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Telangana Today - 15 April-2024

# Alarming drop in groundwater levels

## Plummets to 10.19 metres in Mancherial district in March

SANTOSH PADALA

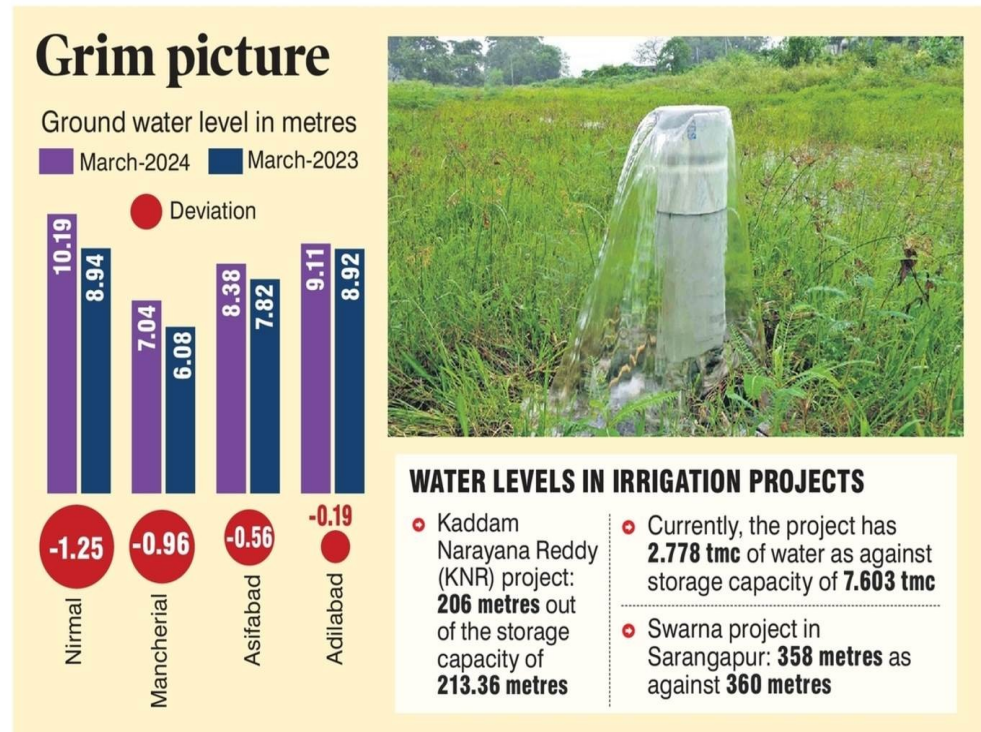
NIRMAL

Groundwater levels in the district continue to deplete to an alarming low. The dip in level is worrying farmers growing various crops in the ongoing Yasangi season and the public who depend on wells and hand pumps for drinking water.

The average groundwater level of the district plummeted to 10.19 metres in March this year as against 8.94 metres in March 2023 reflecting a decline of 1.25 metres. Mancherial district's average groundwater level dropped down by 0.96 metres, while Asifabad and Adilabad districts saw a decrease in groundwater level by 0.56 metres and 0.19 metres last month respectively compared to the corresponding period last year.

The water level is expected to dip by at least 2 metres in the coming two months. The yield of domestic and agricultural bore wells was already reduced by 20 percent.

"Standing paddy crop is likely to wither soon due to lack of supply of water from



the KNR project and depleting groundwater levels. Officials should survey crop damage and the government must extend support to farmers," Gangaram, a farmer from Bellal village in Kaddam mandal said.

The depletion in groundwater is attributed to a lack of supervision on the exploitation of water and poor recharge of groundwater.

"Officials should monitor utilisation of water by the public and also take steps to recharge the groundwater using proper management of irrigation projects and reducing wastage of water," V Rajkamal Reddy, a groundwater expert from Peddapalli remarked.

Nirmal and Mancherial District Groundwater Department deputy Director P

Srinivas Babu said excess rainfall registered in the month of October and November ran off to rivers instead of percolating into the ground due to a lack of check dams and farm ponds. He advised the public to dig rainwater harvesting pits and soak pits and optimum utilisation of water to overcome depletion of the groundwater level.



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# Water scarcity drives migrants away from B'luru

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

THE acute water shortage Bengaluru has been grappling with is driving migrant workers away from the city. These labourers, who had settled down at Bellandur's Kariyamma Agrahara, have been going back to their hometowns or elsewhere as they are unable to pay high amounts for water, both drinking and other necessities.

Water drums are a fixture in front of each shed, where labourers and their families reside. But only 14 out of 40 drums get filled once every three days, said a labourer. Around 60 families of migrant labourers stay here, he added.

The area, apart from bustling IT hubs and high-rise residential buildings, is also home to a large number of migrant workers from West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Assam. But the acute water shortage has forced them to look for live-



## Public toilets in B'luru double rates

Water scarcity has had an effect on public toilets too in Bengaluru. Until now, public toilets operated by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), charged visitors ₹2 for urination and ₹5 for defecation. But ever since water shortage, rates rose to ₹5 and ₹10 respectively

lihood in other cities.

"Throughout Ramzan, we paid Rs 120 each day to get clean water so we could clean ourselves before offering namaz. The taps here are just showpieces and no water has flowed through them in the last two months. The borewells have dried, the price of water for

every 10-litre can at RO units has gone up from Rs 10 to Rs 30 and water tankers have increased their rates from Rs 500 to Rs 1,500 for a 4,000-litre load. Out of 70 families here, around 10 have returned to their hometowns in North India as the money they were sending home was being used to buy water,"

said Nagma, who hails from Assam and earns ₹12,000 per month.

Borah, also from Assam and who works as a housekeeper in Bellandur, said, "We can afford to buy water only once a week. The RO unit is open only three times a week. We do not even have sufficient water to boil rice, forget about cooking a proper meal. There is no piped water supply. Both the landowner and authorities have ignored our problems."

Vijay, 32, a daily wageer and who hails from Howrah in West Bengal, has been staying in the city for over two years. "I moved here because I get around Rs 1,100, compared to just Rs 750 in my hometown. I have two kids aged 5 and 8. Every other day, we have to pay for water. How can we reduce consumption? We compromised on baths and laundry. But still, being a family of five, we need at least 40 litres of drinking water every week.