



LOTS OF SEE HERE

TMIE reporter **Ronnie Kuriakose** & Iersman **T P Soora** join CMFR's 77th Foundation Day celebrations.

AD is not been for a rose of school buses parked outside the gates, the ICAR Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Kochi would have gone unnoticed by daily commuters, as is the case on most days. On Friday, the campus, located near the High Court, was a hubbub of activity after it threw open its gates to students and the public as part of its 77th Foundation Day (February 1) celebrations.

Shreds of delight dimmed the otherwise staid atmosphere as children were introduced to giant fish such as the lionfish, wrasse and whale shark, and precious pearls. We were also among the hundreds who thronged the place. And we, too, were budding with excitement as we roamed and roams unfolded the wonders of the marine life.

For many, it was a rare opportunity to enjoy the exhibits on marine life, observe the scientific activities of the institution, and interact with researchers. But it does not have to be an add a CMFRi spokesperson. This far med the crest of the Founding Day initiative — bridge the gap between the institution and the public.

It was only after arriving here that we learned that CMFRi's museum and aquarium were open to the public all year round. Monday to Friday from



10 am to 5:30 pm. 7:30 (adults) / 7:30 (children). Many Kochiites confessed they never were aware of this.

"This discovery is exactly what this programme hopes to bring. To build a connection with the people," said CMFRi director A. Gopalakrishnan.

"In addition, we also seek to sensitise the people about the sustainable utilisation of marine fisheries and conservation of marine biodiversity. Thus, of course, provide them an insight into the research activities comprising the sector."

The museum, which houses an extensive collection of marine specimens, including fishes, corals, sponges, sea anemones, turtles and seaweeds, was a big hit on the day. Despite the mid-

day heat, students were seen bedding for it. The aquarium, which showcases marine biodiversity, too had its fans.

Furthermore, a show of exhibits were also on display to create awareness of ecosystem conservation and the dangers of marine pollution. To drive home the need for the conservation of marine resources, children were also awarded blue ribbons for conveying the message. The exhibition also included a display of marine ornamental varieties, pearls, pearl oysters, squid fins, different varieties of iron givens, sea shells, corals, etc.

Entrings made of fish other CMFRi publications and posters were available for sale to the public. To further bolster its outreach, the CMFRi recently opened a sales outlet. Here, the public can buy a wide variety of products, from high quality spines to scented hand and face creams, including cleaned and dried fish, marine shells and products will also be available for sale at the outlet.

Despite having a fair share of industries and people dependent on the sea, Kerala is not a sea facing state per se. It's municipalities — goods, services, livelihoods and the sea — remains disconnected from social consciousness. Events like what the CMFRi organised about our message — the sea is right there!

