

I/167518/2024

The Times of India - 25 March-2024

Krishna water tribunal gets 1 more extension

New Delhi: Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal, constituted for adjudicating dispute and river water sharing between Maharashtra, Karnataka and erstwhile Andhra Pradesh in April 2004, has got another extension till July 31, 2025 with effect from April 1, reports **Vishwa Mohan**.

Terms of reference of the 20-year-old tribunal was amended last year to accommodate water-sharing concerns of Telangana as well.

As part of its latest extension, Centre on March 21 notified that the tribunal may now submit its report on addressing water-sharing disputes among four states by July 31 next year.

The Morning Standard- 25 March-2024

Dam across Cauvery to solve drinking water issue

Reiterating that the project will help TN, Gowda referred to the admission of TN counsel Shekar Apade in the civil appeal to consider building a dam across the Cauvery to solve the drinking water problem in that state. He said there is no need to politicise Mekedatu as it is a people-oriented project.

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The Indian Express - 25 March-2024

Water crisis in Karnataka, reservoir levels worrying in many places

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BENGALURU, MARCH 24

WHILE THE full force of summer is still to become evident, Karnataka has been battling a severe water shortage for the last month, with people in Bengaluru facing a major drinking water crisis. The state has imposed strict curbs on water usage and has deployed water tankers since the past fortnight to meet drinking water needs.

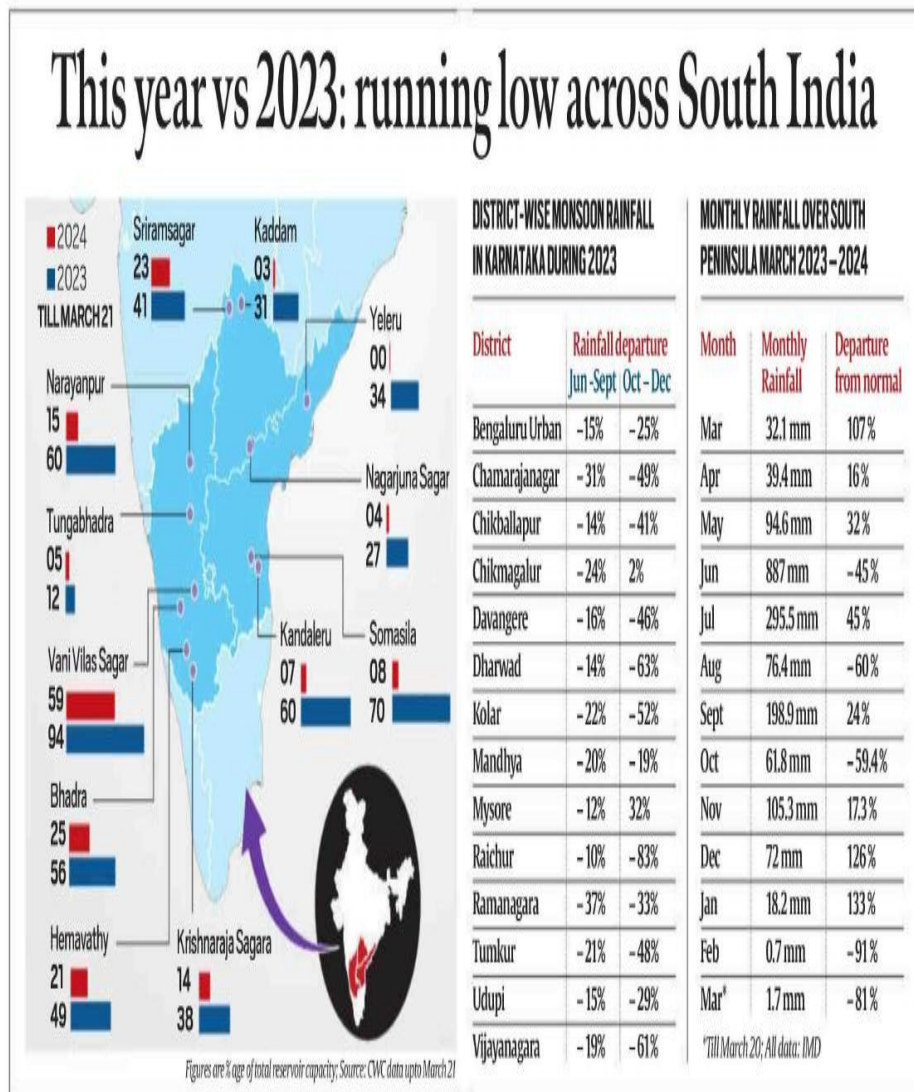
Long queues of people waiting with water cans and pots outside the municipal corporation-led water ATMs (sold at Rs 5 per 20 litres) are now common. Some of these ATMs have been shut owing to a shortage of groundwater in recent days.

The crippling water crisis forced many working professionals, hailing from other parts of Karnataka and the country, to flee the city. There is also uncertainty about hosting Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket matches in Bengaluru due to strict restrictions imposed on water usage.

The acute water shortage has also affected the regular watering of plants and trees in the iconic Lalbagh Botanical Garden and Cubbon Park in the city, which is witnessing a warmer-than-usual March. The rising heat is also beginning to affect the operations of the Fire and Safety Department in the city, which reported having to travel to far-off water bodies for refilling, which is mandatory for fire extinguishing purposes.

Weak monsoon seasons

Deficient rainfall last year could be one of the major reasons for the shortfall in drinking water in India's IT capital. For instance, in 2023,



Bengaluru city recorded normal rainfall of 1,015.8 mm, but during the crucial monsoon seasons — when the recharge of water aquifers and groundwater takes place — the rainfall ended on the negative side.

During the southwest monsoon season (June-September), the city recorded 659 mm (-8 per cent), and during the northeast monsoon (October to December), it received

238.3 mm (-13.1 per cent).

The below-normal rainfall has also resulted in lower storage in the state's reservoirs. The 16 major reservoirs in the state

were together holding water that was just about 25 per cent of their capacities. This is at least 12 percentage points lower than what is normally expected during this time of the year.

EXPLAINED CLIMATE

Low reservoir levels have tied the hands of the state government, which has to worry about increasing demands during peak summer.

Dry reservoirs across the South

Karnataka is not the only state with low storage levels in its reservoirs. The situation is

worse in some other south Indian states. Data released on March 21 by the Central Water Commission (CWC) show that in 30 of the 42 major reservoirs in the region, storage had dipped below 40 per cent of the total capacity.

Except for reservoirs in Kerala, below-normal water stocks prevail in all other southern states, including Andhra Pradesh (-68 per cent), Tamil Nadu (-27 per cent),

Karnataka (-26 per cent) and Telangana (-10 per cent).

At the national level, the 150 major reservoirs together were holding about 67.6 billion cubic metres (bcm) of water as of March 21, which was 38 per cent of the total capacity of 178.8 bcm.

The CWC data show that usable water reserves in southern India had dipped to 12,287 bcm — just 23 per cent of full reservoir capacity. For comparison, this was 39 per cent in March 2023, and the past 10-year average is 32 per cent. The basin-wise storage in rivers Krishna and Cauvery was 'deficient'.

Reservoirs that are fast running dry elsewhere ahead of the onset of peak summer are in the states of Andhra Pradesh (-69 per cent), Bihar (-65 per cent), Tamil Nadu (-30 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (-28 per cent), Chhattisgarh (-27 per cent), West Bengal (-25 per cent) and Karnataka (-24 per cent).

Coming close to the water-parched southern region is the situation in Maharashtra. Ujani, one of the state's large reservoirs, has gone dry. At this time last March, this dam stocked 47 per cent of the total storage capacity. Other dams in Maharashtra with below-average water stocks currently, include Jayakwadi (24 per cent), Mula (38 per cent), Yeldari (41 per cent), Manikdoh (16 per cent), Bhandardara (46 per cent), Urmudi (23 per cent), Bhatghar (39 per cent) and Darna (26 per cent).

The CWC report suggests that water reserves in north, east and some western Indian states were equivalent to March 2023 or better. Some of the regions with appreciable reserves are in Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh.