

The Indian EXPRESS
www.expressindia.com

AHMEDABAD

Third Floor, Sambhav House, Bodakdev, Ahmedabad-380015 | E-MAIL: ahmedabad.newsline@

Fish workers' body to launch campaign against industrialisation along coastline

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD APRIL 28

THE National Fish workers Forum (NFF) will launch a nationwide campaign from May 1 to protest against the large-scale industrialisation along the country's coastline, which, it has said, is directly affecting the livelihood of the fishing community.

The campaign will see a gamut of activities, including mass mobilisations, demonstrations, rallies, and seminars

along the country's 8,118-km-long coastline. The campaign, which will begin at Jakhau port in Gujarat, will pass through the coast of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducheri, Andhra Pradesh, and Orissa, before culminating at Kolkata in West Bengal on June 27.

"Not only in Gujarat, the fishing community settled along the coastline across the country are living with growing insecurities pertaining to

their livelihood and the campaign, *Machhimar Adhikar Rashtriya Abhiyan*, is an effort to give voice to these people," said B Patel, executive member of NFF.

"The entire coastal region is under a serious threat with myriad industries as well as the SEZs coming up. It is causing irreparable damage to the mangroves and the coral reefs, spelling disaster for the fishing folk," said Harekrishna Debnath, Convener NFF.

He said that the Centre's efforts to introduce Coastal Zone Management (CZM) in place of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ), in force now, would be a "death blow to the only environmental protection mechanism available to the coasts", as the CZM completely dilutes the provisions of CRZ.

"We are therefore demanding that this move be stalled immediately," Debnath said, adding that the Abhiyan would also raise voice about

the land rights of the fishing community. "There are more than 3,200 villages of fishing community across the coast, most of whom do not have any land rights," he said.

The campaign would be a precursor to the Fisher People's Parliament March in July 2008, he said. The *Abhiyan* in Gujarat will pass through Jakhau, Mandavi, Bhadreswar, Dwarka, Prabandar, Mangrol, Veraval and Daman apart from a few other small ports.