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Signs of summer showers at Siruvani Dam



Summer showers are expected to improve the situation in Siruvani Dam.

Coimbatore: Strong westerly winds at the Siruvani Dam and the catchment are providing signs of summer showers eagerly hoped for by a substantial portion of the city and the suburbs that are dependent on the Siruvani scheme for drinking water.

March – the normal summer showers time – was a disappointment, according to official sources. An official dealing with Siruvani supply said at least 50 mm rain was the normal quota for the dam in March. Leave alone the westerly winds, there was not even a stiff breeze during that month, he said.

But, April seemed to turn things around. Gusty winds uprooted a tree on the road to the dam in the Siruvani hills and there was a drizzle at the dam last Friday. The situation, however, had not improved on Monday. But, the signs of rain persisted.

The summer showers that normally arrived in Kerala (where the dam is located) in the second half of March never increased the water level substantially. It reduced the water level depletion for a few days, the official said.

The water level on Friday was around 28 ft, as against the full reservoir level of 51 ft. It was five feet more than the level during the corresponding period last year. But, on Monday, the level had dipped by another foot.

While there was a struggle for Siruvani water in the suburbs, the city is not facing any major problem because of the supply from the Siruvani and Pilloor dams. The sources said that on any given day, the city got 130 million litres a day. It now got 70 million litres from Siruvani Dam and at least 60 million litres from the Pilloor Dam. This would be enough to supply 110 litres per capita per day to a population of about 12 lakh.

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Anti-farmers' budget: D. Raja



D. Raja, National Secretary, Communist Party of India, addressing at the 24th State conference of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam at Denkanikottai on Sunday.

DENKANIKOTTAI (KRISHNAGIRI DISTRICT): The general budget submitted by the Centre during the last week of February was against the interests of farmers, D. Raja, National Secretary, Communist Party of India, said here on Sunday.

He was here to participate in the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam's 24th State conference and Diamond Jubilee function of the All India Kisan Sangam.

Mr. Raja said that though the government was claiming to have given priority to agriculture, the allocation for agriculture in the budget was reduced by Rs. 424 crore. Likewise, food subsidy had been reduced by Rs. 300 crore. The recommendation of the M.S. Swaminathan Committee to disburse loans to farmers at 4 per cent interest was not accepted by the Union Government.

The budget allocation for rural development had also been reduced to 16.18 per cent from 21.06 per cent, Mr. Raja added.

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Food production target 472.50 lakh tonnes

CHENNAI: The State government has set a target of achieving 472.50 lakh tonnes of food production in 2010-11 by expanding the area under cultivation to 60.50 lakh hectares from 50.35 lakh hectares, Agriculture Minister Veerapandi S. Arumugam told the Assembly on Monday.

The target was originally fixed for 2009-10, but could not be achieved owing to poor rain. Only 50.35 lakh hectares were covered and production was 363.40 lakh tonnes.

According to the policy note presented by the Minister, the target for the current year will be achieved through crop management, soil health management, water management, quality input distribution, area expansion, mechanisation, technology management, research and extension.

As per the plan, paddy will be cultivated on 21.50 lakh hectares, millets on 12 lakh hectares, pulses on 12 lakh hectares, oilseeds on 10 lakh hectares, cotton on 1.50 lakh hectares and sugar cane on 3.50 lakh hectares.

The expansion in the area of cultivation will result in increase of rice production to 21.50 lakh tonnes. Production of millets is expected to reach 23 lakh tonnes, while pulse production also will go up to 7.50 lakh tonnes. Oilseeds production will touch 18 lakh tonnes, cotton 4 lakh tonnes and sugarcane 4 lakh tonnes.

Later participating in the debate, CPI (M) member Dilli Babu wanted the government to table a White Paper on agriculture lands acquired for Special Economic Zones (SEZs), besides details on water and power supplied to them.

“In States such as Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, farmers are getting more than Rs.5 lakh per acre. But, in Tamil Nadu they get somewhere between Rs.26,000 and Rs.1 lakh,” he said.

Pointing out that mechanisation of agriculture had severely affected agricultural labourers, he said the government should enact a law to prevent fertile land being taken up for real estate purposes. MDMK member R. Gnanadoss said the government should follow the Gujarat model of recharging groundwater by constructing more check-dams.

AIADMK MLA M. Pandurangan said the government had failed to implement the promises it had made.

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Future belongs to grains, not guns: M.S. Swaminathan

Says Food Security Act should have a common and differentiated system of entitlements



FOCUS ON FARMING:M.S. Swaminathan, chairman, MSSRF (second from left),
greeting K.S. Sripathi,

CHENNAI: The proposed Food Security Act should have a common and differentiated system of entitlements to take care of the needs of the underprivileged in a country where millions of adults and children go to bed hungry everyday, M.S. Swaminathan, chairman, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), said on Monday.

Delivering the 'C. Subramaniam Centenary Lecture' on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his brainchild the Bharathidasan Institute of Management (BIM), Professor Swaminathan said while the common entitlements involved Universal Public Distribution System (PDS), clean drinking water and total sanitation, the differentiated entitlement could prescribe the quantity of wheat or rice or other grains to families living below poverty line.

The PDS, which addresses the basic needs of availability, access and absorption of foodgrains, is the backbone of food security in a country with an estimated 230 million undernourished rural people. India accounts for 27 per cent of the world's undernourished population, Professor Swaminathan said.

Calling for steps to bring the best of modern technologies to the farmers, he said it was unfortunate that India was the only country where farmers, who “keep us alive,” were taking their lives. The National Sample Survey showed that 45 per cent of farmers surveyed wanted to quit agriculture, he pointed out. “It is in our enlightened self-interest that farming is made sustainable. As I have said before, the future belongs to grains, not guns,” he said. The agriculture sector in India accounted for 15.7 per cent of the GDP in 2008-09 compared to 18.9 per cent in 2004-05. However, agriculture's role remains critical as it provides employment to over 52 per cent of the net workforce (about 70 crore people), he said.

Professor Swaminathan welcomed the fact that the National Policy for Farmers proposed to extend income security, encourage non-farming activities for remuneration and attract youth to farming.

Pointing out that by generating 17 million tonnes of wheat, the Green Revolution had produced in four years from 1964 the cumulative aggregate amount of what was produced in the preceding 4,000 years, he said India was expecting to produce 82 million tonnes of wheat in 2010 and 100 million tonnes in 2015.

An important challenge for the future farmers from global warming was to develop climate-resilient agriculture systems, as around 50 per cent of India's currently favourable, high-potential wheat production areas could be reclassified as heat-stressed, low-yield growing environment by 2050. For each degree rise in mean temperature, wheat yield loss in India was estimated to be about 6 million tonnes per year, Professor Swaminathan said.

Chief Secretary K. S. Sripathi underlined the importance of value-based management education to groom leaders rather than managers. Individuals and the institutions they work for need to be committed to values, he said. V. Krishnamurthy, chairman, National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council; S. Ramadorai, chairman, Board of Governors, BIM; P. S. Mani Sundaram, first Vice-Chancellor and Pyarelal Arya, first Director, also participated.

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“Don't lease tank for fish farming”

Nagercoil: The people in and around Padmanabhapuram urged the district administration not to lease the Perumalkulam for fish farming, as it posed health hazard to the people who take bath in the tank.

According to sources, there is a big tank spreading over 7.5 acres in Padmanabhapuram, which is under the control of the Public Works Department.

However, the Department of Fisheries leased the tank to private parties for fish-farming.

Under the guise of providing feed to the fish, the lessee dumped human waste, cow-dung and other wastes from slaughter houses, thus polluting the water.

When such kind of a problem raised at Pattanikulam, situated outside the fort, the residents of Eluppakonam, who used this water for bathing and irrigation, objected to the move of the Department of Fisheries to conduct auction for fish farming. Finally, the authorities dropped their auction decision.

In the meantime, the councillors from Padmanabhapuram V.S. Hari Kumar. K. Renuka, K. Kochukrihna Pillai and S.Nagarajan met the District Revenue Officer, Kalaiselvan,

and the Assistant Director of Fisheries, Rubert Jothi, and handed over a memorandum to stop the auction to be held on April 16.

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By G Saravanan

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National census on fisherfolk to begin on Friday

CHENNAI: With the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) embarking on a mammoth data collection exercise - National Marine Fisheries Census 2010 - from Friday across all the coastal states, the country would be getting a detailed report on marine fisherfolk population and their economic status in four months.

Conducted after every five years, the massive exercise was to gather various details related to the marine fisherfolk.

Elaborating the details of the census to Express, G. Mohanraj, Principal Scientist and scientist-in-charge, Chennai Research Centre of CMFRI, said, "In the month-long exercise, which will be held from April 16 to May 15, trained enumerators will ascertain details like the total number of marine fishermen, their crafts and gears, socio-economic profile, demographic features and behavioural parameters." Of the 2,100 enumerators trained by scientists of CMFRI for the nation-level exercise, more than 450 were from Tamil Nadu who would embark on the mission from Chennai, Tuticorin and Mandapam centres, Mohanraj added.

Keeping with the changing trends, enumerators during this year's census would seek additional information like attitude towards fisheries regulations, awareness of climate change, extent of labour migration and perceived constraints.

The data would be analysed by the CMFRI to develop a comprehensive census

database in next three months which would be helpful in facilitating formulation of fisheries related plans and policies in the marine sector.

The last census conducted in 2005 revealed that the total number of fishermen was 3.52 million living in 7,56,212 households spread across 3,202 marine fishing villages. There were 2,38,772 crafts of which 58,911 were mechanised, 75,591 were motorised. After analysing the collected data, it was found that women formed 48.6 per cent of the population with 948 females for every 1000 males. Out of 29,241 trawlers in the fishery Gujarat (8,002) accounted for the maximum number followed by Tamil Nadu (5,300), Maharashtra (4,219), Kerala (3982) and other states.

It also revealed that nearly 62 per cent of the families involved in fishing did not possess any craft.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Apr 13

Max Min

38.6° | 27.7°

Rain: 00mm in24hrs Sunrise: 05:58

Humidity: 34% Sunset: 18:21

Wind: Normal Barometer: 1008.1mb

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Apr 14

Max Min

37° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Apr 15



38° | 29°

Partly Cloudy

Apr 16



38° | 29°

Sunny

Apr 17



37° | 28°

Sunny

Apr 18



37° | 27°

Sunny

Apr 19



38° | 28°

Sunny