WINDOWS

Mayiladuthurai farmers demand drought-hit status

MAYILADUTHURAI: Farmers in Mayiladuthurai district on Wednesday demanded the Tamil Nadu government to declare the district as drought-hit and provide a financial relief of Rs 15,000 per acre without any conditions. They claimed that they are facing severe water scarcity for the ongoing Samba paddy cultivation.

"Since water is unavailable, we request the Tamil Nadu government to declare this district as drought-hit and provide a subsidy of Rs 15,000 per acre to the farmers without any conditions," Mayiladuthurai district farmers' president Rajesh told reporters here.

He said cultivators have initiated direct sowing and planting for the Samba season after suffering massive losses during the previous Kuruvai season. Farmers were forced to abandon Kuruvai cultivation across lakhs of acres because water was not released from the Mettur reservoir, he added.

Despite the Mettur dam currently holding 45 TMC of water, agricultural lands in the district remain parched and the fields have developed cracks due to inadequate water supply, he said.

Rajesh urged the state government to secure its rightful share of water as per the directives of the Cauvery Water Management Authority. He noted that agricultural activity in the region will only be possible if this water is secured.

BITS Pilani, IIT Madras to strengthen academic collaboration

CHENNAI: The Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani is partnering with IIT Madras to promote academic and research collaboration between the two institutions. The five-year agreement establishes a framework for collaboration in areas of mutual academic and research interest and provides opportunities for the exchange of students and faculty, academic and scholarly information, materials, and publication, a release from the IIT Madras here on Wednesday said.

Accordingly, the collaboration will also facilitate the joint organisation of seminars, workshops, and other academic meetings. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) towards this collaboration was signed on Tuesday at the IIT Madras campus by Prof V Ramgopal Rao, Group Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani, and Prof V Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras.

A key component of the collaboration is the student exchange programme, under which students from BITS Pilani and IIT Madras will be able to undertake academic coursework, research activities, and project work at the partner institution.

Students participating in the programme will be designated as special exchange students and will have the opportunity to enrol in courses for credit or audit, subject to the approval of the relevant faculty or project supervisors and fulfilment of applicable prerequisites.

Another key feature of this exchange programme is the provision of tuition-fee waivers at the host institution. Credits and grades earned during the exchange programme will be recognised by the home institution based on the academic report provided by the host institution.

Two girls drown in pond

ERODE : Two minor girls drowned in a pond in Rayapalayam Pudur village in this district, police said on Wednesday. According to Chitode police, Anusri (13) and Dhanushkasri (13), studying class eight, went to a pond in the village on Tuesday for fishing.

Drop move to privatise underground sewerage projects: CPI(M)

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu unit of CPI(M) on Wednesday condemned the state government's move to privatise underground sewerage projects in Madurai and Nagercoil corporations, urging immediate cancellation of the tenders floated under the Public-Private Partnership model.

CPI(M) state secretary P Shanmugam called the government's action shocking, stating that handing over essential public infrastructure to corporate entities for profit was an "anti-people" initiative.

Highlighting past precedents, the party in a release alleged that water supply distribution in Coimbatore was privatised during the AIADMK regime, while a similar attempt for Salem's water scheme under the previous DMK rule faced severe public backlash.

The party criticised the current administration for aggressively pushing the same privatisation agenda by handing over an entire underground sewerage network to private players.



Warning against the fallout of privatising an essential public sanitation service, CPI(M) outlined three major risks -- poor and middle-class households will be burdened with steep sewerage taxes and fees under the guise of maintenance costs, citizens will be deprived of their right to seek grievances directly from local civic bodies, forcing them to depend on corporate entities and the job security of sanitation workers and temporary local body employees will be compromised, leaving them vulnerable to severe exploitation.

The CPI(M) demanded that the Tamil Nadu government allocate full state funds to execute the projects through the public sector under direct civic control, noting that the schemes are estimated at Rs 2,377.48 crore for Madurai and Rs 189.82 crore for Nagercoil.

Recalling that a previous tender to privatise sanitation work across 12 municipal corporations was withdrawn following fierce public resistance, the CPI(M) asserted that repeatedly handing over basic civic services to private players is an abdication of state responsibility.

A welfare government must not retreat from delivering essential public services, the party stated while demanding the immediate revocation of the tender process.

Poll code violations by DMK in Madurantakam, alleges TVK

CHENNAI: Ahead of the Madurantakam assembly constituency by-poll scheduled for October 6, the legal wing of TVK has lodged a formal complaint on Wednesday with the Chief Electoral Officer of Tamil Nadu, alleging Model Code of Conduct violations by the opposition DMK.

In an official representation submitted by S Shankar, advocate on behalf of the TVK legal wing, the party accused DMK functionaries and its candidate I Paranthamen of "systematic electoral malpractices".

The complaint, which was shared with the media, alleged that the DMK has been distributing cash and gift articles to voters across the constituency and mobilising people from other districts to intimidate electors who do not support their candidate.

The representation referred to recent reports of seizure of Rs 48 lakh from the residence of a DMK functionary Moonalur Viswanathan at Dharapuram where the by-poll is also scheduled to be held. TVK further alleged that senior DMK leaders of Madurantakam and Acharapakkam, along with the district secretary, engaged minor children for campaign canvassing on September 25, alleging that no official action has been taken despite prior representations.

To ensure a free and fair poll, TVK has urged the election authorities to multiply flying squads and surveillance teams, install camera and videography coverage outside polling centers, and deploy high-end camera-equipped patrol vehicles throughout the constituency ahead of polling day. Later speaking to the reporters at the Secretariat,



TVK representatives alleged that the DMK is engaging in large-scale cash distribution to influence voters. They claimed that DMK cadres brought from other districts are posing as local party workers, entering residential areas, and threatening voters in the Madurantakam constituency. Madurantakam has a predominantly rural landscape and urged the deployment of additional static surveillance teams, flying squads andpatrol units to monitor interior areas wehre it alleged door-to-door cash distribution was taking place.

According to TVK representatives, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Archana Patnaik had assured them of swift action, stating that instructions would be dispatched to the District Election Officer (DEO) and the State DGP to tighten surveillance and enforce strict compliance.

Vijay accuses AIADMK of aligning with DMK during campaign

CHENNAI: Chief Minister and Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) president Vijay on Wednesday accused the AIADMK of becoming an "offshoot" of the DMK, alleging that the two parties were functioning alike and sharing a common political interest.

Campaigning in Dharapuram for TVK candidate Sathyabama ahead of the October 6 Assembly bypoll, Vijay said he had come to meet voters as a son and a family member, rather than in his capacity as Chief Minister.

He said his government was committed to eliminating corruption and fulfilling its election promises in phases. Rejecting what he described as a monarchical approach to politics, Vijay alleged that some leaders continued to behave as though they remained in power.

Vijay claimed that the AIADMK, which he described as a former offshoot of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), had now aligned indirectly with the DMK. He alleged that this undermined the legacies of former Chief Ministers M.G. Ramachandran and J. Jayalalithaa. Referring to DMK General Secretary Duraimurugan's remarks about defeating rulers by fielding ordinary people, Vijay said TVK had done the same by giving ordinary candidates a chance to contest elections. Defending Sathyabama's decision to leave the AIADMK, Vijay said she had resigned as Dharapuram MLA before joining TVK and maintained that her switch involved no political bargaining. Sathyabama became emotional during her speech, saying online attacks over her resignation and party switch prompted her to stop using her phone for two months. Vijay was seen consoling her. Questioning the AIADMK's response to his references to the Sarkaria Commission, Vijay alleged that the party was supporting the DMK and asserted that TVK alone was opposing it. He also criticised DMK leader M.K. Stalin's political rhetoric, alleging that it encouraged abuse and hatred. Attacks against TVK, he said, would only strengthen the party and expand its support.



Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay addresses a public rally alongside party candidate P Sathyabama during an election campaign ahead of the upcoming Dharapuram Assembly constituency by-poll in Dharapuram

On religion, Vijay said TVK respected all faiths and would continue to greet people on Krishna Jayanthi, Christmas and Bakrid despite criticism. He maintained that the party believed in God and opposed no one's religious faith.

He said the party would continue its approach to religious greetings regardless of criticism from opponents. Appealing for Sathyabama's victory, Vijay praised the people of Kongu Nadu as hard-working and urged Dharapuram voters to support her in the October 6 poll.

TASMAC to raise shop maintenance allowance to Rs 5,000 from October 1

CHENNAI: TASMAC will raise the monthly maintenance allocation for its retail liquor shops to Rs 5,000 from October 1, replacing the existing petty cash provision of Rs 750 per outlet.

The state-owned liquor retailer remains a major source of revenue for Tamil Nadu. TASMAC generated nearly Rs 50,000 crore in 2025-26, underlining the scale of its contribution to the state's finances and its importance as a revenue source for the government.

The revised maintenance allowance will vary according to the location of each shop. Outlets within municipal corporation limits will receive Rs 5,000 a month, while those in municipalities and town panchayats will get Rs 4,000. Shops in rural and village panchayat areas will receive Rs 3,000 monthly.

A circular issued by TASMAC Managing Director K. Nanthakumar sets out the allocations, permitted



expenditure and responsibilities of shop supervisors. The funds are intended for maintaining cleanliness and hygiene, providing drinking water and meeting other basic needs of employees and consumers.

However, the higher allocation comes with restrictions on its use. Supervisors cannot spend the money on shop rent, electricity charges, building repairs, furniture, equipment or capital expenditure. Separate funds are available to meet those expenses, the circular states.

The monthly allowance will be credited along with the salary of the supervisor of each retail vending shop. The supervisor will be responsible for utilising the money and maintaining a register recording monthly expenditure.

Receipts supporting expenditure must be preserved for three years. The requirement places responsibility for documenting the use of the allocation on the supervisor overseeing the outlet.

The circular also specifies how the provision will apply to shops that remain closed. If an outlet is shut for an entire month, no maintenance amount will be drawn for that period. However, the sanctioned amount can be utilised in the following month. The revised system will replace the uniform Rs 750 petty cash provision with allocations linked to the administrative area in which each outlet operates. Corporation-area shops will receive the highest allowance under the arrangement.

TASMAC has also announced an annual increase in the maintenance rates. The allocations will rise by five per cent every year, with effect from April 1, 2027. The provision is therefore subject to both spending restrictions and recordkeeping requirements, alongside the scheduled annual revision.

PMK slams govt for failing to publish TET results, despite SC verdict

CHENNAI: PMK president Dr Anbumani Ramadoss on Wednesday criticised the Tamil Nadu government for failing to publish the results of the special Teacher Eligibility Test even a year after the Supreme Court's verdict.

Expressing serious concern over the threat to the livelihoods of 3.28 lakh teachers, he, in a statement, demanded immediate steps to publish the results and reduce the pass mark criteria for reserved categories.

Recalling that on September 1 last year, the Supreme Court mandated that all secondary and graduate teachers appointed before the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2010, must pass the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) within three years—by August 31, 2027—or face termination, the PMK leader claimed "though the deadline was subsequently extended to August 31, 2028, and teachers with less than five years left for retirement were granted an exemption, as many as 3,28,701 teachers



in Tamil Nadu still need to clear the exam to retain their jobs".

Pointing out that despite his call for simplified special exams immediately following the apex court verdict, the then DMK government announced the exam only six months later, on February 13 this year, the former union minister said, "while the special TET was eventually conducted on July 4 and 5, the results remain unreleased even after 230 days since the notification and nearly 90 days after the examination."

Attributing the delay to administrative apathy, the PMK president stated that when a petition seeking a reduction in pass marks came up for hearing in the Madras High Court on July 8, the government sought time to respond, leading to an interim stay on publishing the results.

"Although the High Court directed the government to clarify its stance by July 24, the state filed its counter-affidavit a month late, on August 25", he said and criticised the government for failing to expedite the case to lift the stay and declare the results in over a month since filing its response.

Highlighting that out of the 36-month window granted by the Supreme Court, 13 months have already elapsed without a single result being published, Anbumani accused the government of "robbing teachers of their rightful opportunities" by failing to conduct exams twice a year as originally mandated. He warned that if the state continues this sluggish pace, teachers will lose out on three to four attempts, resulting in irreparable social injustice.

'Dharman' unit wraps up third schedule of shooting

Chennai

ASHWATH Marimuthu, who is directing superstar Rajinikanth's upcoming film 'Dharman', has now announced that the unit of the film had wrapped up its third schedule of filming.

Taking to his social media timelines, Ashwath Marimuthu wrote, "3rd schedule Wrapped ! #Dharman."

It may be recalled that on Tuesday, actress Raashii Khanna, who plays a pivotal role in 'Dharman', had shared pictures of herself with actors Rajinikanth and Ram Pothineni at Mysuru, where the unit was shooting.

Taking to her Instagram page to share a series of pictures including one in which the actress was seen with Superstar Rajinikanth and Telugu actor Ram Pothineni, Raashi had said, "A little glimpse into the world I have been living in for a while now in Mysore. Early morning workouts with Rajini sir and Ram, because apparently the day starts before the day starts. A little temple hopping, a little wandering, some UNO and lots of laughter.And yes, the Mysore dosa deserved its own moment. #dharman."

It may be recalled that IANS had reported earlier that the team of 'Dharman', featuring Superstar Rajinikanth in the lead, was to head to Mysuru after completing a shooting session in Chennai. IANS had reported that the Mysuru schedule had been planned for a period of around 10 days.

It may be recalled that director Ashwath Marimuthu had, at an event in Chennai, disclosed that Rajinikanth was very happy and very kicked about the pace and the quality of how Dharman was shaping up.

"I am now comfortable working with Thalaivar. I was very scared initially. I have worked with Ashok Selvan, then Pradeep and after that, I started working with Thalaivar. But I have realised nothing has changed. That is because Rajinikanth's work ethics is so pure and amazing. It is like having a child on the sets. Even after 50 years, he is so excited and so full of energy," the director had said at the event. The unit of the film had begun its third schedule on September 16 this year.It may be recalled that the unit of the film had wrapped up its second schedule of shooting only on September 4 this year.

The film has triggered huge excitement among fans ever since the makers announced the project. In June this year, the makers had dropped a making video that showed how the team had arrived at Superstar Rajinikanth's look in the film.

The film is to have music by Anirudh. Cinematography for the film is by Niketh Bommi and editing will be by Pradeep E Raghav. The film is being produced by Kamal Haasan and R Mahendran and co-produced by S Disney.

