



Tamilnadu Economy in News (TEN) is a carefully chosen list of news items spotlighting the state's economy published in the recent press. A fortnightly issue of the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), TEN brings forth notable current economic affairs of the State for wider attention of economists, researchers and policymakers.

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TEN

from

MIDS Madras
Institute of
Development
Studies

Tamilnadu Economy in News

An MIDS Briefing

Volume 1 Issue 1 May 2024

Economic growth not affected by public debt in Tamil Nadu during 2005-2023, says study

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu's public debt has neither "adversely affected" the growth nor "supported" it, according to a study by two veteran economists.

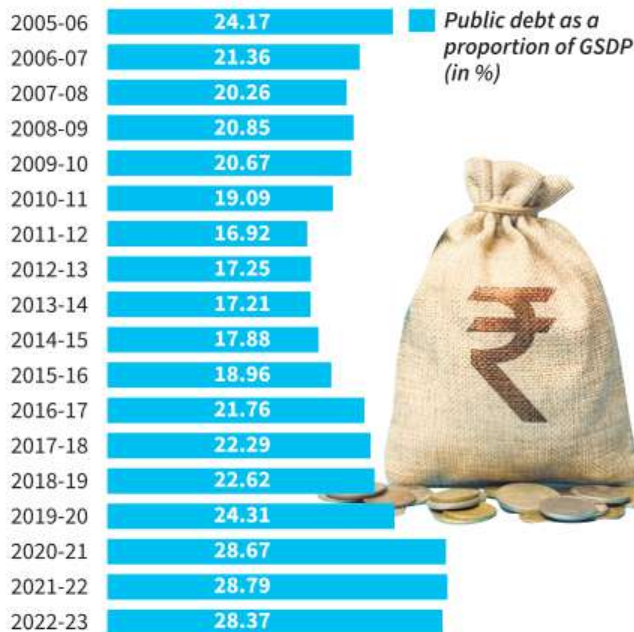
This finding was with reference to the period from 2005-06 to 2022-23 when the public debt-Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) ratio had a negative effect on real economic growth, but it was "not significant".

Economists C. Rangarajan and K.R. Shanmugam of the Madras School of Economics, who carried out the study by covering different facets of the State economy, however, cautioned that in future, a "higher debt ratio may adversely affect growth". They also observed that "reduction in the debt-GSDP ratio may induce growth".

Analysing the pattern of the ratio over the years, they said it was in 2016-17 that the ratio exceeded

Debt data

A look at the pattern of the public debt in Tamil Nadu over the years



20%, the sustainable level recommended by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Review Committee in 2017. "In 2020-21, it had a sudden jump of 4.36 percentage points over the previous year due to the [COVID-19] pandemic ef-

fect," they said, adding that "after that, it stabilises at the same level".

'Appropriate strategies'
They called for "appropriate strategies" to be taken by the State government to control the debt so that the adverse effect

Economists

C. Rangarajan and K.R. Shanmugam, who carried out the study, however, cautioned that in future, a "higher debt ratio may adversely affect growth"

was eliminated.

When asked to elaborate on the "appropriate strategies", Dr. Shanmugam, who pointed out that the trend of rising ratio, especially after the pandemic, was observed in other States, too, said that setting off the debt and reducing the fiscal deficit were some of the strategies suggested.

Emphasising that it was due to an "external shock" in the form of the pandemic that the debt had gone up perceptibly in recent years, Dr. Shanmugam suggested that the Central government allocate more funds to the State.

Source: The Hindu, 9 May 2024, page 6.

Farmers getting 3-phase power for 12 to 16 hours every day, says minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE state government has been providing three-phase power supply for 12 to 16 hours every day throughout the state to farmers without any interruption since assuming office in 2021, Minister for Finance, Human Resources and Electricity Thangam Thennarasu said in a statement on Tuesday.

The release comes in the backdrop of AIADMK general secretary and leader of opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami criticising the government for allegedly failing to ensure three-phase power supply to farmers.

Thennarasu said, "Under the previous AIADMK regime, delta regions received three-phase power supply for 12 hours every day while the other areas received it for only 9 hours. We prioritised farmers' welfare and have been supplying power for 12 to 16 hours every day throughout the state. As a result, agriculture production has increased in Tamil Nadu," he

said.

As regards challenges faced during summer, he said electricity consumption has risen, especially in delta districts where agricultural power use peaks at night, causing disruption in some high-tension power lines. "Steps are being taken in these areas on a war footing to address disruptions and extend the three-phase power supply for more hours. To mitigate low-voltage risks, integrated development plans were initiated in July 2021. A survey revealed that a total of 5,705 transformers were overloaded and 3,200 were functioning with low voltage. To address

this, as many as 8,905 additional transformers were installed under the Integrated Development Project inaugurated by Chief Minister MK Stalin in August 2021, enhancing grid capacity by 652 MVA," he said.

Thennarasu highlighted that three-phase power is also being supplied round the clock for combined drinking water projects across the state.



Source: The New Indian Express, 8 May 2024, page 4.

FOOT NOTE

Namakkal poultry farmers want to put all their eggs in one basket

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If Kerala gets bird flu, Namakkal gets the sniffles. Poultry farmers in Namakkal, egg basket of India, want to ring-fence their trade so that they don't suffer if avian influenza breaks out elsewhere.

Things were rosy till 2006 or so, when the region was exporting up to one crore eggs a day to 17 countries in the Middle East and western Africa. From 2007-08 onwards, outbreaks of bird flu were reported from several states including Assam, Manipur, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Importers of Indian eggs treat the whole country as one zone and if there is an outbreak of bird flu in any state, they ban all eggs from India.

Exports came down to 5 lakh to 10 lakh in 2008-09 and almost nil in

2012-13. While countries opened up a little later, repeated outbreaks of the disease in a few states hit export of Indian eggs.

While there are a few pockets across India that have a concentration of poultry farms for layers (eggs) including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Punjab, Namakkal has emerged as the largest base. "Today, there are 1,100 poultry farms in Namakkal region alone and they collectively brood six crore hens and produce five crore eggs a day," says P V Senthil, general secretary, Livestock Agri Farmers Trade Association (LAFTA) and MD, Kavaris Bio Proteins Pvt Ltd, exporter of eggs since 1990.

Traditionally, Namakkal region used to supply eggs up to Kolkata in the east. The emergence of Bihar has taken away those markets and Namakkal today mostly supplies to

exports. But this involves investment of ₹50 lakh to ₹1 crore and benefits only large farms.

Only four farms have been certified under this policy so far and all of them are in Tamil Nadu - two in Namakkal and one each in Trichy and Erode. "Together they produce 16 lakh eggs per day, of which just 30%-40% can be exported". The potential for exports is around 2 crore - 3 crore eggs a day.

"There are several small-scale poultry farmers in the Namakkal region and additional investment on this scale is next to impossible. One of the conditions under the 'compartment' plan is that no other farm should be there within a one km radius of a certified farm. This makes almost 80% - 90% of the poultry farms in the Namakkal region ineligible. Hence, we are pushing for the entire Namakkal region to be notified as one region and 'bird flu free'," adds Senthil.





OPTIMISTIC : Dr P V Senthil at his poultry farm in Namakkal. He has been an exporter of eggs since 1990

Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and, to an extent, Bangalore. That's why exports come in handy. Farmers can hedge their business by exporting at least 20% of daily production.

Otherwise, frequent glut in the market forces farmers to sell at below permitted farmgate prices.

When the poultry industry reached out to the Centre, it offered to create "compartments" - large-scale poultry farms, which after implementing certain norms, can be certified as disease free and thereby making those eggs eligible for

Source: The Times of India, 6 May 2024, page 2. Also online [here](https://www.timesofindia.com).

25 YEARS ON, HAS STATE'S FARMERS' MARKET GONE STALE?

Uzhavar Sandhais Were Launched In 1999 To Weed Out Middlemen. Now, Say Farmers, It's Malpractice That Needs To Be Eliminated

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In 1999, Tamil Nadu opened its first 'uzhavar sandhai' (farmers' market) in Madurai. Inaugurated by chief minister M Karunanidhi, with the aim of eliminating middlemen between farmers and consumers, and in the hope of setting the stage for an agricultural revolution. Twenty-five years later, politicisation of the markets and infiltration of traders masquerading as farmers are defeating their purpose.

The official figures paint a rosy picture. There are 8,000 farmers at the 190 markets across TN, says data from the department of agricultural marketing, selling 2,200 metric tons of fruit and vegetables worth ₹5.5 crore a day to 3.5 lakh consumers.

According to govt officials, in the past three years, 125 uzhavar sandhais were renovated at ₹35 crore and 14 more launched at ₹7.5 crore. Shops have also been allotted to farmer producer companies to sell value-added products in 50 sandhais.

T Raj Pravin, associate professor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University at Kanyakumari, who tracked the



Pics: P Sreedharan



WHAT THE UZHAVAR SANDHAIS GIVE FARMERS

➤ The first uzhavar sandhai was inaugurated on November 14, 1999, at Anna Nagar in Madurai, by CM M Karunanidhi. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the sandhais

➤ Shops, weighing scales are allotted free to farmers who bring their produce

➤ No bus fare for farmers from village to sandhai

➤ 22 sandhais have cold storage with a capacity of 2 MT, while 47 sandhais have solar-powered cold storage with a capacity of 5 MT

➤ Vegetable waste composting is also conducted

TOP 5 SANDHAIS IN TN

- Tiruppur South
- Singanailur in Coimbatore
- Hosur in Krishnagiri
- RS Puram in Coimbatore
- Suramangalam in Salem

and more about clout," he says. The success of farmers' markets depends on marketing committees, which take decisions regarding prices,

infrastructure development and support services. So, to be a truly representative committee, it needs input from farmers, consumers, and govt.

T Shanmuga Sundaram, a farmer from Masthigoundenpathi in Coimbatore who has been selling his own produce for the past 25 years at RS Puram uzhavar sandhai, one of the top performing markets, says that though the scheme has its advantages, the number of farmers who are producing and selling their own vegetables has decreased because of politics.

After the politicisation, the fakes snuck in. "Small traders in the guise of farmers entered the market and squeezed out the real farmers," says Pravin.

"Farmers' ID cards are being given to those not engaged in farming. Some have land lease agreements but are not using the land for farming. They get fake IDs using the lease documents and sell vegetables directly sourced from wholesale markets," says Aylal Sivasuriyan, state executive committee member of the TN Vivasagal Sangam (CPI). "This has gone unchecked for years." Identity cards need to be renewed annually but once issued they are not inspected until the renewal period, he says. Ananthu, founder of Organic Farmers Market, says there is a provision for substitutes to sell vegetables on behalf of farmers. "But most vendors bribe their way in. Collectors must visit sandhais to eliminate malpractice."

Another issue is that prices are fixed daily at an average of 20% higher than wholesale prices and 15% less than retail prices. Pamayan, an activist and organic farmer from Madurai, says the system highly benefits consumers, not farmers. "The price of vegetables is determined solely by wholesale market rates, regardless of growing costs, which goes against the very idea of the sandhai." Pamayan advocates for the implementation of the minimum support price system.

TN Farmers Protection Association's Propaganda Secretary in Tiruppur A Paramasivam says when wholesale vendors are permitted to operate within markets, small-scale farmers face significant challenges in competing and selling their produce.

"The way forward," says Pravin, "is to improve infrastructure. The sandhais desperately need better parking facilities, toilets and maintenance of amenities. Also, the sandhais need better monitoring from officials if they are to live up to their glory days."



progress of sandhais over the years, says the scheme has a lot going for it. "It was the first major farm welfare initiative. It became popular because it promised to cut out middlemen, offered better prices and free transport to the farming community and even training to grow different crops. It helped create new business opportunities for them as well," says Pravin. "Also, the agricultural marketing department brought in more exotic vegetables such as broccoli from nearby hill stations to cater to customer demands. Registered farmers also became beneficiaries in various govt welfare schemes. All in all, it was a great

scheme when it started." But then, says Pravin, the politics crept in. "Political functionaries were appointed as heads of marketing committees, and this resulted in preferential allotment of shops to party men associated with the ruling party. The functioning of the farm markets took a beating. It stopped being about the farmers

Source: The Times of India, 8 May 2024, page 6.



2.5CR **40**
COCONUT TREES IN TN FACE THREAT **1 TREE NEEDS 40 LITRES OF WATER A DAY**

NO TAKERS FOR WOOD

Cost of 6,000 litres of tanker water has gone up from ₹1,200 to ₹1,800. Sawmills are refusing to buy chopped timber as it is becoming difficult for them to handle the large number of axed coconut trees arriving every day for sale

A woman irrigating her plantation with water from a private tanker at Kanjampatti near Pollachi
| S SENBAGAPANDIYAN

Lakhs of coconut trees set to perish in TN as record heat & drought take toll

M SARAVANAN @ Coimbatore

THOUSANDS of coconut farmers in Pollachi, Anaimalai, Kinathukadavu, and Udumalai taluks in Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts have been felling the entire plantations they had nurtured lovingly for years as they could not stand the pain of seeing their trees wither due to lack of water.

According to sources, around 2.5 crore fully grown coconut trees in 1.6 lakh hectares of land are facing an imminent threat. Nearly 50% of these trees may perish in this unprecedented heat due to

lack of adequate water for irrigation.

“Over the last two weeks, I had cut around 200 of the 500 coconut trees in my farm as they had withered due to scorching heat and lack of water. If I had delayed cutting down these trees, I would not have got even the ₹1,000 which I’m getting now for the chopped timber. Two months ago, the price offered for each tree was ₹2,500,” said KR Kalyanakumar, a farmer in Kasipattinam in Pollachi.

Farmers rued that they could not save the trees de-

spite spending ₹1,500 to ₹1,800 on water tankers (6,000 liters per load) to irrigate them as the groundwater has plummeted to record lows. Due to the rise in number of trees withering due to lack of water, sawmill owners, too, are declining to buy the timber claiming that it’s becoming difficult for them to handle the large number of tree wood arriving every day.

S Dhandapani, a sawmill owner from Thamaraiikulam in Kinathukadavu taluk, said “In the last one month, I have received more than 100 calls

per day from farmers for selling wood. But I started declining the calls as I could not handle so much timber. Earlier, a withered tree timber used to weigh more than a tonne and we offered ₹2,500 to ₹3,000. Now even two trees do not weigh a tonne. On Monday, I gave ₹50,000 to a farmer for chopped trees. Forget about profit, traders, who take wood for construction purposes, are not ready to offer even the price that I offered to farmers.” The timber has become so weak due to lack of water that it cracks within a day of the tree being felled, sources said. **P7, P4**



Source: The New Indian Express, 3 May 2024, page 1.

GONE WITH THE WIND IN FOUR DAYS: 1.86L BANANA TREES FALL IN ERODE

Officials say it's the worst damage in 10 yrs; survey reveals 94K trees damaged on May 4 alone

P SRINIVASAN @ Erode

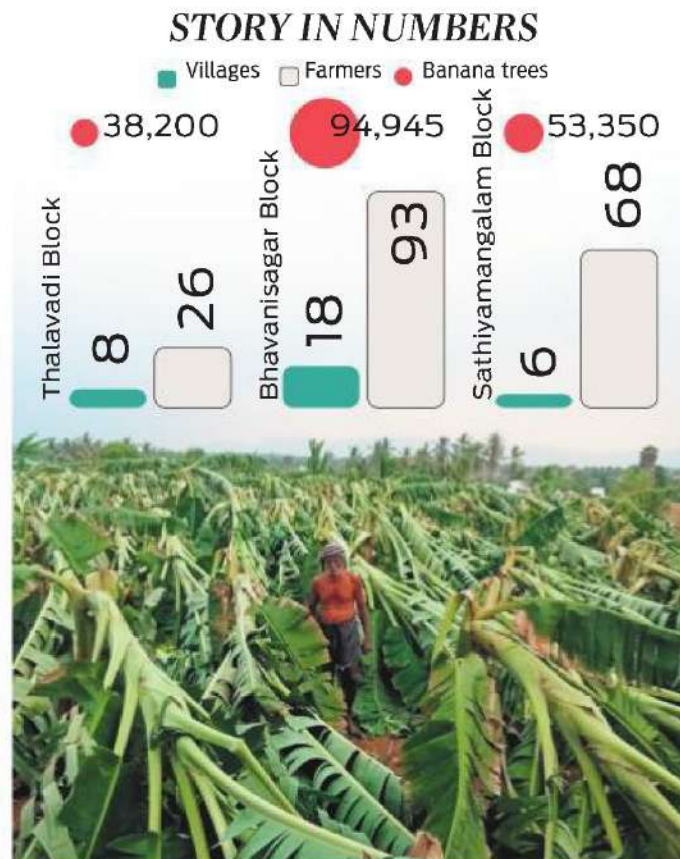
THE survey of banana trees damaged due to rain and strong gale from May 1 to 4 in 32 villages in Bhavanisagar, Sathyamangalam and Thalavadi blocks, which ended on Tuesday, revealed that 1.86 lakh banana trees have been damaged and 187 farmers suffered losses. Further, the survey revealed that 94,000 banana trees were damaged in a single day, on May 4, in Bhavanisagar block alone. The officials said this is the worst damage in the last 10 years. The farmers have urged the government to announce appropriate compensation.

According to sources, Erode district received light rain accompanied by gale wind, from May 1 to 4. Due to this, banana trees cultivated in Bhavanisagar, Sathyamangalam and Thalavadi blocks were severely damaged. The work of surveying the damage began on Sunday.

As per Horticulture and Plantation Crops Department statistics, prepared on the basis of the survey, 1,86,495 banana trees were damaged in 32 villages in Bhavanisagar, Sathyamangalam and Thalavadi blocks. 187 farmers have been affected. The total area of affected banana trees is 67.16 hectares. The value of the damaged trees is estimated to be ₹11.4 lakh.

Similarly, from April 18 to 21, there was strong gale with heavy rain in Thalavadi block, damaging 76,300 banana trees in 11 villages and 51 farmers were affected. The total area of affected banana trees is 25.30 hectares.

AN Asaithambi, a farmer and coordinator of Pandiyar-Moyar



Inaippu Iyakkam, said, "Most of the damaged trees were ready for harvest. So surely compensation should be given to the affected farmers as soon as possible. Along with this, an individual crop insurance scheme should be introduced for banana trees. Central and state governments should take appropriate action for this. Usually, about 900 to 1,000 banana trees are cultivated per acre."

Officials from the horticulture and plantation crops de-

partment said, "Banana is widely cultivated in Erode district. Compensation of ₹17,000 per hectare is given if banana trees are damaged."

Usually, compensation is given by the state government to banana trees which are affected during monsoon. Currently, banana trees have been damaged by gale. We will send a report to the government through the District Collector. Government will consider and take appropriate action."

Heat kills trees in Tiruchy dist, farmers seek compensation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Tiruchy

COMPLAINING that cultivation over hundreds of acres has withered due to lack of water for irrigation and the heatwave-like conditions, banana farmers in the district submitted a representation to the collector on Wednesday seeking compensation for damaged crop.

The representation stated that banana farmers of Anthanallur, Manikandam, Thottiyam, Manachanallur and Lalgudi unions raised nendran, karpooravalli, neipoovan and poovan varieties over thousands of acres.

With insufficient monsoon rainfall last year, the groundwater depleted completely, making banana cultivation on several hundred acres wither. Even as the farmers were struggling to save their crop, the gale that struck Thottiyam and Musiri on Sunday night uprooted hundreds of banana trees in the region, the representation further stated and sought immediate compensation.

A group of farmer leaders, including Ayilai Sivasuriyan, district secretary of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam affiliated to the CPI, handed over the representation to Collector M Pradeep Kumar.

Source: The New Indian Express, 9 May 2024, page 4.



A glint of yellow

Farmers in Tamil Nadu are struggling with poor yield of mangoes due to excess heat, but there is also good news with new varieties being discovered

Akila Kannadasan
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When he noticed tamarind trees in his village bear plenty of fruit in January this year, P Rajkumar knew his mango yield would be poor. "This is the thumb rule my ancestors followed," says the mango farmer based in Vanavasi in Salem district: that if tamarind trees are full of fruit, mango trees will be the opposite, and vice-versa. Mangoes this season, are not having a great run and there is a general sense of disappointment among farmers.

"In our district by the Western Ghats, mango farmers have seen only 10% of their usual yield," says KS Jaganatha Raja, a farmer in Rajapalayam who sells mango saplings at his nursery. "This is because of excess rains and now, excess heat. Owing to excess rains, all we got were new leaves instead of flowers," he explains, adding that some trees did flower, but they too dried up due to the heat.

Jaganatha owns a mango orchard spread across 12 acres near the foothills of the Western Ghats, where he grows and propagates several rare varieties. "The fruits have not matured enough, but fearing winds, farmers tend to get them harvested and sent to the market despite not getting good prices," he adds. This results in traders resorting to using chemicals such as carbide and ethylene to get fruits to ripen quickly.

In his younger years, Rajkumar



says his parents would place fruits inside straw, cover them with a jute sack, and leave them alone for a few days. "When they ripened, the household would be filled with the heady fragrance of mangoes," recalls the 60-year-old who has around 550 mango trees, and grows imam pasand, Salem Bengalura, totapuri, neelam, senthooram, and nadusalai mangoes. He is among the few farmers in the State who are managing to get a reasonable yield thanks to planning ahead. "Last year, we had good rains, and we are getting by, taking care of our trees and watering them sufficiently," he adds.

Rajkumar explains: "For mango trees to thrive, the difference between day and night temperatures should not be more than 13 degree Celsius, but now, this exceeds 16 degree Celsius."

In Salem, according to farmer Sathish Ramasamy, the quality of fruits is excellent, with many of

them ripening fast. He sells what he harvests at his Sangagiri farm online, and has customers across India. Sathish recommends varieties such as Salem Bengalura, nadusalai, panjavarnam, and the tiny but irresistibly sweet sakkarakutty.

From the orchard

Sathish also grows Miyazaki, said to be the most expensive mango in the world. A kilogram can cost around ₹15,000, and this year, he hopes to harvest the variety. "Some of my customers are fond of this variety. But if you ask me, it tastes just like senthooram mangoes," he adds. Overall, mango prices have gone up by 30 to 40%. "Last year, we sold a kilogram of imam pasand for ₹200; whereas now, it costs around ₹300," he says.

Sathish has just returned from harvesting mangoes in the searing heat and urges people to appreciate every mango that

Season's harvest In Salem, the quality of fruits is excellent; (left) Jaganatha Raja at his orchard in Rajapalayam. MOORTHY G AND RASHOK

reaches their hands. "So much of effort goes into each fruit, and people like us spend long hours in the sun to pluck and transport them," he adds.

Baskar K, who owns a 40-acre orchard in Palani, where he grows around 500 mango trees organically, says he is set to harvest from May 15 onwards. "Since there was no flower to fruit conversion, there are only 10 to 15 fruits in my trees," says Baskar, who has regular customers in Chennai and Bengaluru. But he looks forward to see if his trees will yield fruits unseasonably. "This is a cycle; hopefully, next year, things will be better," he says. For mangoes generally yield every alternate year.

Jaganatha, meanwhile, continues to revive rare varieties at his farm. Last year, he happened to eat the tastiest mango he has ever had. "It was juicy, sweet, and had no fibre at all. There is only one tree of the kind at a farm in Rajapalayam, and the owners did not know what variety it was. The tree came up where the farmer's father threw a seed after eating a mango many decades ago," he says. After summer, he is all set to graft and propagate 1,000 plants of this variety at his orchard. If things go well, this variety will soon get a name, and will perhaps reach our tables in a few years.

Source: The Hindu Metro Plus, 2 May 2024, page 2.

Coffee, pepper crops wilt as summer bears down on Vathalamalai

JEVIN SELWYN HENRY
@ Dharmapuri

TRIBAL residents in Vathalamalai are facing their harshest drought ever and it may take up to three years to recover, especially when a major portion of their pepper and coffee plantations have dried out from the intense heat wave.

Vathalamalai is a hill hamlet located 25 km from the Dharmapuri district headquarters. Located atop a 1,418-metre-high hill, the unique climatic conditions prove favourable for the cultivation of pepper and coffee. Both coffee and pepper are raised in the vast Silver Oak Plantations set up here, as they each augment the growth of one another. A major portion of the pepper and coffee plants have wilted due to the harsh summer season and water scarcity atop the hill. "It may take up to three years for us to regrow these cash crops," farmers in Vathalamalai predicted.

Speaking to *TNIE*, G Ramasamy from Palsilambu, said, "In Vathalamalai, we had been growing silver oak with a gap of 4 ft between each tree. But this left a large portion of our land vacant. So a decade ago,

people here started introducing pepper on the silver oak trees and they started growing it in tandem with the trees. This still left space available for us and we learned coffee cultivation from Yercaud. So for the past five years, we had these three crops improving our livelihood and bettering our lives. Now with the harsh heatwave and the lack of water, the pepper and coffee plants are dying."

Another farmer, R Kaliappan from Periyur said, "It takes about three years for one pepper vine to give us a yield of 1 kg and in the case of coffee a plant could provide us between 3 to 5 kg of coffee beans. In Vathalma-

lai most are small farmers and own less than two acres. So on average we plant over 400 silver oak per acre and make the pepper vines grown on these trees. Further we can plant over 700 coffee in between trees. Roughly a kilogramme of pepper is sold at ₹700 per kg and coffee at ₹300 per kg. But this year, the peppers started failing and we have to start from scratch."

When *TNIE* spoke to officials in the Agriculture Department they said, "Vathalamalai has less than 200 acres of coffee and pepper plantations and we would assess the situation and take steps to ensure welfare of farmers."



Both coffee and pepper are raised in the vast Silver Oak Plantations | EXPRESS

TN TO MOVE SC OVER CAUVERY WATER ROW

Chennai: Minister for Water Resources Duraimurugan announced on Wednesday that the state government will move Supreme Court to secure its rightful share of Cauvery water from Karnataka. On the occasion of May Day, Minister Duraimurugan, accompanied by DMK leaders, paid homage at the May Day memorial in May Day Park. Responding to inquiries regarding the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee's rejection of Tamil Nadu's plea to release its backlog of Cauvery water, Duraimurugan said, "Even if Karnataka has ample water, they refuse to fulfill our demand. We will seek our due share through legal channels in the Supreme Court." Meanwhile, MDMK general secretary Vaiko condemned the CWRC chairman's remarks, echoing Karnataka's stance. In a critical tone, TMC(M) President GK Vasan accused the DMK government of prioritising its electoral alliance with the Congress over securing the states Cauvery water share. Earlier in the day, Left party leaders raised their party flags at their respective offices to mark May Day. TNCC President K Selvaperunthagai also paid respects at May Day memorial.

'DECLARE SALEM, K'GIRI, D'PURI DROUGHT-HIT'

Chennai: PMK president Dr Anbumani Ramadoss has urged the state government to declare Salem, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri as drought-hit and provide ₹1 lakh compensation per acre for mango and papaya farmers in the districts. In a statement, he said since most of the waterbodies in the districts have dried up and the groundwater table has depleted, mango and papaya farmers are forced to purchase water from tankers for irrigation. According to his estimates, mango farmers have faced a loss of ₹1.5 lakh per acre while papaya farmers encountered a loss of ₹1 lakh per acre. He also said the state government should take steps to fix the minimum support price of ₹50 per kg of mango procured by processing units.

Source: The New Indian Express, 2 May 2024, page 4.

Start-ups have increased four-fold in 3 years

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

DUE to the encouragement of the state government led by CM MK Stalin, a total of 6,384 start-ups have begun in the state, a release from the government said on

Saturday.

The state government introduced the Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Policy in 2023. Till 2021, the number of start-ups registered in the state was 2,032. This has increased four-fold and there are 8,416

start-ups at present. The number of start-ups by women also increased from 966 to 3,163 in the same period. The state was first in the rankings released by the centre for creating a favourable environment for start-ups, the release read.

Source: The New Indian Express 5 May 2024, page 5.

'6,115 startups launched in three years in Tamil Nadu'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The steps taken by the DMK government have made Tamil Nadu an ideal

State for industrial investment, and 6,115 startups have been launched in the last three years, the State government said.

It said that the purpose

of the Global Startup Summit, slated for January 2025, was to encourage the participation of startups that had made a mark in their respective fields.

"When the DMK government assumed office in 2021, there were only 2,105 startups. The industry-friendly climate created by the government led to the

launch of 6,115 startups. It will fulfil the Chief Minister's vision to make Tamil Nadu a trillion dollar economy and create employment for youth," it said.

Source: The Hindu, 6 May 2024, page 5.

CITY | REGION

SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA, CHENNAI
MAY 5, 2024

'Startups multiplied four-fold in TN since 2021'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: After DMK formed govt in 2021, the number of startup companies in Tamil Nadu have increased four-fold. The same applied to startups headed by women as their number too increased three-fold.

An official statement said, "In the last three years, 6,384 new startups have come up in the state. The number of startups increased from 2,032 in 2021 to 8,416 by April 2024."

Similarly, the startups owned by women increased three-fold as there were 966 startups in 2021 and now the number has increased to 3,163. "The reason for increase in startups is due to the conducive atmosphere prevailing in the state," the statement said.

FACT FILE

- > Total startups | 8,416
- > Startups till 2021 | 2,032
- > Startups in the last 3 years | 6,384
- > Startups headed by women until 2021 | 966
- > Startups headed by women in 2024 | 3,163
- > Total funds given to startups under TANSEED | ₹13.95cr

Tamil Nadu govt under chief minister M K Stalin has launched several initiatives for startups. One of the key initiatives was Tamil Nadu startup seed grant fund (TANSEED)

startup. So far, 132 companies have availed financial aid to the tune of ₹13.95crore," the statement said.

With the intention to support innovation and scalable startups conceptualized and run by entrepreneurs from SC/ST communities, state govt launched TN SC/ST startup fund. When the scheme was launched in 2022-23, ₹30 crore was allocated and it was increased to

₹50crore in 2023-24. "So far, investments of ₹55.2crore have been guaranteed in 38 companies owned by SC/STs," the statement said.

Stalin, in the recently held Global Investors Meet (GIM), launched TANFUND, an online portal to link startups, which require funds, with investors. In the portal, 3,389 startups and 230 investors have registered. Through this portal, 714 meetings between startups and investors were organised.

State govt also launched Mentor TN, another online portal, to link experts with startups.

So far, 257 experts and 669 startups have registered. Through the portal, physical meetings are organised to provide guidance to startups by experts.

Source: The Times of India, 5 May 2024, page 8.

South Side Story

Can a slew of attractive sops from the state government and a competitive workforce turn Chennai into a hub for GCCs, positioning the state as a healthy alternative to Bengaluru and Hyderabad?

Beena Parmar & Annapurna Roy report

Chennai has long lived in the shadows of Bengaluru and Hyderabad, its more cosmopolitan sisters from the South. But with these two metropolises reaching saturation levels, the Tamil Nadu capital has spotted an opportunity to make its move. Accordingly, it has put into motion a plan to lure multinationals and position itself as the new tech city of the South.

Thanks to latest sops offered by the state government, Chennai is now among the locations global firms are eyeing to set up their tech bases and global capability centres (GCCs). High quality English-speaking talent, a thriving industrial ecosystem and the latest round of government incentives could entice multinationals, experts say. "We are seeing a slow movement to Chennai, as it is catching the attention and fancy of companies, which was not the case previously. Earlier, it used to be among the top five or six most preferred cities. But it's part of the shortlist now — not because of the incentives but because of the administration, talent, connectivity and other benefits," said Lalit Ahuja, founder and CEO of ANSR, a leading firm that helps multinationals set up GCCs in India.

A case in point is German athletic apparel and footwear brand Adidas setting up a GCC in Chennai, its first and only GCC in Asia outside China. Last year, firms such as Haptag Lloyd and United Parcel Service entered Tamil Nadu, while Bank of America, Standard Chartered, Amex and Citigroup are all expanding.

EVOLVING NUMBERS

Besides financial companies such as banks and automotive firms, manufacturing, pharma, tech and product companies in the fintech space are considering setting up centres in Chennai.

"Chennai is catching the attention and fancy of companies, not because of government incentives but because of benefits like administration, talent and connectivity."

— Lalit Ahuja, founder and CEO, ANSR

As of March 2023, there are around 2,740 GCC units in India, according to data from Zinnov, a management consulting firm that works with GCCs in India. Of these, Chennai accounts for just about 10 per cent. FY24 numbers are yet to be disclosed.

"Chennai's GCC ecosystem ranks fifth in India, with more than 259 existing centres that employ over 150,000 skilled professionals. This growth is being fuelled by the government's definitive involvement through key policy initiatives like 'Guidance Tamil Nadu'. These initiatives, including incentives on land cost, training, innovation labs, etc., will have a tangible, positive impact on the ecosystem," said Nilesh Thakker, president, Zinnov.

Of the 10 GCCs that were set up in Chennai in Q4, only one was based in Chennai — by Hitachi Energy.

the Nasscom report said. Hitachi Energy plans to house 2,500 energy transition technologists with post-doctorate, doctorate and post-graduate degrees specialising in grid automation, transformers, high-voltage and grid integration.

"Tamil Nadu is one of the country's most industrialised states with enormous business potential, accounting for 15 per cent of doctorates and 11 per cent of post-graduates. Chennai is at the centre of this growth, gaining prominence as an innovation and R&D hub in the country. Its robust infrastructure, skilled talent pool in the region, and conducive business environment attracted us to set up our operation in Chennai in 2007 for R&D and innovation on a small scale. Today, Hitachi Energy is leveraging these characteristics and the immense talent pool for its largest Global Technology and Innovation Centre (GTIC) in Chennai," said N Venu, MD and CEO, India and South Asia, Hitachi Energy.

City	# of GCC Units
Bengaluru	823
Hyderabad	327
Pune	314
Mumbai	350
NCR	433
Chennai	259
Kolkata	214
Total	2,740

SOURCE: ZINNOV

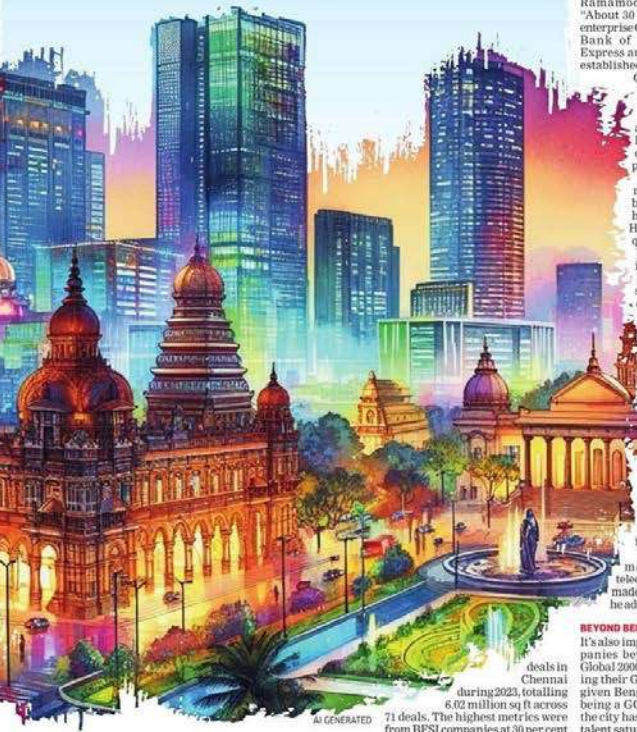
ETHad reported in March that amid increasing interest among overseas firms to set up their tech centres in India, the Tamil Nadu government decided to incentivise firms to be the preferred choice to set up shops here. In its state budget, the TN government also said that it will provide a payroll subsidy for the creation of high paying jobs in new GCCs. Industry experts see this as a booster to help the southern state compete with Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

REAL ESTATE AND ADMINISTRATION

This is also reflective of the strong movement in GCC-focused real estate in 2023. A report by Knight Frank India in March showed that such transactions dominated more than half of the office volume

"The biggest advantage of Chennai is the availability of technology and domain talent at scale. Because of this, financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, automotive, telecom and logistics companies are making a beeline for the city."

— Ramikumar Ramamoorthy, partner, Catalinics



Chennai's GCC push

Tamil Nadu Government to incentivise monthly salaries of over ₹1 lakh with subsidy of 30% in the 1st year, 20% in 2nd year and 10% in the 3rd year

Of the 10 GCCs set up in Q4 FY23, one was based in Chennai — Hitachi Energy

Total 6.02 mn sq ft across 71 deals in FY23, highest from BFSI companies at 30%

GCC-focused real estate transactions in 2023 were over 50% of the office volume deals in Chennai

deals in Chennai during 2023, totalling 6.02 million sq ft across 71 deals. The highest metrics were from BFSI companies at 30 per cent followed by manufacturing and other service sectors. About 67 deals were recorded in 2022, totalling office space of 2.18 million sq ft.

Ramkumar Ramamoorthy, a partner of Chennai-based consulting firm Catalinics, said that Tamil Nadu is the most urbanised state and has the highest gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education among all major states in India. And because it has always been a metro city, it has received robust talent service from other parts of the state. Besides, it also has a strong academic culture and demonstrated administrative stability too.

However, GCCs are not a new

"Chennai's GCC ecosystem ranks fifth in India, with more than 259 existing centres employing 150,000 professionals. This growth is being fuelled by the state government's involvement and key policy initiatives."

— Nilesh Thakker, president, Zinnov

phenomenon for Chennai. Ramamoorthy quickly added, "About 30 years ago, the earliest enterprise GCCs—such as Citibank, Bank of America, American Express and Dun & Bradstreet—established their headquarters in Chennai. In the intervening years, however, other locations such as Bengaluru and Hyderabad stole a march over Chennai," he pointed out.

Moreover, the IT revolution in the 1990s backed by heavy sops helped Bengaluru and Hyderabad attract firms quicker. Ramamoorthy, who is also a former CMD of Cognizant India, sees subsidies as a demonstration of Tamil Nadu's commitment to attracting the world's most progressive companies to establish their GCCs in the state, irrespective of their size and industry they operate in. "The biggest advantage for Chennai over other cities is the availability of technology and domain talent at scale. It is for this reason that the biggest names across industries—financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, auto, telecom and logistics—have made a beeline for Chennai," he added.

BEYOND BENGALURU

It's also important to note that companies beyond Fortune 500 and Global 2000 have started establishing their GCCs in India today. But given Bengaluru's reputation for being a GCC and tech talent hub, the city has become both space and talent saturated. This is especially true post the Covid pandemic, with engineers now more comfortable working from their home towns.

Global software giant IBM Software's senior vice-president

"Its robust infrastructure, skilled talent pool and conducive business environment attracted us in 2007. Today, we're leveraging these characteristics for a global technology and innovation centre in Chennai."

— N Venu, MD and CEO, India and South Asia, Hitachi Energy

(products) Dinesh Nirmal recently told ET that hiring is not as swift as they would like it to be in Bengaluru. "It is harder to hire and retain talent in Bengaluru," he had said.

ANSR's Ahuja added, "Corporates don't set up GCCs for incentives. They are not the primer driver. Incentives do help, but the core is talent, connectivity, ease of setting up businesses here."

In this regard, the incentives offered by the TN government can't be enough. "They help from an entry perspective, but won't give you a huge amount of money over a longer period. Typically, if you look at the characteristics of a GCC, once you set it up, like a services company, projects can come and go, but the GCC is there to stay in perpetuity. You don't move its location (depending on incoming projects)," he explained.

He added that a lot of incentives are designed to help companies set up their bases, but that over a longer period of time, these will wither away.

THE SHORTLISTING PROCESS

Typically, a company aiming to establish GCCs will go through an exhaustive and sophisticated location selection process, based on not just talent but also a cultural match. "You may have service partners in a particular location and so firms would want to create that connected ecosystem; the city needs to be export friendly; travel should be easy for people on both sides of the fence; it should have international connectivity, etc," Ahuja added.

So, even if Chennai has the incentives and there are good managers in place, the question remains if people will move there from Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Delhi, etc. "People are relatively resistant. If there was a mobility index, locations like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, even Pune, will rate way higher, as these are more cosmopolitan locations. Chennai gets very hard-core on that front," Ahuja added, pointing out that several technology majors such as Amazon, Tesco and Walmart continue to be based in Bengaluru, where the ecosystem is bottoms up.

In order to attract firms, Ramamoorthy said, Tamil Nadu should focus on its core select industries, such as financial services, health sciences, manufacturing, transportation/supply chain—irrespective of scale—given the deep domain capability across banking, insurance, healthcare, pharma, industrial engineering, automotive, logistics and transportation.

He said that many companies in these industries are driving R&D and innovation from their GCCs, enabling technology transfer and know-how, and contributing to academic enrichment in the state through faculty development, curriculum and program curation, among others.

"The biggest incentives that the state provides any GCC include high-quality talent at enviable scale, rich domain capability in key industries of focus, a service-oriented work culture, an ecosystem of thriving industries and next-generation startups. Any other incentive is only the icing on the cake," he added.

Source: The Economic Times, 12 May 2024, page 8.

ADD VALUE IS GROWTH MANTRA

Vaitheeswaran.b@timesgroup.com

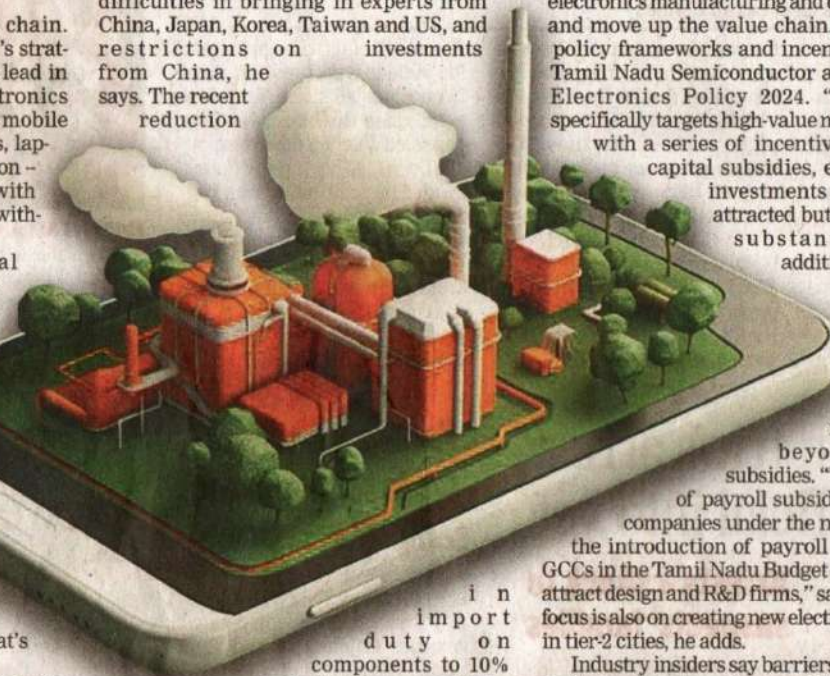
Move up the value chain. That's Tamil Nadu's strategy to build on its lead in assembly of electronics hardware such as mobile phones, computers, laptops and peripherals. But value addition – manufacturing components locally, with margins higher than assembly – is not without its challenges.

Domestic and multinational electronics manufacturing service (EMS) firms in the state last year shipped goods worth \$9.56 billion, contributing 33% to the country's \$29.12 billion exports. India makes 1 in 7 iPhones and much of the \$14 billion iPhone shipments were from Foxconn and Pegatron facilities near Chennai. But the parts that go into these devices mostly come from China, Taiwan and other Southeast Asian countries. That's where the value addition lies.

Even as it is expanding its suppliers in India, Apple is still heavily reliant on China, according to its recent suppliers list. Some Apple analysts say the company is trying hard to bring suppliers into India, but challenges persist. Pankaj Mohindroo, chairman of Indian cellular and electronics association (ICEA), says India has succeeded in scaling mobile manufacturing. But, he adds, supply chain shifting has a short window and India is competing against Vietnam, Thailand and Philippines.

Mohindroo stresses the importance of ease of doing business, stable taxation and policies

in building domestic supply chains. There are difficulties in bringing in experts from China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and US, and restrictions on investments from China, he says. The recent reduction



in import duty on components to 10% has helped but we need more

cuts for components where substitution isn't possible, to increase the competitiveness of Indian exports, he says. He proposes zero duty on sub-assembly and certain inputs.

Around half of iPhone suppliers in India are present in Tamil Nadu. They make a few components such as batteries and chargers, but there is a scope to manufacture more. These include headsets, USB

cables, speakers, microphones and receivers, connectors, inductors, die cut parts, display modules, and vibrator motors. Lithium-ion cells, printed circuit boards and camera modules should also be made locally.

Industry stakeholders, policy makers, economists agree that Tamil Nadu needs to focus more on higher value addition, to build on its initial success. The potential ramp up of Tata's assembly facility in Hosur, and the increased activity of contract manufacturers and entry of suppliers such as glassmaker Corning indicate the electronics component manufacturing ecosystem in the state is growing.

Industries minister T R B Rajaa says Tamil Nadu has a comprehensive strategy to promote electronics manufacturing and design sectors, and move up the value chain. He points to policy frameworks and incentives such as Tamil Nadu Semiconductor and Advanced Electronics Policy 2024. "This policy specifically targets high-value manufacturing with a series of incentives, including capital subsidies, ensuring that investments are not only attracted but also result in substantial value addition," he says.

Tamil Nadu is promoting R&D and design ecosystems in electronics beyond capital subsidies. "The provision of payroll subsidies for ESDM companies under the new policy and the introduction of payroll subsidies for GCCs in the Tamil Nadu Budget are tailored to attract design and R&D firms," says Rajaa. The focus is also on creating new electronics clusters in tier-2 cities, he adds.

Industry insiders say barriers in visa, tariff and technology transfer should be addressed to double localisation in electronics to 40% in three years. S. Raghavendra Ganesh, founder of Holoware, a computer hardware firm in Chennai, says there are challenges in localisation, which should be a mix of building own capabilities and partnership. He says the advantages for domestic players lies in the personalisation. "We once tailored a computer system for a customer in a rural area who faced frequent power failures and voltage fluctuations. So solutions-dependent approaches and different business models for different segments could work in B2B segments."

The other big growth potential is original design manufacturing. This helps original equipment manufacturers bring new products to the market faster. Industry players want the Union govt to promote component prototyping and chip designing in the longer run.

VALUE OF TAMIL NADU'S ELECTRONICS EXPORTS HAS GROWN OVER 470% IN 4 YEARS

Year	Total exports (in billion \$)	share of total exports
2023-24	9.56	33%
2022-23	5.37	23%
2021-22	1.86	12%
2020-21	1.66	15%

Source: National Import Export Record (NIERYAT)

Source: The Times of India, 6 May 2024, page 2.

DP World constructing its largest free trade warehouse zone in city

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Chennai

THE diversification of exports by Tamil Nadu has wooed DP World, the global end-to-end supply chain solutions provider to commence operations at its Integrated Chennai Business Park at Vallur, said Ranjit Ray, Vice President- Economic Zones, Middle East, North Africa, and Subcontinent.

The warehouse zone in Chennai, which is being set up in 125 acres of land is the largest of the three Free Trade Warehousing Zones (FTWZ) the company has set up in India. The first phase project on 6 lakh sq.ft in Chennai was inaugurated in October and the company plans to achieve occupancy of 70% by the end of this financial year. "The occupancy at present is around 12-15%. The second phase is likely to be completed by 2027," said Ray.

Stating that Chennai is a hub for trade with South East Asia and Australia, Ray said DP World is looking to serve several sectors, including electric vehicle components, electronics, industrial electronics, information technology, telecommunication, healthcare, chemicals and petrochemicals



Nearly 45% of capex has already been spent. Once the facilities will be ready in three to four years, about 4 million sq.ft of warehouse space would be available

Ranjit Ray, Vice President- Economic Zones

by providing them with a strategic base in the domestic market. "We are keen to serve pharma players as our cold storage facility could cater to them," said Ray.

He further said DP World had announced an investment of ₹1,700 crore to build three FTWZ in Mumbai, Kochi and Chennai. "Nearly 45% of capex has already been spent. Once the facilities will be ready in three to four years, about 4 million sq.ft of warehouse space would be available," he said.

Source: The New Indian Express, 9 May 2024, page 5.

CMDA prepares blueprints for 6 satellite towns, steps on to prepare DPR for four

The State government had announced the formation of 6 satellite townships through G.O.s issued in 2023 – Minjur, Thirumazhisai, Chengalpattu, Mamallapuram, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

After creating a blueprint for six new satellite townships planned in the Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA), the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) has identified consultants for preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for four of them.

Sharing the salient features of the Thirumazhisai township to be developed, a senior official said the locality was already an industrial cluster, with the presence of many IT companies and an excellent connectivity to the city.


“The plan is to promote it as a research and development (R&D) zone. The town will have a segregation of industrial and innovation parks, housing new start-ups, as also residential and commercial spaces,” he said.

With the construction of Kuthambakkam bus terminus in progress, the new town would usher in economic development. It would be located in close proximity to the Chembarambakkam lake and would have ample green, open area to act as lung space for the city, the official noted.

The other three satellite towns, including Mamal-

Development push


The Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority has created a blueprint for six new townships planned in the Chennai Metropolitan Area




THE NEW SATELLITE TOWNS ARE TO BE DEVELOPED IN THE FOLLOWING PLACES

Thirumazhisai	34 sq.km.
Kancheepuram	99 sq.km.
Chengalpattu	136 sq.km.
Tiruvallur	37 sq.km.
Minjur	111 sq.km.
Mamallapuram	123 sq.km.


SALIENT FEATURES OF THE PROPOSED TOWN AT THIRUMAZHISAI




An industrial cluster dedicated to research and development.




An innovation park to share knowledge and promote technological innovations, among others.



High- and low-rise residential spaces with greenery.




Institutional zones with residential and commercial spaces.



Commercial spaces featuring retail shops, individual stores and shopping malls.

Green Open Spaces to strike a balance between built and open spaces.



lapuram, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu, have good potential for tourism, with their links to ancient heritage. There are plans to develop these towns as tourist hubs, officials said.

The State government had announced the formation of six satellite townships – Minjur covering 111 sq. kilometres, Thirumazhisai 34 sq. km., Chengalpattu 136 sq. km., Mamallapuram 123 sq. km., Kancheepuram 99 sq. km. and Tiruvallur 37 sq. km.,

through Government Orders (G.O.) issued in 2023.

The G.O.s had also delineated several villages in the nearby localities. As part of the New Town Development Plan, the six townships were to be designed and created, according to a common framework possessing common facilities of transit-oriented developments, land pooling area development scheme, redevelopment of old areas and heritage conservation plan.

After the G.O.s were issued for the formation of six new towns, the next process of preparation of DPR was initiated from January this year and the consultants have been appointed for preparing the reports for four townships – Thirumazhisai, Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram and Mamallapuram.

The CMDA has created broad guidelines for towns to be developed which would adhere to the New Town Development Plan.

90% funds for FAME-II used until deadline

NITIN KUMAR
New Delhi, 3 May

The central government's ambitious initiative to promote electric vehicles (EVs) in India saw approximately 90 per cent of the allocated funds utilised by the deadline of March 31, 2024.

Figures from the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) reveal that the government spent ₹10,253 crore of total ₹11,500 crore earmarked for the five-year FAME-II scheme. This funding facilitated the support of 1.5 million vehicles in the past five years.

Government officials said that part of the available funds will be utilised for vehicles that were sold before March 31 but incentives for which have not been claimed yet.

"Some funds will be allocated to provide incentives to manufacturers who sold their vehicles in the previous financial year but applied for incentives afterwards," a senior official said.

The electric three-wheeler (e3W) category demonstrated the highest fund utilisation, with the allocated ₹991 crore being fully used.

In the bus category, 94 per cent of the ₹991-crore allocation was utilised, while in electric two-wheelers (e2Ws), 90 per cent of the ₹4,756 crore allocation was utilised.

The lowest fund utilisation was observed in the electric four-wheeler (e4W) category, where only 64 per cent of the allocated funds were utilised. The government has also spent ₹633 crore out of the allocated ₹839 crore on EV chargers.

The fund allocation was not fully achieved before the deadline.

This was due to the government's decision in October 2023 to increase the target of the scheme from ₹10,000 crore to ₹11,500 crore.

This adjustment came after the MHI exhausted the funds allocated for e2Ws and e4Ws.

In the scheme's initial phase in 2015, the government allocated approximately ₹900 crore, and this amount surged to around ₹10,000 crore during the second phase in 2019.

To date, the scheme has provided support to more than 1.5 million vehicles. The government also raised the target for the number of vehicles from approximately 1.5 million to 1.7 million. A total of 68 original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) were registered under the FAME-II scheme.



POWERING UP

- Funds allocated for 1.5 million vehicles over five years
- Highest fund utilisation in electric three-wheelers.
- Electric four-wheelers saw lowest fund utilisation at 64%
- Centre spent ₹10,253 crore out of ₹11,500 crore allocated for the five-year scheme

In March, the MHI announced a new scheme, the Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS), 2024, with a budgetary allocation of ₹500 crore, to promote the sale of e2Ws and e3Ws in the country.

A total of 11 EV manufacturers, including Ather Energy, Bajaj Auto, Hero MotoCorp, Ola Electric, and Mahindra were approved under the scheme. *Business Standard* had reported on April 10.

EV sales in FY24 witnessed a robust increase of over 41 per cent, notwithstanding the subsidy cuts and regulatory shifts.

Total EV registrations in FY24 surpassed 1.6 million, which is significantly higher than last year's 1.1 million. All this has pushed the overall EV penetration in the country during FY24 to 6.8 per cent against 5.3 per cent in FY23.

The uptick was despite the government's decision in June to reduce subsidies under FAME to a third of the maximum ₹66,000 subsidy it was offering on e2Ws.

Murugappas set to plug into electric SCVs

This comes days after TI Clean Mobility signed an agreement to raise ₹580 cr

SHINE JACOB
Chennai, 13 May

Chennai-based Murugappa Group is set to make a foray into electric small commercial vehicle (eSCV) business.

Tivolt Electric Vehicles, a subsidiary of the group's TI Clean Mobility (TICMPL), plans to launch their eSCV in the next few months. The group is in the process of investing around ₹3,000 crore in electric vehicles through TI Clean Mobility.

This comes days after TI Clean Mobility signed a definitive agreement to raise ₹580 crore from private equity firm GEF Capital Partners LLC. After closing of the proposed investment from GEF, the overall fund raising would aggregate to ₹2,530 crore.

"India is poised to lead the global adoption of electric vehicles, second only to China. TICMPL is making impressive strides in the electric vehicle sector with a substantial commitment of three thousand crores. Currently, we are developing four platforms, including the successful MHCV truck and EV three-wheeler already in the market," said Vellayan Subbiah, Executive Vice Chairman of Tube Investments of India (TII).

Once launched, the vehicle is expected to bring about a significant change in India's mid-mile and last-mile mobility sectors, due to its cutting edge technology, distinctive design, strong performance, and durable build quality, the company said in a statement on Monday.

The development of the eSCV will be a culmination of extensive research and rigorous testing, the company added. Founded in February 2022 as a subsidiary of Tube Investments of India (TI), TICMPL has dedicated itself to clean mobility solutions. With the inclusion of e-SCVs as its fourth EV platform, TICMPL is now positioned to offer complete mobility solutions to enterprises and logistics firms, serving their needs across intercity, intracity, and last-mile applications.

"What excites me the most is our upcoming Small Commercial Vehicle (SCV) platform. SCV represents the largest category in the commercial vehicle segment, making our entry into this arena particularly thrilling.

This segment is primed to adopt EVs swiftly, supported by policies, government initiatives, and increasing adoption rates. Our dedication to becoming the foremost player in this segment in India is unwavering. The TIVOLT eSCV is poised to be a standout product, a definite winner in the market," Subbiah added.

"Montra Electric represents our commitment to enhancing life through eco-friendly mobility solutions, ushering in a new era of growth and innovation for us. The electric vehicle industry is experiencing an exciting phase of development, not only in India but globally as well. We have dedicated our top resources and time to develop this product," he said.

The group is in the process of investing ₹3,000 crore in electric vehicles through TI Clean Mobility

Tata Power Group starts solar module production at Tamil Nadu facility

G Balachandar
Chennai

Tata Power Group's arm Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd has started commercial production of solar modules from its new plant in Tamil Nadu, with the solar cell production set to commence next month. This development is expected to boost several capacity-addition projects that require locally manufactured products.

Located at Gangaikondan, Tirunelveli District in southern Tamil Nadu, the new solar cell and module facility of Tata Power Renewable Energy produced about 130 MW of modules in the March 2024 quarter. The manufacturing operations are expected to stabilise within three months, with the factory reaching its peak capacity of 4.3 GW in the subsequent quarter. "We will

The expansion will include the upgradation of the infrastructure, setting up of an additional 300 MW each of cell and module lines using the latest TOPCon technology

start then producing 100 per cent domestically manufactured cell and module, which is a requirement for many of the bids excluding the rooftop programme of the government," Praveer Sinha, MD and CEO, Tata Power said during the company's Q4FY24 earnings call. Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd had announced that it would increase investment in the existing agreement with the Tamil Nadu government,

signed on July 4, 2022, to set up 4 GW of solar cells and solar modules, with an investment of ₹3,000 crore, in two phases in Gangaikondan in Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu.

EXPANSION PLANS

The expansion will include the upgradation of the infrastructure and setting up of an additional 300 MW each of cell and module lines using the latest TOPCon technology, bringing the total plant capacity to 4.3 GW. As per the new MoU, this project will entail an additional investment of ₹800 crore over the next two years.

The modules produced in Tamil Nadu will be used to meet the captive requirements of the company initially. As of now, it has sufficient contracts for the current module capacity. As and when

it ramps up, it will look at the opportunity of selling outside.

The management indicated that the company was maintaining its leadership position in the solar rooftop EPC segment. It has already installed more than 2 GW of rooftop solar in the country. So, we have the largest penetration with a 20 per cent market share. There is a huge gap between us and the next big player. And we expect that we will maintain our leadership," said Sinha.

With the PM Surya Ghar Yojana programme, the company expects to boost its play on solar rooftops in the coming months.

The rooftop solar market has grown at a CAGR of 17 per cent in the past 4 years and currently, India has 14.5 GW of installed solar rooftop capacity.

Source: Business Line, 13 May 2024. Also online [here](#).

Several safety violations found at fireworks unit in Sivakasi

The leasing of the fireworks unit to multiple persons, the stocking of a huge quantity of chemicals, and the deployment of more workers than what was permitted had led to the deadly accident, Virudhunagar Collector V.P. Jeyaseelan said

The Hindu Bureau
VIRUDHUNAGAR

An initial investigation by officials of various departments found several violations of safety norms at the Sri Sudarshan Fireworks unit at Sengamalapatti, where an explosion claimed 10 lives.

The leasing of the fireworks unit to multiple persons, the stocking of a huge quantity of chemicals, and the deployment of more workers than what was permitted had led to the deadly accident, Virudhunagar Collector V.P. Jeyaseelan said.

The unit had been involved in manufacturing aerial fireworks despite not having the requisite infrastructure and safety features for the purpose. Besides, the unit committed the most common, but dangerous, violation — making fireworks outside the work sheds, under trees.

While the stocking of chemicals beyond the permitted quantity worsened the magnitude of the accident, the use of chemicals outside the work sheds



Avoidable tragedy: The unit committed the most common, but dangerous, violation — making fireworks outside the work sheds, under trees. FILE PHOTO

had a cascading effect in that the flames spread faster from one work shed to another, thereby damaging 12 sheds within a short span of time, according to an official.

The fireworks unit, which had remained defunct for more than a year, resumed operations only recently.

The police have booked the licence-holder, the foreman and the lessee in connection with the fatal accident.

Mr. Jeyaseelan said that those who indulge in gross violation of safety norms, such as leasing out the unit, employing more than the permitted number of workers, and using a higher-than-permitted quantity of chemicals, would have to face stringent action, including criminal charges and detention under the Goondas Act. Besides, the licence of the unit would be permanently cancelled, he said.

Meanwhile, the Petro-

leum and Explosives Safety Organisation has issued a show-cause notice to the licence-holder of the unit. The district administration is also planning to suspend the sulphur licence given to the unit.

Training programme

The Collector pointed out that the owners, foremen and workers of 200 factories had not taken part in a training programme on safety measures organised by the Directorate of In-

dustrial Safety and Health. He directed them to participate in the training session within the next two months.

Similarly, the units had been asked to display on boards the names of the varieties of fireworks for which they had a manufacturing licence, along with the licence number. The fireworks units should ensure compliance with the direction within a week, the Collector said.

Stating that four teams would carry out inspections of factories to check adherence to safety norms, the Collector said that action, including suspension of licence, would be initiated if violations were found.

Similarly, he warned of departmental action against officials who fail to properly inspect the units.

Information on violation of safety norms can be passed on to the district police through the WhatsApp number 9443967578.

The administration has also advised the fireworks industry to reduce the working hours in view of the heatwave-like situation prevailing the district.

Source: The Hindu, 13 May 2024, page 4.

More wind power may help Tangedco cut cost this year

Power utility may buy 15K million units compared to 13.5K MUs in '23

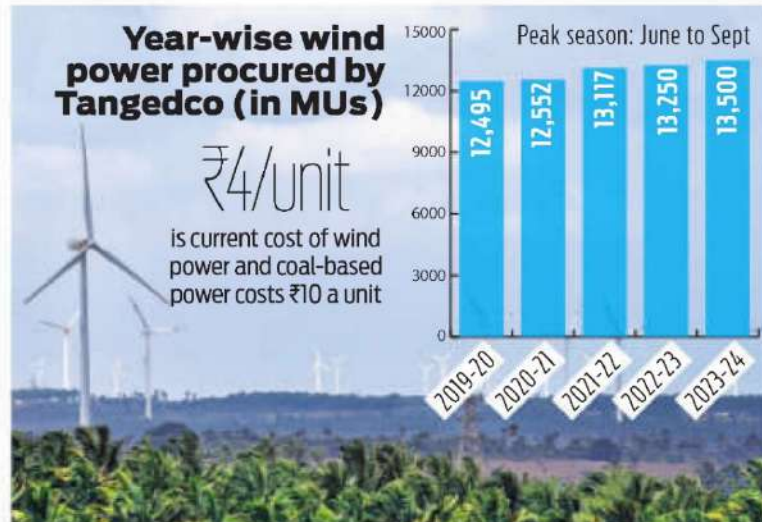
S GURUVANMIKANATHAN
@ Chennai

WITH the wind season commencing a week ago in the state, the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) is eyeing to purchase 15,000 million units (MU) of wind power this year against 13,500 MUs it procured last year.

The power utility is expecting that this will reduce its expenses associated with procuring coal-based power from private players. The current cost of wind power stands below ₹4 per unit, whereas coal-based thermal power costs ₹10 in the open market. Tangedco bought power during peak hours during this summer for as high as ₹18.50 per unit.

On non-summer days, the state consumes around 350 to 370 MUs of power daily. The peak wind season spans from June to September, during which the power utility typically acquires 90 to 100 MUs a day. A senior official told *TNIE* that the windy season officially began on April 30. "In the initial four days, we received 15 to 21 MUs every day. On Monday, we received 33 MUs. By the end of May, we anticipate a surge in power generation as the season peaks, continuing till September."

The official further said implementing a repowering policy for wind plants in the state, whereby they can increase the



height of the turbines' hub, can increase total power generation by up to 30 %. "Tangedco and the National Institute of Wind Energy have already engaged in discussions with wind power producers to implement this policy. A decision in this regard is expected within a year."

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a wind power producer based in Tirunelveli said, "Most of the wind generators have entered into agreements with Tangedco, restricting us from selling power to others, especially captive users. Allowing us to do so would enable small wind power generators to expand their business and meet monthly EMIs on time."

The wind producer also urged Tangedco to ensure timely clearance of bills.

Proposing measures to enhance wind power generation, S Jayakumaran, CEO of Vayal Energy in Tirunelveli, said, "Establishing separate corridors for wind and solar power is crucial, along with increasing substations that are connected with 400 kV lines (through which more power generated by windmills can be evacuated). With adequate infrastructure, many entrepreneurs will be motivated to set up wind plants in the state."

To incentivise entrepreneurs, the union government offers loans through the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency and conducts training programmes for them. The state government can adopt similar strategies to foster sectoral development, he added.

Source: The New Indian Express, 10 May 2024, page 2.

Amid soaring demand, power prices are rising on exchanges

Sanjay Vijayakumar
CHENNAI

Amid soaring power demand across States, including Tamil Nadu, power prices on exchanges are on the rise.

Tamil Nadu has the highest power demand among the southern States. It logged an all-time high demand of 20,830 MW on May 2, exceeding the previous high of 20,701 MW recorded on April 30 amid the continuing heat wave.

Tangedco's own thermal power capacity stands at 4,320 MW. Along with the State's share from Central Generating Stations (CGS), and long-term and short-term power purchase agreements, the

T.N. logged an all-time high demand of 20,830 MW on May 2, exceeding the previous high of 20,701 MW

State's conventional installed capacity was 16,417.38 MW.

During summer, Tangedco meets the shortage in availability through short-term and swap power arrangements, and purchases from power exchanges. In April 2024, the market clearing price in the Day Ahead Market was ₹5.1 per unit, according to Indian Energy Exchange.

On May 2, when Tamil Nadu recorded the high peak power demand, the

clearing price stood at ₹8.8 per unit in the evening. So far this month, the market clearing prices have ranged between ₹6.2/unit to ₹8.8/unit, according to the data available on the India Energy Exchange website.

The trading in power exchanges happen in 15-minute blocks, and prices fluctuate based on demand. There are a total of 96 blocks. The maximum prices have been capped at ₹10 per unit.

As per the 2022 tariff petition, approved by the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission, Tangedco plans to buy 6,130.70 million units of power from exchanges at a cost of ₹3,911.17 crore in 2024-25.

Source: *The Hindu*, 6 May 2024, page 4.

TN's power demand may soon reach 22,000 MW

S GURUVANMIKANATHAN
& S SENTHIL KUMAR
@ Chennai/Nilgiris

As temperature soars, Tamil Nadu's power demand and consumption hit a new record of 20,701 mega watt (MW) and 454.320 million units respectively on Tuesday. The officials expect the demand to spike further to 22,000 MW in the coming days.

A senior official at Tangedco told *TNIE* that anticipating the surge, the power utility has initiated proactive measures such as power purchases and strengthening infrastructure. "We have also tied up with private players to procure electricity and will receive 4,500 MW round-the-clock till June," he said.

Despite the efforts, the power grid is under strain due to overload, leading to occasional shutdowns. However, Tangedco hopes to tide over the demand-supply issue without much ado during this summer.

As water crisis looms simultaneously, Tangedco's hydro power generation has also taken a major blow. **P5**

Date 2024	Demand (MW)	Consumption (Million units)
March 22	19,409	--
March 23	--	423.79
March 29	--	426.44
April 2	--	430.13
April 3	19,413	435.85
April 4	19,455	440.89
April 5	19,580	441.18
April 8	20,125	--
April 17	--	442.74
April 18	20,341	448.21
April 26	20,583	451.79
April 30	20,701	454.32

NEW RECORDS OF THIS YEAR

Worst drought in last 30 years, says Tangedco

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

WATER levels in Kunda, Avalanche and Emerald dams have hit a rock bottom, crippling hydel power generation from the three dams. They blame it on the poor rainfalls in the last monsoon and a record rise in temperature in Nilgiris district.

Kundah dam which has a capacity to store 62 million cubic-feet (mcft) of water has dried up completely "like a desert". Sources in Tangedco said the drought has been the worst in the last 30 years. Avalanche and Emerald dams are also dried up. "We have been taking water even at the dead storage level in a few dams for power generation. The total generation capacity is 833 MW power in the district. However, due to a shortage of water in some dams now, the power generation has come down to 400 MW during last month," said M Premkumar, superintendent engineer at Kundah.

Another official said the price ranged from ₹3 to ₹6 per unit in Tangedco's own thermal generation. When procured from private sources, cost can rise to at least ₹10 per unit. "With current surge in demand, Tangedco is compelled to purchase power from Higher Price Daily Average Market at ₹18.50 per unit," he said. The recently-commissioned North Chennai Stage III thermal power plant is facing technical difficulties.

Source: (Left) *The New Indian Express*, 2 May 2024, page 1. (Right) *The New Indian Express*, 2 May 2024, page 5.

T.N. and Chennai's power demand, consumption hit record high on Tuesday

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

Chennai and Tamil Nadu's demand and consumption reached a new high on Tuesday.

As per the details shared by Tangedco on X (formerly Twitter), Tamil Nadu's peak demand reached 20,701 MW on April 30 from 3.30 p.m. to 4 p.m., surpassing the previous high of 20,583 MW on April 26.

New record

The State's daily consumption reached a new high of 454.32 million units on April 30, beating the previous record of 451.79 million units on April 26.

Chennai's peak power demand saw a new record high of 4,383 MW on April 30 at 10:30 pm, surpassing the previous record of 4,368 MW on April 25.

The city's highest daily



Tamil Nadu's peak demand reached 20,701 MW on April 30 from 3.30 p.m. to 4 p.m., surpassing the previous high of 20,583 MW.

energy consumption was 93.70 million units on April 30, surpassing the previous best of 92.74 million units on June 16, 2023.

Tangedco said it is committed to meeting the growing needs of the State while maintaining a reliable power supply.

Source: The Hindu, 2 May 2024, page 5.

Tangedco's call centre now fixes 'power' problems

Venkadesan.S@timesgroup.com

Chennai: Tangedco has just completed setting up 30 new transformers in Madipakkam and Moovarasanpet areas and will erect an additional 10 transformers over the next two weeks to accommodate additional power demand in the locality thereby reducing frequent power failures.

Do you know how Tangedco gathered intelligence about the problem faced by consumers in the neighbourhood? It was through the data of Minnagam, Tangedco's call centre to receive complaints and redress them, the utility staffers identified the problem and took remedial steps.

"In a month, repeated calls from the same areas were identified and feedback from field officers was sought to identify the problem. A possible solution is arrived at before the steps are initiated," said a senior official.

Additional transformers have been installed in Avadi and Egmore areas, based on complaints of frequent tripping of transformers. Explaining why it is difficult to identify transformer issues, Tangedco official said, "Summer is when we know the actual power load in a neighbourhood as electricity consumption in each household is at its peak. Since domestic consumers need not inform

WHERE MORE MINNAGAM CALLS ARE MADE FROM

Avadi | Tambaram | Mambalam
Mylapore | Perambur |
Tondiarpet | KK Nagar | Puzhal
Ambattur | OMR | Tirumazhisai
Maraimalai Nagar

Minnagam No | 94987 94987

Tangedco when they add new appliances to the house, personnel at the section may not be aware of the additional load added to the grid due to new appliances. Checking the power load physically on a daily basis in each transformer is not practically possible," said the official.

Calls to Minnagam are now segregated based on the nature of grievances and field officers are instructed to look into them.

Tangedco officials say consumer from their end should ensure that the power load of their house should be equally distributed in all three phases. "People with three-phase connections switch to the other two phases, when one fails. But most of them do not switch back even after the third-phase is restored. This causes imbalance on the transformer leading to tripping of the phases again. The tripping happens mostly in night hours during summer because that is when the load will increase due to air conditioner usage," said the official.

Source: The Times of India, 1 May 2024. Also online [here](#).

24x7 power sought as TN gets ready for EV transition

C SHIVAKUMAR @ Chennai

WITH Tamil Nadu preparing a blueprint for transitioning the state towards electric vehicles, charging point operators have asked the state to ensure charging stations along highways, connected through rural feeders from Tangedco, function round-the-clock with uninterrupted three-phase power supply.

As part of preparing the blueprint, the state is holding consultations with stakeholders like charging point operators, Tangedco and vehicle operators after the industries department rolled out an Electric Vehicle (EV) policy last year.

A first-ever stakeholder consultation to have an electric vehicle charging infrastructure was held on Tuesday, with focus on private charging infrastructure, source said. During the conference chaired by Industries secretary Arun Roy on Tuesday, charging point operators urged the state to ensure that bottlenecks on applying for power from Tangedco and getting quality power is streamlined. "Usually, when charging point operators file an application, it takes a long time for Tangedco to clear it and provide power," said Karthikeyan Palanisamy, co-founder and chief executive officer at Zeon Charging.

He highlighted the need to have 24x7 uninterrupted three-phase power supply through rural feeders. Most charging stations located on highways are connected through rural feeders, which lacked 24x7 three-phase power supply, he said, adding this would impact the charging of vehicles. "When charging stations are set up under LT7 (EV charging category), they have to give us 24x7 uninterrupted power supply," he said.

The other issue which was highlighted by charging point



A first-ever stakeholder consultation to have an EV charging infrastructure was held on Tuesday | P JAWAHAR

operators is to have submeters in malls, which get power under HT tariff. The state government should emulate the Bengaluru model where submeter tariffs are provided in the malls so that charging point operators need not pay a higher tariff, they said. The charging point operators also sought availability of land for setting up charging stations.

Other than that, the charging point operators want the one-time payment to Tangedco for setting up a charging station to be subsidised. "This works out to around ₹40 lakh and we urge the discom to reduce it so that it becomes viable to have a charging station," he said.

To a query on how many charging points are required, Palanivel said it depends on the adoption of EV vehicles in the state.

Tamil Nadu's EV policy offers incentives and highlights that the state will amend Tamil Nadu Combined Development and Building Rules, in line with the Model Building Bylaws 2016 for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. However, this has yet to come into effect.

Source: The New Indian Express, 2 May 2024, page 4.

Efforts on to revive Vallur Thermal Power Station unit-2 by end of June

The unit tripped on January 3 and an earth fault in stator was observed. NTECL has sought to extend maintenance schedule till June 30, as per the agenda for Regional Power Committee meet

Sanjay Vijayakumar
CHENNAI

The NTECL Vallur Thermal Power Station's unit-2, which is under annual maintenance since January 4 this year, will be revived by June 30.

It is a joint venture between National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Limited and Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Company (Tangedco) and has a capacity of 1,500 MW (three units of 500 MW each), of which Tangedco has a share of 1,064 MW from the Central power generating station.

The unit-2 tripped on January 3 and an earth fault in stator (one of the components in the power plant) was observed subsequently. The unit has been under annual maintenance since January 4 and is yet to be revived. NTECL has sought to extend the maintenance schedule till June 30, as per agenda for a meeting of the Southern Regional Power Committee (SRPC).

BHEL, the original equipment manufacturer, has informed that the stator cannot be repaired at site and hence, a decision



Drive to meet demand: NTECL Vallur Thermal Power Station is a joint venture between NTPCL and Tangedco and it has a capacity of 1,500 MW (three units of 500 MW each). FILE PHOTO

was taken to borrow the stator from Aravali Power Company Private Limited, Haryana, it said.

Spare in transit

NTECL Vallur said that the spare stator was in transit and was expected to reach the site by May 30. The unit-2 would be revived by June 30. "We are putting our best efforts to bring unit-2 back to operations as early as possible," NTECL said in its letter to SRPC.

Tamil Nadu has witnessed a record high power

demand in the current summer season. The State's peak power demand touched an all-time high of 20,830 MW on May 2. Chennai's peak power demand saw a record high on May 6 – 4,590 MW.

State's capacity

Tangedco's own thermal power capacity stands at 4,320 MW. Along with the State's share from Central Generating Stations (CGS), and long-term and short-term power purchase agreements, the State's

conventional installed capacity is 16,417.38 MW.

During summer, Tangedco meets the shortage in availability through short-term and swap power arrangements, and purchases from power exchanges.

As per the State's energy department policy note for 2023-24, agreements have been executed to procure 7,170 MW power from the Central power generating stations. However, the peak availability is only 5,900 MW.

Source: The Hindu, 12 May 2024, page 6.

TN to get 7k new buses by next year as 52% of the fleet across state old

10.5k buses running daily are over 9 yrs old; fund crunch didn't allow new purchase for 2 years

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Chennai

THERE is an increase in the proportion of overaged government buses in the state, now at 52.73%, as the procurement of new buses did not happen for two years due to the Covid-19 lockdown-induced fund crunch, said the transport department on Friday.

In the light of recent incidents involving parts of buses such as footboards and seats getting detached from the vehicle, causing accidents and injuries, the transport department said measures are being taken to introduce 7,030 new buses to replace the ageing ones.

The department stated that the average age of buses is nine years. The fleet strength of Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC), State Express Transport Corporation (SETC), and six other undertakings of the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSTC) is



The fleet strength of MTC, SETC, and six other undertakings of the TNSTC is 20,260, of which 18,728 are put into operation every day | MARTIN LOUIS

20,260, of which 18,728 are put into operation every day.

According to an official note, a total of 10,582 buses in the state are overaged. "Following intensive repair and maintenance works in the last three years, the average breakdown of buses for every 10,000 km had fallen from 10% to 1% and 2%," noted the statement.

Despite facing huge financial constraints, the department has taken efforts to purchase 1,000 new buses for each of the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24, as well as 3,000 new buses for 2024-25. Moreover, 16 new buses are slated for procurement under the Special Area Development Programme (SADP), and 2,666 buses planned

for purchase with funding from the KfW, a German-based bank, added the statement.

It further indicated that out of the planned 7,282 buses, 652 have already been put into operation, and the remaining are scheduled to be rolled out by April 2025. Consequently, 7,030 worn-out buses will be removed.

The statement also mentioned plans to introduce 1,000 electric buses on a Gross Cost Contract (GCC) model in Chennai. During the first phase, 500 eco-friendly buses will be launched. Additionally, about 1,500 bus chassis have been earmarked for the reconstruction of vehicles. Currently, 839 refurbished buses have been deployed and the remaining are set to be launched soon, the statement noted.

Government buses carry 1.76 crore commuters a day, including 51.47 lakh women and others who avail free travel in 7,179 ordinary buses.

Source: The New Indian Express, 4 May 2024, page 2.

Metro Rail ridership sees sharp dip in April

The passenger traffic fell from 86.82 lakh in March to 80.87 lakh in April. Officials say the shifting of bus operations from Koyambedu terminus to the new one at Kilambakkam and summer vacation may be causes for the decline. They are planning to carry out an analysis to identify other reasons

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

After many months, Chennai Metro Rail has recorded a sharp drop in ridership, losing around 5.95 lakh passengers in April.

The previous such drop was seen last year, when ridership dipped from 85.5 lakh passengers in October 2023 to 80.01 lakh in November 2023.

The ridership once again rose gradually in the following months, with March witnessing 86.82 lakh people travelling in Metro Rail.

But in April, only 80.87

lakh passengers used the network.

According to officials of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), the daily passenger average decreased by 3.7% – from 2.8 lakh in March to 2.69 lakh in April.

“One of the important reasons for the reduction in passenger traffic is the shifting of the bus terminus from Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G.R. Bus Terminus in Koyambedu to Kalaigai Centenary Bus Terminus in Kilambakkam. When we looked at the data between December and April, the average traffic in CMBT Metro station came down by 6,000 passengers a day.

This aside, we presume that there is a fall because many educational institutions are shut for summer holidays and several working professionals may have gone on vacation. Both office-goers and students comprise a significant part of our passenger profile,” an official said. Officials said they were planning an analysis to identify the other possible reasons for the sudden dip in ridership.

Last-mile connectivity
Sources said more passengers would come forward to use the system only when last-mile connectivity, such as share autorick-

shaws, was available for them to drop them closer to their destinations. But even nine years after the launch of Metro Rail services, the officials are still chalking out plans to implement last-mile connectivity.

CMRL recently called for ‘Expressions of Interest’ for last-mile connectivity services from firms and held talks to see how to establish the service with a viable financial model.

“After the Model Code of Conduct is lifted, we will call for bids to bring in last-mile connectivity in some of the stations,” a source said.



Fewer takers: According to officials of Chennai Metro Rail Limited, the daily passenger average fell from 2.8 lakh in March to 2.69 lakh in April. FILE PHOTO

Source: *The Hindu*, 13 May 2024, page 2.

CUMTA cuts down time to prepare transport roadmap, saves ₹3 crore

C SHIVAKUMAR @ Chennai

THE collection of data to prepare the Comprehensive Mobility Plan (CMP), a long-term vision document that provides the strategy for integrated development of land use and transport planning in the Chennai Metropolitan Area for 5,904 Sq.km, was a big challenge for Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA). The authority cut down the time to prepare the by 75% seeking help from Tangedco in collecting data.

According to sources, the lack of current land use plan was a cause of worry for CUMTA member secretary I Jayakumar as the data has been key to preparation of the plan. Initially, the plan was to collect data manually on the number of different types of buildings and their location in Chennai, a tiring task for officials as they want over 90% accuracy. “This would have taken two years and cost the exchequer over ₹3 crore,” said Jayakumar.



It was then that the officials hit upon the idea to collect the data of power connections from Tangedco. “Every house, industry or residence will have power connection. Tangedco provided us the data of 60 lakh collections. The power utility has 16 kinds of connections. It could be residential, industrial, institutions among others. CUMTA saved 18

months time by using this data instead of a manual survey and saved ₹3 crore,” Jayakumar said. Based on the land use plan, CUMTA found that 5,904 sqkm of Chennai Metropolitan Area had 30% of built-up area resulting in the transport planning body to plan the roadmap for Chennai.

Jayakumar said the Comprehensive Mobility Plan will be ready by July end. It focusses on green, resilient, inclusive, development-focused and safe principles, prioritising movement of ‘people’ instead of vehicles.

The plan will look at mass transit options that will complement the proposed metro alignment. It could be another light rail system or a bus rapid transit system, sources said.

Source: *The New Indian Express*, 12 May 2024, page 3.

TNUHDB constructs 28,824 tenements in the past three years

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board (TNUHDB) has constructed 28,824 tenements for the poor under various projects over the past three years.

The government has handed over the housing units to the beneficiaries in 92 locations across the State over the past three years. The tenements were constructed at an investment of ₹3,197 crore, and they have been allotted to 37,720 beneficiaries. Sale deeds for 3,023 units and 1,733 developed plots have also been handed over in the same period, a release said.

Besides, 1.68 lakh houses have been constructed



Tenements that have been built by TNUHDB in Thirumangalam. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

by beneficiaries under the scheme to facilitate the construction of houses on their own land. Construction is under way after issuance of work orders for 89,429 beneficiaries. Administrative sanction has been obtained for 69,701 houses under the scheme, at an estimated cost of ₹2,078 crore. Repair and renewal of 76,434 tenements in 117 areas have been completed at a cost of ₹59 crore.

Source: The Hindu, 13 May 2024, page 2.

GCC surrendered ₹8 cr meant for building shelters for homeless: Report

NIRUPAMA VISWANATHAN
Chennai

FROM being one of the first cities in the country to set up shelters for urban homeless in 1944, Chennai seems to have lost its focus on eradicating homelessness, according to a recent report by the Information & Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities.

The city corporation, in the 10th project sanctioning committee for Dendayal Arayudaya Vignanam National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) in January announced its decision to surrender a whopping ₹7.97 crore allocated for the construction of nine shelters citing 'non-availability of land', the report stated.

Even while destitute persons are exposed to the heatwave this summer, newly constructed

shelters and those with which NGOs withdrew their contracts or got terminated, remain closed for months. This includes the shelter on Subbarayan Street, CDH Hospital, which was for persons with psycho-social issues, and shelters in Kannappur Thidal, Chambers Road, Triplicane and Saidapet. *TNT* reported in 2023 that the GCC closed four shelters, shifting 30 inmates after contracts with NGOs were terminated.

In addition to this, in Sholinganallur, a building that was intended to be used as a shelter is currently used as the Munsif cum Judicial Magistrate Court and another in Elango Nagar in Tondiarpet zone is currently functioning as a PHC.

"Despite implementing the shelters for urban homeless for over a decade, the GCC has not evolved any summer or mon-



(L) The building that was intended to be used as a shelter in Sholinganallur is currently used as the Munsif cum Judicial Magistrate Court, another building meant for homeless shelter remain closed in Tondiarpet. | *Express*

soon plans to reduce the vulnerabilities of urban homeless during extreme weather conditions," the report stated.

According to the heatwave action plan that the revenue administration and disaster management department came up

with in 2019, homeless individuals were classified under the 'high high-risk' groups.

As part of the recommendations for the civic body, the report stated that reasons such as 'non-availability of land' or 'non-availability of NGOs to op-



erationalise shelters' or 'lack of strength in the existing shelters' should not be cited as reasons as there are several measures that could be adopted to address them. "Vacant land mapping, frequent advertisement for NGOs and other insti-

tutions to submit an expression of interest, and information campaigns and strengthening outreach measures can be adopted to address the existing challenges," the report stated.

The city corporation reimburses NGOs running the shelters monthly for staff salaries and quarterly for other maintenance expenses.

When asked if the funds are being released on time, the founder of an NGO that runs one of the shelters in the city, said on condition of anonymity.

"After Covid-19, some of the long-time coordinators of the shelter programme (at Ripon) left and since then, there have been backlogs. For us, three quarterly payments are pending and salary disbursement for around seven months is also pending." If an NGO fails to perform, the blame cannot be

solely on the organisation. It also means that the monitoring and mentoring mechanism by the city corporation is also not strong, the NGO said.

Actions pending such as inter-departmental meetings, capacity-building exercises for GCC officials and the shelter organisations and executive committee meetings chaired by GCC commissioner to assess progress of programme should be expedited, the report stated.

When contacted, a corporation official said once the model code of conduct is lifted, tenders would be floated for shelters which are not functional because of terminated contracts or because of withdrawal by NGOs. In the meantime, regular drives are being held to accommodate homeless persons in shelters that are functioning now, officials said.

Source: The New Indian Express, 4 May 2024, page 3.

THE DMK government completes three years amid the long limbo between the state going to the polls for the Lok Sabha elections on April 19 and results on June 4, with the model code of conduct still in force. For the DMK, the parliamentary elections set as an interim referendum on its governance ahead of the Assembly elections in 2026. The results will allow the party to gauge the veracity of the allegations of anti-incumbency flogging against it during the recent poll campaign and course correct as needed. For its part, the DMK's campaign relied on positioning itself in ideological opposition to the BJP while touting its flagship schemes. The impact of the schemes the DMK has rolled out over the past three years cannot be ignored, even by its detractors, and this is what the party hopes to have held in good stead at the hustings.

Investing in women

After MK Stalin assumed office as chief minister on May 7, 2021, among the first announcements was of the 'Vidyal Payaam' scheme, offering free travel to women in government buses, which was extended to trans persons as well. Studies done by the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission and the Consumer and Civic Action Group show that women have been able to save between ₹400 and ₹1,000 a month, which they

are able to use for health or education-related expenses.

Over 400 crore free trips have been made by women since the introduction of the scheme and the state has offered more than ₹5,700 crore as subsidies to the transport corporations for its implementation. The scheme is not without complaints as commuters alleged that the transport corporations have reduced the number of ordinary services of buses, in which the scheme can be availed. The government, however, has refuted this charge.



The Kaladamar Magalir Urimai Thittam, through which ₹1,000 is provided as assistance to eligible women heads of families, is another scheme targeted at women, which has had significant social, economic and political impact. A key electoral promise of the DMK, the government only managed to roll out the scheme two years after assuming office. The scheme, which initially covered a little more than 1 crore women, now has 1.15 crore beneficiaries.

Nonetheless, the government has faced criticism for introducing an eligibility criteria

SOCIAL SCHEMES TAKE WINGS, HOPES ABOUND

Results of the Lok Sabha election on June 4 can be a referendum on the performance of the state government in the last 3 years



despite the DMK's electoral promise that all families will be covered. The party, on the other hand, blamed the BJP-led union government for its "discriminatory" attitude in financial allocation, which has put the state's finances under stress. During the Lok Sabha election campaign of several

DMK leaders, an off-handed request from women was to be included in the scheme. The DMK, in turn, appealed to the people to vote for the INDIA bloc so the scheme can be continued and extended.

Feeding children

One scheme of the DMK gov-

ernment that has received almost unconditional praise is the Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme which was launched for students in Class 1 to 5 in government schools. In this year's budget, the scheme was extended to government-aided schools in rural areas. Aside from relieving working moth-



Flagship schemes

Some of the schemes the Dravidian major takes pride in are the free bus ride scheme, the ₹1,000 monthly honorarium scheme and the breakfast scheme for schoolkids from class 1 to 5

ers' of the stress of making a healthy meal and alleviating the hunger of the children, a study by the State Planning Commission found the scheme had resulted in marked improvement in attendance levels as well as aptitude levels of the student. In the 1,543 government schools in which it was initially rolled out, 1,319 schools showed a marked increase in attendance. Seen as a concrete intervention with wider benefits on the public health and

education front, there is demand to extend the scheme to government-aided schools in urban areas as well. Acknowledging the benefits, the opposition AIADMK has claimed credit for the scheme, stating that it tried to introduce it initially in partnership with a private organisation.

'Everything for everyone'

Stalin's definition of his usual 'Dravidian' model of governance is that everything should be accessible to everyone. To this end, the party launched the Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam scheme which takes healthcare to the doorstep of the residents with a focus on prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of diseases such as diabetes. Seeing access to education, especially for women, as the silver bullet for development, the DMK converted the patriarchal 'gold for marriage' assistance scheme into a monthly support for girls from government schools enrolled in higher education. The scheme is credited with increasing enrolment in colleges by 34% and was extended to boys as well in the recent budget. Given that education alone does not ensure education, the state also launched a skilling programme for college students called Naam Kalladuvam.

While the implementation of these schemes have further strained the finances of the State, Stalin, in a recent interview to TNIE, said, "These are not merely expenditures. We look at it as investments in the state's overall growth."

Source: The New Indian Express, 7 May 2024, page 4.

Centre yet to release funds for disaster relief, says T.N.

Tamil Nadu has filed a suit accusing the Centre of showing a 'step-motherly' attitude towards the State by delaying the release of disaster relief funds to the tune of nearly ₹38,000 crore

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu on Monday informed the Supreme Court that the Centre had still not released disaster relief funds meant for people affected by Cyclone Michaung and the unprecedented floods in the southern districts of the State.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, senior advocate P. Wilson, appearing for the State, sought an urgent hearing of its case.

"National disaster relief funds have not been released to Tamil Nadu," Mr. Wilson said.

Tamil Nadu has filed a suit accusing the Union government of treating the people of the State in a "step-motherly" fashion by delaying the release of nearly ₹38,000 crore in disaster relief funds sought by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin.

Mr. Wilson pointed out that Karnataka had also moved the court over the Centre's delay in releasing drought relief.

On April 29, Attorney-General R. Venkataramani said that the Centre had allocated over ₹3,400 crore to Karnataka to provide relief to drought-affected parts of the State. The case



Seeking sanction: Stating that there was no justification for delaying the release of the funds, Tamil Nadu sought an early hearing of its case.

had come up before a Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai on Monday, but was adjourned to be heard after the summer vacation.

Seeking an early hearing, Mr. Wilson said that there was no justification for delaying the release of the funds.

"We will deal with it (early listing)," Chief Justice Chandrachud said.

'Differential treatment'

Tamil Nadu's suit said that "differential treatment in the release of funds in comparison to other States is tantamount to class discrimination. It violates the fundamental rights of those who have suffered due to calamities

and faced greater hardships and irreparable losses".

"This step-motherly treatment violates the National Disaster Management Policy, including financial relations and the federal nature of tax division by unfairly allocating funds to some States over others," the State said.

The original suit was filed by the State under Article 131 of the Constitution following Mr. Stalin's statement highlighting the lack of flood relief from the Centre in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remark, ahead of the general election, about the Congress "callously giving away" the strategic Katchatheevu island to Sri

Lanka and Mr. Stalin's party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, doing "nothing" to safeguard Tamil Nadu's interests.

The State submitted that it had sent a representation to the Union government as early as on December 14 last year, seeking ₹19,692.69 crore in financial aid to repair the extensive damage caused by the cyclone. However, the Centre did not take any action, it said.

Again, the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary had sent representations on December 19 last year and on January 10, 2024 for the release of ₹18,214.52 crore towards restoration and rehabilitation efforts in the wake of the unprecedented and extremely heavy rainfall and consequent floods in the southern districts in December 2023. The Centre had not taken a decision on providing assistance to the State from the National Disaster Response Fund even three months after the representation was submitted, it said.

"Therefore, there is no valid reason or justification to delay the disbursement of funds to Tamil Nadu when all the required formalities are fulfilled as per the guidelines and the Disaster Management Act of 2005," the State said.

T.N. gearing up to provide agrotourism facilities to visitors

TTDC is trying its hand at offering farm tours to visitors. As tourists are evincing interest, it will be a win-win situation for farmers, visitors: officials

Deepa H. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

Imagine a break where you will be waking up with the rooster, trying your hand at milking the cows, feeding the chicken, plucking tender lady's finger from the fields and having lunch under the shade of a canopy of trees. The images in your mind will remain even after you return to the mill and grind of your daily routine. Agrotourism centres give such lasting memories to those who like to be one with nature.

The Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) is trying its hand at offering farm tours to visitors in the State. Studying models from other States, it is charting a strategy for the same. Recently, a meeting of various stakeholders was held where different models were discussed. Officials said tourists were evincing interest in learning about rural life and it would be a win-win situation for both the farmers and tourists.

A.P. Arul James Edwin Thambu, founder and secretary, Tamil Nadu Agro-



Agrotourism is being offered at a small scale in some places, and there is a need to widen the scope, says Commissioner of Tourism.

tourism Federation, who has been providing training to farmers interested in agrotourism, said visitors have to be able to do something in the farm, to see and learn something and buy something from the farm. "By bringing the profitable tourism and mostly loss-making agriculture together, we can give an authentic feel to the visitors," he explained.

Shammy Jacob and his wife Charlotte Vant Klooster, who started their farm in 2016 at Thalambur, off OMR near Chennai, said their objective was to expose their children to live one with nature when they moved back from The Netherlands. "We planted

trees and then the farm started telling us what to do. We brought in cows, chicken and ducks and designed our farm around our house. Since we had additional rooms, we opened them to people who wanted to enjoy farm life. We give people space to have picnics beneath the trees," Mr. Jacob said.

C. Samayamoorthy, Commissioner of Tourism, said a policy was under preparation for agrotourism in the State. "There is a lot of interest in Tamil Nadu, which is evident from the rising numbers of tourists to the State. Agrotourism is already being offered, we want to enlarge the scope," he said.

Source: The Hindu, 11 May 2024, page 4.

Tourist arrivals in Tamil Nadu in '23 recorded an increase

Ayyappan.v@timesgroup.com

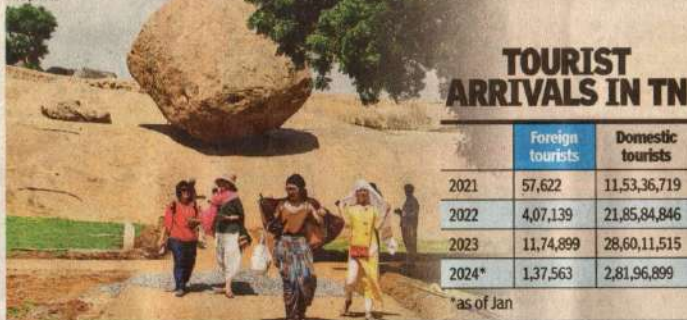
Chennai: More people travelled to the state for holidays in 2023 over the previous year. Tourist destinations in the state received a good number of domestic and foreign tourists compared to previous years.

The trend continues now as Ooty, Kodaikanal, Kolli Hills, Kanya Kumari, Rameswaram and a few other popular tourist spots keep registering a good crowd. Foreign tourists have already booked hotel rooms for July, when the season begins.

The state received 28.61 crore domestic tourists in 2023, a 33% rise over the previous year, and 11.75 lakh foreign tourists, a 97% increase when compared to the previous year.

An increase in the number of long weekends, around 16 last year, is believed to

File photo



be one of the reasons for a surge in domestic tourists, while foreign tourists arrivals were decent in the June-Sept tourist season, tour operators said.

A majority of leisure travellers were those from neighbouring states, while pilgrims came in large numbers from northern states because of good train and air connectivity, said a state tourism department official. A study by Thomas Cook showed that there was a 25% increase of tourists to drivable destinations.

Sriharan Balan of Madura Travels said that in addition to Ooty, Kodaikanal, Yercaud and Yelagiri, people are preferring Kolli Hills, Madurai, Rameswaram, and Kanyakumari. "The rooms are full for the summer months. Pilgrims from Andhra Pradesh

visited Tiruvannamalai in large numbers. We can say that around 90% of tourists have been from Andhra."

The e-pass for Ooty and Kodaikanal has also been a hit. Around 3.66 lakh tourists have e-passes for Ooty while 2.78 lakh tourists have e-passes for Kodaikanal as of May 9. Daily arrivals are approximately 39,000-1 lakh.

"The e-passes will help the govt find out the number of visitors and improve infrastructure," said Balan.

The state also received a good inflow of foreign tourists, mostly from southeast Asian countries.

J Sethuraman of Travel XS, which handles inbound tourists, said, "Last year was good for foreign tourist arrivals. Many from Europe visited. This year too, the season is looking upbeat as many tourists from abroad have booked

rooms from July onwards when the peak season begins."

However, an increase in the cost of holidays in India has affected arrivals from Europe. The cost of a package is high compared to previous years, he said.

"Flight tickets, which used to be sold for 500-600 euros, now cost more than 1,200 euros. Tourists who used to spend some 3,000 euros for a trip are now spending more than 3,500 euros. One section of tourists has fallen off the map," he said.

He said foreign arrivals will increase if there are direct flights from Tamil Nadu to Japan, Australia, and Europe. "There is good traffic from Japan. But tourists spend 20 hours travelling via Singapore. A direct flight will take only seven hours," Sethuraman said.

Source: The Times of India, 10 May 2024. Also online [here](#).

Jobs crisis: Regional approach needed

JOBS FIRST. Though the unemployment rate has fallen there are still significant State-level disparities



BALWANT SINGH MEHTA

Young people worldwide are increasingly finding it difficult to get a stable job, especially due to limited experience and resources to compete effectively in the job market.

The *India Employment Report, 2024*, jointly published by the Institute for Human Development (IHD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), has highlighted this issue for India. The report indicates an overall improvement in the labour market in recent years, with a rise in adult (15+ years) employment rates from 46.8 per cent in 2018 to 56 per cent in 2023, and a decrease in unemployment rates from 6 per cent to 3.2 per cent, with youth unemployment rate decreased from 17.8 per cent to 10 per cent.

However, educated youth face disproportionately high unemployment rates, at 16 per cent for secondary and above, and 28.4 per cent for graduates and above. Despite national improvements, significant regional and State-level disparities in youth unemployment exist, which are masked in the national average and require detailed discussions and clarity.

India's working-age population (15-59 years) comprises 64 per cent of the total with, 8.9 million new individuals joining annually. Despite a yearly decrease in the youth (15-29 years) of one million, it still represents 40 per cent of India's working-age population, the highest globally.

The IHD-ILO report stresses India's "final window of opportunity" to harness its "demographic dividend" provided labour supply and employment are sustained with high workforce productivity. The challenge lies in not only creating more jobs but also ensuring decent employment across States for their growing labour force.

STATE-LEVEL VARIANCE

Indeed, significant differences exist in the youth population across States. Uttar Pradesh (18.6 per cent) and Bihar (9.5 per cent) alone constitute over one-fourth (28.1 per cent) of the total youth population in the country, projected to reach 29.8 per cent by 2036.

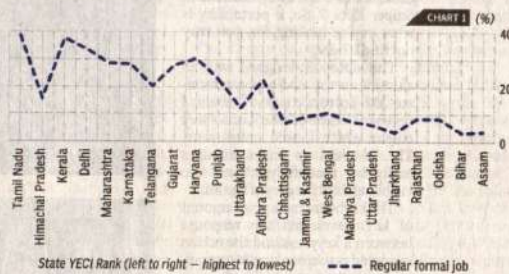
These States, along with Maharashtra (8.3 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (7 per cent), and Rajasthan (6.4 per cent), are anticipated to represent over half (52 per cent) of the youth population.

So, the less developed States, especially in eastern and central region like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh, expect an increase in youth population, while developed States particularly in southern region like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka anticipate a significant decline.

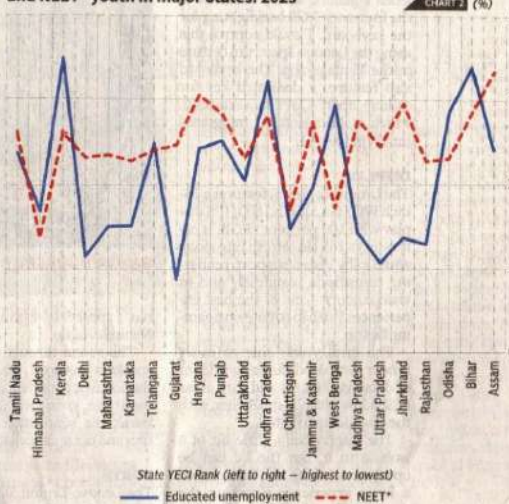
In recent decades, there has been a decline in both the crude birth rate and mortality rates among the elderly in India. The total fertility rate (TFR) has



Relationship of YECI with share of youths in highly educated and regular formal jobs in major States: 2023



Relationship of YECI with share of educated unemployment and NEET* youth in major States: 2023



*NEET - Not in employment, education, or training YECI - Youth Employment Condition Index as given in ILO-IHD report Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey data for 2023

also dropped below the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman in major States, except Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar.

Consequently, India's youth population is decreasing and is projected to decline further, indicating the likely closure of the "youth bulge" advantage. As discussed above, only few less developed States in eastern and central India are expected to sustain a "youth bulge", contributing significantly to the working-age population.

Conversely, developed States, especially in the south, will likely see a

smaller youth population share and an increase in the ageing population.

The disparities in youth population across major States are also reflected in the Youth Employment Condition Index (YECI), which evaluates four key supply and demand labour market indicators as given in the IHD-ILO report.

States with higher YECI performance compared to the national average include Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, and

Chhattisgarh. These States exhibit high per capita incomes, a substantial number of highly educated youths, and a relatively higher proportion of youth engaged in quality regular formal jobs (Fig 1).

Conversely, States with lower YECI performance such as Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Jammu & Kashmir are characterized by low per capita incomes, a larger share of youth in the population with lower education levels, higher unemployment rates, limited regular formal employment, and a significant number of youths are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) status (Fig 2).

Despite high YECI performance, developed States like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Haryana still grapple with challenges of educated unemployment and NEET status among youth.

While these States have a sizable population of highly educated young people, not all secure local suitable job opportunities. Additionally, they face a shortage of low and unskilled workers, and demand for such workers expected to increase further in the future.

While the eastern and central States are not generating enough jobs and face out migration of labour, the more developed States are facing educated unemployment

Conversely, States with low YECI performance struggle to generate enough jobs for increasing young labour force, leading to out-migration. This diminishes the economic contribution and demographic advantage of such young individuals in their home States.

This analysis highlights the disparity in youth employment and unemployment situation across States, often hidden by national averages. Thus, there's a pressing need for customized regional or state-level policies to tackle youth unemployment issues.

States with low YECI scores should prioritise local job opportunities for their growing youth population, while those with high YECI scores should aim for quality job creation that meets youths' aspirations.

The Central and State Governments have initiated several schemes to increase youth employment, but most of these schemes focus more on skill development rather than creating suitable jobs.

While enhancing skills is important, it alone won't solve unemployment problem without creating adequate and suitable jobs. The policies should assist employers in creating suitable jobs to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 8, ensuring access to decent employment for all and reducing youth unemployment rates.

The writer is Professor at IHD, Delhi, and co-author of India Employment Report, 2024. Views expressed are personal.

'Involve civic body in septic tank cleaning to end manual scavenging'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: In a bid to eradicate manual scavenging, Madras high court has directed the state govt to consider making it mandatory that all kinds of septic tank cleaning are done only through the local body.

"Every local body must have a dedicated officer to attend to septic tank cleaning. All septic tanks must be cleaned once every year and the local body must maintain a record and find households and premises that do not empty every year," the court said.

The first bench of Chief Justice Sanjay Vijaykumar Gangapurwala and Justice Sathya Narayana Prasad passed the order on Tuesday, on a PIL moved against the practice of manual scavenging.

The court expressed its dismay over the fact that the practice continues even after several orders issued by courts and enactment of the Employment of Manual Scavenging and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993.

The judges made it clear that heads of local bodies must be named in the FIRs registered in connection with manual scavenging.



"Currently, FIRs are being filed only in cases of deaths. That too, it is done by identifying a convenient scapegoat, typically a lowly employee of the contractor. The heads of the local bodies go scotfree. There is no disincentive for such persons," the court said.

In deserving cases, the FIR must be lodged against the following persons: the commissioner for death within a city municipal corporation (In cases arising in Chennai, senior officers of Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board must also be arrayed as accused); the municipal commissioners for death within a municipality; and the commissioner of panchayat union for death within a panchayat, the judges said. "In order to rehabilitate, manual scavengers must be provided employment in Group-IV posts according to their qualification," the bench said.

Source: The Times of India, 1 May 2024, page 4.

It's been a decade since Abdul Kalam Puram was set up in Tiruvannamalai as a model for holistic rehabilitation, providing bonded labourers with housing and sustainable livelihood

RESCUED, RESETTLED, NOW REBUILDING LIVES



A NEW LIFE: (Left) Rescued bonded labourers take charge at a sanitary napkin manufacturing unit, selling products under the brand 'Vaagai'; Following the 2015 floods, Irulas, whose homes were washed away, were given houses in Meesanallur village. Community members are trained and employed in carpentry and encouraged to start businesses

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All through her teens, G Priya toiled as a bonded labourer at a brick kiln in Vellore, seeing no way out for herself or her family. In 2015, came a ray of hope when she and her family were rescued by govt officials and resettled with a house on the 15-acre campus of Abdul Kalam Puram at Meesanallur village in Tiruvannamalai district. Things have been looking up since, says the 29-year-old, whose family was one of 100 rescued bonded labourers given permanent housing in the community living space.

Meesanallur is today more than just a social housing project. It has become a model for rehabilitation.

In the past decade, the rescued labourers at Meesanallur, who are from the Irular community — classified under particularly vulnerable tribal groups — have been upskilled and employed in various cottage industries in the hamlet. Some have even been trained to start their own businesses and are joint owners of brick kilns and wood workshops as well as charcoal and paper bag-making units.

Priya works at a sanitary napkin manufacturing unit, jointly run with 23 other rescued women. "We sell our products under the brand 'Vaagai'," she says, adding that they have started receiving orders from Lotus Footwear in SIPCOT for 40,000 pads. "We are now acquiring a BIS certificate for our product and are looking at ways to improve our

marketing," says Priya.

While most rehabilitation exercises across India focus on providing rescued labourers with an alternate livelihood, they do not provide a permanent residence, due to which many cannot avail of govt benefits. The Meesanallur project is one of the few that provides a viable livelihood and permanent residences.

All the houses here are uniform in size and appearance. The one BHK houses are fitted with solar panels for smaller electric equipment and a biogas plant for cooking. Drinking water pipelines have been laid and street lights fixed in the smart housing colony. The hamlet also has a park for children, a community hall and an anganwadi (crèche/daycare centre).

"There are no instances of rescued bonded labourers returning to their old lives even after the Meesanallur project was initiated," says P Muniappan, president of the Rescued Bonded Labourers Association. "Our association is working with the govt to ensure this does not happen. Govt ID cards such as Aadhaar, ration and voter ID are being provided so they get all the benefits due to them."

There is a school nearby for students up to Class VIII but they have to go to other villages and towns such as Thellur, Nadukuppam and Vandavasi for higher secondary education. "We have 100 children enrolled in the school here," says Muniappan. "What we need from the govt is transport for students, especially girls studying from Class XI and Class XII who

have to travel some distance for school."

However, only a handful of youngsters from Meesanallur have joined colleges. "In my community, girls are married off at a very young age which is why I am determined to get a job immediately after I get my degree," says Deepika, among the few from the village who are in college. "Maybe I will inspire other parents to allow their children to go to college."

The project was started immediately after the 2015

floods, when it was found that the homes of Irulas living near waterbodies had been washed away, says Tiruvallur collector T Prabhushankar, who was the sub-collector of Tiruvannamalai in 2015, and helped get the project off the ground. "Funds for constructing houses were sought from Union govt under the tribal welfare scheme."

In the first phase, about 50 houses were built, and then the project was stalled. The project was restarted in 2019 by Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited MD P K Kandasamy, who took over as collector of Tiruvannamalai (and is now spread across about 40 acres and expanded to more than 100 families). "Though they had

housing, we found unemployment was a problem they encountered, which was why we established cottage industries here," says Kandasamy. "Community members were trained and assigned to industries based on skills. We have new ventures in the pipeline, among them is training women in tailoring. We plan to get orders for stitching govt uniforms."

Resettling is a social transition, where families must adapt to a new way of life, says Prince Solomon Devadass, associate professor and field work coordinator of social work at Madras Christian College, who helped with the transition to community living.

"Despite ready houses, some of the families did not want to move, one reason being the deep bond Irulas have with their ancestral land, often regardless of legal ownership, as it connects them to their ancestors' spirits."

Devadass adds that social discrimination against the community as 'snake-catchers' makes it hard for them to trust outsiders. "Rather than imposing urban standards, we need to tailor designs to their norms. For example, houses should feel familiar, with slanting roofs mimicking thatched ones, and verandahs for communal gatherings or elders to rest, which is something the community is familiar with. Social housing projects need to take into consideration a community's unique way of life."

As per a study conducted by ASK training and learning, a New Delhi-based NGO, bonded labourers in Tamil Nadu have reduced by 81.9% from 2014 to 2021

Source: The Times of India, 2 May 2024, page 6.

POWER STRUGGLE

As the mercury level rises by the day, Tangedco employees and AC technicians work through the heat to help bring some respite

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

TAMIL NADU has been setting records in power demand once every few days this summer. Despite the jump in consumption, Tangedco has managed to avoid major disruptions. This has been made possible by the power utility's workforce which is short-staffed yet kept on its toes round the clock to ensure residents aren't inconvenienced by the searing heat.

Though legislation demand that 8-hour duty should be ensured, some foremen claimed their work hours get extended by 50%. S Ezhilan (55), a foreman in Chengalpattu, told *TNIE*, "Employees like me work 10 to 12 hours every day due to inadequate staff strength. Nevertheless, we are ready to do it because we have a responsibility, and uninterrupted power supply has to be ensured."

Explaining challenges in summer, Ezhilan said working on power lines, transformers, and electricity poles gets tougher. "Sometimes, we spend sleepless nights owing to heavy workload. If the power utility fills vacancies, burden on the staff can be reduced by 50%," he said.

Some wiremen said they receive a minimum of 15 to 20 calls every day in summer against the usual average of 10 calls during other seasons. R Velmurugan, a wireman from Vellore, said, "I have seen some



Though legislation demand only 8-hour duty, some foremen claimed their work hours get extended to 12 to 15 hours | S SENBAGAPANDIYAN/S DINESH

of my friends faint while at work owing to pressure."

Nothing can be more nightmarish to a wireman than climbing iron poles when the heat shows no sign of abating. U Muthaiah said he has to climb 10 to 15 poles and a few transformers every day under the blazing sun. "Concrete poles are hotter, but we somehow manage it. Climbing iron poles, however, peels the skin off our palms. Power utilisation is significantly higher at night and transformers frequently trip. We have been working till 2 am every day in the recent days to ensure residents sleep peacefully," he said.

R Murali (46), who is working as a line inspector at SS Colony substation in Madurai,

said as per norms 15,000 EB services should be managed by five wiremen, five helpers and one line inspector (supervisor). However, only five employees are managing such an area. "I went home at 4 am on Thursday after rectifying issues in some transformers, and had to report to duty again at 8 am. A transformer generally receives 11,000 volts power, and a lot of concentration is needed while repairing it. Working under extreme stress makes a person vulnerable to serious accidents. Safety gear supply is also limited. Over 10,000 contract labourers have worked in Tangedco across the state without salaries for over 10 years. They don't receive compensation or benefits including insurance given by the govern-



As part of a series on the condition of workers toiling under the sun, *TNIE* takes a look at the lives of electricians and AC mechanics

ment, for accidents at work spot. The government should come forward and regularise such staff," Murali said.

Fatal accidents on duty is not uncommon among line inspectors when they work long hours, R Kalimuthu, who is employed at Tatabad section office in Coimbatore, said. "There have been several deaths in the past. If consumers avoid power wastage by switching off electrical appliances when they leave a room, frequent issues in transformers owing to increased demand can be curtailed. This will, in turn, reduce work burden on field staff," he said.

Apart from Tangedco staff, even electricians working privately, especially air-conditioner technicians, have been doing overtime this summer.

R Sivanesan, an electrician from Chinthamani in Tiruchy for 30 years, said his day starts at 7 am and stretches for 12

hours. "Our work is difficult and dangerous. However, until last year, we used to get low salaries (₹450 a day). Now we get ₹550 to ₹600. Rain or shine, we have to go to work to feed our family," he said.

A Balamurugan, a 30-year-old AC technician from Ram-anathapuram who resides in Salem, said he has been in this job for 11 years, earning up to ₹900 a day. Working in summer gets challenging while installing outdoor units at a height without adequate safety gears. However, there are still many AC technicians like M Saravankumar who earn only ₹300 a day, work without weekly break and also face hostile homeowners.

(With inputs from S Gurusankaranarayanan @ Chennai, Thirakaran Rajamani @ Tenkasi, Jeyalakshmi Ramanujam @ Madurai, N Dhamotharan @ Coimbatore, K Shakthivel @ Salem, Rajalakshmi Sampath @ Vellore and P Thiruselvam @ Tiruchy)

Source: The New Indian Express, 3 May 2024, page 4.

Tribal girl tops class 10 boards from outside network coverage

PEARSON LENEKAR S R @ Tiruchy

“THE number you’re trying to reach is not available at the moment,” echoes the recording whenever someone attempts to contact R Dhanusha, a tribal community girl from Sillaiyur village who has secured a centum in mathematics in the class 10 public examination.

As there is no mobile phone tower in her place, it’s quite tricky to reach out to Dhanusha and her parents, who are cashew farm workers in the village at Vannadu panchayat, nestled in the hills of Pachamalai. In order to talk to *TNIE*, she had to walk over a kilometre to get connectivity.

A student of Government Tribal Residential Higher Secondary School in Chinna Illupur, Dhanusha is the only student among all the five tribal residential schools in the Thuraiyur region to score a centum in the boards this year. Scoring a total of 450 marks, Dhanusha is also the topper of her school.

With her voice breaking up over the call, Dhanusha said, “I travelled back and forth to my village on weekends to work



R Dhanusha (15) has scored a total of 450 in her class 10 exams, with a centum in mathematics | EXPRESS



alongside my parents in the agriculture field. When my father goes to work in the downhill area, I take responsibility of the field along with my mother.”

Rathika, mother of Dhanusha, said, “We are cashew cultivators by profession. Along with her studies, she helped us a lot with work. Whatever she opts to study, we will stand by her and help her achieve her dream.”

P Selvam, headmaster of the school, said, “We are happy that our student has achieved a centum. She has scored 450 in the exam and topped in the school. Hailing from a poor background, she was able to achieve this through her hard

work under teachers’ guidance. Since she is staying in the hostel, we gave her focused training.” He added, “If she had scored more than 90 in English, she might have scored above 480, setting a record for the highest marks scored by a student in the school’s history. We are aiming for more centums in the next year.”

The same school achieved two centums in Science last year in the tenth public examination, as per sources.

Dhanusha said, “I want to become a Collector (IAS officer) and do good for the people in my area. I want to thank my teacher R Suji and the headmaster for making this possible.”

Source: *The New Indian Express*, 13 May 2024, page 2.

AT 95.15%, TN TRIBAL SCHOOLS' CLASS 12 PASS SCORE IMPROVES

Among 35 schools across the state, 14 record 100% pass rate; 7 students score centum

SUBASHINI VIJAYAKUMAR
@ Chennai

FROM the bottom of the performance table two years ago, the schools run by the tribal welfare department have come a long way, recording a pass percentage of 94.82 in 2023 and 95.15 this year.

As per the data collated by the department, out of the total 35 schools, 14 have achieved 100% pass rate, compared to just 10 schools last year. Additionally, seven students have scored centum in various subjects against just one student who managed to get it last year.

In 2022, the pass percentage of class 12 students from tribal welfare schools was 86, lower than the 89 recorded by all the government schools. This year, out of the 1,402 students who wrote the examination, 1,334 passed. Among the 35 schools under the department, including seven Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), 10 government tribal residential schools and four EMRS schools achieved a 100% pass rate.



Teachers said there is still scope for improvement and urged the government to fill vacancies and to redeploy teachers as per student count | EXPRESS

June 1 deadline for applying for supplementary exam

Chennai: Students who have failed to clear or were absent for class 11 and 12 examinations could apply for the supplementary examinations by making a visit to their respective schools from May 16 to June 1 (except Sundays) from 11 am to 5 pm. Private candidates can apply from the service centres that are formed in each district for the purpose, said a press release from the directorate of government examinations. Private candidates can find the details of the service centres on www.dge.tn.gov, in or at the district and chief education offices.

A top tribal welfare department official said one of the main complaints against the department was there was no regular monitoring of the schools.

"We changed that now and gave more importance to the schools. Results were reviewed after every examination and measures were taken to improve them,"

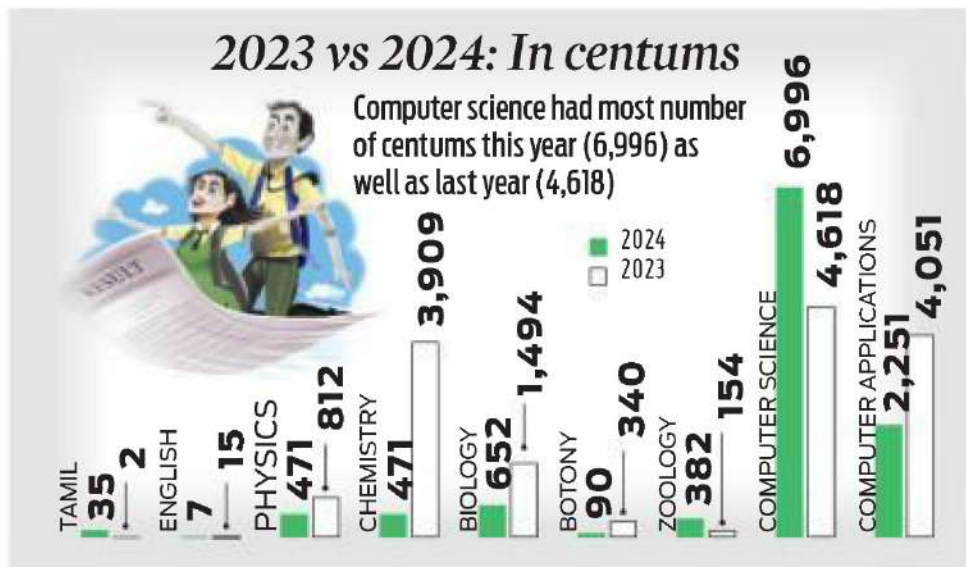
he said.

While the overall pass percentage are encouraging, only 8% of students managed to score above 80%. About 47% of students scored between 60 and 79%, while 44% fell within the range of 35 to 59%. Headmasters and teachers working in the tribal schools said this is due to absenteeism and lack of proper primary education.

"About 10 to 20% of the students start working after class 10. We have to convince them to continue schooling. This apart, primary level education should also be strengthened to improve the results," said D Vijayan, Karumandhurai Government Tribal Residential School.

Teachers also said there is still scope for improvement by filling vacancies and redeployment of teachers. "There are many vacancies at all levels. At present, they have been filled with temporary teachers. The department also doesn't ensure redeployment of teachers as per the student count, affecting the education of the students," said a teacher of a tribal school.

Source: *The New Indian Express*, 8 May 2024, page 2.



Number of centums drop by 6,129 this year

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE number of students scoring centum in various subjects in the class 12 exam has dropped by 6,149 — the number stands at 26,352 this year against 32,501 last year.

The major difference was in accountancy — as many as 6,573 had scored full marks last year, while it dropped by 4,926 and stood at 1,647 this year.

Talking about the decrease, an accountancy teacher from a government school in Nammakkal said this was due to the one-mark questions being tough. “The pass percentage has shown a slight improvement from 96.06% last year to 96.61% this year,” he noted.

The number of centum in major subjects like physics,

chemistry, biology and botany have reduced while that in maths and zoology have increased. More students (2,587) secured centum in maths this year than last year (690).

“Though there was a decrease from 812 last year to 633 this year in physics centum, we were expecting it to reduce drastically as the question paper was tough. Students have performed better than we expected,” a physics PG Teacher from Chennai said.

Highest number of students (6,996) scored full marks among the major subjects followed by commerce (6,142).

The number of students scoring centum in Tamil increased to 35 this year from 2 last year, while English reduced from 15 last year to 7 this year.

Learning deficit, rising tech dependence among reasons for fall in Class X pass rate

Experts call for steps to address the pandemic-induced learning loss, such as a diagnostic test to identify the learning stage the students are at and prepare a curriculum according to their needs

**Meghna M.
R. Aishwaryaa**
CHENNAI

In the academic year 2018-19, Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) schools recorded a pass percentage of 92.44 in the Class X Board examination. As the world battled a pandemic, the schools remained closed for two years, and the State declared a blanket 'all-pass' to the students. Cut to academic year 2021-22, GCC-run schools's pass percentage hit a 10-year low of 75.84. Since then, Chennai district's pass percentage has struggled to leave the 70 scale.

This year, the district recorded a pass percentage of 88.21, with GCC schools recording 79.11 and government schools recording 79.07. The government school performance in the city is only the second lowest in the State. This consistent dip in the pass percentage has been attributed to many factors, chief among these being the learning deficit that occurred due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

"Steps have not been taken by schools to remedy the pandemic-induced learning loss among the children. This is affecting students from Class I. There should be a diagnostic test conducted to under-

Fluctuating trend

While until 2019, Chennai had maintained a good pass percentage in the Class X board examination, it dipped after the COVID-19 pandemic hit



Chennai district's pass percentage for the last 6 academic years



*DECLARED ALL-PASS | SOURCE: THE HINDU ARCHIVES

stand at what learning stage the students are and a curriculum that would benefit them must be planned accordingly," said K.R. Maalathi, CEO, Auuro Educational Services.

Even with the learning loss, other experts point out that the technological dependence among students has gone up. "Other districts have been able to bounce back to the pre-COVID-19 numbers but Chennai has not. The dependence on technology for

things other than studies has adversely affected them. Despite counselling sessions with children and parents, the students are not able to move away from the screens," said N. Vijayan, Senior Principal, Zion Group of Schools.

However, these are not the only problems that plague the schools as P.B. Prince Gajendra Babu, general secretary, The State Platform for Common School System-Tamil Nadu (SPCSS-TN), points out.

"On a foundation-level, the students need to be told why education is an important aspect and be taught the importance of pursuing it," he said.

Cyril Alexander of the Tamil Nadu People's Forum for Tobacco Control (TNPFTC) stated that all schools should be declared a tobacco-free zone, otherwise even younger children will start falling prey to it.

An official in the GCC said: "Interest in education is critical. Methods to handle students who are not comfortable with conventional form of education must be assessed. Skill-based support can also be extended in all schools to empower children to seek better opportunities."

He added that, "Low-performing GCC-run schools can be partnered with high-scoring schools to understand the latter's model and help the other. Ideally, transport services can also be offered to students so dropout rates can be monitored." GCC Commissioner J. Radhakrishnan said a granular analysis of the results, both Class X and XII and school-wise and subject-wise, would be done and students who needed special guidance would be identified by September for the upcoming academic year.

Source: The Hindu, 11 May 2024, page 2.

Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Schools record over 90% pass

N. Sai Charan

CHENNAI

More than 90% of the students from 126 higher secondary schools run by the Department of Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare have passed the Class XII examinations.

According to official sources, 5,460 students from 98 Adi Dravidar Welfare and 28 Tribal Welfare Higher Secondary Schools appeared for the exams this year. Out of 4,145 students from Adi Dravidar Welfare Schools, 3,778 passed the exams. The overall pass percentage of students from these schools stood at 91.15 – higher than in the last two academic years. The pass percentage was 88 in 2023 and 83 in 2022. A total of

A total of 5,460 students from 98 Adi Dravidar Welfare and 28 Tribal Welfare Higher Secondary Schools appeared for the exams this year

26 Adi Dravidar Welfare Schools recorded 100% results this year.

The performance of students from Tribal Welfare Schools and Eklavya Model Residential Schools also improved this year. A total of 1,260 out of 1,325 students passed the exams. S. Annadurai, Director, Department of Tribal Welfare, said that because of the concerted efforts of teachers and students, the Tribal Welfare Schools,

whose performance used to be below the State's average, had risen to the second place among schools under the administrative control of various departments. The overall pass percentage was less than 85 two years ago, and had improved to 95.15 this year. A total of 14 out of 28 Tribal Welfare Schools secured cent per cent results, he said.

Official sources said that the department was also taking steps to ensure that all the students who passed the exams got enrolled in higher education courses. A plan of action had been prepared to track absentees and those who had not passed the exams. Steps were being taken to help them write supplementary exams.

Source: *The Hindu*, 8 May 2024, page 6.

FROM SOOTHSAYERS TO ENGINEERS

Govt Tribal Residential Schools in TN are helping youngsters from tribal communities break away from stereotypical occupations and forge new careers in medicine, tech

STATE OF LEARNING

Govt Tribal Residential higher secondary schools

28

Eklavya Model Residential Schools

8



JEE aspirants in 2024

447

NEET aspirants in 2024

118

A Malaiyaali's mettle

S Rajesh from the Malaiyaali tribe at Manjakkal village in Yelagiri, is a first-generation graduate. His father, a farmer, earns ₹3,750 a month. Despite their best efforts, the family struggles to make ends meet after covering essential expenses like groceries and bills. "There have been moments when we couldn't afford to buy medicines," says Rajesh. But Rajesh believes all that is going to change. Now pursuing a degree in metallurgy, a seat he managed to get because of the coaching he got at his GTR school, Rajesh says he plans to build a career in the industry and provide for his family. "I now see hope," he says.



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Two years ago if you asked Vengateshwaran S if he ever thought he would be an engineer, he would have said no. Hailing from Kizhur village in Tirupattur and belonging to the Malaiyaali tribe, the journey, as he and most others from his community would tell you, was almost unthinkable given their families' financial struggles. "Most of us just give up and begin doing odd jobs to keep our families afloat or to look after ailing elders. Getting coached for college entrance exams is unaffordable," says Vengateshwaran.

His life took a turn for the better when he heard about the professional coaching classes that were being launched in his Govt Tribal Residential (GTR) higher secondary school. Vengateshwaran signed on for JEE training, and today is pursuing a metallurgy and material engineering course at NIT, Trichy. "Who would have thought?" he says.

Over the years, with the pass rate at TN's GTR higher secondary schools increasing — this year, it was 95.1% across 36 GTR schools, one of the highest ever — students from tribal communities are finding hope in govt education programmes. In response to the challenges of unemployment and educational disparities among tribal communities, last August, state govt initiated training for GTR higher secondary students in NEET and JEE. This year, 447 students appeared for the JEE and 118 for the NEET exams. Of them, more than 40 have qualified to attend the advanced JEE exam. GTR and Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) are located in 14 districts, including Dharmapuri, Erode, Coimbatore, Dindigul and the Nilgiris.

Many students from these tribal communities are first-generation learners, and so it becomes crucial to create a safe space for them to feel comfortable, says S Annadurai, director of state tribal welfare department. "In 2023, only 67 students wrote the JEE exam. We wanted to up those numbers, so we focused



EDUCATION, ASPIRATION: JEE coaching classes class at EMRS Abinavam in Salem have helped students from tribal communities secure seats at engineering colleges in state

traditional occupations passed down generations such as snake charming, street circus, handling a saattai (a whip-like stick), or soothsaying.

"I completed my BCom degree more than five years ago, but could not get a job. I recently learned about job training opportunities, and I'm positive that I'll secure a voice processing role through placements," says 27-year-old M Kaliyappan, a member of the Irular tribe from Chengalpet.

Non-profits too are stepping in. Chennai-based non-profit Hope Trust: Together We Can, with the support of Tamil Nadu govt, has been organising three-month residential training programmes for job aspirants from tribal communities at the Nettur Technical Training Foundation in Bengaluru. Students are offered two courses: technical (CNC operator) and non-technical (customer relationship management roles).

"The batch from the tribal community will be done with their programme next month and we'll begin our placement drives," says Sathish Kumar, founder of Hope Trust.

"These programmes should be made accessible in all villages across TN. Unfortunately, many are not aware of this initiative," says R Rajan, founder of The Empowerment Centre of Nomads and Tribes.

on providing them with NEET and JEE coaching every day for an hour and gave one-on-one training to students who were finding it difficult to understand the concepts. The students were also given reference books, question banks, and previous years' question papers," he says.

To improve the quality of the coaching at all the schools, govt is also working on having video conferencing facilities to help students learn from the best of faculties for competitive exams. Besides focusing on competitive exams such as JEE, NEET, NIPT, CUET, IELTS and CLAT, the GTR schools also organise lectures for regular subjects.

Another problem that haunts the

community is unemployment. As per the International Labour Organisation Survey, 2024, in 2022 the rate of unemployment among youth with a graduation degree among scheduled tribes in India is 33.8%.

"Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes or persons in lower-income brackets face more formidable barriers to accessing formal and organised sector employment opportunities or high-skill jobs," says the report.

Additionally, due to the absence of community certificates and the discrimination they encounter in schools, many children from tribal communities either never step foot in a school or drop out. They often find themselves relegated to

Email your feedback to southpole.toi@timesgroup.com

Source: The Times of India, 9 May 2024, page 8.

Primary school classrooms to get smarter at a cost of over ₹1,000 cr.

Work to install smart boards in 23,000 primary schools has commenced across the State; the idea behind the initiative is to help students enhance their learning skills through visuals; work is in progress to set up high-tech labs in middle schools

Sangeetha Kandavel
CHENNAI

When this academic year begins, primary school students studying at government schools in Tamil Nadu will get access to smart boards in their school campuses.

Work to install smart boards in 23,000 primary schools has commenced across the State.

Apart from this, broadband connections will be given to over 8,000 schools.

Around 50% of this work is expected to conclude by June 2024.

"The smart boards are meant for primary school-children. A total of 22,791 schools will get these boards. Some schools that have more children will get two boards," School Edu-



A total of 22,791 schools will get smart boards. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

cation Secretary, J. Kumaragurubaran said. The idea behind the initiative is to help students enhance their learning skills through visuals.

A lot of videos across various subjects have also been prepared and they would be played on the boards.

"As of now, the idea is to

allocate two hours per week for each class to learn from smart boards. The timings are being worked out. There are plans to make it part of the curriculum," he said, adding that the project would help students understand the concepts taught in classrooms well.

As on May 1, over 500

smart boards have been fixed. Schools in Andimadam and Ariyalur have got 86 boards, schools in Cuddalore (Kattumannarkoil, Mangalore, Nallur, Panruti) have got 201 boards, and at Nagapattinam (Vedaranyam), 22 boards have been fixed in various locations.

In Salem region (Kolathur, Nangavalli, Pethanaickenpalayam, Tharamangalam, Yercaud) 157 boards have been installed. Smart boards have also been installed at Tiruvarur (Muthupettai) and Villupuram (Marakkanam, Melmalayanur, Thiruvannainallur).

Tech labs coming soon

Work is in progress to set up high-tech labs in middle schools. Around 10 systems would be provided to each school. "Around 8,000 schools will bene-

fit," he said. "Students can now learn coding, python and other programming languages in these labs. Today, most students opt for jobs pertaining to information technology, and learning IT skills from a young age will help them," he added.

Tamil Nadu is the human capital for the Indian IT sector and a majority of students from the State get absorbed each year.

Also, around 80,000 primary school teachers will be given tabs. Mr. Kumaragurubaran said that the tabs would be used for teaching and creating content along with doing assessments for students.

To a query on the funding for all these initiatives, he said, "The total investments for all these initiatives is around ₹1,100 crore."

Source: *The Hindu*, 2 May 2024, page 5.

All govt schools will get high-speed internet by month-end

Chennai: State govt on Wednesday said the process of providing high-speed internet connection with 100mbps speed to all govt schools would be completed by this month-end.

In a release, state said, "High-speed internet will facilitate faster transmission of larger files which will enable 46 lakh students to access online education, to master English communication skills and to improve their computer skills."

The release said, of 6,223 govt high schools and higher secondary schools, high-speed internet has been provided in 5,907 schools. Of 6,992 govt middle schools, high-speed internet has been provided to 3,267 schools and out of 24,338 govt primary schools, it has been provided to 8,711 schools.

Earlier, govt schools were provided with internet at a speed of just 5mbps to 6mbps. Due to low-speed internet connection, students found it difficult to access large files meant for online classes. TNN

Source: The Times of India, 9 May 2024, page 6.

All govt schools to get high-speed internet

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Chennai

AS part of improving the technological infrastructure of government schools, the school education department is set to enhance internet speeds at high and higher secondary schools by the end of May. The existing 5-6 MBps connections will be upgraded to 100 MBps ones.



The improvement is expected to aid in the better use of the hi-tech labs in 6,023 schools, to teach students in various formats including text, image, audio and video. These labs will also feature career guidance sessions, language classes and mental health training. A total of 46 lakh students are set to benefit from this. Moreover, the department is also building hi-tech labs in

8,180 middle schools and smart classrooms in 22,931 primary schools at ₹970 crore.

Internet connectivity at these schools is a joint effort by the Tamil Nadu government and BSNL. At present, 5,907 out of 6,223 high and higher secondary schools, 3,267 of 6,992 middle schools and 8,711 of 24,338 primary schools have the facility. Remaining schools will be connected by the month end, said an official release.

Source: The New Indian Express, 9 May 2024, page 2.

Data entry for EMIS portal will be outsourced from next academic year

Meghna M.
CHENNAI

In a relief for teachers, the Tamil Nadu School Education Department will outsource the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) data entry work from the upcoming academic year.

The portal, introduced in 2018, stores all the information on schools, teachers, and students under government, aided, and private management.

At present, the teachers are tasked with carrying out the data entry work themselves.

They had petitioned the government to outsource the work as it took away time from their teaching periods.

School Education Department Secretary J. Kumaragurubaran said: "Work is under way to set up advanced laboratories in 8,500 middle schools, where educators will be appointed. Likewise, lab

At present, the teachers are tasked with carrying out the data entry work themselves

assistants have been employed in about 6,000 high and higher secondary schools. They will take up the data entry work for the EMIS." These assistants will be assigned two-three schools each, which will also include primary schools, and they will carry out the EMIS work of the schools. "They will begin functioning from the first week of June," he added.

Information sharing

The School Education Department has also planned to roll out a WhatsApp channel for easy communication with the teachers.

To support this, the department is also in the process of authenticating 1.6 crore phone numbers in the EMIS portal.

As the numbers were not verified, it has been difficult for the department to follow up regarding higher education, as only 40% of the calls connected with the right numbers.

"To correct this, an OTP is now being given, so that the right phone numbers can be verified. So far, 5 lakh numbers have been collected," Mr. Kumaragurubaran said.

The WhatsApp channel will be able to disseminate bulk information in a short period of time.

To be launched soon

"The testing for this is over, and the channel will soon be launched once the phone numbers are collected. This will also help the headmasters of the school to communicate with the parents easily in terms of attendance or circulars such as those for distribution of books or sandals," the School Education Secretary added.

Source: The Hindu, 14 May 2024, page 6.

Out-of-school children survey yet to begin in TN

SUBASHINI VIJAYAKUMAR

@ Chennai

THE out-of-school children (OoSC) survey, that identifies children aged 6-18 who have not enrolled or have dropped out of school, is yet to be carried out in the state. According to education department officials, the survey, usually conducted in April and May, has been delayed due to the Model Code of Conduct being in place and also department officials being involved in the New India Literacy Programme. Delays in conducting the survey in turn delay admissions for vulnerable children and also make it more difficult to bring them into the mainstream.

Education department officials said that even though the enrolment drive began in March, the OoSC survey is expected to start only in the last week of May or the first week of June. The door-to-door survey is conducted by Block Resource Teacher Educators (BRTEs), headmasters, teachers, anganwadi workers, activists, special educators, physiotherapists, school management

committee (SMC) members along with the labour department and others. The survey will also focus on children with disabilities and children of migrant labourers.

According to the department's data, in February 2023, there were 1.3 lakh dropouts in Tamil Nadu. As per the G.O. issued by the state government in 2017, students who have not attended school for 30 continuous working days will be considered dropouts and those

who are irregular will be considered potential dropouts. "However, we have seen several cases where schools would continue to mark attendance for children even if

they are not attending classes. These children are also tracked in the survey. There is no other system in place to track children who shift from one district to another," said a BRTE from Villupuram.

In Villupuram, there are a total of 1,837 vulnerable children of which 1,551 are in class 10 and 94 are yet to be admitted in a school. The OoSC survey is vital in identifying more children before the beginning of the academic year, he added.



Source: The New Indian Express, 13 May 2024, page 2.

Kalloori Kanavu programme for this year inaugurated

The State-wide programme will be held till May 13 in various districts; Tamil Puthalvan scheme to be implemented from June, says Chief Secy.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena on Wednesday inaugurated the *Kalloori Kanavu* programme for this year to help students who have completed their Class XII realise their dreams.

On the occasion, Mr. Meena said that the *Tamil Puthalvan* scheme would be implemented from the upcoming academic year in June. To encourage boys pursue higher education, the scheme was announced during the State Budget 2024. Boys who have studied in government schools from Class VI to XII, will be provided ₹1,000 a month under the scheme to purchase books and other items. Around 3 lakh students are expected to benefit from the scheme. The government has already been implementing the *Pudhumai Penn* scheme along the same lines.

The Chief Secretary pointed out, during the inauguration, that the *Kalloori Kanavu* programme would help children and parents choose a course that would be best-suited for their students.

The program aims at guiding students in opting for subject-wise courses, diplomas and colleges



Educational impetus: Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena interacting with students at the inauguration of the *Kalloori Kanavu* programme in Chennai on Wednesday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

where there are job opportunities after graduation. All guidance would be provided by renowned experts and academics, he said.

The State-wide programme will be held till May 13 in various districts. Speakers from various fields will address the children about the options available to them. Besides, various departments have put up stalls explaining the courses they offer.

Mr. Meena further said, “The *Naan Mudhalvan* scheme was envisioned and worked out to realise every student’s right to pursue higher education. The School Education Department, the Higher Education Department and the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Department have made efforts to increase the gross enrolment ratio

too...” “The [*Kalloori Kanavu*] initiative began in 2022 for Class XII students only. We are planning to commence a career guidance initiative from Class IX in the upcoming academic year so that students can also decide on the groups that they wish to take,” said an official who is a part of the *Naan Mudhalvan* scheme.

Bhuwaneshwari K. from Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Ambattur, a Class XII graduate, said: “We have heard about the [*Naan Mudhalvan*] scheme, but never made an attempt to enrol. After this session, we will...”

Secretary I to the Chief Minister N. Muruganandam said that the Chief Minister’s Breakfast Scheme had helped increase attendance in primary schools.

CSE still a big draw, students also interested in ECE, EEE

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Chennai: Computer science engineering, AI and data science courses continue to attract students, while many are also showing interest in electronics and communication engineering (ECE) and electrical and electronics engineering (EEE) under management quota this year. Some colleges are also receiving queries for core branches such as mechanical engineering.

While surrendering 65% of seats for counselling, colleges can admit students for remaining 35% under management quota. Minority institutions can fill up to 50% of seats under this quota.

"Students have realised the importance for value-based education. After CSE, more students are interested on core branches such as EEE and mechanical engineering in top colleges this year," said R M Kishore, vice-chairman of RMK Engineering College. Good placement for mechanical engineering students last year has reignited interest in it, he said. Abhay Meganathan, vice-chairman of Rajalakshmi Gro-



up of Institutions, said that unlike in previous years, interest is diverse this year. "It is mainly because of job opportunities in core sectors," he said.

B Chidambararajan, director of SRM Valliammai Engineering College, said computer science and AI are still the two most sought after. "However, core branches are also receiving enquiries which is a good sign."

Due to the increase in intake in the top colleges, those in tier-2 cities have not got many enquiries so far. "Top colleges have almost doubled their intake in computer related branches. They may fill all seats under management quota. But colleges in semi-urban areas did not get many enquiries so far," a principal from an engineering college said.

As per data from Anna University, engineering colleges are set to add more than 8,000 seats in computer related branches this year after the AICTE lifted the cap on number of seats in a branch

As per data from Anna University, engineering colleges across Tamil Nadu are set to add more than 8,000 seats in computer related branches this year after the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) lifted the cap on number of seats in a branch.

Engineering colleges have also arranged campus tours for parents showcasing their facilities and arranging for interactions with the faculty members before admissions. "Every day we have around 100 parents visiting our campus. We are splitting them in batches and taking them on campus tours," Abhay Meganathan said.

Some colleges are also giving scholarships and fee concessions for top scoring students and students joining in the core branches.

Source: The Times of India, 13 May 2024. Also online [here](#).

Health Department to come up with Disaster Preparedness Plan in T.N.

The directorate has documented its public health response strategies following extensive flooding in the aftermath of Cyclone Michaung in Chennai and its suburbs as a result of which there was no major outbreak of diseases

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

On the basis of lessons learnt from the flood in 2023, the Directorate of Public Health (DPH) and Preventive Medicine is looking to draw up a Disaster Preparedness Plan for Tamil Nadu, and district-level plans in the longer run.

The directorate has documented its public health response strategies following extensive flooding in the aftermath of Cyclone Michaung in Chennai and its suburbs, and the heavy downpour in southern districts in December 2023, as a result of which there were no major outbreak of diseases.

A team from the DPH, Institute of Community Medicine, Madras Medical College and SRM Medical College, Kattankulathur, has documented the lessons learnt from Tamil Nadu's flood response in 2023 and public health interventions that were put in place to address potential outbreaks in the article *Adapting to Adversity: Public Health Flood Response Strategies Following Twin Disasters*, published in the Tamil Nadu Journal of Public Health and Medical Research.

On December 3 and 4, Cyclone Michaung triggered extensive flooding in Chennai and its suburbs. On December 17 and 18, Tenkasi, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanniya-

Timely action

Various public health measures were put in place following the extensive flooding during December 2023. A look at the number of people who were able to get help through medical camps and some of the key public health interventions that were made

KEY STRATEGIES

Incident command system established at State and district levels



Helpline number put in place for immediate assistance

Disease surveillance and prevention



Data from medical camps and integrated health information platform utilised

Geographical localisation and reporting of acute febrile illness and acute diarrhoeal disease were done through choropleth mapping. Trend analysis of each reported disease served as a valuable tool for monitoring disease trends



Analyses aided in prioritising vulnerable populations, carrying out risk stratification of areas and provision of healthcare services for high-risk focus areas



Risk stratification of areas was done based on number of illness reported

Task-specific teams such as for flood response, vector control and water analysis were formed to address different aspects of the emergency



DEPLOYMENT OF MOBILE MEDICAL TEAMS IN FLOOD-AFFECTED DISTRICTS OF TAMIL NADU

District	Number of additional external medical teams	Total number of medical camps conducted	Total number of beneficiaries
Chennai	159	7,834	4,85,109
Chengalpattu	60	2,953	1,68,526
Tiruvallur	51	2,308	1,22,806
Kancheepuram	30	1,270	69,328
Thoothukudi	30	3,885	2,75,346
Tirunelveli	30	2,945	1,02,458
Tenkasi	5	2,055	59,280
Kanniyakumari	5	1,569	50,358
Total	370	24,819	13,33,211

Source: Adapting to Adversity: Public Health Flood Response Strategies Following Twin Disasters/Tamil Nadu Journal of Public Health and Medical Research

kumari witnessed unprecedented deluge following the heavy downpour.

Floods have significant implications on public health. The displaced population faced the risk of waterborne and foodborne disease outbreaks such as acute diarrhoeal diseases and dysentery due to interruptions in safe water supply and sanitation, while overcrowding increased the transmission of airborne diseases such as measles and pneumonia.

Increased vector breeding raised the risk of vector-borne diseases, the authors said.

"We did anticipate outbreaks following the floods. But, establishing an emergency control centre early worked to our advantage. We continuously monitored the source of drinking water, thereby preventing diarrhoeal diseases, and managed to bring vector-borne diseases under control," said T.S. Selvavinayagam, Director

of Public Health.

The 474 mobile medical units comprising a doctor, nurse, adequate medications and requirements to perform small interventions, were the biggest advantage for the public health sector, he said, adding: "They can be deployed in any place where there are no resources for immediate response." The effectiveness of the various flood response measures, including establishment of a command system at the

State and district levels, utilisation of technology for informed decision-making, continuous disease surveillance, formation of task-specific teams such as for flood response, vector control, water analysis and continuous monitoring of activities, were proved by the absence of major outbreaks in both Chennai and the southern districts, the authors noted. But it does not stop here. The lessons learnt are being put to use for better planning.

Decentralise plan

"We are looking to have a Disaster Preparedness Plan. Most of the time, our response has been to mobilise our mobile medical teams to the affected areas. This is a part of the common response, and we want to decentralise the plan," Dr. Selvavinayagam said.

Anticipating the severity of an event is difficult, he said, adding: "Within the season, the India Meteorological Department gives an idea of what to anticipate at least a week ahead. Our strategy is to have local coverage. For instance, if there is a problem in Tirunelveli, we can move our team from Namakkal to there or if there is a problem in Tiruvallur, we can move our team from Villupuram."

"During the floods, we understood that local resources are the most valuable," he said.

Source: The Hindu, 1 May 2024, page 6.

T.N. sees rise in deceased organ donations in 2024

According to the Health Department, the State achieved a record 102 donations in 130 days; increase has been attributed to the government's decision to accord state honours to deceased donors

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In just four months, Tamil Nadu has reached a record high in the number of organ donations this year. In 130 days (as of May 9, 2024), the number of deceased donor organ donations has crossed 100 in the State.

Health Minister Ma. Subramanian said there were 102 deceased donors so far this year. In comparison, there were 178 donors in 2023 and 156 donors in 2022.

According to the Health Department, 102 donors in 130 days was the highest number ever registered since the deceased donor organ transplantation programme was launched in the State. A total of 324 major organs and 271 tissues were retrieved from these donors. Two hand transplants were also performed this year.

The Minister and officials of the Transplant



A quantum leap: In 2022, the number of deceased donors in the State was 156, and in 2023, it was 178. FILE PHOTO

Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN) attributed the rise in the number of organ donations to the Chief Minister's announcement to accord state honours to deceased donors on September 23, 2023.

Mr. Subramanian pointed out that this announcement was being replicated in a number of States in the country.

Soon after this announ-

cement, several families of persons who were declared brain dead came forward to donate organs. Last year saw 1,000 organs being retrieved from 178 donors, and were allocated for the benefit of patients in government and private hospitals, he said.

Following the government order, State honours were accorded to 159 deceased donors so far.

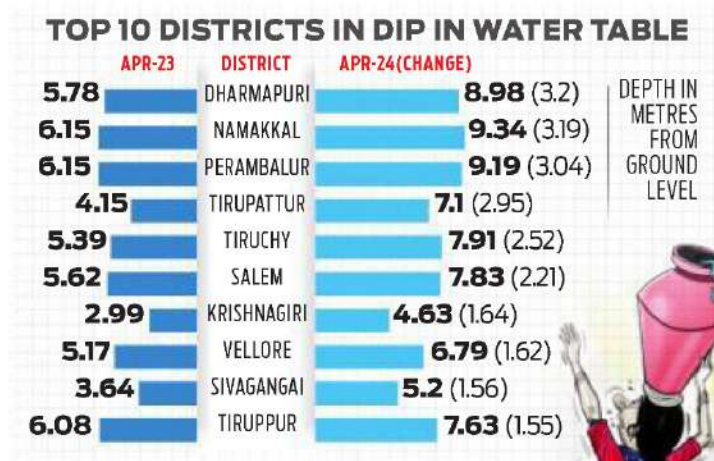
N. Gopalakrishnan, member-secretary of TRANSTAN, said the announcement that deceased donors would be honoured by the District Collector or an officer of equal ranking was a major step. 'Honour walks' by institutions also helped in improving awareness.

Sensitisation drive

"Team of experts from various institutions were given structured reappraisal programmes. So far, teams from seven to eight medical colleges have participated in these sensitisation programmes organised at the Madras Medical College. They were taken through every step of the process," he said.

He added, "A number of awareness initiatives have also been held to promote awareness on organ donations. The acceptance rate for organ donations has increased among the public owing to awareness and sensitisation initiatives."

Source: The Hindu, 12 May 2024, page 8.



Groundwater level dips in 26 districts, west TN worst hit

S GURUVANMIKANATHAN @ Chennai

THE groundwater levels in 26 districts of Tamil Nadu have witnessed a significant drop compared to April last year, exacerbating the water shortage across the state. Eleven districts, however, have seen a slight improvement in the water table.

According to the Water Resources Department's (WRD) groundwater data for the month of April accessed by *TNIE*, some of the western districts have witnessed the steepest decline in water level.

For instance, the average depth at which groundwater is available in Dharmapuri plummeted from 5.78 metres last April to 8.98 metres this year. Similarly, in Namakkal, the level dropped from 6.15 metres to 9.34 metres. Salem, Krishnagiri and Tiruppur are some of the other western districts that saw a significant drop. Coimbatore was among

the worst hit, with water level dropping from 9.4 metres to 10.85 metres compared to last year. On an average, Chennai region has witnessed a 0.5 metre dip in groundwater level.

Other districts that saw significant decline include Perambalur, Tiruchy, and Tirupattur (see table). In contrast, groundwater level has gone up in the southern districts of Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Thoothukudi, and Virudhunagar due to the heavy rain during northeast monsoon which led to flooding in many areas in these districts. K Balasubramani, general secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Munnetra Kazhagam, expressed concern over the poor efforts by the state in promoting rainwater harvesting. "The impact of dwindling water level is acutely felt by farmers particularly in the western regions where groundnut, coconut and other cash crops are traditionally grown," he said.

P7



TN's budget for water management insufficient, says farmers association

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"THIS year, due to water scarcity, farmers have refrained from sowing crops. The situation is grim in Mettur Dam, a vital water source for irrigation and drinking purposes, which has dried up entirely, leaving farmers anxious about the future," Balasubramani said.

KV Elankeeran, president of the Federation of Cauvery Delta Farmers Association, said, "It is essential to raise awareness about rainwater

harvesting among farmers and the public to replenish the state's groundwater levels." He also noted that existing rain harvesting tanks are in disuse.

Echoing these concerns, a senior WRD official told *TNIE*, "The budget allocation by Tamil Nadu for water management compared to neighbouring states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh is insufficient."

The WRD's dependency on external funding agencies like

Japan International Cooperation Agency to implement vital projects is also delaying projects. However, efforts are under way to convert non-functional borewells into rainwater-recharging units to improve groundwater levels, the official said.

In an attempt to address these challenges, the state planning commission and WRD are collaborating with experts and farmers to implement updated water policies introduced in 1994 and 2012, the official said.

Source: *The New Indian Express*, 9 May 2024, page 7

Not even a drop of water in 10 of 90 reservoirs in TN

S GURUVANMIKANATHAN
@ Chennai

WITH summer heat on the rise, water levels in several reservoirs across the state have continued to decline. Shortage of drinking water has led to protests and concerns in some places, and with the southwest monsoon more than a month away, it may be a daunting task to ensure adequate supply.

As of Thursday, the combined water storage in 90 reservoirs across the state stood at 51,992 tmcft, which is just 23.18% of their total capacity of 224,297 tmcft.

According to Water Resources Department data accessed by *TNIE*, 10 out of 90 reservoirs in the state are completely dry, while 16 hover between 1 and 9% of their capacity. Barring Tirunelveli's Vandal Odai, none reach their full capacity.

Consequently, people living in several rural areas have already begun to bear the brunt of water shortage. Residents of Keezha Puthur in Tenkasi staged a road blockade this week on the Thirumangalam – Kollam national highway demanding drinking water supply to their area. About 100 residents of Puranoor near Shengottai gathered at Tenkasi collectorate, alleging they were receiving drinking water only once in 20 days.

In Tirunelveli, Congress district president K Sankarapandian staged a protest by sitting on the steps of an overhead tank condemning drinking water shortage in various areas of Palayamkotai zone.

Coimbatore has also witnessed protests in different places.

The situation in Coimbatore and neighbouring districts led to Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department secretary D Karthikeyan holding a meeting with officials of Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Nilgiris and Erode districts to ensure water supply.

While water supply is regular in most places in Madurai city, residents of extended areas of the corporation are facing difficulties with some pockets getting water once in four days. Residents are forced to purchase water from private players for ₹13 to ₹15 a pot.

NUMBERS SPEAK

Reservoir	Capacity	Storage (May 2, 2023)	Storage (May 2, 2024)
Mettur	91,470	66,252	19,870
Bhavanisagar	32,800	16,735	3,420
Amravathi	4047	1610	724
Periyar	10,570	2,060	1,745
Vaijai	6,091	2,416	3,068
Papanasam	5,500	131	1,116
Manimuthar	5,311	1,620	2,833
Pechiparai	4,350	2,759	3,754
Perunchani	2,890	421	771
Krishnasani	1,666	821	589
Sathanur	7501	3,764	1,502
Sholayar	5,046	145	52
Pambikulam	13,483	1,981	1,650
Aligar	5,864	821	619
Thirumuthy	1,744	614	428

Despite the situation, officials from Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage (TWAD) Board have expressed confidence about managing the situation efficiently.

Speaking to *TNIE*, TWAD Board's Joint Managing Director Anand Mohan said, "In April 2023, the board supplied 1,949 MLD water across the state. In April 2024, the supply in fact surged to 2,286 MLD. We have intensified water distribution in drought-affected regions, including the western belts and the delta."

During a recent meeting held at the secretariat, Stalin allotted ₹150 crore to districts facing water shortage, signalling the government's acknowledgement of the situation and commitment to address it.

Anand Mohan said efforts are on to pump water from the Upper Bhavani dam to mitigate shortage in Coimbatore. In addition, the TWAD Board is collaborating with municipal and panchayat officials in delta districts to ensure uninterrupted water supply, he said.

A senior WRD official raised concern on ground-water levels. "While 14 districts have seen no improvement in water table, 23 have witnessed decline compared to last March. The ground-water level in Dharmapuri, which stood at 5.51m last year, has declined sharply to 3.85m."

(With inputs from
Thirakaran Rajamani @
Tenkasi, MS Thararaj @
Madurai and M Saravanan
@ Coimbatore)



Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board officials have expressed confidence on managing the situation efficiently | S SUNDARAPANDIYAN

Chennai Metrowater deploys robot to clean sewers in 3 city zones

Unlike desilting machines, these robotic units have both vertical and horizontal movement for effective waste collection from clogged lines. It is equipped with underwater camera and sensors

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In its efforts to ensure effective maintenance of the sewer network and reduce clogging of lines, Chennai Metrowater has added bandicoot mobility, a robot that cleans maintenance holes, to its fleet of sewer machines.

The agency now operates these devices in zone 6 (Thiru.Vi.Ka.Nagar), 9 (Teynampet) and 13 (Adyar) to desilt the maintenance holes. Officials of the Metrowater said the device mounted on a vehicle comprises a stand unit, which has control panels and a robotic drone system with spider-like legs that is lowered into the manholes to remove clogged waste from the sewer lines.

Unlike the desilting machines, the robotic unit would have both vertical and horizontal movement for effective waste collection from the clogged lines. The unit is equipped with



Hands-free: The device mounted on a vehicle comprises a stand unit with control panels and a robotic drone system with spider-like legs that is lowered into manholes to remove waste.

underwater camera and sensors, including gas sensors to detect hazardous gases.

These devices can empty chambers of a minimum depth of eight metres. The vehicle integrated unit also has garbage dumper and a guiding system to position

the robotic unit over the manhole precisely. They can be operated in manholes of sizes varying from 450-600 mm in diameter.

They can also be unloaded from vehicles and used independently in narrow areas. The robotic units were procured through

corporate social responsibility funding from the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, officials said.

Recalling other proposals to adopt smart solutions for better maintenance of sewer infrastructure and detect leaks and blocks in water distribution pipelines, officials said endobots, which are robotic machines, are deployed to patrol the network and detect leaks and blocks.

With cameras for its eyes, these machines identify the issue and send reports on action taken. These are now hired whenever necessary for use in a few locations across the city.

On average, nearly 645 mld is being pumped into the sewer network daily. The water agency has about 540 sewer machines to clean and maintain its infrastructure. There are plans to purchase more robotic units depending on the need, officials added.

Source: The Hindu, 14 May 2024, page 2

WATER IS MONEY



Yogesh.Kabirdoss@timesgroup.com

This summer has sparked an unprecedented 30% surge in demand for packaged drinking water in Tamil Nadu. Every year, bottlers step up production between March and August but this year they are scrambling to meet demand. The election campaign in the first two weeks of April also pushed demand up.

Most of the demand is for 500ml, one-litre and two-litre bottles and not bubble top cans. That's because many households, which were the main consumers of bubble top cans, have shifted to RO water purifiers.

The state is home to 2,100 licensed packaged drinking water plants, of which 60% are located in Chennai, Chengalpeta, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts. While the average capacity of each plant is 70,000-80,000 litres a day, plants run at full capacity during the six-month period between March and August. The rest of the year, they operate at 50% of capacity as demand decreases with fall in temperature.

The annual size of the packaged drinking water business in Tamil Nadu is estimated at ₹3,000 crore by industry sources. And it's expected to grow exponentially as even people in remote villages now depend on packaged drinking water on a daily basis.

The demand for packaged drinking water is the highest in the past 25 years, says T Prabakaran, state advisor, Tamil Nadu Packaged Drinking Water Manufacturers Association. "Tourists and the floating population prefer

PET water bottles. These contribute about 60% of sales and bubble top cans account for the rest. The share of bubble top cans has fallen because households have started installing RO water purifier systems," he says. Bottlers expect demand in Chennai and suburbs will further increase next month as families that are on vacation return when educational institutions reopen, he adds.

April to June is also the peak wedding season when demand for packaged water also rises, says Nandakumar Rajendran, assistant secretary, Tamil Nadu Packaged Drinking Water Manufacturers Association and proprietor of Vijay Aqua Minerals, Chennai. "The harsh summer pushed demand 30% above the usual spike we experience during this period. In fact, manufacturers are struggling to meet demand," he adds.

Leading mineral water brand Bisleri International says there is an upsurge in sales of both water and fizzy drinks, particularly in regions experiencing extreme heat.

"This demand surge is boosted by holiday travel. To enhance affordability and reduce wastage of water, we are introducing a 200ml pack priced at Rs5," says Tushar Malhotra, director of sales & marketing, Bisleri International.

The high temperatures have revived the aerated beverages industry too. "Consumers stayed away from cold beverages during Covid. This scenario continued even

after the pandemic ended and this hit our sales. However, the prevailing weather conditions has revived the consumption of aerated beverages to pre-pandemic levels," says K P D K Karthik, proprietor, Kali Aerated Water Works (Trichy). The size of the Indian market for aerated beverages is pegged at nearly ₹15,000 crore and Tamil Nadu accounts for a market share of about 15%.

Even the chains selling tea and coffee are serving more cold beverages. For instance, Chai King is launching new cold beverages. "Sale of cold beverages usually increases to 35% of the total between April and July. But this year demand started rising in March itself," says Jahabar Sadique, co-founder and CEO, Chai Kings. "We are introducing 10 new cold beverage varieties such as milk bubble tea and fruit bubble tea," he adds.



"We are witnessing an additional 10% spike in demand for nannari sarbath, buttermilk and rose milk compared to previous summers," says P Prasanna Venkatesh, co-founder and director, Madras Coffee House. The share of cold beverages in total sales during summer is usually 30%. Now, it has increased to 40%," he says.

In restaurants too, filter coffee is taking a backseat. Ravi Muthukrishnan, chairman, Vasanta Bhavan Hotels, says, customers prefer buttermilk and badam kheer over hot coffee. "The sale of cold beverages has doubled in restaurants," says Ravi, who is also the president of Chennai Hotels Association.

QUENCHING THIRST

2,100 Number of licensed packaged drinking water plants in Tamil Nadu

60% of them are located in Chennai, Chengalpeta, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts

₹15,000cr Size of the Indian market for aerated beverages

15% Tamil Nadu's share of this market



Source: The Times of India, 13 May 2024. Also online [here](#).

'Even 15 water tankers not enough for my 150 trees'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

KS BALACHANDRAN, a farmer from Kanjampatti near Udumalai, said, "Though I am a big farmer, I could not save my trees. I bought 15 water tankers per day but it was not enough. We use tanker water for around 150 trees (2 acres). There is heavy demand for tankers as every farmer in my village needs water and started calling for the tanker. Earlier in the season, a tanker cost was ₹1,200. Now it has gone up to ₹1,800. The cost of water increases depending on the distance between the source of water and the farm."

P Sundaraj, a farmer from Pollachi East,



PIC: S SENGAPANDIYAN

said he lost 60 out of 250 trees on his four acres of land. Kalayanakumar said sawmill operators are thinking twice about accepting withered native trees and completely reject timber of hybrid variety coconut trees.

TA Krishnasami, president of South

India Coconut Growers Association, said, "I have never seen this kind of drought in my 88 years of life. Even palmyra trees, which can sustain drought, are dying. We are clueless on how to save tree around 2.5 crore of trees in the 1.6 lakh hectare in the region."

Speaking to *TNIE*, V Geethalakshmi, Vice Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, said, "A minimum of 40 litres of water is required for a coconut tree per day. Normally, we get some amount of summer showers in April. It would save coconut trees from withering. But this time, summer shower has completely failed. TNAU is helpless as trees cannot be saved without water."

Source: *The New Indian Express*, 3 May 2024, page 7.

Parts of north Chennai to get improved water, sewer network

Tenders are set to be floated for these projects under the *Vada Chennai Valarchi Thittam* by June. Officials of Metrowater say 49 projects will be carried out over the next three years to strengthen and modify the network to address sewage issues

K. Lakshmi
CHENNAI

A solution seems closer to the decades-long issue of frequent sewage overflow and gaps in water supply in the densely populated areas of north Chennai.

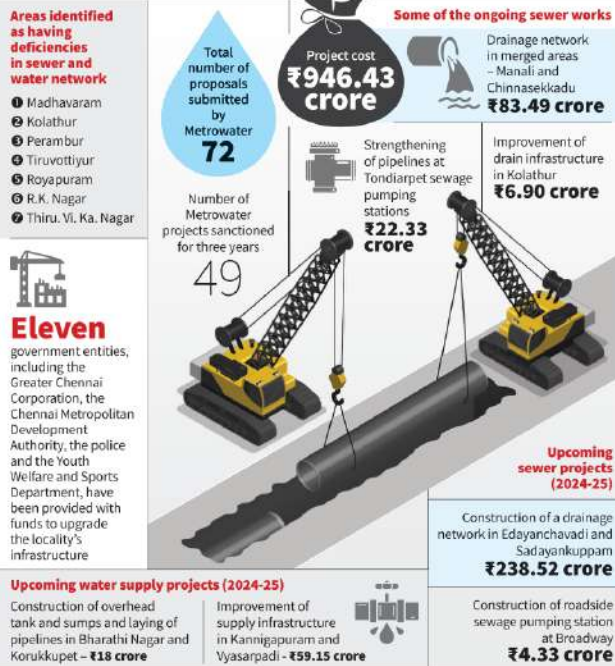
Tenders are set to be floated for projects to improve water and sewer infrastructure under the *Vada Chennai Valarchi Thittam* by June. The Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (Metrowater) is preparing estimates to replace the old sewer, water infrastructure, improve the sewage collection system and initiate drinking water supply in unserved merged areas, officials said.

The State government had earlier announced the *Vada Chennai Valarchi Thittam* to address the deficiencies in the infrastructure in north Chennai. The sewer network laid in north Chennai is the oldest in the city and comprises brick gravity sewers, served by pumping stations in places such as Royapuram and Purasawalkam since 1914.

To keep pace with the growing needs of the expanding metropolis, the water agency has chalked out projects to upgrade the network in chronically affected areas. It had hired Sai Consultants to study

Infrastructure boost

The *Vada Chennai Valarchi Thittam* looks to ensure equitable development of north Chennai



the decades-old sewerage and water supply infrastructure in the core parts of north Chennai. Of the 560.97 million litres of sewage treated daily (mld), nearly 159 mld is received

and treated in Kodungaiyur sewage treatment plant (STP). It also has a 45 mld tertiary treatment reverse osmosis plant added to supply treated water to industrial belt in north Chennai.

Metrowater officials said 49 projects would be carried out over the next three years to strengthen and modify the network to address sewage issues and water contamination apart

from providing adequate piped water supply. While some projects have already been begun, new proposals have been chalked out to improve the capacity of the sewage pumping stations and provide drinking water supply to the left-out streets.

The long-awaited comprehensive sewerage project in Chinnasekkadu has reached its final stages and will soon be inaugurated. Some of the sewer works to be taken up in the first phase include sewer network in merged areas in Edayanchavadi, Puzhal, Vadaperumbakkam and new pipelines between sewage pumping stations in Royapuram and improved sewage collection system in Kolathur and Periyar Nagar.

Metrowater also plans to enlarge sewer pipelines in various areas such as Tiruvottiyur, Perambur, Tondiarpet and R.K. Nagar and construct a 6-mld modular STP to treat sewage collected at Kilijosi Nagar, Tiruvottiyur.

Officials said works were under way to provide piped water supply to added areas in Manali and Puzhal and replace old water pipelines in R.K. Nagar and Perambur. In the next three years, choked water lines in areas such as R.K. Nagar, Royapuram, and Perambur would be replaced.

Source: *The Hindu*, 11 May 2024, page 3.

Water hyacinth dries up lakes faster

But Officials Have No Plan To Remove It

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Chennai: Lakes have gone 'green' in the city, with a blanket of plants and some lavender-coloured flowers floating on the waters. But these weeds are killing stagnant and sewage-ridden waterbodies and the water resources department has no plans to remove them.

Water hyacinths are invasive aquatic plants sucking up oxygen, blocking sunlight, and making water evaporate 2.5 times faster, according to research. "Water evaporates more from a lake infested with hyacinths. This is because the plants undergo transpiration," said Shyamala Lionel, a former

DEPLETING WATER SOURCES

IMPACT ON WATERBODIES

> Dissolved oxygen levels dip, making native fishes suffocate

> Hyacinth is a dominant species that will deprive native plant species such as lilies of sufficient nutrients, sunlight and oxygen

> Evaporation rate of waterbodies increases by 2.5 times when hyacinths infest lakes and ponds in summers. So, waterbodies dry up faster

> Hyacinth's longer and thicker roots become host to mosquito larvae

WHAT IS WATER HYACINTH?

An invasive aquatic plant species that grows in nutrient-rich, stagnant or slow-flowing waterbodies. With illegal sewage discharge, the waterbodies become nutrient-rich, leading to increased hyacinth growth



Affects nutrition of birds such as kingfishers, herons and storks by putting the population of native fishes at risk

WEED IN CONTROL: The Medavakkam Chinna Eri is covered in a thick blanket of water hyacinth

Pic: TOI

and groundwater levels are going down.

The weeds adversely affect the entire aquatic ecosystem. "Hyacinths reduce dissolved oxygen level needed for plants and fish. Native plants such as lilies get less oxygen and nutrients. Moreover, birds such as kingfishers, storks and herons may have to go elsewhere to feed. Invasive species such as African catfish, which can breathe atmospheric oxygen, will dominate native fish that depend on dissolved oxygen," said P Prashanth, a biodiversity expert from the state wetlands mission.

"Curbing sewage discharge and removing water hyacinths frequently, especially in summer, will help the weeds grow less," said Shyamala. "We usually remove hyacinths only before monsoons for water to flow," said a WRD official when TOI asked if they had plans to remove the weeds now.

plant chemistry professor at Madras Christian College. Transpiration refers to expelling excess water from the leaves after plants absorb water from the roots. Therefore, summer heat and hyacinths are drying up lakes faster.

Dried-up lakes are prone to disappearance like the Ullagar

am lake which was spread across 59 acres in the 1990s as per old village survey maps. "When lakes dry up, encroachers move in. This reduces the water-spread area. These weeds speed up this trend," said Shyamala.

Hyacinths also impact water resources in their neighbo-

urhood. "If water levels are low, the groundwater recharge rate dips," said L Elango, hydrogeology professor at IIT Madras. Medavakkam, for instance, had an abundance of groundwater with three large lakes in the area. However, because of illegal sewage inflow, water hyacinth blankets their surface

Source: The Times of India, 1 May 2024, page 4.

A 'green' solution to prevent landslips in the Nilgiris

The Hindu Bureau
UDHAGAMANDALAM

The State Highways Department is undertaking the stabilisation of slopes around major roads in the Nilgiris at five locations by growing grasses to prevent soil erosion.

The project, known as 'slope stabilisation using soil nailing and hydroseeding method', was being undertaken in Ketti, Kattabettu, Perar, Kudah and Udhagamandalam, officials said.

The five locations were chosen for being prone to landslips. According to officials, the soil had to be tested along the slopes for their suitability before the project was undertaken.

"Soil nailing is a geotechnical engineering technique that involves the insertion of reinforcing elements into the soil in a specified area to streng-



Soil nailing work being undertaken by the State Highways Department in the Nilgiris. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

then it," an official from the State Highways Department said.

Strengthening soil

Following the strengthening of the slope, 'hydroseeding' – the process of applying a mixture of

It is being undertaken in Ketti, Kattabettu, Perar, Kudah and Udhagamandalam

seeds, fertilizer, organic materials and water on to the soil to facilitate the growth of grass and plant life – would be undertaken to help hold the top soil together and prevent erosion.

An official said that around five species of grass, including a few native to India, would be grown along the slopes. The Highways Department would take up the maintenance of the grasses once hydroseeding was completed, officials said, adding that this method of preventing landslips would help in mitigating the impact of linear infrastructure such as roads in the Nilgiris.

Source: The Hindu, 13 May 2024, page 4.

Consider long-term housing needs of fishermen before publishing final CZMP, says NGT

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Tamil Nadu State Coastal Management Authority (TNSCZMA) to consider the long-term housing needs of coastal communities while preparing the draft Coastal Zone Management Plan

(CZMP). The Bench, comprising Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana and expert member Satyagopal Korlapati, was hearing a petition filed by S. Palayam, a fisherman from Besant Nagar, seeking a direction to the TNSCZMA to prepare and publish detailed plans for the long-term housing needs of coastal fishermen communities, as required by the CRZ Notification, 2019.

The petition pertains to the draft CZMP, first released in 2022, which ran into opposition from the fishermen community as it did not include any specific comments about fishing zones in waterbodies, breeding and spawning grounds, common properties of the fishermen communities, and the detailed plan for long-term housing needs of the coastal fishermen communities.

The absence of provisions for reserve land allocation for long-term settlement of fishermen raised concerns about the plan's alignment with CRZ regulations and its impact on both the fishermen's livelihood and the environment. Currently, the draft maps in 1:25000 scale have been prepared and made available in the public domain for 12 coastal districts, except Chennai and Tiruvallur. Considering the petitioner's request, the Bench ordered the State management authority to address the issue before publishing the final CZMP notification.



Fisher's interests ignored: Currently, draft maps in 1:25000 scale have been prepared and made available in the public domain for 12 coastal districts, except Chennai and Tiruvallur. M. MOORTHY

Source: *The Hindu*, 12 May 2024, page 8

Weather shocks spell sour start to mango season, but exports not hit

Puja Das
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NEW DELHI

India's favourite fruit is facing a problem—heatwaves and unseasonal rains have hit crops, potentially disrupting supplies. This, coupled with a prolonged dry spell and depleting water levels, is expected to impact mango yields which could send prices zooming in domestic markets.

There's a silver lining, though. Of sorts. Mango exports are unlikely to be hit, according to trade analysts.

India is the world's largest producer of mangoes, celebrated nationally as the king of fruits. But the flowering of mango trees has been impacted this year, and the fruit's size and weight is likely to be smaller, too, depending on region.

"Because of unseasonal rainfall during winter (December-January) in some parts of West Bengal, flowering was affected," said Sandipan Biswas, a mango grower from Ichapur of North 24 Parganas in West Bengal who has 2 acres of mango orchards.

Biswas added, "This season, the crop is less. I am expecting the harvest from my orchard to be around 50 baskets (1 basket=40 kg) against the typical



Despite the poor harvest, trade analysts do not expect India's mango exports to suffer as it has shipment commitments.

150-200 baskets. Prices are already up and may rise further as produce is low this year."

Kalachand Dutta, another

grower from the same region, said that not only the quantity but also the size and weight of mangoes could be affected due

to inadequate precipitation before the flowering season.

"Weight of some varieties such as Amrapali, Fazli, and Langra are about 200-250 gm each against their original of 450-500 gm. This is going to pinch our pocket this season as we will have to put more produce in the basket when we sell it to traders in the market."

Similarly, growers in Tamil Nadu will bear the brunt of a poor harvest in terms of margin as heatwaves have slashed the crop at least by a half.

"In Tamil Nadu, mango crop is poor because excess heat and less water availability for irrigation causing flower and fruit to

drop. As a result, we lost more than 50-60% of the crop. Now the hot windy weather condition for the past 3-4 days is causing fruit drop rapidly," said Prabhuram Rajagopal, who runs a nursery in Krishnagiri and is a member of the Tamil Nadu Mango Growers Federation. "To make up for the loss, farmers must get ₹400-500 per kg," Rajagopal said.

Currently, prices of Bombay Suruli and Gopal Bhog varieties are quoted at ₹45 and ₹50 a kg compared with ₹20 and ₹25-28 per kg in the corresponding period last year.

The best-quality Alphonso is priced at around ₹200 per kg,

the B-grade at ₹60-70 C-grade ₹40-50 a kg.

Despite the poor harvest, trade analysts do not expect India's mango exports to suffer as it has shipment commitments and exporters demand higher prices from the international market.

"I don't see any impact of produce on exports in terms of volume and value. Most of the mangoes have already been shipped because they are booked well in advance. The exports start from March onwards," said Ajay Sahai, director general and CEO of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations.

Source: *Mint*, 13 May 2024. Also online [here](#).

குறைந்த செலவில் உயர்திறனுடன்

ஐஐடி ஸ்டார்ட்-அப் நிறுவனம் உருவாக்கிய புதிய மைக்ரோசிப்

▶ இந்திய நிறுவனங்கள் பயன்படுத்த அழைப்பு

● சென்னை

குறைந்த செலவில் உயர்திறனுடன் சென்னை ஐஐடி ஸ்டார்ட்-அப் நிறுவனம் உருவாக்கியுள்ள புதிய மைக்ரோசிப் சாதனத்தை இந்திய தொழில்நிறுவனங்கள் பயன்படுத்திக் கொள்ளுமாறு அழைப்பு விடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

சென்னை ஐஐடி ஸ்டார்ட்-அப் நிறுவனமான மைன்ட் குரோவ் டெக்னாலஜிஸ் நிறுவனம் குறைந்த செலவில் உயர்திறன்மிக்க புதிய மைக்ரோசிப் சாதனத்தை ('Secure IoT') வணிகரீதியாக உருவாக்கியுள்ளது. இந்த சாதனம், ஸ்மார்ட்வாட்ச், வாட்டர் மற்றும் கியாஸ் மீட்டர், மின்வாகன பேட்டரி மேலாண்மை உள்ளிட்டவற்றில் பெரிதும் பயன்படும்.

மத்திய அரசின் அறிவியல் மற்றும் தொழில்நுட்பத் துறையின் நிதியுதவி பெற்ற மைன்ட் குரோவ் நிறுவனத்தில் ஐஐடி

மாணவர்களும் இணைந்து இந்த மைக்ரோசிப் சாதனத்தை வடிவமைத்து உருவாக்கியுள்ளனர். இதன்வெற்றி கொண்டாட்ட நிகழ்ச்சி ஐஐடி வளாகத்தில் நேற்று மாலை நடைபெற்றது.

இதில் ஐஐடி இயக்குநர் வி.காமகோடி கலந்துகொண்டு பேசியதாவது: புதிய மைக்ரோசிப் தயாரிப்பு குழுவில் ஐஐடி மாணவர்கள் மற்றும் இதர கல்விநிறுவனங்களைச் சேர்ந்த மாணவர்களும் இடம்பெற்றுள்ளனர். செமிகண்டக்டர் உற்பத்தியில் இந்தியா வேகமாக முன்னேறி வரும் சூழலில் இந்த மைக்ரோசிப்பை தயாரித்திருப்பது வரவேற்கத்தக்கது.

இந்தியாவில் வரும் காலத்தில் செமிகண்டக்டர் உற்பத்தித் துறை மிக வேகமாக வளரும். குறைந்த செலவில் உயர்தரத்தில் தயாரிக்கப்பட்டுள்ள இந்த மைக்ரோசிப் சாதனத்தை டாடா குழுமம், மகேந்திரா அண்ட்

மகேந்திரா ஆட்டோமொபைல், எல் அண்ட் டி உள்ளிட்ட இந்திய நிறுவனங்கள் பயன்படுத்திக்கொள்ள முன்வர வேண்டும்.

முற்றிலும் உள்நாட்டு தொழில்நுட்பத்தில் உருவான மைக்ரோ புராஸசர் சக்தி சாதனத்தின் 2 வர்த்தக சோதனைகளை வெற்றிகரமாக நிறைவேற்றியுள்ளோம். இதற்கு அதிக சந்தை வாய்ப்புகள் உள்ளன. அதன்தொடர்ச்சியாக தற்போது உருவாக்கப்பட்டு மைக்ரோசிப் சாதனத்துக்கும் வர்த்தகரீதியாக அதிக சந்தை வாய்ப்புகள் உருவாகும்.

அந்த வகையில் இந்த திட்டத்துக்கு நிதியுதவி அளித்த மத்திய மின்னணு மற்றும் தகவல் தொழில்நுட்பத் துறை, மத்திய கல்வித்துறை, மத்திய அறிவியல் மற்றும் தொழில்நுட்பத் துறை ஆகியவற்றுக்கு நன்றி.

இவ்வாறு அவர் கூறினார்.

தொழில்

விளைபொருளுக்கு ஏற்ப தொழில் பூங்கா மாவட்டம் தோறும் அமைக்கிறது அரசு

சென்னை, மே 4- விவசாயிகளுக்கு உரிய வருவாய் கிடைக்கவும், அதிக விளைச்சலின் போது விலை குறையாமல் இருக்கவும், மாவட்டம் தோறும் விளைபொருளுக்கு ஏற்ற தொழில் பூங்காவை அமைக்க, சிறு, குறு மற்றும் நடுத்தர தொழில் துறை முடிவு செய்துள்ளது.

தமிழகத்தில் கரும், திண்டுக்கல் உள்ளிட்ட மாவட்டங்களில் முருங்கை விளைச்சல் அதிகம் உள்ளது. பலர் முருங்கை காய், முருங்கை கீரை ஆகியவற்றை மட்டும் சமையலுக்கு பயன்படுத்துகின்றனர்.

முருங்கை இலை, விதை, பூ என, முருங்கையில் அதிக ஊட்டச்சத்துகள் கொண்டவை

இருப்பதால், வெளிநாடுகளில் பல்வேறு மதிப்பு கூட்டப்பட்ட பொருட்கள் தயாரிக்கப்படுகின்றன.

தமிழக சிறு, குறு நடுத்தர தொழில் துறையின் கீழ் செயல்படும், உணவு பதப்படுத்துதல் மற்றும் வேளாண் ஏற்றுமதி நிறுவனம், கரும்பில் முருங்கை தொழில் பூங்கா அமைத்து வருகிறது.

அந்த பூங்காவில் உள்ள தொழில்மனைகள், முருங்கையில் இருந்து மதிப்பு கூட்டப்பட்ட பொருட்களை தயாரிக்கும் தொழில் நிறுவனங்களுக்கு வழங்கப்பட உள்ளன. இவற்றின் வாயிலாக, முருங்கை பயிரிடும் விவசாயிகளுக்கு ஆண்டு முழுதும் வருவாய் கிடைக்கும்.

ஈரோட்டில் மஞ்சள், கடலூரில் முந்திரி, பலா;

பெரம்பலூரில் மக்காச் சோளம் என, ஒவ்வொரு மாவட்டத்திலும் காய்கறிகள், கீரை வகைகள் என அதிகம் விளைகின்றன.

ஒரு விளைபொருளின் விளைச்சல் அதிகரிக்கும் போது, விலை வீழ்ச்சி அடைகிறது. இதனால், போதிய வருவாய் கிடைக்காமல் விவசாயிகள் பாதிக்கப்படுகின்றனர்.

இது குறித்து, சிறு, குறு நடுத்தர தொழில் துறை அதிகாரி ஒருவர் கூறியதாவது:

தக்காளி உள்ளிட்ட பல வகை காய்கறிகளும்; மா, பலா, வாழை என, பழ வகைகளும் தமிழகத்தில் அதிகம் விளைகின்றன.

ஒவ்வொரு பகுதியிலும் என்னென்ன விளைபொருள் அதிகம் உள்ளது என கண்டறியப்பட்டு, அதற்கு

ஏற்ப தொழில் பூங்கா அமைக்கப்பட உள்ளது.

அங்கு, தொழில் துவங்கும் சிறு நிறுவனங்கள் பயன்பெற, மதிப்பு கூட்டப்பட்ட பொருட்கள் தயாரிக்கும் தொழில் கூடங்களை உள்ளடக்கிய பொது வசதி மையம் ஏற்படுத்தி தரப்படும்.

இதன் வாயிலாக, விவசாயிகளுக்கு உரிய வருவாயும், உள்ளூர் இளைஞர்களுக்கு அதிக வேலைவாய்ப்பும் கிடைக்கும்.

இதற்காக, ஒவ்வொரு பகுதியிலும் என்னென்ன விளைபொருட்கள் அதிகம் கிடைக்கின்றன; அவற்றுக்கான சந்தை வாய்ப்பு உள்ளிட்டவை தொடர்பாக ஆய்வு செய்யப்படுகிறது.

இவ்வாறு அவர் கூறினார்.

Source: Dinamalar, 4 May 2024, page 16.

6,384 தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள்

தமிழகத்தில் 3 ஆண்டுகளில் துவக்கம்

சென்னை, மே 5- தமிழகத்தில் கடந்த மூன்று ஆண்டுகளில், 6,384 புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் புதிதாக துவக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன.

அரசு வெளியிட்டுள்ள செய்திக் குறிப்பு:

தமிழ்நாடு புத்தொழில் மற்றும் புத்தாக்கக் கொள்கை, கடந்த செப்., 20ம் தேதி முதல் வர் ஸ்டாலினால் வெளியிடப்பட்டது. கடந்த 2021 வரை, தமிழகத்தில், 2,032 புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் பதிவு செய்யப்பட்டிருந்தன.

இன்று நான்கு மடங்கிற்கு மேல் அதிகரித்து, 8,416 ஆக உயர்ந்துள்ளன. அதாவது, மூன்று ஆண்டுகளில், 6,384 புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் துவங்கப்பட்டு உள்ளன.

மகளிர், 'ஸ்டார்ட் அப்'களின் எண்ணிக்கை, 2020ல், 966 ஆக

இருந்தது. தற்போது, 3,163 ஆக உயர்ந்துள்ளது. இது அரசின் செயல்பாட்டிற்கு கிடைத்த வெற்றி. ஸ்டார்ட் அப் நிறுவனங்களுக்கு உகந்த சூழலை கட்டமைத்து செயல்படும் மாநிலங்கள் பட்டியலை, மத்திய அரசு வெளியிட்டுள்ளது. அதில், தமிழகம் முதல் நிலையை பிடித்துள்ளது.

ஆதார நிதி

துவக்க நிலையில் உள்ள, புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்களுக்கு ஆதரவு அளக்கும் வகையில், தமிழக அரசு தகுதி வாய்ந்த நிறுவனங்களுக்கு, ஆதார நிதியாக 10 லட்சம் ரூபாயை வழங்குகிறது. இதுவரை, 132 நிறுவனங்களுக்கு 13.95 கோடி ரூபாய் வழங்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

பட்டியலினம் மற்றும் பழங்குடியினரால் நிறுவப்படும் புத்

தொழில் நிறுவனங்களை ஊக்குவிக்கும் திட்டத்தில், இதுவரை 38 நிறுவனங்களுக்கு 55.20 கோடி ரூபாய் பங்கு முதலீடுகள் உறுதி செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளன.

அரசின் நேரடி முதலீடு பெற்ற, புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் வழியாக, 1,913 வேலை வாய்ப்புகள் ஏற்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளன.

வழிகாட்டி மென்பொருள்

புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்களுக்கு தகுந்த வழிகாட்டி தலை அளிக்க, வழிகாட்டி தளம் எனப்படும், 'Mentor TN' துவக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. இதில், 257 துறைசார் வல்லுனர்கள் வழிகாட்டுனர்களாக இணைந்து உள்ளனர். இதுவரை, 669 புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் பதிவு செய்துள்ளன.

ஸ்டார்ட் அப் நிறுவனங்கள் பயன் பெறும் வகையில், 'ஸ்டார்ட் கார்டு'

அறிமுகம் செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது. இதன் வழியாக அங்கீகரிக்கப்பட்ட நிறுவனங்களில் இருந்து, பொருள் மற்றும் சேவைகளை, சலுகை அடிப்படையில் பெற முடியும். இதுவரை, 137 நிறுவனங்கள் ஸ்டார்ட் கார்டு பெற்று பயனடைந்துள்ளன.

பன்னாட்டு அளவில் தடம் பதிக்கும் நோக்கில், துபாயில் புதிதாக புத்தொழில் ஒருங்கிணைப்பு மையம் துவக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

இதன் வழியே, தமிழகத்தில் உள்ள ஸ்டார்ட் அப் நிறுவனங்கள் துபாய் சென்று, அங்குள்ள வாய்ப்புகளைப் பெற வழி ஏற்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளது.

சென்னையில், அடுத்த ஆண்டு ஜனவரி மாதம், உலக புத்தொழில் மாநாடு நடத்தப்பட உள்ளது.

இவ்வாறு அதில் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது.



வெள்ளி	
ன்னை நிலவரம்/ரூபாயில்)	
ரம்	90.00
லா	90,000

தொழில்

3 தொழிற்பேட்டை அமைக்கும் பணிகளை துவக்கியது 'சிட்கோ'

சென்னை, மே 14- குறு, சிறு தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் பயன் அடைய, செங்கல்பட்டு உட்பட மூன்று மாவட்டங்களில் புதிய தொழிற்பேட்டை அமைக்கும் பணியை, 'சிட்கோ' நிறுவனம் துவக்கியுள்ளது.

தமிழக அரசின், 'சிட்கோ' எனப்படும் சிறு தொழில் வளர்ச்சி நிறுவனம், பல்வேறு உள்கட்டமைப்பு வசதிகளுடன் கூடிய தொழிற்பேட்டைகளை அமைக்கிறது. அங்குள்ள தொழில்மனைகள், குறு, சிறுநிறுவனங்களுக்கு வழங்கப்படுகின்றன.

இந்நிறுவனம், 127 தொழிற்பேட்டைகளை

நிர்வகித்து வருகிறது.

புதிதாக, புதுக்கோட்டை மாவட்டத்தில், ஆலங்குடி தாலுகா, கொத்தக்கோட்டையில், 55 ஏக்கரிலும்; செங்கல்பட்டு மாவட்டம், திருக்கழுக்குன்றம் தாலுகா, முள்ளிக்கொளத்தூரில், 28 ஏக்கரிலும்; திருநெல்வேலி மாவட்டம், பாளையங்கோட்டை, முத்தூரிலும் தொழிற்பேட்டைகள் அமைக்கப்பட உள்ளன.

திட்ட செலவு, 55 கோடி ரூபாய். இதற்கான அறிவிப்பை, குறு, சிறு மற்றும் நடுத்தர தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் துறை அமைச்சர் அன்பரசன், கடந்த 2023ல் சட்டசபையில்

அறிவித்தார்.

தற்போது செங்கல்பட்டு, முள்ளிக்கொளத்தூரில் தொழிற்பேட்டை அமைக்கும் பணியை சிட்கோ துவக்கியுள்ளது. அங்கு நிலத்தை மேம்படுத்தி, சாலை, தெருவிளக்கு, கழிவுநீர் அகற்றும் அமைப்பு உள்ளிட்ட உள்கட்டமைப்பு பணிகள் நடந்து வருகின்றன.

இது குறித்து, குறு, சிறு, நடுத்தர தொழில் துறை அதிகாரி ஒருவர் கூறியதாவது:

சென்னை புறநகரில் புதிய தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் அதிகளவில் துவக்கப்பட்டு வருகின்றன. அந்த பகுதியில் உள்ள

தொழில் முனைவோர் பயன்பெற, செங்கல்பட்டிலும்; வளர்ந்து வரும் தொழில் பகுதிகளான புதுக்கோட்டை, கொத்தக்கோட்டை; திருநெல்வேலி, முத்தூரிலும் தொழிற்பேட்டைகள் அமைக்கப்படுகின்றன. இதனால், 5,000 நபர்களுக்கு வேலை கிடைக்கும்.

செங்கல்பட்டில் பணிகள் துவங்கிய நிலையில், கொத்தக்குளம், முத்தூரில் நிலம் தயாராக உள்ளது. அங்கு, அடுத்த மாதம் முதல் தொழிற்பேட்டை அமைக்கும் பணி துவங்கப்படும்.

இவ்வாறு அவர் கூறினார்.

‘தமிழகத்தில் மூன்று ஆண்டுகளில் 6,115 புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்கள் தொடக்கம்’

சென்னை, மே 4: திமுகவின் 3 ஆண்டுக்கால ஆட்சியில் 6,115 புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்கள் தொடங்கப்பட்டுள்ளதாக தமிழக அரசின் சார்பில் தெரிவிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

இது தொடர்பாக தமிழக அரசு சனிக்கிழமை வெளியிட்ட செய்திக்குறிப்பு:

2024-25-ஆம் நிதியாண்டுக்கான நிதி நிலை அறிக்கையில், கடந்த 3 ஆண்டுகளாக மேற்கொள்ளப்பட்ட சிறப்பு முயற்சிகளின் விளைவாக புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் அமைவதற்கான உகந்த சூழலை உருவாக்குவதில் நாட்டிலேயே தலைசிறந்த மாநிலங்களில் ஒன்றாக தமிழகம் தேர்வு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது மகிழ்ச்சிக்குரியது.

அந்த வெற்றியைத் தக்கவைக்கும் நோக்குடன் உலகில் பல்வேறு பகுதிகளில் முத்திரை பதித்த முன்னணி புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் நிறுவனங்களும், இளம் தொழில்முனைவோ

ரும் கலந்து கொள்ளும் வகையில் உலகப் புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் மாநாடுவரும் 2025 ஜனவரியில் சென்னையில் நடத்தப்படும் என அறிவிக்கப்பட்டது.

எண்ணிக்கை அதிகரிப்பு: 2021-இல்திமுகபொறுப்பேற்ற நிலையில் தமிழகத்தில் இருந்த புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் நிறுவனங்களின் எண்ணிக்கை 2,105 மட்டுமே ஆகும். 3 ஆண்டுகளாக அரசு, புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் நிறுவனங்களுக்கு அளித்து வரும் மிகப்பெரிய ஊக்கம் காரணமாகவே 2021-க்குப் பிறகு 6,115 புத்தாக்க நிறுவனங்கள் தமிழகத்தில் புதிதாகத் தொடங்கப்பட்டுள்ளன.

இது முதல்வர் தமிழக இளைஞர்களுக்கு வேலைவாய்ப்புகளைப் பெருக்க வேண்டும் என்ற நோக்கத்தின் அடிப்படையிலும், தமிழகத்தின் பொருளாதாரத்தை ஒரு டிரில்லியன் அமெரிக்க டாலர் அளவுக்கு உயர்த்த வேண்டும் என்

னும் குறிக்கோளின் அடிப்படையிலும் தமிழகத்தில் ஏற்படுத்தி வரும் தொழில் வளர்ச்சியின் சாதனைக் குறியீடாகவே திகழ்கிறது.

புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் வளர்ச்சிக்குத் தேவையான உதவிகள் அளிக்க 5,393 பயிற்சிகள் வழங்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. ஸ்ரீபெரும்புதூர் மற்றும் ஒசூர் சிப்காட் தொழிற்பூங்காக்களில் புத்தாக்க மையங்கள் ரூ. 33.46 கோடி மதிப்பீட்டில் சிப்காட் நிறுவனம் நிறுவப்பட்டு, புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் வளர்ச்சிக்கு தமிழக அரசு பெரிதும் ஊக்கம் அளித்துள்ளது. இவ்வாறு பல்வேறு முயற்சிகளை முனைப்புடன் மேற்கொண்டு வருவதன் மூலம் முதல்வர் மு.க.ஸ்டாலின் புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்கள் வளர்ச்சியில் மாபெரும் சாதனைகள் படைத்து வருகிறார் என்று அதில் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது.

Source: Dinamani, 5 May 2024.

கடந்த 3 ஆண்டு கால முயற்சிகளின் விளைவாக

6,115 புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் தொடக்கம்

● **நாட்டிலேயே தலைசிறந்த மாநிலமாக இருப்பதாக தமிழக அரசு பெருமிதம்**

● **சென்னை**
தமிழகத்தில் 3 ஆண்டுகளில் 6,115 புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் தொடங்கப்பட்டுள்ளன என்று தமிழக அரசு தெரிவித்துள்ளது. இதுதொடர்பாக நேற்று தமிழக அரசு வெளியிட்ட செய்திக்குறிப்பில் கூறியிருப்பதாவது: தமிழக அரசின் 2024-25-ம் நிதியாண்டுக்கான நிதி நிலை அறிக்கையில், “கடந்த 3 ஆண்டுகளாக மேற்கொள்ளப்பட்ட சிறப்பு முயற்சிகளின் விளைவாக புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் (Startups) அமைவதற்கான உகந்த சூழலை உருவாக்குவதில் நாட்டிலேயே தலைசிறந்த மாநிலங்களில் ஒன்றாக தமிழகம் தேர்வு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது என்பது பெருமகிழ்ச்சிக்குரியது.

2021-ல் திமுக அரசு பொறுப்பேற்ற நிலையில் தமிழகத்தில் 2,105 புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் இருந்தன. இந்த 3 ஆண்டுகளாக இந்த அரசு புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்களுக்கு அளித்து வரும் மிகப்பெரிய ஊக்கம் காரணமாகவே 2021-க்குப் பிறகு 6,115 புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் தமிழகத்தில் புதிதாகத் தொடங்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. முதல்வர் மு.க.ஸ்டாலின், தமிழக இளைஞர்களுக்கு வேலை

வாய்ப்புகளைப் பெருக்கிட வேண்டும் என்ற நோக்கத்தின் அடிப்படையிலும், தமிழக பொருளாதாரத்தை ஒரு டிரில்லியன் அமெரிக்க டாலர் அளவுக்கு உயர்த்திட வேண்டும் என்னும் குறிக்கோளின் அடிப்படையிலும், தமிழகம் தொழில் வளர்ச்சியின் சாதனைக் குறியீடாகவே திகழ்கிறது. தமிழக அரசின் சார்பில் புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் வளர்ச்சிக்காக கோலையில் 2023 ஆகஸ்ட் மாதம் நடத்திய ‘தமிழக புத்தொழில் திருவிழா 2023’ மாபெரும் வெற்றி கண்டது. 18,835 பார்வையாளர்கள், 1,761 பரிநிதிதிகளும், 841 கண் காட்சி அமைப்பாளர்கள் இத்திருவிழாவில் பங்கேற்றனர். 83 உற்பத்திப் பொருட்கள் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டன. 67 புத்தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் மூலம் 251 பொருட்கள் தயாரிக்கும் திட்டங்கள் முன்மொழியப்பட்டன.

அவற்றில், ரூ.3 கோடியே 64 லட்சத்து 39 ஆயிரம் மதிப்பீட்டில் 1,674 தொழில்களைத் தொடங்கிட தொழில் முகவர்கள் முன்வந்தனர். 18 மகளிர் கய உதவிச் சூழல்கள் புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் தொடங்காக மாறியுள்ளன. 25 மகளிர் தொழில் முகவர்கள் புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்

வாய்ப்புகளைப் பெற்றுள்ளனர். தாழ்த்தப்பட்ட மலைவாழ் மக்கள் மேம்பாட்டுத் துறை நிதியுதவியால் 150 வேலைவாய்ப்புகளும், டான்சி நிதியுதவியில் 1,525 வேலைவாய்ப்புகளும், லேபரல் 238 வேலை வாய்ப்புகளும் என ஆயிரக்கணக்கான வேலைவாய்ப்புகள் புதிதாகத் தொடங்கப்பட்ட புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்கள் மூலம் ஏற்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளன.

டான்சி நிதியுதவியில் தொடங்கப்பட்ட புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்களில் ரூ.314.30 கோடி முதலீடுகள் உயர்ந்துள்ளன. தமிழ்நாடு நிதித் துறை மூலமாக 714 முதலீட்டாளர்களுடன் இணைந்துள்ள புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்களின் நிதி ரூ.26 கோடியே 40 லட்சமாக உயர்ந்துள்ளது.

புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் வளர்ச்சிக்குத் தேவையான உதவிகள் அளித்திட 5,393 பயிற்சிகள் வழங்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. ஸ்ரீபெரும்புதூர், ஒசூர் சிப்காட் தொழிற்பூங்காக்களில் புத்தாக்க மையங்கள் ரூ.33.46 கோடியில் நிறுவப்பட்டு, புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் வளர்ச்சிக்கு இந்த அரசு பெரிதும் ஊக்கம் அளித்துள்ளது.

சென்னைவையச் சேர்ந்த னாரெஸ்.ஆ.டோமோடர்வ்ஸ்டார்ட்

அப் நிறுவனம் தமிழக அரசின் டான்சி நிதியம் மூலம் ரூ.10 லட்சம் திரட்டிய பிறகு, இந்நிறுவனத்தில் எம்எம் போர்ட்ரூம் ரூ.200 கோடி முதலீடு செய்துள்ளது. இதன் மூலம் 60 பேருக்கு வேலை வாய்ப்பு கிடைத்துள்ளது.

புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் வளர்ச்சிக்கான 5 ஊக்க மையங்களுக்கு சிங்கப்பூரிஸுள்ள ஸ்விட்ச் தொழில் நிறுவனத்துக்கு சென்று அதன் செயல்பாடுகளை அறிந்து பயன் பெறும் வாய்ப்பு அளிக்கப்பட்டது. 15 புத்தாக்கத் தொழில் ஊக்க மையங்களின் வளர்ச்சிக்காக அவை ஒவ்வொன்றுக்கும் ரூ.5 லட்சம் மானிய உதவி வழங்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்களுக்கான போர்ட்டல் கடந்த பிப்ரவரி 29-ம் தேதி ஏற்படுத்தப்பட்டது. 78 புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்கள் இதில் இணைந்துள்ளன.

இப்படிப் பல்வேறு முயற்சிகளை முனைப்புடன் மேற்கொண்டு வருவதன் மூலம் முதல்வர் மு.க.ஸ்டாலின் புத்தாக்கத் தொழில்கள் வளர்ச்சியில் மாபெரும் சாதனைகள் படைத்து வருகிறார் என்று பலரும் பாராட்டுகின்றனர். இவ்வாறு அதில் தெரிவிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

Source: Hindu Tamil Thisai, 5 May 2024.

அன்னிய முதலீடு, இணையதள வணிகம், ஊக வணிகத்தால்

இந்திய பாரம்பரிய சிறு வணிகம் முடங்காமல் பாதுகாக்க வேண்டும்

● வணிகர்கள் வாழ்வரிமை பாதுகாப்பு மாநாட்டில் தீர்மானம்

● திருவள்ளூர்

அன்னிய முதலீடும், இணையதள வணிகமும், ஊக வணிகமும் இந்திய பாரம்பரிய சிறு வணிகத்தை முடக்கி விடாமல் பாதுகாக்க மத்திய, மாநில அரசுகள் நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க வேண்டும் எனக் கோரிக்கை விடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. வணிகர் தினமான நேற்று தமிழ்நாடு அனைத்து வணிகர் சங்கங்களின் பேரமைப்பு சார்பில் வணிகர்கள் வாழ்வரிமை பாதுகாப்பு மாநாடு, திருவள்ளூர் மாவட்டம், வானகரத்தில் நடைபெற்றது.

தமிழ்நாடு அனைத்து வணிகர் சங்கங்களின் பேரமைப்பின் மாநில தலைவர் கொளத்தூர் த.ரவி தலைமையில் நடைபெற்ற இம்மாநாட்டில் விஜிபி குழுமத் தலைவர் வி.ஜி.சந்தோசம், தமிழ்நாடு தன்னுரிமை கழகத் தலைவர் பழ.கருப்பையா, பெருந்தலைவர் மக்கள் கட்சித் தலைவர் என்.ஆர்.தனபாலன், திரைப்பட நடிகர் எஸ்.வி.சேகர் உள்ளிட்டோர் சிறப்பு அழைப்பாளர்களாகப் பங்கேற்று, வணிகர்களின் பிரச்சினைகள் மற்றும் அதைத் தீர்ப்பதற்கு அரசு எடுக்க வேண்டிய நடவடிக்கைகள் குறித்து விரிவாக எடுத்துரைத்தனர்.

மேலும், தமிழ்நாடு அனைத்து



↑ தமிழ்நாடு அனைத்து வணிகர் சங்கங்களின் பேரமைப்பு சார்பில், வணிகர்கள் வாழ்வரிமை பாதுகாப்பு மாநாடு வானகரத்தில் நேற்று நடைபெற்றது. இதில், தமிழ்நாடு அனைத்து வணிகர் சங்கங்களின் பேரமைப்பின் மாநில தலைவர் கொளத்தூர் த.ரவி, தமிழ்நாடு தன்னுரிமை கழகத் தலைவர் பழ.கருப்பையா, பெருந்தலைவர் மக்கள் கட்சித் தலைவர் என்.ஆர்.தனபாலன், திரைப்பட நடிகர் எஸ்.வி.சேகர் உள்ளிட்டோர் பங்கேற்றனர்.

வணிகர் சங்கங்களின் பேரமைப்பின் மாநில பொதுச் செயலாளர் ஆர்.ரமேஷ்குமார், மாநிலப் பொருளாளர் வி.என்.ராஜா, மாநில செய்தித் தொடர்பாளர் எம்.பி.ரமேஷ் உள்ளிட்ட நிர்வாகிகள் பங்கேற்று தங்கள் கருத்துகளை வழங்கினர்.

மாநாட்டின்போது, “இந்தியாவில் புதிதாக ஒன்றிய அரசு உப்பு, அரிசி, கோதுமை ஆகிய உணவுப் பொருட்களுக்கான ஜிஎஸ்டியை நீக்க வேண்டும், பேரிடர் காலங்களில் வணிக இழப்பு

களைக் கணக்கில் கொண்டு, சிறு, குறு வணிகர்களுக்கு அரசு உதவி செய்ய வேண்டும். வணிகர் தினத்தை அரசு விழாவாகத் தமிழ்நாடு அரசு அறிவிக்க வேண்டும். வணிகர் நல வாரியம் மூலம் 60 வயதைக் கடந்த வணிகருக்கு ஓய்வூதியம் வழங்கத் தமிழக அரசு நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க வேண்டும். அன்னிய முதலீடும், இணையதள வணிகமும், ஊக வணிகமும் இந்திய பாரம்பரிய சிறு வணிகத்தை முடக்கிவிடாமல் பாதுகாக்க மத்திய, மாநில அரசுகள்

உரிய நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க வேண்டும். காவல் துறையும், உள்ளாட்சி அமைப்புகளும் உன்னிப்பாய் கவனித்து, வட மாநிலங்களிலிருந்து தமிழகத்துக்கு கொண்டு வரப்படும் நெகிழிப் பொருட்களைத் தடை செய்ய வேண்டும். அரசு கட்டுமான பொருட்களின் விலைகளைக் கட்டுப்படுத்த உடனடி நடவடிக்கைகளை மேற்கொள்ள வேண்டும் என்பன உள்ளிட்ட தீர்மானங்கள் நிறைவேற்றப்பட்டன.

Source: Hindu Tamil Thisai, 6 May 2024, page 4.

மாணவர்களுக்கு ரூ.1,000 வழங்கும் 'தமிழ் புதல்வன்' திட்டம் ஜூலையில் தொடக்கம்

சென்னை, மே 8: அரசுப் பள்ளிகளில் பயின்று உயர்கல்விக்குச் செல்லும் மாணவர்களுக்கு மாதந்தோறும் ரூ.1,000 வழங்கும் 'தமிழ் புதல்வன்' திட்டம் வரும் ஜூலை மாதம் தொடங்கப்படும் என தமிழக அரசின் தலைமைச் செயலர் சிவதாமஸ் மீனா கூறினார்.

தமிழகத்தில் பள்ளி, கல்லூரி மாணவர்களின் திறன்களை மேம்படுத்தி வேலைவாய்ப்புகளை ஏற்படுத்தி தருவதற்காக தமிழக அரசால் 'நான் முதல்வன்' திட்டம் அமல்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளது. இதன் ஒருபகுதியாக, மீனா 2 முடிந்த மாணவர்களுக்கு உயர்கல்விக்கு வழங்கப்படும் 'கல்லூரிக் கனவு' திட்டத்தை முதல்வர் முகேஷ் டைவன் 2022-ஆம் ஆண்டு தொடங்கிவைத்தார்.

கல்லூரிக் கனவு திட்டத்தின் இலக்கு தொட்டிருந்து நியூ கல்வி பாண்டிச்சேரி, மீனா 2 தேர்ச்சி பெற்ற மாணவர்களுக்கான 'கல்லூரிக் கனவு-2024' நிகழ்ச்சி சென்னை கலிபோர்ட்டோ, ஹாம் அண்ட் ஹாஸ்டல் துறையின் துணை வளாகத்தில் புதன் கிழமை நடைபெற்றது. இதே போன்று திருச்சி, கோவை, தாய் மட்டியம், மதுரை, நெல்லை, சேலம் ஆகிய மாவட்டங்களிலும்

இந்த நிகழ்ச்சி நடத்தப்பட்டது. இதில் அடுத்தகட்டமாக என்ன படக்களம், அதற்கான வேலைவாய்ப்புகள் என்னென்ன என்பன உள்ளிட்ட பல்வேறு தகவல்கள் மாணவர்களுக்கு வழங்கப்பட்டன. இதற்குள் தமிழ்நாடு திறன் மேம்பாட்டுக் குழுவும் மற்றும் தமிழ்நாடு பாடநூல் குழுமம் சார்பில் சிறப்பு கைகேடுகளும் வழங்கப்பட்டன. மேலும், பொறியியல், கலை மற்றும் அறிவியல் கட்டம், மருத்துவம், பாலிடெக்னிக், வேளாண்மை, கால்நடை மருத்துவம் போன்றவற்றில் உள்ள படிப்புகள் குறித்து துறை சார்ந்த கல்வியறிவு வழிகாட்டுதல்களை வழங்கினர். அத்துடன் பல்வேறு கல்வி நிறுவனங்களின் சார்பாக சிறப்பு அரங்குகளும் அமைக்கப்பட்டிருந்தன.

கல்வித் துறை சிறந்த முதலமைச்சர் சென்னையில் நடைபெற்ற நிகழ்ச்சியை தலைமைச் செயலர் சிவதாமஸ் மீனா தொடங்கிவைத்து பேசினார்.

நான் முதல்வன் திட்டம் ஒவ்வொரு மாணவருக்கும் கல்வி, தொழில்சார் கனவுகளை தொடர்வதற்கு தமிழக அரசின் உதவியாக இருந்து வருகிறது. இதுதான் பள்ளி



தலைமைச் செயலர் தகவல்

சென்னை போட்டியும் அனா ஹாஸ்டல் துறை சார்ந்த பதக்கிதழை 'நான் முதல்வன்' திட்டத்தின் கீழ் கல்லூரிக் கனவு மாவட்ட அளவிலான நிகழ்ச்சியை தொடங்கி வைத்து மீனா, மாணவர்களுடன் கலந்துரையாடிய தலைமைச் செயலர் சிவதாமஸ் மீனா உடன் முதல்வரின் செயல் திட்டங்களைத் தயார் செய்து கொடுத்தார். சிறப்பு திட்ட செயலகத்தினால் தயாரிக்கப்பட்ட தொழில்நுட்ப கல்வி அமைப்பின் கீழ் நடத்தப்பட்ட ஆட்சியர் சித்தார்த் ஜெய்

ளிகளில் காலம் உணவு திட்டம் செயல்படுத்தப்பட்டு இந்தியாவுக்கே முன்னோடி மாநிலமாக தமிழகம் திகழ்கிறது.

கல்வித் துறை சிறந்த முதலமைச்சர் அமைச்சர் எடுக்க முடியாது. இந்த முதலமைச்சர் கடைசி வரை உயர்கல்வி இலக்கு அளிப்பதே பல்வேறு திட்டங்களைப் பரப்ப முதிர்ந்த மாணவர்கள் தங்கள் லட்சியங்களை அடைந்து முன்னேற வேண்டும்.

மாணவர்கள் அனைவரும் விஞ்ஞானிகள், ஹாஸ்டல், ஹோட்டல் அதிகாரிகள், தொழில் முனைவோராக முடியும். அதற்கே உயர்கல்வியை பெற்று வாழ்க்கையில் வெற்றி அடைய வேண்டும் என்றார் அவர்.

இந்த நிகழ்ச்சியில் முதல்வரின் தனி செயலர் முருகானந்தம், பள்ளிக் கல்வித் துறைச் செயலர் ஜே. குமாரகுமார், தொட்டை கல்வி இயக்குநர் சுகன்யாபதி உள்ளிட்ட அதிகாரிகள் பங்கேற்று கொண்டனர்.

குழு அமைக்கப்படும் இலக்கு தொட்டிருந்து தலைமைச் செயலர் சிவதாமஸ் மீனா செய்தியாளர்களை சந்தித்து உரையாற்றி உயர்கல்வியில் மாணவர் சேர்க்கை எவ்வளவு

தமிழகத்தில்தான் அதிகமாக உள்ளது. மீனா 2 வகுப்பை நிறைவு செய்து மாணவர்கள் அனைவரையும் உயர்கல்வியில் 100 சதவீதம் சேர்ப்பதற்கான நுழைவாய்வு. அந்த வகையில் தான் கல்லூரிக் கனவு நிகழ்ச்சி நடத்துபடுகிறது. உயர்கல்வியில் சேராமல் இருப்பவர்களை கண்டறிந்து அவர்களுக்கும் படிக்க வைப்பதற்காக குழு அமைக்கவுள்ளோம்.

தமிழகத்தில் அரசுப் பள்ளிகளில் 6-ஆம் வகுப்பு முதல் மீனா 2 வகுப்பு வரை பயின்று உயர்கல்வி படிக்கும் மாணவர்களுக்கு உதவும் வகையில் 'புதல்வன் பெண்' திட்டம் அமல்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளது. இதன் மூலம் அவர்களுக்கு மாதம் ரூ.1,000 வழங்கப்படுகிறது. இதனால் மாணவர்கள் 20 முதல் 25 சதவீதம் கடுமையான உயர்கல்வியில் சேர்ந்துள்ளனர்.

அதேபோன்று அரசுப் பள்ளிகளில் படித்து உயர்கல்வியில் சேரும் மாணவர்களுக்கு 'தமிழ் புதல்வன்' திட்டம் வரும் ஜூலை மாதம் முதல் அமல்படுத்தப்படவுள்ளது. இந்தத் திட்டங்களை சரிவாக கொண்டு செல்லும்போது மாணவ சேர்க்கை மேலும் அதிகரிக்கும் என்றார் அவர்.

Source: Dinamani, 9 May 2024, page 9.

CHENNAI

புதன், மே 1, 2024

5 இந்து தமிழ் திசை

சென்னை ஐஐடி-ரோட்டரி அமைப்பு இணைந்து பள்ளி மாணவர்கள் 1000 பேருக்கு இணைய பாதுகாப்பு பயிற்சி

● சென்னை சென்னை ஐஐடி, ரோட்டரி அமைப்புடன் இணைந்து அரசு மற்றும் தனியார் பள்ளி மாணவர்கள் 1000 பேருக்கு இணைய பாதுகாப்பு பயிற்சி அளிக்கிறது.

அரசு மற்றும் தனியார் பள்ளிகளில் 9 மற்றும் 11-ம் வகுப்பு படிக்கும் மாணவர்களிடையே பாதுகாப்பான டிஜிட்டல் குழுவை உருவாக்கும் வகையில் அவர்களுக்கு இணைய பாதுகாப்பு (சைபர் செக்யூரிட்டி) பயிற்சி அளிக்க சென்னை ஐஐடி பிரவார்டாக் டெக்னாலஜிஸ், பவுண்டேஷனும், சென்னை மாவட்ட ரோட்டரி அமைப்பும் முடிவு செய்தன. அதன்படி, பிஜேஎஸ்எஸ்டி அகாடமியுடன் இணைந்து 1000 மாணவர்களுக்கு (அரசு/தனியார் பள்ளி) இணைய பாதுகாப்பு பயிற்சி அளிக்கப்படுகிறது.

ஒரு குழுவிற்கு 100 பேர் வீதம் 10 குழுக்களாக ஆயிரம் பேருக்கு பயிற்சி அளிக்க முடிவு செய்யப்பட்டு முதல் குழுவிற்கான பயிற்சி தற்போது தொடங்கியுள்ளது.

இதுகுறித்து ஐஐடி பிரவார்டாக் டெக்னாலஜிஸ், பவுண்டேஷன் துணை தலைவர் ராஜேந்திர முத்தாசூரம்போது, "இன்றைய தகவல் தொழில்நுட்ப யுகத்தில் பள்ளி மாணவர்களுக்கு இணைய பாதுகாப்பு குறித்து பயிற்சி அளிக்க வேண்டியது அவசியம். இப்பயிற்சியில் இணைய பாதுகாப்பு குறித்த அடிப்படை விஷயங்கள் சொல்லிக் கொடுக்கப்படும். இதில், கலந்துரையாடல், பயிலரங்கம், துறைநிபுணர்களுடன் நேரடி, செய்முறை பயிற்சி இடம்பெறும்" என்றார்.

Source: Hindu Tamil Thisai, 9 May 2024, page 9.

ல் உலகம் முழுவதும் இயங்கிவரும்
ள் பற்றிய விவரங்களை மதுரை
டையின்கீழ் தொகுத்து வருகிறது.
ரும் இதன் <https://ulagatamil.com>
கட்டுரைகள், கவிதைகள்,
தழ்கள், தமிழ் சார்ந்த பல்வேறு
ப்புகள் உள்ளன.



வாது அறிவு: சங்க கால பெண்பாற் புலவர்களில் ஒக்கூர்
மாசாத்தியாரும் ஒருவர். சிவகங்கை மாவட்டம் திருக்கோவ்வட்டூர்
அருகே ஒக்கூர் உள்ளது. இவர் இயற்றிய 8 பாடல்கள் சங்க
இலக்கியங்களில் உள்ளன. போருக்கு அனுப்ப இளவயதில் ஆண்
இல்லையே என வருத்தமுற்று, வீட்டு முற்றத்தில் விளையாடிக்
கொண்டிருந்த தன் குழந்தையை தயார்படுத்தி போருக்கு அனுப்பும்
வீரம் நிறைந்த புறநானூற்று பாடல் இவர் இயற்றியது.

‘தமிழ் புதல்வன்’ திட்டத்தின்கீழ் உயர்கல்வியில் சேரும் அரசு பள்ளி மாணவர்களுக்கு மாதம் ரூ.1,000 உதவி தொகை

● ஜூலையில் அமலுக்கு வருவதாக தலைமைச் செயலர் தகவல்

● சென்னை

உயர்கல்வியில் சேரும் அரசுப் பள்ளி மாணவர்களுக்கு மாதம் தோறும் ரூ.1,000 கல்வி உதவித் தொகை வழங்கும் ‘தமிழ் புதல்வன்’ திட்டம், வரும் ஜூலை மாதம் முதல் அமல்படுத்தப்பட உள்ளதாக தமிழக தலைமைச் செயலர் சிவ்தாஸ் மீனா தெரிவித்துள்ளார்.

தமிழகத்தில் பள்ளி, கல்லூரி மாணவர்களின் திறன்களை மேம்படுத்தி வேலைவாய்ப்புகளை ஏற்படுத்தி தருவதற்காக ‘நான் முதல்வன்’ திட்டத்தை தமிழக அரசு செயல்படுத்தி வருகிறது. இதன் ஒரு பகுதியாக, பிளஸ் 2 முடித்த மாணவர்களுக்கு உயர்கல்விக்கு வழிகாட்டும் ‘கல்லூரி கனவு’ திட்டத்தை முதல்வர் ஸ்டாலின் கடந்த 2022-ம் ஆண்டு தொடங்கி வைத்தார்.

இந்நிலையில், நடப்பு கல்வி ஆண்டில் பிளஸ் 2 தேர்ச்சி பெற்ற மாணவர்களுக்கான ‘கல்லூரி கனவு - 2024’ நிகழ்ச்சி, சென்னை, திருச்சி, மதுரை, கோவை, சேலம், நெல்லை, நாகை மாவட்டங்களில் நேற்று நடத்தப்பட்டது.

இதில், பிளஸ் 2 முடித்த

மாணவர்கள் அடுத்தகட்டமாக என்ன படிக்கலாம், எந்தெந்த துறைகளில் அதற்கு வேலைவாய்ப்புகள் உள்ளன என்பது உள்ளிட்ட பல்வேறு தகவல்கள் மாணவர்களுக்கு வழங்கப்பட்டன. பொறியியல், கலை - அறிவியல், சட்டம், மருத்துவம், பாலிடெக்னிக், வேளாண்மை, கால்நடை மருத்துவம் போன்ற துறைகளில் உள்ள படிப்புகள் குறித்து துறைசார்ந்த வல்லுநர்கள் பல்வேறு வழிகாட்டுதல்களை வழங்கினர். தமிழ்நாடு திறன் மேம்பாட்டு கழகம், தமிழ்நாடு பாடநூல் கழகம் சார்பில் சிறப்பு கையேடுகளும் வழங்கப்பட்டன. இந்த நிகழ்வையொட்டி, பல்வேறு கல்வி நிறுவனங்கள் சிறப்பு அரங்குகளும் அமைக்கப்பட்டிருந்தன.

சென்னையில் கோட்டுர்புரம் அண்ணா நூற்றாண்டு நூலக வளாகத்தில் நடைபெற்ற ‘கல்லூரி கனவு’ நிகழ்ச்சியை தமிழக தலைமைச் செயலர் சிவ்தாஸ் மீனா தொடங்கி வைத்து பேசியதாவது:

தமிழக மாணவர்களை உலக அளவிலான சாதனையாளர்களாக மாற்ற பல்வேறு நடவடிக்கைகள் எடுக்கப்பட்டு வருகின்றன. அதன்

படி, ஒவ்வொரு மாணவரின் கல்வி மற்றும் தொழில்சார் கனவுகள் நிறைவேற, தமிழக அரசின் ‘நான் முதல்வன்’ திட்டம் உதவியாக இருந்து வருகிறது. பள்ளிகளில் ‘காலை உணவு திட்டம்’ செயல்படுத்துவதன் மூலம், நாட்டுக்கே முன்னோடியாக தமிழகம் இருந்து வருகிறது.

கல்விதான் சிறந்த முதலீடு. அதை யாரும் எடுக்கவோ, பறிக்கவோ முடியாது. இந்த முதலீடுதான் கடைசி வரை உங்களுடன் இருக்கும். எனவே, அரசின் பல்வேறு திட்டங்களை பயன்படுத்தி, மாணவர்கள் தங்கள் லட்சியங்களை அடைய வேண்டும். நீங்கள் அனைவரும் விஞ்ஞானிகள், ஐஏஎஸ் அதிகாரிகள், தொழில்முனைவோர் ஆக முடியும். அதற்கேற்ப உயர்கல்வியை பெற்று வாழ்க்கையில் வெற்றி அடைய வேண்டும்.

இவ்வாறு அவர் பேசினார். பின்னர், செய்தியாளர்களிடம் பேசிய அவர், “உயர்கல்வியை பொருத்தவரை, தமிழகத்தில்தான் மாணவர் சேர்க்கை எண்ணிக்கை அதிகம். அதேநேரம், பிளஸ் 2

முடிக்கும் மாணவர்கள் 100 சதவீதம் பேரையும் உயர்கல்வியில் சேர்ப்பதுதான் நமது நோக்கம். அந்த வகையில்தான் கல்லூரி கனவு நிகழ்ச்சி நடத்தப்படுகிறது. உயர்கல்வியில் சேராமல் இருப்பவர்களை கண்டறிந்து அவர்களை யும் படிக்க வைக்க குழு அமைக்கப்பட உள்ளது. மாணவிகளுக்கான புதுமைப்பெண் திட்டத்தில் மாதம் ரூ.1,000 வழங்கப்படுவதால், 20-25 சதவீதம் பேர் கூடுதலாக உயர்கல்வியில் சேர்ந்துள்ளனர். அதேபோல, அரசுப் பள்ளியில் படித்து உயர்கல்வியில் சேரும் மாணவர்களுக்கு மாதம் ரூ.1,000 வழங்கும் ‘தமிழ் புதல்வன்’ திட்டம் இந்த கல்வி ஆண்டிலேயே வரும் ஜூலை மாதம் முதல் அமல்படுத்தப்பட உள்ளது. இந்த திட்டங்களை சரியாக கொண்டு செல்லும்போது மாணவர் சேர்க்கை மேலும் உயரும்” என்றார்.

இந்த நிகழ்வில் முதல்வரின் தனி செயலர் முருகானந்தம், பள்ளிக் கல்வி துறை செயலர் ஜெ.குமரகுரு பரன், தொடக்க கல்வி இயக்குநர் ச.கண்ணப்பன் உள்ளிட்ட அதிகாரிகள் கலந்து கொண்டனர்.

பள்ளிக் கல்வி திட்டங்கள்: பெற்றோருக்கு தெரிவிக்க பிரத்யேக வாட்ஸ்-ஆப் தளம்

சென்னை, மே 12: பள்ளிக் கல்வி நலத் திட்டங்களை பெற்றோர்களுக்கும் பகிர்வதற்காக பிரத்யேக வாட்ஸ்-ஆப் தளத்தை தொடங்க பள்ளிக் கல்வித் துறை திட்டமிட்டுள்ளது.

தமிழகத்தில் பள்ளிக் கல்வி மேம்பாட்டுக்காக பல்வேறு விதமான நடவடிக்கைகள் தமிழக அரசின் சார்பில் மேற்கொள்ளப்பட்டு வருகின்றன.

அந்த வகையில், பள்ளிக் கல்வித் துறையின் கல்வி மேலாண்மை தகவல் முகமை (எமிஸ்) எனும் இணையதளத்தில் அரசு, அரசு உதவி, தனியார் பள்ளிகளில் பயிலும் மாணவர்களின் முழு விவரங்கள் சேகரிக்கப்பட்டு, அதற்கேற்ப நலத் திட்ட உதவிகள் வழங்கப்படுகின்றன. மேலும், கல்வித் துறை அலுவலர்கள் மற்றும் ஆசிரியர்களின் செயல்பாடுகளும் எமிஸ் தளம் வழியாக கண்காணிக்கப்படுகிறது. இந்த நிலையில் நலத் திட்டங்கள் சார்ந்த தகவல்களை பெற்றோருக்கு பகிர்வதற்காக வாட்ஸ்-ஆப்

வழியாக ஒரு தளத்தை உருவாக்க பள்ளிக்கல்வித் துறை திட்டமிட்டு உள்ளதாகத் தெரிகிறது.

இது குறித்து கல்வித் துறை அதிகாரிகள் சிலர் கூறியது: வாட்ஸ்-ஆப் வாயிலாக 'டிபார்ட்மென்ட் ஆப் ஸ்கூல் எஜுகேஷன்' (department of school education) எனும் புதிய தளம் செயல்பாட்டுக்கு கொண்டுவரப்படவுள்ளது.

இதற்காக மெட்டா நிறுவனத் துடன் புரிந்துணர்வு ஒப்பந்தம் மேற்கொள்ளப்பட்டுள்ளது.

இந்த புதிய தளத்தில் ஒரே நேரத்தில் ஒரு கோடி பேருக்கும் மேலாக தகவல் சென்றடையும் வகையில் ஏற்பாடு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது.

தற்போது அந்த வாட்ஸ்-ஆப் தளம் பரிசோதனை முயற்சியில் இருக்கிறது.

இதற்கு ஏதுவாக எமிஸ் தளத்தில் உள்ள 1.16 கோடி மாணவர்களின் பெற்றோர்களின் தொலைபேசி எண்களில் பயன்பாட்டில் உள்ளவை எத்தனை, அவை

அனைத்தும் வாட்ஸ்-ஆப் உடன் இணைக்கப்பட்டு உள்ளதா என்ற சரிபார்ப்புப் பணிகள் தற்போது நடைபெற்று வருகின்றன.

இதுவரை 5 லட்சம் எண்கள் சரிபார்க்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. தொடர்ந்து மே 25-ஆம் தேதிக்குள் இந்த பணிகளை நிறைவு செய்ய இலக்கு நிர்ணயித்து இதர எண்களின் சரிபார்ப்பு துரிதப்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளது.

அவை நிறைவு பெற்றதும் இந்த தளம் பயன்பாட்டுக்கு வரும்.

இதன் மூலம் ஆசிரியர்கள், மாணவர்கள், பெற்றோர்களுக்கு தேவையான அனைத்து தகவல்களையும் உடனே கொண்டு சேர்க்க முடியும்.

மேலும், பள்ளி, வட்டம், மாவட்டம், மாநில, இயக்குநரகம் அளவிலும் இந்த தளம் வழியாக தகவல் பரிமாற்றம் மேற்கொள்ள முடியும். மேலும், இது பெற்றோர்களுக்கும், பள்ளிகளுக்கும் இடையே உள்ள இடைவெளியை சரிசெய்யும் ஒரு முயற்சியாக இருக்கும் என்றனர்.

Source: Dinamani, 13 May 2024.

பொன் மொழி:

தம்மால் வெல்ல முடியும் என்று நம்புகிறவர்கள்தான் வெற்றிகளைக் குவிப்பார்கள்.

- வெள்ளி

கிணையம்:

தேசிய பாதுகாப்பு அகாடமி 70 ஆண்டுகளாக ராஜ்யப் பரிசு அளிக்கும் அமைப்பாக விளங்கி வருகிறது. பல்வேறு பட்டப் படிப்புகளை வழங்கி, ஒவ்வொரு வீரரும் மனம், ஒழுக்கம், உடல், அறிவாற்றல் ரீதியாக சிறந்த விவேகமுள்ளவர்களாகவும், போர்க்களத்தில் மனிதர்கள் மற்றும் பொருட்களை திறமையாக கையாளத் தெரிந்தவர்களாகவும் மாற்றத் தேவையான பயிற்சிகளை வழங்குகிறது. இதன் <https://nda.nic.in/> -ல் மேலும் தகவல்களைப் பெறலாம்.

42 யானை வழித்தடம் குறித்து வரைவு அறிக்கை வெளியீடு

● குழு பரிந்துரையை அமல்படுத்த அரசுக்கு சுற்றுச்சூழல் ஆர்வலர்கள் கோரிக்கை

ஆர்.ஆதித்தன்

● கோவை

தமிழகத்தில் 42 யானை வழித்தடங்களை கண்டறிந்து வரைவு அறிக்கை வெளியிடப்பட்டுள்ளது.

தமிழகத்தில் நீலகிரி, கோவை, ஆனைமலை, ஸ்ரீவில்லிபுத்தூர், அகஸ்தியமலை ஆகிய 5 யானைகள் காப்பகம் உள்ளிட்ட 20 வனக் கோட்டங்களில் 2023-ம் ஆண்டு கணக்கெடுப்பின்படி 2,961 யானைகள் உள்ளன. 20 யானை வழித்தடங்கள் உள்ளதாக வனத்துறை புள்ளி விவரங்கள் தெரிவிக்கின்றன.

மனித ஆக்கிரமிப்புகளான விநிதிகட்டடங்கள் மற்றும் விவசாய தலையீடுகள் காரணமாக யானைகள் பல ஆண்டுகளாக பயன்படுத்தி வந்த வழித்தடங்களில் இடையூறுகள் ஏற்பட்டுள்ளன. கடந்த 10 ஆண்டுகளில் மனித-யானை மோதல் கணிசமாக உயர்ந்துள்ளதுடன் உயிரிழப்புகளும் ஏற்பட்டு வருகின்றன.

இதைத் தவிர்க்க அரசு சார்பில் யானைகளின் வாழ்விடங்களை பாதுகாத்தல், நெருக்கடியான யானை வழித்தடத்தை அடையாளம் காணுதல், யானைகள் வழித்தடத்துக்கான உடனடி மேலாண்மை ஆகியவற்றை உள்ளடக்கிய யானைகள் வழித்தடம் திட்டம் தயாரிக்க முடிவெடுக்கப்பட்டது.

தமிழக அரசின் வனத்துறை கூடுதல் முதன்மை தலைமை வனப்பாதுகாவலர் வி.நாகநாதன் (வனஉயிரினம்) தலைமையில் வனத்துறை மற்றும் அறிவியல்



↑ கோவை மாவட்டம் ஆலாந்துறை பகுதியில் வனத்தை விட்டு விளைநிலங்களுக்குள் புகுந்த காட்டு யானைகள். (கோப்பு படம்). படம்: ஜெ மனோகரன்

நிபுணர்கள் அடங்கிய குழு சார்பில் விரிவான ஆய்வு மேற்கொண்டு, தமிழக யானைகள் வழித்தட திட்ட வரைவு அறிக்கை தயாரிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

இக்குழு, தமிழகம் முழுவதும் 42 யானைகள் வழித்தடங்களை அடையாளம் கண்டுள்ளது. 161 பக்க அறிக்கையில் முக்கிய பிரச்சினைகள், யானைகள் வசிப்பிடம், முக்கியத்துவமான வழித்தட சூழல், நீர் ஆதாரம், வழித்தட அச்சுறுத்தல்கள், மேலாண்மை திட்டங்கள் குறித்து குறிப்பிடப்பட்டுள்ளது.

யானைவழித்தடத் திட்ட அறிக்கை தமிழக அரசின் <http://www.forestn.tn.gov.in/tnforestdeptpublications> என்ற இணையதளத்தில் பதிவேற்றம் செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது.

இதுகுறித்து பொதுமக்கள், சுற்றுச்சூழல் ஆர்வலர்கள், இயற்கை ஆர்வலர்கள் elephantcorridorntfd@gmail.com என்ற மின்னஞ்சலில் தங்களது கருத்துகளை மே 5-ம் தேதி வரை அனுப்பி வைக்கலாம்

மீட்க வேண்டும். கோவை வனக் கோட்டத்தில் ஏற்கெனவே 2 யானை வழித்தடங்கள் உள்ளன. தற்போது தானிகண்டி - அனுவாவி-மருத மலை-மாங்கரை வரை ஒரு யானை வழித்தடமும், கல்குத்தி முதல் வாணையாறு வரையில் மற்றொரு யானை வழித்தடமும் கண்டறியப்பட்டுள்ளது.

யானைகள் மலை உச்சியில் வலசை செல்லாது. மாறாக மலை அடிவார பகுதியில் தான் செல்லும். யானை செல்லும் குறுகிய பாதை துண்டாடப்பட்டால், யானைகள் வாழ்விடம் பாதிக்கும். இதனால் மனித-யானை மோதல் தொடர்ந்து நிகழும் அபாயம் உள்ளது. மிக அவசியமாக குறுகிய பாதைகளை அரசு காப்பாற்ற வேண்டும்.

இவ்வாறு அவர் கூறினார். இதுகுறித்து சுற்றுச்சூழல் ஆர்வலர்கள் கூறும்போது, யானைகள் வழித்தட திட்ட குழுவின் பரிந்துரைகளை அரசு விரைவாகச் செயல்படுத்த வேண்டும். கோவை பாரதி யார் பல்கலைக்கழகம் அருகே டெக்ஸ்டைல் பூங்கா ஆகியவற்றை கொண்டு வருவது மனித-யானை மோதலை மேலும் அதிகரிக்கும். மேற்கு பகுதியை தவிர்த்து, சரவணம்பட்டி, பொள்ளாச்சி, அவிநாசி சாலையில் நகர விரிவாக்கத்தை மேற்கொள்ள வேண்டும். கோவை-நீலகிரியில் ஏற்கெனவே மனித-விலங்கு மோதல் அதிகமாக உள்ளது. இதை மேலும் அதிகரிக்காமல் அரசு தடுப்பு நடவடிக்கைகளை எடுக்க வேண்டும் என்றனர்.

பூண்டி ஏரியில் புதிய மதகுகளை பொருத்தும் பணி விரைவில் தொடக்கம்



நீர்மட்டம் குறைந்து காணப்படும் பூண்டி ஏரி (வலது) ஏரியில் பொருத்த தயாராக உள்ள புதிய கதவணைகள்.

திருவள்ளூர், மே 1: பூண்டி நீர்த் தேக்கத்தில் சேதமடைந்த மதகுகள் வழியாக நீர் வீணாக வெளியேறுவதை தடுக்கும் நோக்கத்தில் விரைவில் புதிய மதகுகளைப் பொருத்தும் பணிகள் மேற்கொள்ள ஏற்பாடுகள் தயாராக உள்ளதால் விரைவில் பணிகள் தொடங்கும் என நீர்வளத்துறை அதிகாரிகள் தெரிவித்தனர்.

சென்னை மக்களின் குடிநீர்த் தேவையை பூர்த்தி செய்யும் முக்கிய ஏரிகளில் ஒன்றாக விளங்குவது திருவள்ளூர் அருகே உள்ள பூண்டி ஏரியாகும். இந்த ஏரிக்கு நீர்ப்பிடிப்பு பகுதியில் மழைக் காலங்களில் பெய்யும் மழை நீர், ஆந்திரம் மாநிலம் கண்டலேறு அணையில் இருந்து வரும் கிருஷ்ணா நதி நீர் ஆகியவை முக்கிய நீர் ஆதாரமாகும். இந்த ஏரியின் உயரம் 35 அடி, 3,231 மில்லியன் கன அடி நீரை சேமித்து வைக்கலாம்.

இந்த நிலையில் கொசஸ்தலை ஆற்றின் மத்தியில் அமைந்த நீர்த் தேக்கத்தில் உபரி நீரை வெளியேறும் வகையில் 800 அடி நீளத்தில் 50 அடி உயரத்தில் 16 மதகுகள்

அமைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன.

ஏரியில் அமைந்துள்ள 8, 9 மணல்வாரி கதவணைகள் மட்டும் அடி மட்டத்திற்கு 2 அடி ஆழம் வரையில் உள்ளதால், ஏரி தொடங்கியதிலிருந்து இதுவரையில் சீரமைக்கப்படாமல் இருந்துள்ளது.

அதனால் அடி மட்டம் வரையில் இரும்பு கதவணை உள்ளதால், செயல்படாமல் இறுகி துருப்பிடித்து சேதமடைந்ததால் அதிகளவில் நீர் கசிந்து வெளியேறி வருகிறது. இதை அவ்வப்போது கதவணைகள் அருகே மணல் மூட்டைகள் கொண்டு தற்காலிகமாக அடைக்கப்பட்டு வந்தன.

அதனால், இப்பணிகளை நிரந்தரமாக மேற்கொள்ளவும் என கோரிக்கை எழுந்துள்ளது.

அதன்பேரில் புதிய மதகுகள் பொருத்த ரூ.2 கோடி ஒதுக்கீடு செய்து, கடந்த 2021-இல் பணிகள் தொடங்கி நடைபெற்றன. இந்த நிலையில் தமிழக அரசு ஆந்திர மாநில அரசுக்கு கோரிக்கை விடுத்ததன் பேரில் கிருஷ்ணா நீர் திறந்து விடப்பட்டது. அதனால்

ஏரியின் நீர்மட்டம் உயர்ந்து 8.9 மதகுகள் வழியாக நீர் வீணாக வெளியேறியது. அப்போது, புதிதாக மதகுகள் அமைக்காமல், பழைய மதகுகளை சீரமைத்து பலப்படுத்தினர். ஆனாலும், நீர்வரத்து அதிகரித்த காரணத்தால் நீர் வெளியேறுவதை நிறுத்த முடியவில்லை.

தொடர்ந்து கனமழையின் காரணமாக நீர் வரத்து அதிகரித்து ஏரி முழுக் கொள்ளளவை எட்டிய நிலையில், உபரி நீரும் அதிகளவில் வெளியேற்றப்பட்டது.

தற்போதைய நிலையில் கோடை வெயில் வாட்டி வதைத்து வருகிறது. மேலும், போதிய மழை பெய்யாத காரணத்தால் பூண்டி நீர்த் தேக்கத்தில் நீர் இருப்பு 822 மில்லியன் கன அடியாக குறைந்து கொண்டே வருகிறது.

அதனால், ஆந்திர மாநிலம் கிருஷ்ணா நதி நீர் வருவதற்கு முன்பு 8, 9 ஆகிய மதகுகளை அகற்றிவிட்டு புதிய மதகுகளை பொருத்த நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க வேண்டும்.

இதன் மூலம் குடிநீரை வீணாக

காமல் அதிகளவில் சேமிக்க முடியும் எனவும் விவசாயிகள் தெரிவிக்கின்றனர்.

இதுகுறித்து நீர்வளத்துறை அதிகாரி ஒருவர் ஒருவர் கூறிய தாவது: இந்த நீர்த் தேக்கத்தில் 8.9 ஆகிய மதகுகள் என்பது மணல்வாரி கதவணைகள் ஆகும். இவற்றின் வழியாகத்தான் ஏரியில் இருந்து சேறு, மணல் கழிவுகளை அகற்ற முடியும்.

எனவே, நீர்த் தேக்கம் தொடங்கியது முதல் இதுவரையில் பயன்படுத்தவில்லை. அதனால் இரும்பு மதகுகள் துருப்பிடித்து சேதம் அடைந்த காரணத்தால் நீர் வெளியேறி வருகிறது.

ஏற்கெனவே இப்பணிகளை மேற்கொள்வதற்காக ரூ.2 கோடி ஒதுக்கப்பட்டு, அதற்கான இரும்பு கதவணைகள், தேவையான வெல் டிங் பொருள்கள், ராட்சச கிரேன்கள் ஆகியவை தயாராக வைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன.

தற்போதைய நிலையில் நீர் இருப்பு குறைந்து வருவதால், புதிதாக மதகுகள் பொருத்தும் பணி மேற்கொள்ள திட்டமிட்டு வருவதாக அவர் தெரிவித்தார்.

மின் நுகர்வு மீண்டும் உச்சம் 41 நாளில் 1,400 மெகாவாட் உயர்வு

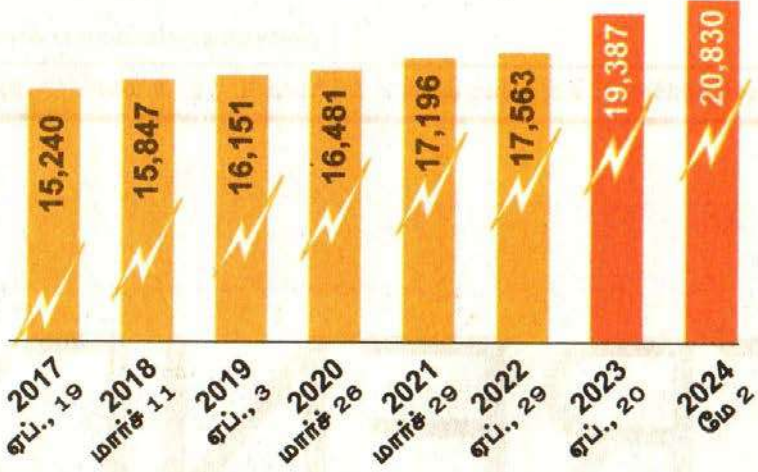
சென்னை, மே 4-

தமிழகத்தில் தற்போது வீசும் வெப்ப அலையால், 'ஏசி' உள்ளிட்ட மின் சாதனங்களின் பயன்பாடு அதிகரித்துள்ளது. இதனால் மின் நுகர்வு அதிகரித்து வருகிறது. ஏப்., 30ம் தேதி மாலை இதுவரை இல்லாத அளவாக 20,701 மெகா வாட்டாக அதிகரித்தது.

கடும் வறட்சியால் விவசாயிகள் பாசனத்திற்கு நிலத்தடி நீரை அதிகம் பயன்படுத்துகின்றனர். இதனால், மின் நுகர்வு நேற்று முன்தினம், எப்போதும் இல்லாத வகையில் 20,830 மெகாவாட்டாக அதிகரித்து, புதிய உச்சத்தை எட்டியுள்ளது.

புதிய மின் இணைப்பு, மின் பயன்பாடு அதிகரிப்பு உள்ளிட்ட காரணங்களால், ஆண்டுதோறும் மின் நுகர்வு அதிகரிப்பது வழக்கம். அதன்படி, ஆண்டுக்கு சராசரியாக 750 மெகா வாட் வரை கூடுதலாக அதிகரிக்கும்.

கொரோனா ஊரடங்கிற்கு பின் தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் அனைத்தும்,



ஆண்டு வாரியாக அதிகபட்ச மின் நுகர்வு

(மெகாவாட்)

2023ல் முழுவீச்சில் செயல்பட்டன. அந்த ஆண்டில், மின் நுகர்வு முந்தைய ஆண்டை விட அதிகரித்தது.

இந்தாண்டு லோக்சபா தேர்தல், மிக கடுமையான வெயிலால் வீசும் வெப்ப அலை உள்ளிட்ட காரணங்களால், மின் நுகர்வு எப்போதும் இல்லாத வகையில் அதிகரித்து வருகிறது.

கடந்த ஆண்டில் உச்ச அளவாக இருந்த 19,387

மெகா வாட் மின் நுகர்வை விட, இந்தாண்டு மார்ச் 22ம் தேதி, 19,409 மெகா வாட்டாக அதிகரித்தது.

இது தொடர்ந்து அதிகரித்து, நேற்று முன்தினம் புதிய உச்சத்தை எட்டியுள்ளது. எனவே, கடந்த ஆண்டில் ஏற்பட்ட உச்ச அளவுடன் ஒப்பிடும் போது, கடந்த 41 நாட்களில் மட்டும் மின் நுகர்வு 1,443 மெகா வாட் அதிகரித்து, புதிய உச்சத்தை தொட்டு உள்ளது.

நீர்நிலைகளைத் தூர்வாரும் பணியை அரசு கைவிடவில்லை

ஈரோடு மே 1: நீர்நிலைகளைத் தூர்வாரும் பணியை அரசு கைவிடவில்லை என வீட்டு வசதித் துறை அமைச்சர் சுமுத்துசாமி தெரிவித்தார்.

மே தினத்தையொட்டி 3 நடமாடும் நீர்மோர் வழங்கும் வாகனங்களை அமைச்சர் சுமுத்துசாமி புதன்கிழமை தொடங்கி வைத்தார். அப்போது அவர் செய்தியாளர்களிடம் கூறியதாவது: அரசு பிரி உற்பத்தியை அதிகரிக்க கூறவில்லை. ஆனால், கோடை காலம் என்பதால் பிரி

அமைச்சர் சுமுத்துசாமி

வாங்குவோர் எண்ணிக்கை அதிகரித்துள்ளது. மற்ற மது வகைகளின் விற்பனை குறைந்துள்ளது.

நீர்நிலைகளை தூர்வாரும் பணியை அரசு கைவிடவில்லை. ஆனால், அதில் பல சிக்கல்கள் உள்ளன. பவானிசாகர் அணையில் வண்டல் மண் படிந்துள்ளது. அதை அப்புறப்படுத்துகிறதால் தண்ணீர் மட்டம் குறைந்து சில இடங்

களுக்கு தண்ணீர் வருவது நின்று விடும் என சிலர் எதிர்க்கின்றனர். இது குறித்து ஆலோசித்து நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க வேண்டியுள்ளது. நீர்நிலைகளை தூர்வாராததால் வறட்சி ஏற்படுகிறது என்ற குற்றச் சாட்டில் உண்மையில்லை. ஈரோட்டில் அதிக வெப்பம் நிலவுகிறது. இதற்கு மரங்கள் வெட்டப்பட்டதை சிலர் காரணமாக கூறுகின்றனர். சாலை

விரிவாக்கத்துக்காக மரங்கள் வெட்டப்படுகின்றன. இந்தப் பணி கடந்த 5 ஆண்டுகளுக்கும் மேலாக நடைபெற்று வருகிறது. எனினும் மழைக்காலம் தொடங்கும்போது, ஈரோடு மாவட்டத்தில் அதிக எண்ணிக்கையில் மரக்கன்றுகள் நடப்படும்.

வீடுகளில் மரங்களை நடப்பதால் வீட்டு வரியில் சில சலுகை வழங்குவது குறித்து அரசின் கவனத்துக்கு கொண்டு செல்லப்படும். கோடை காலத்தில் வெப்பத்தின் தாக்கத்தில் இருந்து மக்க

ளைக் காக்க சென்னையில் குடிநீர் வழகால் வாரியம் மூலம் தண்ணீர் பந்தல்கள் அமைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. அதேபோன்று ஈரோடு மாநகராட்சி மூலம் நடவடிக்கை எடுக்கப்படும்.

முதல்வர் ஓ.ஆர்.எஸ் என்பபடும் உப்பு சர்க்கரை கரைசல் பாக்கெட்டுகளை பொதுமக்களுக்கு வழங்க உத்தரவிட்டுள்ளார். இருப்பினும் அரசுத் துறை மூலம் மக்களுக்கு அதை விறியோகிக்க நடவடிக்கை எடுக்கப்படும் என்றார்.

Source: Dinamani, 2 May 2024.

CHENNAI

ஞாயிறு, மே 5, 2024

5 இந்து

நவரை பருவத்தில் 25 இடங்களில்

நேரடி நெல் கொள்முதல் நிலையம் திறப்பு

ஆட்சியர் பிரபு சங்கர் தகவல்

● **திருவள்ளூர்**
திருவள்ளூர் மாவட்டத்தில் நடப்பு நவரைப் பருவத்தில் 2-ம் கட்டமாக 6 வட்டாரங்களில் 25 நேரடி நெல் கொள்முதல் நிலையங்கள் மூலம் நெல் கொள்முதல் செய்யப்படும் என மாவட்ட ஆட்சியர் த.பிரபு சங்கர் தெரிவித்துள்ளார்.

திருவள்ளூர் மாவட்டத்தில் நவரைப் பருவத்தில் 26,520 ஹெக்டேர் பரப்பளவில் சாகுபடி செய்யப்பட்டுள்ள நெற்பயிர் அறுவடை தொடங்கி உள்ள நிலையில் சராசரியாக ஒரு ஹெக்டருக்கு 6 மெட்ரிக் டன் வீதம் 1 லட்சத்து 57 ஆயிரத்து 58 மெட்ரிக் டன் மகசூல் எதிர்பார்க்கப்படுகிறது. இதில் நேரடி நெல் கொள்முதல் நிலையத்துக்கு 50 ஆயிரம் மெட்ரிக் டன் நெல் வரத்து இருக்கும் என தெரிகிறது.

முதற்கட்டமாக, அம்பத்தூர், பூந்தமல்லி, கடம்பத்தூர், திருவள்ளூர், திருவாலங்காடு, திருத்தணி, பள்ளிப்பட்டு மற்றும் ஆர்.கே. பேட்டை ஆகிய 8 வட்டாரங்களில் 38 நேரடி நெல் கொள்முதல் நிலையங்கள் திறக்கப்பட்டு இதுவரை 2,435 விவசாயிகளிடமிருந்து

14,822 மெட்ரிக் டன் நெல் கொள்முதல் செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது.

மேலும், 2-ம் கட்டமாக பூண்டி, எல்லாபுரம், மீஞ்சூர், கும்மிடிபூண்டி, சோழவரம் மற்றும் புழல் ஆகிய 6 வட்டாரங்களில் 25 இடங்களில் நேரடி நெல் கொள்முதல் நிலையங்களை உடனடியாக திறக்க தமிழ்நாடு நுகர்பொருள் வாணிப கழகத்தின் மண்டல மேலாளருக்கு உத்தரவிடப்பட்டுள்ளது.

எனவே, விவசாயிகள் தாங்கள் அறுவடை செய்யும் நெல்மணிகளை நேரடி நெல் கொள்முதல் நிலையங்களில் குவிண்டால் ஒன்றுக்கு சன்ன ரக நெல் ரூ.2,310-க்கும், பொது ரக நெல் ரூ.2,265-க்கும் விற்பனை செய்யுமாறு அறிவுறுத்தப்படுகிறது.

விவசாயிகள் அனைவரும் நேரடி நெல் கொள்முதல் நிலைய வலைதளத்தில் (eDPC) பதிவு செய்து தங்களுடைய நெல்மணிகளை எவ்வித சிரமமும் இன்றி நேரடி நெல் கொள்முதல் நிலையங்களில் விற்பனை செய்து பயன்பெறுமாறு மாவட்ட ஆட்சியர் த.பிரபு சங்கர் தெரிவித்துள்ளார்.

Source: Hindu Tamil Thisai, 5 May, page 5.