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1. Fishermen observe fast

Indian Express dated 16th September 2006 reported that “about 500 fishermen from 26 villages participated in the one day fasting at Nagapattinam demanding protection for fishing. For the past few weeks, the fishermen of Nagai district have been alleging attack by Lankan Navy while fishing in Indian Waters. Last week the Lankan Navy personnel forced four fishermen of Seruthur from their boats. Two of the four drowned in sea. The fishermen of 26 villages observed a one-day token fast at Avuri Taluk Thidal at Nagapattinam today seeking protection for fishing from the state and union government. They also urged the Union Government to condemn the atrocities of the Lankan Navy.

2. German teams review tsunami projects

Indian Express dated 17th September 2006 reported that “a team of top officials from RAG Group Germany visited various places around Tarangambadi Nagapattinam district to assess the progress of tsunami rehabilitation project s sponsored by them. The group had sponsored various tsunami rehabilitation projects for the affected areas of Nagapattinam districts through Kindernothilfe (KNH), a Germany based service organisation. KNH authorised St Joseph Development Trust, a Theni based service organisation to implement the projects in Nagai district. Activities such as construction of buildings, assistance for SHGs and physically challenged, vocational training had taken up by SJDT. A team of officials from RAG, led by Weber Ulrich from HR director, visited Tharangambadi, Thirumalaivasal and other areas to assess the projects sponsored by them. Koster, Head, Department of Sociopolitical Education, RAG, Froning and Schrimpf employees of RG were part of the team. The team interacted with the affected people at Tarangambadi on the services rendered by

SJDT. Later they declared open the 'Ziegenbalg Home for Children constructed at a cost of Rs2.70 crore inside the TELC school premises at Tharangambadi

3. Workshop on organic farming

Indian Express dated September 20th 2006 reported that The Department of Microbiology, Ponnaiah Ramajayam College organised a workshop on organic farming. The organizers underlined the need for the farmers in the delta district to go in for organic farming and integrated farming methods by using innovative methods. Dr. C.Laksminarasimhan a researcher advisor urged the need for soil improvement using organic manure to increase soil texture by use of organic wastes. About 85 farmers of Thanjavur, Thiruvavur, and Nagapattinam districts participated. A farmers union, 'Ponnaiah Ramajayam Organic Farming Associates Club (PROFAC)', was inaugurated.

4. Recipe for rural development

The Indian Express dated September 22nd 2006 reported that "Union Minister for Panchayati Raj Mani Shankar Aiyar said that partnership of panchayats in business would lead to partnership in governance which was very much necessary to narrow down the gap between the rich India and poor India. He emphasised that we need a constructive partnership between panchayats and industry to bring about economic transformation and social justice in rural India and it is an invitation for you to participate in governance, while addressing the 96th annual general meeting of the Southern Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI).He pointed out that India was 8th in the world in the number millionaires but was standing in 127th position in human resource development. Rate of employment growth had been coming down in the last 10 – 12 years; he said the rural business hubs with the services of panchayat raj institutions, self help groups and community groups would be round urbanise the villages, besides bringing about an overall economical and social change.

5. Tsunami –planning yet a long way to go

The Indian Express reported on the 23rd September, 2006 that "At a high level consultation meeting to take stock of progress of tsunami recovery for future direction, State relief Commissioner R.Santhanam said there was a need to develop a foolproof system for identification of beneficiaries at times of disasters. He stressed on the following,

- ❖ Temporary shelters for the tsunami – affected had drawn criticism, justifiably so, stressing on the need to design and develop standard models for temporary shelters.
- ❖ Delay of construction of permanent houses which basically would have to be built in close consultation with the local community who were the users.

- ⊕ On sustaining livelihoods he said fishing resources were already over-exploited and suggested improvement in market linkages and better infrastructure.
- ⊕ Providing alternate employment and skill up gradation for women.
- ⊕ Solutions to the problem of finding means to make agriculture sustainable, possible changes in crop patterns, compensation for the affected and training of farmers in land reclamation also remained elusive.
- ⊕ Need for gender sensitivity in rehabilitation.
- ⊕ Special care should be given to sensitive issues like trafficking, care for the disabled, education, psycho-social support and above all a conducive family environment.

A major lesson from the tsunami was awareness to adhere to guidelines of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) at all levels he said. Appreciating tsunami relief in TN, National Disaster Management Authority member Prof. N. Vinod Chandra Mohan said there were very clear signals from the state, especially in co-ordination of relief works. He stressed on the importance of back room preparedness like systems of coordination and relief already in place, to achieve the front line success in times of disaster.

Union Planning Commission adviser L P Somkar said agencies concerned should take a stock in terms of requirements and physical infrastructure. UN Tsunami Recovery Programme co-coordinator Pieter Bult said coordination between government, multilateral agencies and NGOs was essential for effective rehabilitation. State Government Officer on Special Duty C.V.Sankar briefed on shelter and Sanitation, Public Health Director Dr P Padmanabhan and WHO's Dr. Arvind Mathur gave a presentation on health and nutrition and TANSACs project director Supriya Sahu spoke on HIV and trafficking.