

# The thirst quenchers from Gujarat

They drove 3,000 km for four days to provide potable water to flood-hit villages

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATHANAMTHITTA

A seven-member team led by Sanjay D. Patil, senior scientist, from the Central Salt and Marine Chemical Research Institute (CSMCRI) under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Gujarat's Bhav Nagar, has travelled 3,000 km by road to supply potable water to the homes in the badly flood-hit villages in Central Kerala.

It took less than six hours for the CSMCRI team to leave Bhav Nagar in response to an SOS sent by Ajay Ghosh, Director of the CSIR-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology to his Gujarat counterpart, Amitava Das, on August 21. Shakti Rajjada, technical officer; technicians Rahul Patil, Sunil Choudhary, and Chetan Vagela; drivers Jadeja and Vikrant are the other members of the team.



A CSIR-CSMCRI team from Gujarat in front of a bus fitted with a mobile water treatment plant at Panayannarkavu in Pathanamthitta district. ■ RADHAKRISHNAN KUTTOOR

Sivankutty Nair, technical officer in the CSIR unit in Thiruvananthapuram, is coordinating the flood relief activities of the Gujarat team that has been camping at Parumala since August 25.

## Quick potable water

The CSMCRI had developed a mobile Reverse Osmosis (RO) plant fitted to a bus 10 years ago, at an estimated cost of ₹1 crore, for

supplying drinking water to various natural calamity-hit areas. The unique feature of the mobile RO unit is its capacity to produce 3,000 litres of potable water an hour, at an operating cost of just ₹60 paise per litre, says Mr. Sanjay Patil.

The Kerala Water Authority (KWA) has made necessary arrangements to supply the treated water to Pandanad, Mannar,

Parumala, Budhanur, Panayannarkavu, etc., where the post-flood drinking water scarcity is at its worst. All wells in these flood-hit villages have been inundated and it may take weeks together to clean and sanitize these wells.

## Working 24/7

Mr. Nair told *The Hindu* that the mobile RO unit has been supplying 25,000 to 30,000 litres of treated water to the affected households from August 25.

The unit functions round the clock and the public support was immense, he said. At present, the CSIR-CSMCRI has only one such unit and the organisation is planning to set up one unit each for all the States.

The team will be returning to Bhav Nagar soon as the KWA is gearing up its machinery to meet the drinking water needs of the villages, he added.