

# News Round-up

## **Export boost**

The **Fiji** government has allocated \$100,000 to subsidize cargo charges for all agricultural, fisheries and timber products bound for export.

Minister for Forests and Fisheries Konisi Yabaki says this is an incentive to help develop and introduce commercialized resource-based industries.

Mr Yabaki said this incentive would be based at all fishing centres his ministry was setting up alongside all shipments of export-bound products.

Fiji Chamber of Commerce president Taito Waradi welcomed the incentive, saying it would certainly help to boost export earnings and capabilities. Fishing centres at Vanuabalavu, in the Lau Group, and Vanua Levu, as well as those planned for Levuka and Kadavu, will benefit from this incentive.

These fishing centres are places where fishermen near these islands send all their catch for export or to be sold in Suva.

## **Training youth**

Youth Service members in **Namibia**

are to be trained in fish farming, according to a recent Cabinet decision.

The Cabinet decision touches on a number of other aspects,

including options to source initial capital for aquaculture development.

The Ministry is planning an international investors' conference for February next year. It will be funded by the Norwegian government.

Freshwater fish farming projects have started in the Caprivi and Okavango regions, while pilot projects are ready to be set up in other regions.

These community projects would mainly focus on tilapia fish.

A nine-member Aquaculture Advisory Council was also recently announced.

## **Beyond fishing**

**Djibouti** boasts 372 km of coastline, the ragged edge

separating scorching, desolate land from waters so teeming with marine life they have become hugely popular with divers.

Yet experts say the country reels in just 10 per cent of its potential catch.

The abundance of fish has also not provided a defence against hunger. An estimated 20 per cent of all children under the age of five are malnourished in the poor, desert country.

A recent government paper blames lack of support, equipment, and illiteracy on the poor state of the fishing industry, that with investment, experts say, could be worth 4,000 jobs and an annual \$10 mn in much-needed foreign exchange.

In its fisheries code issued in September 2002, the government gave full rights to small-scale fishermen and banned the use of trawlers. But the law has been repeatedly flouted.

The Djiboutian navy impounded five foreign trawlers with a total capacity of 1,000 tonnes earlier this year, while a dozen or so Yemeni fishing boats are currently sitting in Djibouti's port, hauled in because of illegal fishing.

Heavy emphasis on one market or species

can also have drastic effects on a delicate marine environment. Officials noted that Djibouti's shark population drastically shrank in the past decade, victims of the Asian appetite for shark fin soup.

## **Free soon**

**Pakistan and India** have discussed issues of bilateral interest and agreed to expedite the release of held fishermen after completion of legal formalities.

The discussions were held in Islamabad between Pakistani Interior Minister Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao and Indian High Commissioner Shivshankar Menon, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reported.

They discussed a number of issues of bilateral interest, with special emphasis on the release of fishermen held in the

two countries, according to the report.

The two sides agreed that release of held fishermen will be expedited after the completion of legal formalities. Every year India and Pakistan arrest hundreds of fishermen for fishing across the sea boundary.

### **Dolphin curry**

Wildlife officials have warned Thais against eating dolphins after receiving reports they were turning up in restaurant curries and meat markets.

**Thailand's** Department of Marine and Coastal Resources said it was investigating reports that dolphin meat had gone on sale in two coastal provinces.

"I have sent officials to verify whether people in Chumphon and Prachuap Khiri Khan have killed and eaten dolphins," the department's director Maitree Duang-sawasdi told AFP.

Dolphin dishes are not popular in the kingdom according to Maitree, who said any meat found in curries and coastal markets would likely come from accidental netting or carcasses found on the shore.

However, the director said he had advised the Fisheries Department to step up patrols within three kilometres (two miles) of the coast, where most dolphins

breed, including Southeast Asia's endangered Irrawaddy dolphin.

Thailand was the driving force behind a complete trade ban on the Irrawaddy dolphin granted last month after experts

### **Fishing ties**

The Spanish Popular Party (PP) has expressed support for negotiations for a fishing agreement between the **European Union (EU)** and **Peru** for EU fishing licences in

his party will support EU negotiations for a fishing agreement with Peru, granting fishing licences to the EU fleet targeting tuna and other fish species.

During the meeting, the Peruvian

President seemed well in favour of Varela's proposal for Peru to request the EU to start negotiations leading to an agreement for the possible fishing of the EU fleet in Peruvian waters. In exchange, the EU should offer cooperation and support in regard to the development of sustainable fishery of Peru.

Varela, who is also Vice-president of the International Trade Commission for the European Parliament, said that this new agreement will exist parallel to the Association Trade Agreement currently in negotiation between the EU and countries of the Andean Agreement.

### **SAMUDRA News Alerts launch**

**T**he International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) will officially launch its SAMUDRA News Alerts service in January 2005. The service, which has been in the beta (test) phase for almost a year now, is designed to deliver news on fisheries and related issues, on a daily or weekly digest basis, in plain-text or HTML format.

Apart from news and stories on fisheries, the service also focuses on environmental and oceans topics as well as issues that deal with women in fisheries and safety at sea. So far, around 1,700 alerts have been mailed out. Apart from news from secondary sources like newspapers, agencies, mailing lists and websites, the service has also featured SAMUDRA Exclusives, original stories from ICSF sources.

The alerts sent out daily (except on Saturday and Sunday) provide headlines, a summary of news and links to the original sources. The weekly news digest, sent on Saturdays, provides only headlines and links to the original sources. The news archives can be searched on the ICSF website by keywords, themes and country names.

The SAMUDRA News Alerts service has so far attracted close to 400 subscribers in different parts of the world. The users include academics, journalists, policymakers, inter-governmental organizations, researchers, students, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and fishworker organizations.

Please visit <http://www.icsf.net> to subscribe to the news alerts.

said their number in the wild may be as few as 100.

Under Thai law, anyone caught with dolphin meat or parts faces up to four years in jail and/or a fine of 40,000 baht (us\$977).

Peruvian waters. After a meeting with Peruvian President, Alejandro Toledo, and the Peruvian Minister of Production, Alonso Velasquez, the EU Deputy for the Popular Party, Daniel Varela, informed that

Furthermore, the Peruvian Minister mentioned that another possible field of co-operation could be the transfer of Peru's tuna fishing licences, which are not being used at this time.