

## World Environment Day in Umargaon, Gujarat

To support the residents of Umargaon and 20 nearby villages in Gujarat, struggling to save the seacoast (*Kinnara Bachao Sangharsh Samiti*, KBSS), their homes, and their livelihoods from a Port construction project planned in the area, people from Mumbai and Surat observed the World Environment Day in Umargaon. Umargaon is home to the world renowned natural farm *Kalpavriksha*, run by Bhaskar Save, whose nephew Cl. Pratap Save died in the struggle.

While unveiling a memorial to Cl. Save, KBSS leader C. Sagar recalled that Cl. Save had declared that he would even give his life for the sake of justice. Others discussed why the port was not necessary, and the scale of environmental and the economic damage it would cause. Ever since Cl. Save's death by police beating, the village is in a state of shock. Defying the fear, Abha Behn spoke for KBSS, and related the recent events in detail. Fr. Kocherry, leader of the National Fishworkers Forum and convenor of the National Alliance for People's Movements, made it clear that the people's non-violent protest would continue until the port was cancelled and if any construction went on the people would remove it. Some retired army officers expressed outrage at the police repression, and expressed their solidarity with the goals of preserving the seacoast and the livelihood of the fishworkers and the farmers, who were assembled in thousands under the scorching sun.

Marching through Umargaon, people gathered enough strength to resist the police and the video

*Volunteers and supporters of KBSS protest the port construction project in Umargaon, Gujarat, on World Environment Day.*



surveillance cameras, which have become a regular feature of Umargaon life now. A lawyer from Mumbai has volunteered her legal services for the protection of activists, who are being targeted by the police. For more information, including the report of the Indian People's Tribunal on the Port project, please go to the web-site [www.indiatogether.org](http://www.indiatogether.org). *Can you help?* Please write to KBSS at [jjhna@vsnl.com](mailto:jjhna@vsnl.com), or to the Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti, at [pss@wilnetonline.net](mailto:pss@wilnetonline.net), with your suggestions for sustaining this movement.

*Aravinda Pillalamarri, Ravi Kuchimanchi, AID-India*

## AID-Raleigh goes on stage

Nafisabhen Bharot, working in Uthaan (an NGO in Gujarat), and Rajoobhai, a widely acclaimed film director and an award winning actor with a love for theater, visited the US to spread awareness about the water crisis in Gujarat. AID-Raleigh volunteers enthusiastically enacted the US premier of the play "Water O Water", directed by Rajoobhai. This 17 minute play conveyed the theme that "Water is Life", and that dams are not the solutions to water crisis. The enthusiastic response from the audience made us realize that drama is an effective medium to reach out to a large number of people.

*Anita Tagler, Vijay Manghnani, AID-Raleigh*



*AID-Raleigh volunteers enacting the play "Water O Water", directed by Rajoobhai, on June 4.*

## For your Library - *The River and Life*

*The River and Life: People's Struggle in the Narmada Valley*: Sanjay Sangvai, journalist and full time activist of the Narmada Bachao Andolan, gives an insider's story of a historic and tenacious people's movement.. 200 pages. Price: \$12 (incl. shipping). To order your copy, please contact Uday at [uday@psu.edu](mailto:uday@psu.edu). Uday, AID-State College

## The AIPSN 100 Blocks Plan: A new road ahead for AID

The All India People's Science Network (AIPSN) is a network of about 50 people's science movements in India including the Tamil Nadu Science Foundation (TNSF), Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS, in Orissa) etc. Starting Jan 2001, AIPSN is embarking on a program of holistic development in 100 blocks (comprising about 6000 villages in total), spread all over India. The thrust of the development in these 100 blocks will be in the areas of health, savings, and education. The major goal of this effort is to stimulate local level planning of health and education programs, and demonstrate that decentralization of planning is possible and that it can work efficiently in a large number of blocks. The budget for this plan is about Rs. 5000 per village per year, making it one of the cheapest programs with such a large reach. The concept of local community involvement and decentralization of planning is central to the ideology of AID. Over the last month, several AID chapters discussed the 100 block plan and unanimously voted to support it by reviewing the related projects, and raising funds to support them. For more information on the 100 block plan, please go to the web-site [www.aidindia.org/aipsn](http://www.aidindia.org/aipsn).

*Kirankumar Vissa, AID-Maryland*

### News & Notes from India

#### *Satyagraha in the Narmada Valley*

Again this monsoon, the people of the Narmada Valley will be confronting the illegal and unjust submergence caused by the Sardar Sarovar Dam. The two Satyagraha centres are located in the villages of Domkhedi (Maharashtra) and Jalsindhi (MP), on opposite banks of the river. From Vadodara, 4 hours by bus plus a short boat ride takes you there. A sixty cents stamp delivers your message to the Indian government.

*Aravinda Pillalamarri, AID-India*

#### *Orissa Visit Report*

I am an AID volunteer from Maryland. I visited the cyclone ravaged coastal parts of Orissa from May 8 to May 25, before joining my new job in Pune. Post cyclone coastal Orissa is a confusing place. NGO involvement is heavy, overlapping, but is not well-coordinated. People's involvement in the rebuilding process varies from enthusiastic, forward-looking participation to outright manipulation and exploitation. I surveyed the cyclone rehabilitation and rebuilding projects that AID has been carrying out with several local NGOs, including Abhiyan, Adhikar, Ruchika, Unnayan, Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS), and the Ersama Navanirman Samiti. I describe the work of other local groups, and present my views on where AID should go from here, regarding the projects in Orissa, including the possibility of starting an AID chapter there. The full text of this report is available at [www.astro.princeton.edu/~vijay/Aid/orissa.html](http://www.astro.princeton.edu/~vijay/Aid/orissa.html).

*Prasad Subramanian, AID-Maryland*

### Charity starts with grocery shopping

Namaste.com, the online Indian grocery store, has agreed to donate 10% of your grocery bill to AID, **at no extra cost to you**. When you go to the "checkout aisle" page, you will see a box that says enter "promotional discount". Please choose organizational discount here and key in "AID". You can also register at this site and then shop using the login. Please convey this information to all your friends who may be already purchasing from namaste.com. Once again, don't forget to punch in "AID".

*Vandana Vaidyanathan, AID-Columbus*

### From the AID Video Desk

1) *In conversation with Keshavbhai Vasave*. Features an interview with Keshavbhai Vasave, a village elder from Nimghavan village, and chronicles the struggle in the Narmada valley through his eyes and experiences. It also includes coverage of Narmada Bachat Gan., a women's saving group. The video was produced by Savita Kini during her visit to the Narmada Valley with this Spring.

2) *Understanding Poverty*. Balaji Sampath discusses gender and social inequality, and how these lead to social problems and poverty, in a debate at Stanford University.

These and other videos can be obtained from the AID-Bay Area video library. Please call or write to Savita Kini at [savita@cisco.com](mailto:savita@cisco.com), Ph: 408-244-4660.

*Savita Kini, AID-Bay Area*

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