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## “Stop degradation of water sources”

L. Renganathan

*Industrial pollution-hit Karur farmers petition CM*

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*Even wells have been rendered waste by effluents*

*Take steps to give compensation to affected persons*

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KARUR: Farmers affected by the industrial pollution of water sources in the district have petitioned Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi to intervene urgently and prevent further degradation of precious water sources due to sustained discharge of effluents from pollution treatment plants and dyeing industry units in the region.

President of the Federation of Associations of Farmers Affected by Pollution and Association for Protection of Groundwater Sources K. Ramasamy in his petition to the Chief Minister has noted that due to sustained onslaught by the effluent treatment and dyeing plants functioning in the district, the whole of River Amaravathy has turned into a veritable poison. Moreover, the irrigation channels along the south and north banks of Amaravathy have been turned into effluent dumping channels.

Since even the wells in the region have been rendered waste by the effect of the effluents, they too were of no use to farmers and the public.

The functioning of the so-called effluent treatment plants needs introspection and the whole idea seems to be farcical the way pollution management was proceeding.

The federation also alleged that the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board was lax in enforcing the rules.

It was doubtful whether the pollution treatment agencies were adhering to the reverse osmosis process and recycling of treated water as has been recommended.

That being the case, it had to be ensured that the units did not discharge the effluents treated or otherwise into the river systems and water sources.

### **Demand to bring out White Paper**

It was in these circumstances the State Government should bring out a White Paper

on the functioning of the treatment plants and the effects of industrial pollution on the natural resources, Mr. Ramasamy emphasised in the memorandum to the Chief Minister.

Steps should also be taken immediately to disburse adequate compensation to the affected farmers and the public without any categorisation.

### Census on loss of cattle lives

The Department of Animal Husbandry should undertake a census to enumerate the loss of cattle lives and identify the farmers who have suffered losses.

Stringent measures, including closure of polluting units that contravene the pollution control norms, should be taken without any hurdle, the memorandum demanded.

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## Farmers' field school programme launched

Staff Reporter

Photo: N. Bashkaran



***Motivation drive: S. Ravi, Assistant Director, Agriculture, speaking at the launch of the Farmers' Field School for Tomato programme at Moongilpudur, near Krishnagiri, on Wednesday. —***

KRISHNAGIRI: A Farmers' Field School for Tomato programme was launched at Moongilpudur village, near Krishnagiri, on Wednesday.

The 14-week programme was organised by the Dr. Perumal Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

The seed-to-seed programme was planned in such a manner to apprise the farmers on weekly basis on their field. Resource persons from Regional Research Station of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Paiyur and Dr. Perumal KVK would help the farmers on planting seedling up to the stage of harvest.

This is the first of its kind in the district for tomato growers.

Earlier such programmes were conducted for paddy cultivation by the Agriculture Department.

Tomato was the main cash crop in the region. About 2,500 hectares of agriculture lands in Moongilpudur, Royakottai and Palacode are under tomata cultivation. Keeping this in mind, the FFS was conceptualised by the KVK, T. Sundararajan, Coordinator, Dr. Perumal KVK told 'The Hindu'.

In his special address, S. Ravi, Assistant Director, Agriculture, said the programme was launched to teach the methodologies to reduce cultivation cost, reduce usage and cost of pesticides and selection of good yielding varieties.

He said farmers can make use of the subsidy for mechanisation of farming. Precision farming will give good yield, he added.

Mr. Ravi announced that a World Bank team will visit the district shortly to monitor the projects funded by them.

In his speech, Mr. Sundararajan asked the farmers to spread the knowledge they gained from the programme. He also insisted on use of less quantity of chemical fertilizers and it should be applied in the right time at right quantity.

In his special address, A.K. Mani, Head and Professor, Regional Research Station of TNAU spoke about soil testing and integrated pest management system.

S. Vijayabaskaran, Associate Professor (Agronomy), and T. Manickam, Chairman, Farmers' Advisory Committee, Krishnagiri block of the Agriculture Technology Management Agency also spoke.

T.I. Rameshbabu, Technical Expert (Horticulture), Dr. Perumal KVK welcomed the gathering. S. Senthil Kumar, Technical Expert (Extension), proposed a vote of thanks.

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## **Mettur level**

The level in the Mettur dam stood at 77.11 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 902 cusecs and the discharge, 2,000 cusecs.

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## **World Wetland Day celebrated**

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: Slide shows, distribution of pamphlets and awareness programmes

marked the World Wetland Day celebrations in the city on Tuesday.

Officials of the Kancheepuram Forest Division distributed pamphlets with the help of student volunteers from various city colleges near the Velachery bridge and at the Pallikaranai junction of the Thoraipakkam – Pallavaram Radial Road.

Forest Department authorities said there were more than 150 water bodies in the city and its suburbs, but due to urbanisation their number has come down to 27.

On the Pallikaranai marshlands, the officials said recent reports about the appearance of the white-spotted garden skink for the first time in the State and Russell's viper, the largest and the most widespread among Asian vipers, confirmed the invaluable ecological status of the marshland.

Fish such as dwarf gourami and chromides occur naturally in Pallikaranai. Besides, the windowpane oyster, mud crab, mullet, half beak and green chromide are some of the estuarine fauna present in the marsh.

A total of 317 ha (about 793 acres) of the marshland had been classified as Reserve Land under Section 4 of Tamil Nadu Forest Act 1882. The process, of declaring this part of Pallikaranai as Reserve Forests, is on.

### Awareness

As part of the programme, the Trust for Environment Monitoring and Action Initiating (EMAI) organised an awareness programme.

A slide show on the wetland habitat and their status with the flora and fauna of these wetlands was conducted.

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### Water level

MADURAI: The level in the Periyar dam on Wednesday stood at 113.70 feet (full level 136 feet) with an inflow of 9 cusecs and a discharge of 400 cusecs. The level in the Vaigai dam was 44.36 feet (71 feet) with no inflow and a discharge of 1,860 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit stood at 1,706 mcft.

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**Stay united over climate talks, India asks G-77**

UNITED STATES: India has asked the Group of 77 developing countries to stay united to see that climate change negotiations address "the glaring injustice that those worst affected by climate change are the least responsible for it".

"The G-77 must remain united as we strive to redress this injustice," India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Hardeep Singh Puri, said Wednesday at a meeting here of the group on brainstorming on climate change issues.

"This injustice is acute to countries of Africa, to the LDCs (Least Developed Countries), and to the SIDS (Small Island Developing States) whose very survival as viable nation states is in jeopardy," he said.

Like many other developing countries, India was among the worst affected by climate change, Puri said. "India, therefore, has a major interest in ensuring that climate change is addressed substantively and constructively."

India was voluntarily and proactively undertaking numerous measures to address climate change, he said.

"However, there cannot be any renegotiation or dilution of the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), in particular the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities."

"Efforts to address climate change must be firmly embedded in a demonstrably equitable access to atmospheric space for every citizen of the globe, with adequate finance and technology available to all developing countries," Puri said.

"It is imperative that the G-77 remains united in pursuing these common objectives," he said, stressing "solidarity that has been the bedrock of this diverse Group must be maintained and strengthened".

While acknowledging the Copenhagen Accord "was a high-level political understanding among the participants on some of the contentious issues", Brazil, South Africa, India and China, or the BASIC countries, also hoped that it would facilitate the two-track negotiating process under the Bali Roadmap, Puri said.

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**Punjab may get Rs 800 crore for saving paddy**

Ramaninder K Bhatia, TNN, 4 February 2010, 05:09am IST

CHANDIGARH: Finally, relief may be on way for the state which had put all its resources on stake last year in order to retain the status of "food sufficient nation" for India.

The Union government is likely to release Rs 800 crore for Punjab as compensation for all the drastic measures that the state took in order to sustain paddy crop last year in the wake of severe drought which had ravaged the crop elsewhere in the country. Haryana, the second state to have managed that feat, is also likely to be rewarded with Rs 400 crore relief package. Revealing this on Wednesday, Punjab CM PS Badal said he had been told informally by the Union government that strong recommendations have been sent by the

agriculture ministry and the Planning Commission to release this amount for the two states, who had pulled all stops to sustain the crop and send sufficient stocks to the national pool.

“I was personally assured by the agriculture minister and other officials that Punjab would be compensated adequately. We are now waiting for the official communication,” Badal said.

Last week, TOI had highlighted how Punjab has expressed its helplessness on continuing as nation’s granary in the wake of severe restraints on its resources, as well as the absence of any help from the Union government. Since July last year, the state has been sending representations for help to the Union government, describing how it had incurred an expenditure of nearly Rs 3,000 crore for raising the paddy crop during drought, where absence of rains and severe power shortage had forced farmers to burn gallons of diesel to pump out underground water for irrigation.

## DECCAN **Chronicle** *On The Web*

### **Global warming hits Pulicat, flamingos**

By DC Correspondent

Feb 04 2010

Feb. 3: Pulicat lake, the second largest lagoon in India bordering Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, is now drying up and faces the effects of climate change and global warming, according to field biologists of the forest department.

“Summers are usually hot in Pulicat bird sanctuary with a maximum and minimum temperature ranging between 15 and 45 degrees Celsius, but last year, the maximum temperature hovered around 48 degrees, showing a 3 degrees Celsius rise,” Mr B.M. Gupta, biologist – Pulicat lake, Andhra Pradesh forest department, said.

Pointing out that the lake requires more scientific research and studies to ascertain these changes, Mr Gupta said the catchment areas of Pulicat lake were dry this year due to lack of adequate rainfall. According to official records, the lake has witnessed frequent monsoon failures since 1996, he said.

When contacted, district forest officer (Sulurpet division) V.N. Subbunachari said the delay in the arrival of monsoon and silting up of the sea mouths in the lake has affected the current migration of flamingos, the leading species at Pulicat. Last year, about 50,000 flamingos visited the lake but this year the number has dwindled to 25,000 and the migration of the birds is related to rainfall and climatic conditions, he said. Though flamingo sighting is relatively not that encouraging this season, the other major migratory birds like pelican, painted stork, open bill stork, duck varieties including shovellers and pintails are recorded in good numbers, he said.

According to Mr K.V.R.K. Thirunaranan, founder, Nature Trust, once migratory ducks used to flock in large numbers, invading the Kuduri tank located inside the sanctuary, but now the situation remains grim for them.

The only respite is highly endangered bar headed geese continue to figure in routine bird census of Pulicat. The sanctuary is also shrinking due to unchecked development activities and encroachments, alleged Mr Thirunaranan.

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