spread misinformation. Full-page ads in all newspapers were published, and videos released on social media. A section of trolls was engaged especially to intimidate and defame NGOs and cast aspersions on citizens selflessly fighting tooth and nail to save Mumbai's forests (Johari 2019; Satija 2019).

The Coastal Road It is said you cannot have your cake and eat it too. Whoever said this has not met the government in Maharashtra, which managed to convince people that the metro projects were a godsend and would reduce pollution, save fuel, reduce traffic, and even sequester more carbon than trees. So, did the answer to climate change have to be the building of more metro lines and the making of more service stations, while replacing and removing trees at a breakneck



speed? The very same absurd logic was used for the coastal road too. If the metro would reduce traffic, pray, what would the coastal road do? Make cars evaporate into thin air? The coastal road would ensure that thousands or more cars make it to the southern end of the city and create a traffic and parking nightmare for South Mumbai. The question that comes to people's mind is that why is this being done. The answer is that if there is traffic and parking nightmare in South Mumbai, it becomes a reason to demolish its heritage façade and replace it with monstrous commercial/residential towers with “ample parking space. The driving logic is simple, create a crisis and profit from it. Let us assume here for a minute that the coastal road is a necessity. The original plan was to build the road on stilts to avoid damage to the coastline and ecology.

It seemed like a good idea until we look at what happened later. This condition or safeguard was dumped since it was expensive, and hence, it was decided that reclamation would be undertaken instead. The reclamation proposed was for 90 ha. Out of this 90 ha, the reclamation for the road was 20 ha and the remaining was to create land for the city. Yes, the sea was to recede by 90 ha because Mumbai's planners felt the need to create more land for the city! This plan was envisioned for a city that is predicted to be severely affected along with Mangaluru due to the rising sea levels. This suicidal mission has been aborted, albeit for now, by the judiciary, which clearly declared that this was not an infrastructure project, but an area development project. The matter is pending final adjudication in the apex court. But, shockingly, the court has allowed the destruction to continue while saying that the case would be heard in April 2020. There is no logic or reasoning as to why a court of law, which is meant to uphold the law, has chosen to allow its violation and kept the matter pending for disposal. This is nothing but an evident attempt to tell citizens that they dare not try to save the environment, and that the precautionary principle meant to protect the environment can be ignored. What good will come out of the final hearing in April?

Will the damaged shoreline with its natural rocky areas which are being pulverised be remodelled? Centuries of nature's landscaping will be lost forever. The risk of inundation and the loss of beaches is inevitable, but then, the judiciary in this case seems to believe that the government can possibly recreate the original shoreline... The findings and judgment of the court do not convey any justice or transparency, being blatantly biased and in favour of the government. The fundamental belief that the government knows best itself is a flawed understanding. If the governments did what they needed to, then citizens would not be compelled to fight in order to save the environment. If the governments did what they needed to, then we would not be staring at climate change, rising temperatures, pollution and rising sea levels, loss of ecology, etc. This direction of the apex court has undone decades of earlier judicial interventions, which have managed to save the remaining fragments of biodiversity in our country. It can only go downhill from here for the environment.

Jawaharlal Nehru Port The largest wetland in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region is vanishing by the minute. The wetlands of Uran were among the best in the world. A mixture of waterbodies, grasslands, reeds, marshes, lakes, etc, made this place like none other. At any given point of time, over two lakh birds of at least 100 or more species could be spotted in the wetlands of Uran. Students of ornithology were asked to go to Uran to learn about birds, such was its beauty. But, what happened next was that the Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT) was proposed in the same area, initiating the degradation of the wetlands. Uran has transformed into a dust bowl from a thriving wetland. Anyone who wants to see how a wetland can be destroyed, must visit Uran and see the horror with their own eyes. The JNPT project has spelt the death of the entire zone. Was this avoidable? Yes. The truth should have been told to the Ministry of Environment and Forests at the beginning of the project itself. Even today, the truth is hidden from the people. The project takes permissions or environment clearances in a piecemeal fashion to avoid intense scrutiny. So far, three terminals have been built and a fourth one has just got approval.

All wetland areas near the landing berth areas have been reclaimed and decimated beyond repair. With just four terminals on the ground, most of Uran's wetlands have vanished. The nearby fishing villages have been severely affected by the loss of fisheries. Flooding of villages has become common due to the rampant reclamation undertaken. The fact of the matter is that 14 terminals are proposed (Asian Age 2019), and if they are completed, nothing will survive in terms of ecology or coastal communities. Birds or even wetlands will become a rare event, like the sighting of a total solar eclipse. Seeing carpets of wetland birds in Uran is now history. A few hundred birds are still clinging on to what they see as their homes in the hope that human greed will reduce and they will be spared. But, no such luck is coming their way. Was this damage avoidable? Yes. The landing terminal could have been made with just the ancillary facilities, being located a couple of kilometres inland would have helped the port and ecology to coexist. A little compassion and honesty in planning would have made that possible.

### **Maharashtra: G5A Foundation for Contemporary Culture organises a cleanup drive at Worli Koliwada**

<https://www.indulgexpress.com/events/mumbai/2020/jan/17/g5a-foundation-for-contemporary-culture-organises-a-cleanup-drive-at-worli-koliwada-21547.html>

If you have watched Coldplay and Beyoncé's Hymn For The Weekend music video, you must have seen Mumbai's Worli Koliwada, one of the earliest fishing villages in Mumbai where the video was shot. The land is also said to be one of the original seven islands of Mumbai where the native fishermen community came over 800 years ago. Over the years, the rapid urban development and migration has transformed the character of this urban village to a mixed, lower-middle-income demographic, with diverse livelihoods, a degrading urban landscape and a

neglected shoreline. This shoreline, once the sacred resource of the Kolis, has now sadly become a site for open defecation and unchecked waste disposal, posing severe health and environmental hazards. Forgotten in these urban challenges, is also the 18th century Worli Fort, a former British military outpost, that recalls the days of maritime trade and warfare – a cultural landmark to be preserved. To make this village a sustainable cultural precinct and Zero Waste Neighborhood, G5A Foundation for Contemporary Culture has joined hands with Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) and IDFC First Bank to organise a cleanup drive this Saturday.

“Art is a wonderful way to dissolve barriers and boundaries. With G5A cityLAB we have found it to be an incredibly powerful tool, as we work closely with communities in our neighborhood. At Koliwada, we are addressing tangible civic issues that affect the community, like waste management, while also building a holistic plan enabling Worli Koliwada to become a vibrant cultural destination. Simultaneously our continuous engagement with the women and youth - through our ARTshala programs - empowers them in articulating identity and self-awareness, building confidence, and reinforcing and rediscovering skills and livelihood possibilities, elaborates Ms Anuradha Parikh, Founder and Artistic Director, G5A, and Architect & Filmmaker. The drive aims to bring the community together to take collective ownership of the neighbourhood is expecting to see participation of over 300 people, including local community members, Navy Officers and workers and officers of the participating organisations.

**Maharashtra: Canoe with 8 capsizes in Wainganga, 2 drown**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/canoe-with-8-capsizes-in-wainganga-2-drown/articleshow/73257624.cms?>

Two persons drowned while six others had close shave after a canoe capsized midstream in Wainganga river separating Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts on Tuesday morning. Rescue team from disaster management cell failed to recover the bodies despite intense search operation till late evening. The river has deep water as the doors of Chichdoh barrage upstream are closed after monsoon. The victims Ramchandra Pendam and Parshuram Atram were returning from Chamorshi after attending a funeral. They had boarded a canoe with six others to cross the river at Talodhi ghat on Gadchiroli side. As the canoe started for Kadoli ghat on Chandrapur side, it started filling with water as it has excessive load of eight people, informed Saoli teshildar PK Kumre. As Pendam and Atram, who did not know how to swim, panicked and jumped into the water, said Kumre. As the duo jumped, the canoe overturned and all other occupants fell into water. Pendam and Atram met watery grave even before anyone could save them. The six others managed to swim to the riverbank. One of them was travelling with his mother and he carried her on his back and swam to safety. Soon the disaster management cell was informed and search operation to fish out the bodies was started in the afternoon. However, the rescue team failed to

locate the bodies till evening. Search operation will resume on Wednesday morning.