



16-31 August 2006

## Inside this issue...

1. [Sri Sri Ravi Shankar hands over houses for Tsunami Survivors](#) *Indian Express* 18.08.06
2. [Educational aid for tsunami-hit students](#) *Indian Express* 21.08.06
3. [NGOs plea to TN Govt for Policy on Disability](#) *Indian Express* 22.08.06
4. [Steps to protect temporary shelters](#) *The Hindu* 25.08.06
5. [ADB assistance for SHGs in Nagai District](#) *Indian Express* 27.08.06
6. [Farmers want crop Insurance Scheme to be restructured](#) *The Hindu* 30.08.06
7. [Gamma Thittam biggest development Scheme](#) *The Hindu* 30.08.06
8. [Rural India outperforms urban India on job-creation: Economic Census 2005-](#) [www.Indiadaily.org](http://www.Indiadaily.org)
9. [Seeds Bill: 2004-](#) [www.Indiatogether.org](http://www.Indiatogether.org)
10. [Fishing communities: the economics of impoverishment: Info Change News & features, August 2006](#)

### 1. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar hands over houses for Tsunami Survivors

On the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2006 the *Indian Express* Nagapattinam reported that: Thiru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, spiritual leader and founder of the Art of Living Foundation (ALF) handed over the keys of permanent houses to 60 Tsunami-hit families of Periyamanickapanguru near Porayar in Nagapattinam District.

The houses were constructed at a cost of Rs.1.65 Crores by ALF and its sister Organisation, the International Association for Human Values (IAHV). Sri Sri Ravi Shankar arrived at Anaikoil near Porayar in the morning on a days visit to Nagai district to review the ongoing Tsunami Rehabilitation projects undertaken by ALF and IAHV.

An Integrated Education complex construction was undertaken by IAHV with assistance from Deutsche Bank other voluntary organisations. This is built in seven and a half acre land in this village and is of cost Rs.1.75 Crore.

The Complex will have primary school, a higher secondary school, a vocational training centre, a day care centre, a yoga training centre and a computer training centre.

[Back to top](#)

### 2. Educational aid for tsunami-hit students

On the 21<sup>st</sup> August 2006 *Indian Express* reported that Government of Tamil Nadu would provide educational assistance to 7000 students affected by Tsunami in Villupuram district, minister for Fisheries K.P.P.Samy announced on Sunday, when he was addressing the gathering at the inaugural function of houses built for the tsunami victims by Billy Graham Evangelistic Association at Anaichakuppam in Villipuram district

#### Highlights of the Educational Aid

- ❖ Rs.300 will be provided to each of the affected school students.
- ❖ Scholarships to students belonging to the Fisherman community who score high marks in the government exam.
- ❖ Sports equipments worth Rs.10000 for youngsters in 591 villages affected by Tsunami.

These measures are to develop the sports skills of the youth and change the psychology of those who were badly hit by the disaster.

[Back to top](#)

### 3. NGOs plea to TN Govt for Policy on Disability

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2006 The Indian Express Chennai reported that: the Confederation of Organisations for Persons with mental Disability has urged the State Government to come out with a State Policy on the Disabled on the lines of Govt of Goa.

“The NGOs for mentally ill persons are usually concentrated in Chennai. The special educators are also not paid well” said the press release.

Integrated Education for Disabled (IED) under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) does not have an individual attention to the children with differed disabilities. The State should review the integrated Education for Disabled”.

[Back to top](#)

### 4. Steps to protect temporary shelters

The Hindu dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 2006 – Nagapattinam reported:

The Collector announced in a meeting held with the Tsunami Rehabilitation and other development officials that Rs.1.02 crore had been allocated for maintenance of the temporary shelters and for changing the damaged roof and removing stagnated water in the temporary shelters.

Mr. Jawaharlal also said that officials of the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board were instructed to main the uninterrupted power supply to these shelters authorities were told to provide continuous protected water supply to the Tsunami Hit families residing in these shelters. Additional the fire service would also be kept ready at various points for emergency purpose.

He said that the respective Block Development Officers and municipal engineers were told to complete the repair and maintenance of temporary shelters in district within 15 days and to submit a report to him.

There was also a special team which would inspect and monitor the maintenance of these shelters.

[Back to top](#)

### 5. ADB assistance for SHGs in Nagai District

The New Sunday Express on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2006 reported that “The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has extended a scheme for providing financial assistance for providing financial assistance to the women SHGs in the Nagapattinam District.

1. An amount Rs.30, 000 would be given as revolving fund to women SHGs and a minimum loan amount of Rs.15000 or four times the saving amount of SHG under the AB aided scheme. For availing this loan, SHGs must qualify in selection process to be carried out by the officials.
2. For a starting under the self employment scheme, a subsidy of Rs.1.25 lakh would be given and a bank loan of between Rs.2.75 lakh to Rs.3.75 lakh would be extended.
3. Physically challenged members of SHGs willing to start a business under the Self Employment Scheme would be given suitable assistance.

Only those aged 18 to 60 years would be eligible for the scheme, and it functions in Nagapattinam, Keezhaiyur, Thalanayar, Vedaranyam, Sembranarkoil, Sirkzhi and Kolidam panchayats.

[Back to top](#)

## 6. Farmers want crop Insurance Scheme to be restructured

The Hindu, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2006 reported that Farmers of Thanjavur and other deltas districts on Monday appealed to M.S.Swaminathan, Chairman National Commission for Farmers, to recommend to the Central Government to restructure the crop insurance scheme. The following are the suggestions put forward by the Farmers:

- ☑ The present crop insurance system which helped only farmers of a particular block and not individuals should be changed
- ☑ Separate bank should be created for agriculture and also that farmers should be given representation in the Agriculture Price Commission and a reasonable price be fixed for paddy as the remunerative price for Wheat is fixed.
- ☑ Uniform price should be fixed for sugarcane throughout.
- ☑ The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural development should revive its scheme of giving loans for sinking tube wells and deep bore wells.
- ☑ Steps to be taken to improve water resources like lakes, tank and ponds explore the possibility of conserving surplus water that was drained into the sea through Kollidam River.
- ☑ Reduction in the interest rates for loans given for agricultural purposes to three per cent.
- ☑ Ninety per cent of the agriculture produce of farmers should be procured by the Government and seventy five per cent subsidy should be granted for drip irrigation projects.
- ☑ The Crop insurance benefit should be extended to all farmers instead of giving to farmers who availed co-operative loans.
- ☑ South Indian rivers should be linked to solve water problem.
- ☑ To show importance to organic farming and use of ethanol as a fuel to help sugar cane farmers.

[Back to top](#)

## 7. Gramma Thittam biggest development Scheme

The Hindu dated 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2006 reported:

The Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam, wholly funded by the State Government, has emerged as the biggest of all rural development schemes. The scheme aims at injecting substantial amount of resources for village panchayats over five years, the scheme covers many development works as follows;

- ♣ Laying of concrete roads;
- ♣ Installation of street lights and sodium vapour lamp;
- ♣ Setting up village markets;
- ♣ Building reading rooms;
- ♣ Creating ponds and providing water supply.

Each year the Government will allocate Rs.500 crore to cover 2,500 village panchayats. In five years all the 12618 panchayats will be covered on an outlay of Rs.25000.It's designed in such a way that the "poor" village panchayats will get priority, as they find it difficult to provide statutory services or improve infrastructure.

[Back to top](#)

## **8. Rural India outperforms urban India on job-creation: Economic Census 2005**

*The latest Economic Census of India 2005 reports that rural India witnessed a higher rate of employment-generation in recent years compared to urban India*

Rural India has outshone its urban counterpart in generating employment, reports the latest Economic Census of India 2005. In the average annual growth in employment since 1999-2000, with employment growth rates of 3.33%, rural areas have outperformed the urban sector, which registered a rate of 1.68%, according to provisional results of the census. Interestingly, the results also show that 42.12 million enterprises are engaged in various economic activities other than crop production and plantation.

Among the surprising facts revealed in the census, Jammu and Kashmir registered 6.82% in total employment growth. It was followed by Sikkim (5.52%), Kerala (5.39%), Haryana (5.22%) and Tripura (5.07%).

Releasing the document on June 12, G K Vasan, Minister of State for Statistics and Programme Implementation, said: "We have collected data from the largest number of enterprises, and contacted 21.1 crore households." He added that unlike the previous census (conducted in 1998) this census would have a directory of enterprises employing 10 workers or more, to help undertake detailed surveys with respect to the services sector, which contributes 54% to the gross domestic product (GDP).

The total number of people working in these enterprises is around 98.97 million, more or less equally distributed between rural and urban areas. Rural India accounts for 51% of total employment, while in urban areas the proportion is 49%.

Adult female workers constitute 19% of the total employed population. In rural areas they comprise 24% of the workforce; the figure for urban areas is 14%.

Rural India also accounts for 61.3% of the country's industrial units, as compared to just 38.7% in India's urban regions. *Tamil Nadu, with 44.5 lakh units, ranked first in the list of states with the highest number of industrial units.* Mizoram recorded the highest growth in enterprises, at 9.60%, followed by Kerala, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and Assam.

*Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal together account for 50% of the total enterprises in the country, according to the census.*

Surprisingly Gujarat, India's so-called economic powerhouse, is a noticeable absentee from any of the lists of achievers

Source: [www.indiadaily.org](http://www.indiadaily.org), June 13, 2006

*Hindustan Times*, June 12, 2006

*The Economic Times*, June 12, 2006

[Back to top](#)

## **9. SEEDS BILL 2004: India Together - on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

### **Seeds Bill 2004**

Through registration and certification, the draft law seeks to promote quality seeds. But it's unclear if farmers can meet the standards set for commercial seeds. Controversially, the Bill also permits inspectors to carry out search and seize operations without warrants. M R Madhavan and Kaushiki Sanyal presented a legislative brief which is as follow.

The Seeds Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 9 December 2004. It has been referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture (Chair: Prof Ram Gopal Yadav).

### Highlights of the Bill

- The Seeds Bill, 2004 aims to regulate the quality of seeds sold, and replaces the Seeds Act, 1966.
- All varieties of seeds for sale have to be registered. The seeds are required to meet certain prescribed minimum standards.
- The Bill does not restrict the farmer's right to use or sell his farm seeds and planting material, provided he does not sell them under a brand name. All seeds and planting material sold by farmers will have to conform to the minimum standards applicable to registered seeds.
- If a registered variety of seed fails to perform to expected standards, the farmer can claim compensation from the producer or dealer under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.
- The Bill permits self certification of seeds by accredited agencies and allows the central government to recognise certification by foreign seed certification agencies.
- Every seed producer and dealer, and horticulture nursery has to be registered with the state government.

To read more see the link

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2006/jun/law-seeds.htm>

[Back to top](#)

### 10. Fishing communities: the economics of impoverishment: [Info Change News & Features, August 2006](#)

**Mr.N.P.Chekkutty reported in info change that** “Foreign trawlers are entering Indian fishing zones as part of global joint ventures, and Indian markets will soon be flooded with foreign fish products. This is yet another nail in the coffin of traditional fishing communities, and a major contributor to violence and social conflicts. *(N P Chekkutty is a Kerala-based journalist. He is presently Executive Editor Of Tejas. This is the second in a series of articles on the communal polarisation of Kerala’s fisher community, researched as part of the CCDS-InfochangeIndia Research Fellowships 2006.)*

To read more see the link

<http://www.infochangeindia.org/features379print.jsp>

[Back to top](#)