

Business Standard- 15- March-2023

Searing summer on the cards, all eyes on reservoirs, grain storage

Reservoir levels lower than last year but higher than 10-yr average; ample elbow room in grain storage for now

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE
New Delhi, 14 March

As several parts of India enter a long and dry summer, water levels in the country's reservoirs and foodgrain storage are being closely monitored to ensure that irrigation, power generation, and — most critically — grain supplies do not wilt in the heat.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week called for optimal grain storage, fire audits, and mock drills in hospitals as preparations for the harsh summer forecast by the meteorological department, and asked officials to track the water levels in reservoirs.

This is all the more vital given the grim projections of El Nino and its possible impact on India's southwest monsoon this year. So far, not much can be said with certainty about El Nino's impact on the monsoon, except that it is expected to appear during the second half of the four-month southwest monsoon season starting June.

Reservoirs: Bad news and good

Already, water levels in the reservoirs are less than the corresponding period of last year, as on March 09. The good news is that the water levels are higher than the average of the last 10 years during the corresponding period.

Of the 143 reservoirs monitored by the Central Water Commission, 18 have electricity projects linked to them. Live storage in the reservoirs is 86.449 billion cubic metres (BCM), which is 49 per cent of their total live storage capacity, according to the reservoirs bulletin of March 09. Last year, during the same period, the total water available in these reservoirs was 53 per cent of the capacity.

However, the water available this

year is significantly higher than the average storage during the same period of the last 10 years, which is 75.218 BCM. The water levels in reservoirs dipped this year due to the lower-than-expected winter rains in most parts of the country.

From January 1 to February 28, rainfall across the country was about 45 per cent less than normal. Not only that, in February 2023, the monthly average maximum temperature over the Indian region was the highest since 1901, while the monthly average minimum was the fifth highest, according to the Met department.

The average minimum temperature was the second highest in February over north-west India, third highest for east and north-east, and fifth highest for pan-India since 1901. That made February unusually dry, depleting the reservoirs.

Region wise, the March 09, 2023, Central Water Commission data showed that except for the 10-odd reservoirs in north India, water levels in reservoirs of all the remaining regions of the country were lower than last year. But, in all regions, water levels were much higher than their 10-year average.

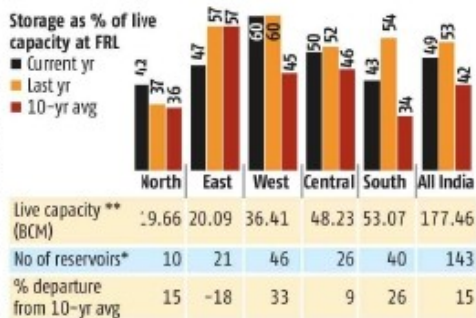
To recap, the Met, in its March to May forecast, had said that both maximum and minimum temperatures over most parts of east, north-east, central and north-west India was expected to remain above normal. Only in Southern Peninsular India, both the maximum as well as minimum will remain normal to below normal.

Grain storage: Ample space, for now

Prime Minister Modi, in his review meeting last week, directed the Food Corporation of India to ensure optimal storage of grains in extreme weather conditions.

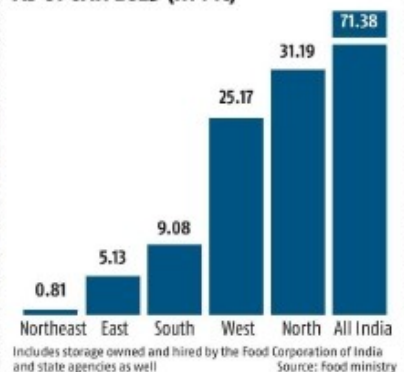


WATER LEVELS IN 143 RESERVOIRS MONITORED BY THE CENTRAL WATER COMMISSION



Note: Decimals have been rounded off; *No of reservoirs monitored by the government; **At full reservoir levels in BCM (billion cubic metres); FRL is full reservoir level; data as on March 9, 2023. Source: Central Water Commission

GRAIN STORAGE SPACE AVAILABLE AS OF JAN 2023 (IN Mt)



Foodgrains storage is a critical aspect of the preparations for fighting heat waves. March to May is the period when wheat procurement across the country's northern belt — in the states of Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and western Uttar Pradesh — is at its peak.

These are states where the impact of heat is felt most severely. With prolonged exposure to heat, the wheat lying in the open either in mandis or

elsewhere could deteriorate in quality.

The Centre has targeted to procure 34.1 million tonnes of wheat from farmers in the coming season starting April, significantly higher than the actual procurement of about 19 million tonnes in 2022-23.

According to government data, the total storage capacity available with FCI and state agencies, both owned as well as hired, is 71.39 million tonnes as of January 2023. Foodgrain stocks, as on February 1,

2023, were 33 million tonnes.

This means there is ample storage space available with the government even before the wheat procurement gathers full steam. This is largely on account of the huge offtake of wheat and rice in the last three to four years due to Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Ann Yojana alongside the usual public distribution system.

For now, it seems that government will be able to face the challenges.

The Times of India- 15- March-2023

DDA sets monsoon date for floodplain revamp

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New Delhi: Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has intensified the planting of 15,000 saplings and riverine grass for restoration of the Yamuna floodplain from the Wazirabad Barrage to the ISBT Barrage (Yamuna Vanasthali) before the monsoon.

A senior DDA official said some of the work, such as developing lawns on some portions, giving shape to natural depressions for water bodies and intensive cleaning of the site, was complete. "We have also dug pits in the floodplain for planting saplings of fruit trees and riverine grass mostly grown in such areas to support the natural habitat, attract birds and stop soil erosion. The site measures



DDA will plant 15,000 saplings and riverine grass on the floodplain

around 236.5 hectares and the entire rejuvenation project is being carried out without disturbing the natural ecosystem," said the official.

Among the native variety of saplings to be planted are Pilkani, Sheesham, Arjun, Bamboo, Desi Babul, Kath Jamun and Gular. "These plants will bear fruits and help in

the nesting of birds. Considering that the number of plants here are huge, we have procured varieties from various sources. The saplings are 5-6-foot in height and around 2-3 years old. All attention will be paid by the department to ensure that these saplings survive and grow properly," the official said.

Cleaning the banks and floodplain by removing garbage, construction waste, animal waste and encroachments is one of the main tasks, an official said

Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena had inspected the Shastri Park-Bela Farm-Garhi Mandu area of the floodplain on Saturday and directed officials to clean, restore and rejuvenate the 11-km stretch.

Cleaning the banks and floodplain by removing garbage, construction waste, animal waste and encroachments is one of the main tasks, the official said. "While cleaning the waterbody is being done simultaneously, requ-

ests have been made to other civic agencies to contribute to keeping the area clean. The district magistrate and senior officials on Monday visited the site to check the progress of work. There is also a plan to remove encroachments and garbage being dumped at the site," the official said.

The site is surrounded by localities like Seelampur, Shastri Park and Usmanpur.

"Cleaning, desilting, restoration and maintenance of the two main water bodies on the banks with the aim of inter-connecting all water bodies through a channel is important and a priority," the official said. "It will ensure uniform water levels and support extensive plantation throughout the stretch in a triple-grid layered design," the official said.

3 out of 4 rural homes without piped drinking water: NSSO

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Less than a quarter of rural households and under two-thirds of urban ones in India reported having piped water for drinking in their houses or yard, according to a report just released by the National Statistical Office. About 70% of the rural households reported having exclusive access to a latrine while 21.3% reported having no access to a latrine, exclusive or otherwise. The report, based on a large survey, also shows that almost half of rural households are still using firewood as the primary source of energy for cooking.

The survey, called the Multiple Indicator Survey (MIS), was part of the 78th round of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). Initially planned to be conducted over the course of 2020, it was extended till August 15, 2021 following the pandemic. The survey covered 1.6 lakh households in rural areas and another 1.1 lakh households in urban areas.

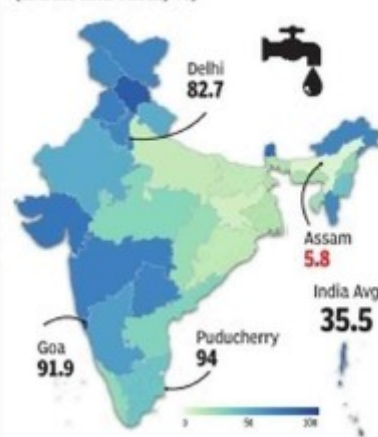
During the time of the survey, 16.1% of males and 43.8% of females aged 15-24 were neither studying nor working or being trained. Less than half of all those aged 18 or more had exclusive access to mobile phones. The report confirms the progress in financial inclusion in India with nearly 90% of those surveyed reporting having an account individually or jointly with banks, other financial institutions or mobile money service providers.

Although the penetration of piped drinking water is abysmal in many states, more than 95.7% of people reported having access to an "improved source of drinking water". This is defined as water taken from packed bottles, piped water into a house, yard or from a neighbour, public tap, tube well, hand pump, covered well, tanker and so on.

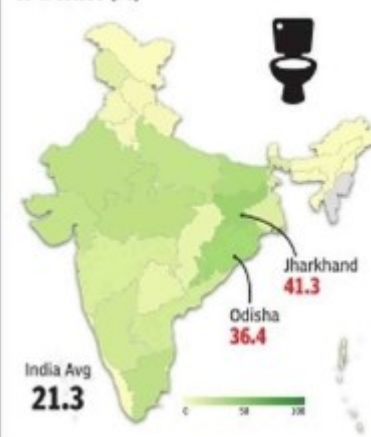
Among major states, Assam, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha are among the worst in access to tapped drinking water for both rural and urban households. Kerala, Manipur, Nagaland, and Jharkhand have less than 90% access to an improved source of drinking water. Similarly, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha have the lowest proportion of rural households with access to an exclusive toilet. For all other states, the proportion of such households is more than 60%. In the same three states, more than 30% of households had no access to

TOILET ACCESS LOWEST IN JHARKHAND VILLAGES

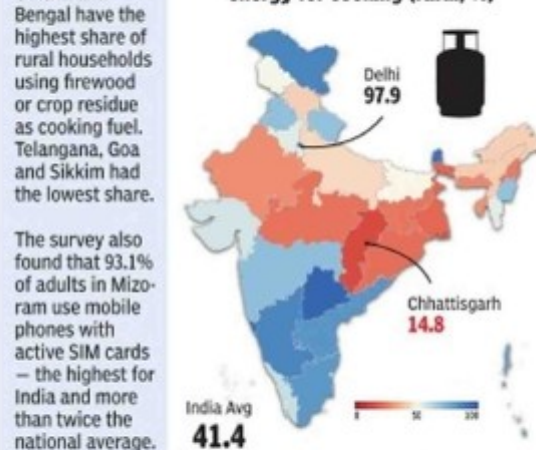
Households with piped drinking water (urban and rural, %)



Rural households that have no access to a toilet (%)



LPG as primary source of energy for cooking (rural, %)



The survey also found that 93.1% of adults in Mizoram use mobile phones with active SIM cards — the highest for India and more than twice the national average.

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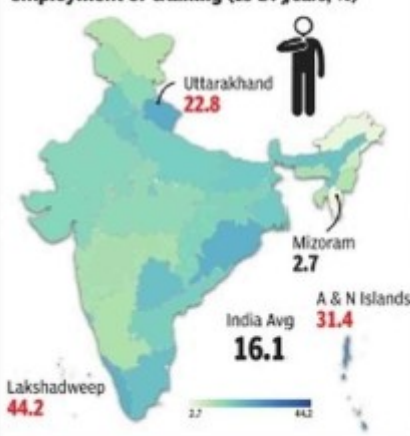


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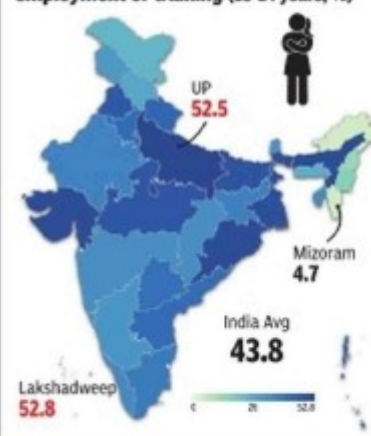


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Percentage of men not in education, employment or training (15-24 years, %)



Percentage of women not in education, employment or training (15-24 years, %)



a latrine.

In Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal, Nagaland and Madhya Pradesh, for more than 70% of households, firewood is the primary source of energy for cooking. These states along with Jharkhand have less than 25% of households using LPG for cooking

— the lowest among all states and UTs.

Among big states, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Kerala and Delhi have the highest proportion (more than 20%) of men aged 15 to 24 who were not in education, employment or training at the time of the survey. For females,

the proportion was highest in Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Odisha, Gujarat, West Bengal and Bihar.

In exclusive use of mobile phones, both Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh have less than a third of their 18-plus population with exclusive access to mobile phones.

Millennium Post- 15- March-2023

IMD

The IMD made a presentation on the global weather phenomena and the temperature outlook for the period from March to May. Forecast for the second fortnight of March was also provided.

Minimum temperatures are more likely to be above normal over most parts of the country except south peninsular India, where normal to below normal temperatures are likely.

The IMD further informed that no significant heat waves are expected during the remainder of March.

Secretary in the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare informed that Rabi crop condition is normal as on date and the production of wheat is expected to be about 112.18 MT, the highest ever.

Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that the National Action Plan on Heat Related Illness (NAP-HRI) released by the ministry in July 2021 outlines the challenges posed by heat wave, heat-related

illnesses and their management from primary to tertiary level.

He advised the states to review health facility preparedness in terms of essential medicines, intravenous fluids, ice packs, ORS and drinking water.

Director General (Forests) in the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change outlined the action plan and preparedness for forest fire management.

The Union home secretary outlined the efforts made by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the National Disaster Management Authority and informed that the National Guidelines for Preparation of Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Heat Waves was issued in 2016 and revised in 2017 and 2019.

Power Secretary emphasised the need to complete all maintenance activities in power plants by March 2023.

He also requested Punjab and Rajasthan to augment production of coal by captive power plants.

Secretaries in the departments of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Animal Husbandry and Dairying outlined the suggested measures related to drinking water, irrigation and fodder.

Gaubha noted that the central ministries and departments have been closely engaging with the states and Union territories to ensure optimal preparedness levels and for implementing timely mitigation measures.

He requested chief secretaries to review the preparedness for a likely heat wave with the relevant departmental secretaries and the district collectors.

Gaubha assured the states that central agencies will continue to closely coordinate with them and will continue to be available for necessary assistance.

IMD predicts hotter summer in 2023

'Above normal temperature expected in most parts of North, East, Central India'

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: A hotter than normal summer is expected in 2023 with temperatures likely to reach 2-3 degree celsius above normal in some parts of Indo-Gangetic plains and eastern India during the last week of March, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) told a high-level meeting on Tuesday.

At the review meeting, chaired by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba here, the IMD said above normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of northeast, east and

central India and some parts of northwest India.

Temperatures could be 2-3 degree Celsius above normal in some parts of Indo-Gangetic plains and eastern India during last week of March, the IMD informed the meeting convened to review preparedness for the ensuing summer and mitigation measures.

The cabinet secretary noted that since a hotter than normal summer is expected, states and union territories need to be adequately prepared to meet the associated challenges, according to an official release. **Continued on P4**

Telangan Today- 15- March-2023

Centre ignores TS' plea for flood relief

Approves Rs 1,816.16 crore under NDRF to five States

PS DILEEP
HYDERABAD

Telangana's plea to the Centre for an assistance of Rs.1,000 crore towards losses suffered during the unprecedented Godavari floods July last year has once again been ignored by the Centre, which however, at the same time approved additional assistance of Rs 1,816.16 crore under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to five States, four of them ruled by the BJP or allies, and which were affected by floods, landslides, and cloudburst during 2022.

A high-level committee chaired by union Home Minister Amit Shah took the decision to help the five States. Of the total central assistance of Rs 1,816.162 crore, Rs 520.466 crore has been approved to Assam, Rs 239.31 crore to Himachal Pradesh, Rs 941.04 crore to Karnataka, Rs 47.326 crore to Meghalaya and Rs 68.02 crore to Nagaland. Except for Himachal Pradesh ruled by Congress, all other States

Step-motherly treatment

Centre's discrimination against TS once again to fore

Telangana's plea for
₹1,000 cr
after Godavari
floods ignored

Assam allocated **Rs 520.466 crore**,
Himachal gets **Rs 239.31 crore**

Rs 941.04 crore given to Karnataka,
Rs 47.33 crore to Meghalaya

Nagaland gets **Rs.68.02 crore**

Telangana's request for **Rs 1,000 crore** after
October 2020 floods in Hyderabad too ignored



are ruled by BJP or its allies. In July last year, Telangana witnessed incessant rains across the State especially in the northern and eastern districts. Several villages in low-lying areas were inundated and cut off from rest of the State disrupting power, water and supply of essentials and leading to widespread flooding. Farmers too bore the brunt as their fields were flooded at the beginning of Vaanakalam season itself.

At least 15 persons died and over 30,000 were relocated to rescue camps. In Bhadrachalam Kothagudem dis-

trict, flood waters in Godavari River touched 71 feet against a third level warning of 53 feet, which was unprecedented. The districts of Adilabad, Nirmal, Kurnool, Bheem Asifabad, Jayashankar Bhupalpally, Mancherial, Mulugu and Peddapalli were also battered by heavy rain. The State estimated a loss of Rs 1,400 crore due to floods and submitted a report to the Centre on preliminary estimations of flood losses. It had sought immediate financial assistance of Rs 1,000 crore from the Centre.

During the financial year

2022-23, the union government released Rs 15,770.40 crore to 25 States in their SDRF and another Rs 502.744 crore to four States from NDRF. Except for annual funds, the Centre did not release any additional funds to Telangana during the last fiscal as well. Further, the BJP government deputed Inter-Ministerial Central teams to all five States, immediately after the calamities, without waiting for the receipt of memorandum from them. But was no help to Telangana

Telangana met with a similar response when it sought financial assistance from Centre after Hyderabad was hit hard by torrential rains in October 2020. The preliminary estimations of damage caused by the heavy rains was around Rs 5,000 crore, following which Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao urged the Centre to provide Rs 1,000 crore as immediate assistance. However, the Centre refused any help, claiming that adequate funds were provided in the SDRF.

Hindustan Times- 15- March-2023

LG directs cleaning of 200km sewer lines at Yamuna meet

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: Lieutenant governor (LG) VK Saxena on Tuesday chaired the third review meeting of the Yamuna cleaning committee, constituted by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), at the Asita East biodiversity park, and said that desilting of sewer lines has emerged as the biggest challenge in the river clean-up project. He directed the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to expedite desilting 200km of trunk and peripheral sewer lines across Delhi, officials aware of the matter said.

According to the targets fixed by the panel, desilting 90km of trunk sewer lines has to be completed by June, and the remaining 110km is expected to be cleaned by September.

Criticising DJB, the LG office lamented "gross inaction and neglect" on its part, saying that DJB did not undertake any


VK Saxena

cleaning work for the last 8-10 years, resulting in choked sewer lines. Saxena said that he reviewed the progress of work based on outcomes of previous meetings, and asked officers to ensure desilting of sewer lines was taken up in mission mode.

"Trapping of drains, construction of sewage treatment plants, management of septage and restoration of floodplains are going on as per schedule. I have expressed satisfaction at the works completed so far and

remain hopeful that the future plan of action will be enforced in time, before the review by NGT in July. We owe the future generations a clean Yamuna," he said.

According to the status report submitted to the panel, DJB said it desilted 21.9km of trunk sewer lines over three months, out of which 6.74km was cleaned only last month.

The agency acknowledged it has been tasked to clean 90km by June, and said the estimate for the second phase (110km of sewer lines) is still being prepared.

An official in the LG's secretariat said that Saxena also reviewed other projects, such as 100% treatment of sewage, trapping of all 242 drains, expansion of sewage network in unauthorised colonies and environment management of Najafgarh Jheel.

DJB officials did not comment on the issue despite repeated requests.

Amar Ujala- 15- March-2023

मिशन मोड में करें यमुना की सफाई : उपराज्यपाल रिकॉर्ड पर लेकर सभी नालों को करें ट्रैप

अमर उजाला ब्यूरो

नई दिल्ली। यमुना की सफाई और कायाकल्प के लिए दिल्ली के उपराज्यपाल वीके सक्सेना ने संबंधित एजेंसियों को मिशन मोड में काम करने को कहा है। एलजी की अध्यक्षता में असिता पूर्व में राष्ट्रीय हरित प्राधिकरण (एनजीटी) की ओर से गठित उच्चस्तरीय समिति की बैठक में उन्होंने दिल्ली जल बोर्ड (डीजेबी) से पूरे 200 किमी के दायरे से गाद निकालने में तेजी लाने का निर्देश दिया। साथ ही एजेंसियों से सभी 242 नालों को ट्रैप करने सहित शेष सभी नालों को भी रिकॉर्ड में लाने को कहा है। एलजी ने कहा कि बुजुर्गों से विरासत में मिली यमुना भावी पीढ़ी को सौंपी गई है।

एलजी ने शत प्रतिशत सीवेज का निर्देश देते हुए दिल्ली विकास प्राधिकरण (डीडीए) की ओर से यमुना बाढ़ के मैदानों की सफाई के लिए किए जा रहे प्रयासों की सफलता का जिक्र किया। पिछले कई वर्षों से उपेक्षा के कारण बंद सीवेज लाइनें यमुना की सफाई की राह में सबसे बड़ी चुनौती रही हैं। ट्रंक और पेरिफेरल सीवर लाइन के करीब 200 किमी की सफाई में दिल्ली जल बोर्ड की घोर निष्क्रियता को गंभीरता से लेते गाद निकालने का काम तेजी से करने का निर्देश दिया। उच्च स्तरीय समिति की पहली बैठक से ही गाद निकालने की कवायद शुरू हो चुकी है। जबकि 90.34 किलोमीटर सीवर लाइन की जून तक सफाई का अनुमान लगाया गया था। शेष 110 किलोमीटर में सितंबर तक इसे पूरा किया जाना है।



200

किलोमीटर के दायरे से गाद निकालने के काम में लाएं तेजी

इन बिंदुओं पर हुई चर्चा

- सीवेज के 100 फीसदी उपचार का लक्ष्य
- रिकॉर्ड में सभी 242 नालों को फंसाना व 238 नालों को ट्रैप करना
- अनधिकृत कॉलोनियों में सीवेज नेटवर्क
- डीएसआईआईडीसी की ओर से सीईटीपी से औद्योगिक प्रदूषण का प्रबंधन।
- यमुना बाढ़ के मैदानों की सफाई, उपचारित अपशिष्ट जल का उपयोग सहित नजफगढ़ झील का पर्यावरण प्रबंधन

एलजी ने अधिकारियों को यमुना की सफाई के लिए गाद निकालने का काम मिशन मोड में पूरा करने का निर्देश दिया।

बैठक में यह बात सामने आई कि भले ही प्रदूषण यमुना में कई मानकों से कम हुआ है। बावजूद इसके नजफगढ़ नाले से पिछले वर्षों के दौरान प्रदूषण का स्तर अधिक है। कोविड-19 महामारी के समय को छोड़ भी दे, फिर भी यमुना की सफाई और कायाकल्प के लिए कार्यों को तयशुदा वक़्त पर पूरा करें।