

Central Water Commission  
Technical Documentation Directorate  
Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section

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The News Clippings on Water Resources Development and allied subjects are enclosed for perusal of the Chairman, CWC, and Member (WP&P/D&R/RM), Central Water Commission. The soft copies of clippings have also been uploaded on the CWC website.

*S. Maheshwari*  
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Deputy Director TD Dte, & Publication Division

Director TD Dte

For information of Chairman & Member (WP&P/D&R/R.M.), CWC and all concerned,  
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*o/c*

News item/letter/article/editorial published on 14.09.2018 in the

Hindustan Times

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Hindustan (Hindi)

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)

Punjab Keshari (Hindi)

The Hindu

Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)

Deccan Chronicle

Deccan Herald

M.P. Chronicle

Aaj (Hindi)

Indian Nation

Nai Duniya (Hindi)

The Times of India (A)

Business standard

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CWC. *economy times*

## Monsoon Watch



**Countrywide rainfall since June 1 remained 7% below normal**

Overall rainfall recorded on Monday morning remained 43% below normal

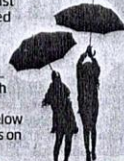


**RAINFALL ACTIVITY OVER EAST & northeast**  
India has picked up; the region has recorded the highest deficit since June 1

Normal rainfall recorded over 74% AREA OF THE country since June 1



**ALL PARTS OF CENTRAL India & south peninsula** recorded below normal rains on Monday



**ON MONDAY, 51% AREA OF the country** recorded large deficit in normal rainfall, while 17% AREA DID NOT RECEIVE any rain



**Heavy rainfall likely over parts of east & northeast India in 2-3 days**

Good rainfall activity likely over Western Himalayan region & south east peninsula India till Thursday

**RAINFALL OVER northwest India** to pick up between September 13 & 15



**Highest max temperature recorded at 39.2° Celsius in West Rajasthan on Sunday**



News item/letter/article/editorial published on 22.09.2018 in the

Hindustan Times  
Statesman  
The Times of India (N.D.)  
Indian Express  
Tribune  
Hindustan (Hindi)

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)  
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*Economy Times*

# Rising Diesel Prices May Hurt Telcos

The surge could lead to a near 60 bps on-quarter fall in telco Ebitda margins in July-Sept period, say analysts

Kalyan.Parbat  
@timesgroup.com

**Kolkata:** Rising diesel prices over the past one month is likely to lead to a 50-to-60 basis points (bps) sequential dip in operating margins of telco biggies Vodafone Idea (VIL), Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio Infocomm in the September quarter, analysts said.

"Since diesel cost is about 7-8% of a mobile carrier's revenue, the continuing price rise of this critical fuel could lead to a near 60 bps on-quarter fall in telco Ebitda margins in the July-September period," Rohan Dhamija, partner and head of India & Middle East at Analysys Mason, told ET.

Diesel prices have already risen about 7% since August 1, courtesy a combination of a weak rupee versus the greenback, higher global oil prices

and heavy taxes.

Rajan Mathews, director general of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), said any increase in diesel prices will have a negative financial impact on the telecom industry, "given the sector's dependence on this fuel to power generators that are in place to ensure 99.99% uptime for our cell towers".

The COAI represents all major telecom carriers such as VIL, Airtel and Jio.

At press time, VIL, Airtel and Jio did not reply to ET's queries.

The telecom industry is reckoned to be a significant buyer of diesel after the Railways, and is estimated to run up annual spends of nearly Rs 9,000 crore to consume some 200 crore litres of the fuel.

Another senior telco executive, who did not wish to be named, said "higher diesel costs will ultimately be borne by tel-

**Feeling The Pinch**

Diesel prices have already risen about 7% since Aug 1

COAI said any increase in diesel prices will have a negative financial impact on telecom industry

Sector relies on diesel to power generators

Spends nearly ₹9,000 crore annually on 200 crore litres of the fuel

Tower cos may seek the support of communications ministry if diesel prices continue to rise

cos since all price increases on this score will be passed on by the telecom tower companies as pass through items".

The continuing rise in diesel prices, he said, could also lead to "a near 2% on-quarter fall in absolute operating income" for the top telcos.

The diesel price jolt comes at a time when the telecom industry continues to reel under acute financial stress, we-

ighed down by nearly ₹8 lakh-crore of debt and brutal price wars reflected in slumping telco revenues and operating income. The older incumbent carriers, in particular, have incurred big losses with Reliance Jio being the sole profitable telco.

TR Dua, director general of Tower & Infrastructure Providers Association (TAIPA), said tower companies would

shortly "seek the support of the communications ministry" if diesel prices continue to increase.

In the immediate term though, the tower industry, he said, "would pass on the diesel price increase to its (telco) customers". But the impact, he said, "would be partly mitigated due to improved electricity supply through the grid and deployment of alternate energy sources".

The TAIPA representative, in fact, said the advent of alternate green energy resources has reduced the telecom tower companies' dependence on diesel.

Dua said the telecom tower industry has deployed "over 1.10 lakh diesel-free sites that consume merely a litre of diesel a day," and instead use solar cooling units, lithium batteries, simple power panels, fuel cells to free cooling units (FCUs).



News item/letter/article/editorial published on 11.09.2018 in the

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## Fuel Price Cuts are a Populist Demand <sup>ET-11</sup>

The Opposition might think it is voicing popular anger over ever-higher fuel prices by making that the central point of its united strike action, the Bharat Bandh. But this is populist and potentially counterproductive. Global oil prices could well come down, say, if the US strikes a deal with Iran that could bump up the latter's production. Would the Opposition start praising the government then? For Congress and its allies to pretend that, were they in power, global oil prices would, somehow, have moderated is silly.

Higher prices of crude in global markets reflect strengthening economies around the world and geopolitical tensions that could depress oil production from Iran. The only way the government can bring down the final retail prices of petrol and diesel is to slash taxes. Lower revenue would raise the fiscal deficit or force expenditure cuts. Making petro-fuel less expensive will bring down transport costs, true, but that does not mean inflation would hold down across the board. Indirect taxes on petrol and diesel account for a sizeable chunk of the Centre's tax revenues, and lowering these levies will widen the fiscal deficit. The government would then have to depend more on non-government sector's savings to finance its spending. If the private sector does not have savings to spare after its own investment, such government borrowing will create excess demand and increase prices.

Therefore, lowering fuel prices will push up the general price level unless the government raises other revenue to make good this revenue loss. Lower fuel prices would take away any incentive to moderate consumption of fuels. It makes better sense for the Opposition to engage in a constructive dialogue to bring petroleum products under the goods and services tax.



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*Economy Times*

## INDIA-BRITAIN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TIES

# A Clean, Renewable Friendship



Graham Stuart

Some partnerships have the potential to build a better, cleaner, more sustainable world. It's been my privilege this week to cement one such example, the Britain-India collaboration on mobility.

India and Britain are natural partners when it comes to the future of mobility, and the future of technology. Both countries have set ambitious targets for new vehicles to be zero emission. Britain has demonstrated that clean growth is possible, cutting emissions by more than 40% while growing its economy by more than two-thirds.

In 2017, Britain was the second-largest market for ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) in the EU. It continues to be a global leader in their development and manufacture. One in every eight battery electric cars sold in Europe in 2017 was made in Britain.

By 2040, Britain will end the sale of

new conventional vehicles completely. It has set up a public fund to accelerate the roll-out of charging infrastructure and are investing over £300 million (about ₹2,800 crore) in research into ultra-low emission technologies.

British business is also investing. In March, British technology company Dyson announced they will put £2.5 billion (₹23,500 crore) into developing an electric vehicle in Britain. In April, Toyota Connected Europe established a £4.5 million (about ₹43 crore) London startup to support new mobility businesses.

India's ambition is similarly clear and ambitious. The target to establish 175 GW of new renewable energy by 2022 is world-leading. India's ambition for most new vehicles to be zero emission by 2030 is equally stretching.

This is an important week for progressing our partnership. Last weekend's Global Mobility Summit, for which I was in New Delhi, was an important step in developing a clean, efficient and affordable mobility ecosystem. British Prime Minister Theresa May will be hosting Indian minister of new and renewable energy RK Singh at a global Zero Emission Vehicle Summit on September 11-12 to help further accelerate this

transition.

These summits are important moments. They help boost investment into zero-emission technologies by giving industry confidence in the growth of markets for cleaner vehicles. This stimulates innovation and brings down prices.

Britain brings specialised expertise in technology, infrastructure, skills and R&D to the Britain-India partnership. The two countries are about to embark upon structured programmes in R&D, skills and policy, exclusively in the domain of electric and clean mobility. We are working to mobilise green finance, a powerful way to support India's clean energy priorities. Indian issuers have raised £2 billion (₹18,800 crore) to date on the London Stock Exchange through green bonds since 2016.

And building on 35 years of collaboration, Britain's Energy for Growth Partnership with India goes from strength to strength, with large-scale private sector investments flowing in both directions.

We're looking forward to the India-Britain Ministerial Energy Dialogue on September 13 in London. Our current focus includes more efficient and affordable power generation, integrating more renewables into India's energy mix, and boosting

industrial efficiency.

Meanwhile, exciting work is underway on the UK-India Technology Partnership announced by PMs Narendra Modi and May in April. A key illustration of Britain's Industrial Strategy in action, this will see the two countries share knowledge, collaborate on research and create industry partnerships. They will use complementary strengths to create jobs, promote trade and tackle shared challenges. More than 30,000 of the 110,000 jobs with Indian parent companies in Britain are in tech and telecom. We want this to grow even further as we exit the EU.

There will be no better opportunity to celebrate the tech partnership than the India-Britain 'Future Tech Festival', a thought leadership summit in Delhi in December, at which future mobility will be a key theme.

We have come a long way already, but there is more to do. Low carbon growth is a global challenge. The commitment we share around this makes Britain and India natural partners, in Modi's words, a joint "force for good" in building a cleaner, more sustainable world.

*The writer is British minister for investment, department for international trade*



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# Most agri commodity prices well below MSP

DILIP KUMAR JHA  
Mumbai, 10 September

**M**ost agricultural commodities are trading below the central government-set minimum support price (MSP), and for quite a while.

The average price of maize, for example, was ₹887 a quintal during August at the Santhesargur (Karnataka) wholesale centre (mandi), around 38 per cent lower than its MSP of ₹1,425 a quintal. Black gram (urad) at the Alirajpur (Madhya Pradesh) mandi was quoted at ₹2,827 a quintal in August, on average; the MSP is ₹5,400 a quintal.

This situation is set to continue, with a bumper harvest estimated for the ongoing kharif season; harvesting is to commence in a month. With record inventory also with government procurement agencies, early relief seems unlikely for farmers.

"As long as the country witnesses a normal harvest, there will be a case of prices falling below the MSP, until the government makes a proper system of procurement. While the current kharif season harvest is expected to be slightly lower than last year, it will be above normal. This means supply is going to improve further," said Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at CARE Ratings.

The central government is believed to be in an advanced stage of announcing a 'Bhavantar' (price differential)

scheme, to directly pay growers the difference

between the current price and MSP. It is based on a scheme pioneered by the Madhya Pradesh government but the latter had

some loopholes and other issues.

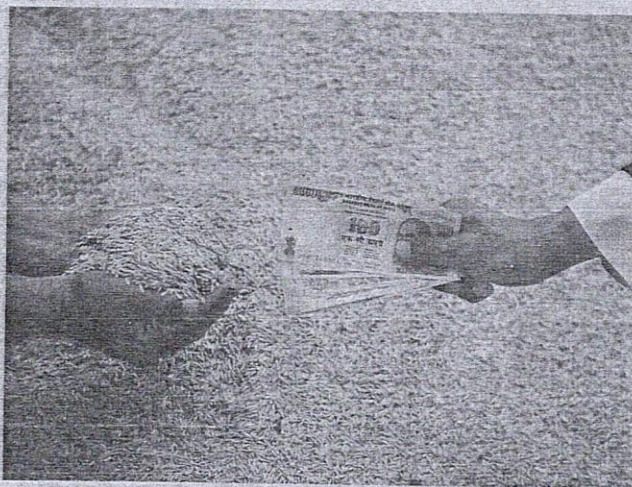
"It will be interesting to see, how the government tightens these loopholes before announcing the 'Bhavantar' scheme. With government agencies' limited reach and financial strength, involvement of private agencies would be needed. But, private purchasers' bills would have to be met. With prices below the MSP, private procurers (now) always purchase at the market price,"

**The central govt is believed to be in an advanced stage of announcing a 'Bhavantar' (price differential) scheme, to directly pay growers the difference between the current price and MSP**

said Sanjay Kaul, managing director, National Collateral Management Services Ltd.

The Union ministry of agriculture had announced the sown area under kharif crops at 104.2 million hectares as of last Thursday, a marginal rise from 104 million hectares reported by the same time last year.

D K Joshi, chief economist at ratings agency CRISIL, says price movement would be decided by success on MSP procurement. "While there is a bit of question mark on the reach of the government's procurement, we will have to wait for the final kharif output to assess price movement," he said.





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## UP to ensure sugar arrears payment before October 20

**SANJEEB MUKHERJEE &  
VIRENDRA SINGH RAWAT**

New Delhi/ Lucknow, 10 September

Uttar Pradesh will ensure that the entire sugarcane arrears of little less than ₹100 billion, accruing to the state's farmers from 2017-18, would be paid before October 20.

This comes on the back of a recent announcement of a package by the state government, sugarcane minister Suresh Rana said.

"The state government has announced a package of ₹55.35 billion for sugarcane farmers of which around ₹10 billion will be paid through cooperative societies, ₹250 million through the state sugar corporation and around ₹5 billion directly to farmers associated with private sugar mills at the rate of ₹4.50 a quintal," Rana told *Business Standard*.

He said around ₹44 billion will be given as soft loans to sugar mills which will also be used for payment of sugarcane arrears.

"In the next 15 days, the state cabinet will work out the modalities of the soft loans and conditions under which it can be applied," Rana said.

However, critics have questioned the state's sugar package on the grounds that it is much less than what is required for wiping off the arrears.

"Most sugar mills have already taken loans against their assets. Therefore, it remains to be seen how many of them can avail the soft-loan facility being offered by the state government. Moreover, the amount allocated for cooperatives and state corpo-

ration is lower than their actual debt," Sudhir Panwar, former member of UP Planning Commission, said.

On some sugar mills declining to participate in meetings called to determine the cane reservation area, Rana said all of them will take part and the state government has fixed a nodal official for each mill.

Meanwhile, in a related development, the state government has decided to invest ₹1.56 billion to revive six distilleries for producing ethanol and organic fertiliser.

These distilleries owned by the UP Co-operative Sugar Mills Federation had been temporarily shut following the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) order over non-compliance of environmental norms.

However, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had directed the state sugarcane department to take steps to revive these units. The government will infuse ₹1.56 billion for setting up of zero-liquid discharge bio-compost plants in these six distilleries for producing ethanol and organic manure without harming the environment.

The manure would be supplied to farmers, who would also check the consumption of chemical fertilisers in the vicinity.

According to sources, Adityanath would soon lay the foundation of the projects located in Saharanpur, Bulandshahar, Mau, Pilibhit, Farrukhabad and Bahraich districts.

The units are likely to be completed before start of the coming

### SEEKING A SWEETENER

■ Cooperative sugar mills have demanded a fresh bailout package from the Centre

■ This includes delinking export with the Centre's production subsidy of ₹5 per quintal, higher incentive on production of ethanol from B-heavy molasses and sugarcane juice, allowing states to enter into direct power purchase agreements with sugar mills and a fresh price stabilisation fund for the sector

■ The demand was made during the annual general body meeting of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories

crushing season in October-November 2018.

While there are 24 functional cooperative sugar mills in UP, there were only seven distilleries integrated with these plants. Of this, six were closed down after the CPCB order.

The six distilleries are projected to process 0.28 million tonnes (MT) of molasses (a sugar byproduct) annually to produce ethanol and organic manure, helping the federation earn almost ₹3 billion in revenues.

Currently, the private sector dominates the UP sugar market with 94 the total 119 units in the state.



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## Cochin airport files ₹3.4 bn claims over flood damage

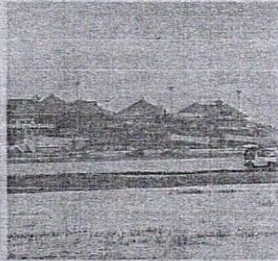
ADVAIT RAO PALEPU &  
NAMRATA ACHARYA

Mumbai/Kolkata, 10 September

Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL) and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) have filed claims totalling ₹3.36 billion with New India Assurance (NIA) general insurance company owing to the damage caused by the recent floods in the state, said a senior official of CIAL.

Speaking to *Business Standard*, a senior executive of NIA confirmed the development and said that the insurance company is assessing damage to the airport's assets.

The insurer expects to pay out a little over ₹2 billion towards the claim. However, this is a preliminary estimate as the investigations are only



**Operations at Cochin airport had to be stalled due to floods**

in an early stage.

CIAL had shut operations for 14 days from August 15 as many assets of the airport were submerged under water and found to be destroyed.

The total damage to the assets and operations of CIAL is estimated to be ₹3 billion.

*More on business-standard.com*



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## Karnataka CM meets Modi, seeks ₹1,199 cr as flood relief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 10 SEPTEMBER

A high-level delegation from Karnataka led by Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy met Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday and sought a relief of Rs 1,199 crore for flood-hit seven districts of the state.

The delegation also apprised the prime minister of the prevailing drought-like situation in 17 of the total 30 districts in the state.

The delegation comprised former prime minister H D Deve Gowda, Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara, and ministers HD Revanna, RV Deshpande, DK Shivakumar and Krishna Byre Gowda.

BJP's Karnataka unit leaders were also invited to the meeting but they chose to give it a miss.

After the meeting, Kumaraswamy said, "We have told the prime minister that the floods in seven districts of the coastal and Malenadu region have not only affected crops but also infrastructure and

human life. We have requested Rs 1,199 crore relief from the Centre." Kumaraswamy said floods and landslides in the state have caused a loss of Rs 3,705.87 crore.

He said his government has already released Rs 49 crore from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and an additional amount of Rs 200 crore from the state fund to the effected districts towards immediate relief and rehabilitation work.

The chief minister had recently submitted an interim proposal in this regard to Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, who had assured of sending a central team to ascertain the damage caused.

With regard to the drought-like situation in the state, Revenue Minister Deshpande said 17 districts in the interior parts of northern Karnataka and a few districts in southern interior are facing severe drought. About 89 taluks are facing a drought-like situation, he said.



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## Karnataka floods: Centre to send teams

### CM meets Modi, seeks ₹2,000 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday assured the Karnataka government that the Centre would send two official teams to assess flood damage in Kodagu, Malnad and the coastal districts.

This followed a meeting of a delegation led by Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy with Mr. Modi to appraise him of the flood havoc in certain parts of Karnataka.

The delegation comprised former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara, and Ministers R.V. Deshpande, D.K.

Shivakumar, H.D. Revanna, and Krishna Byre Gowda.

They urged Mr. Modi to announce a ₹2,000 crore relief package for rehabilitation and rebuilding infrastructure in the flood-hit districts.

According to an official release, Mr. Modi responded favourably to the appeal. The loss incurred owing to rain in the districts has been estimated at ₹3,705.87 crore.

The delegation also explained to the Centre the intensity of the drought situation in the interior parts of Karnataka, which received below normal rainfall. A total of 17 districts received deficient rainfall.



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## Capital sees longest Sept wet spell in 22 years

Amit Bhattacharya  
@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** The capital witnessed its longest wet spell in the month of September in 22 years, with rain being recorded in nine consecutive days from the first till the ninth of the month. Safdarjung, Delhi's main weather station, registered 179mm of rain during these nine days, nearly 40% more than the normal for the entire month.

This was also the wettest start to September — counting the first 10 days of the month — in seven years and these, and wettest in the last 22 years, according to rainfall data from IMD and the TuTiempo website.

In fact, it rained continuously in the capital from August 27 till September 9, as per Safdarjung weather station records, barring just a single day — August 31.

The next few days, however, are expected to be relatively dry in the city.

## 9 days of continuous rain in Sept unusual for Delhi

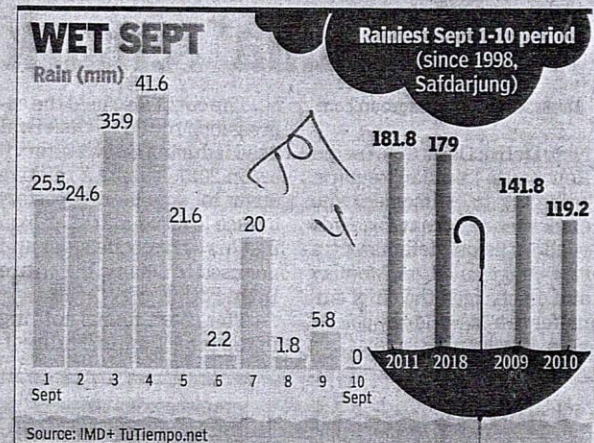
► Continued from P1

Safdarjung recorded as much as 259mm of rain in this 14-day period, more than what the city normally receives during the entire period of its wettest month of August. Normal August rainfall in Delhi is 247.7 mm.

"It is highly unusual for the city to record nine straight days of rainfall, particularly in September. The spell was caused by steady incursion of moisture into the region because of a persisting cyclonic circulation over Uttar Pradesh and Haryana that led to the monsoon trough staying close to the capital," said B P Yadav, head of IMD's regional meteorological centre.

This peculiar atmospheric condition led to long spells of rain in a relatively small area adjoining south Haryana and UP, the official said.

The monsoon trough, a typical feature of the monsoon season, is an east-west line of atmospheric low pressure that divides two regions of differing air flows. It



usually moves in a north-south direction, shuttling between the Himalayan foothills and the central Indian plateau. But during this period, officials said, the trough stayed mostly just north or south of the national capital, creating perfect conditions for rainfall over the area.

It was in 2011 that the capital last saw a wetter start to September. Then, the cumulative rainfall in the first 10 days of the month was just marginally more than this

year, at 181.8mm. Going back further, such heavy rainfall in the beginning of September was last seen in the capital way back in 1995, when 179.3mm was recorded in the first 10 days of the month.

As for most consecutive rainy days in September, 2011 too saw a nine-day wet spell like this year. A longer spell was last witnessed in 1995, when 11 straight days of rain took place from September 3 to 13, as per the weather archives website, TuTiempo.net.



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# Naveen reviews flood situation, announces relief

So far 7.5 lakh people in Bhadrak, Jajpur and Kendrapara have been hit

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BHUBANESWAR**

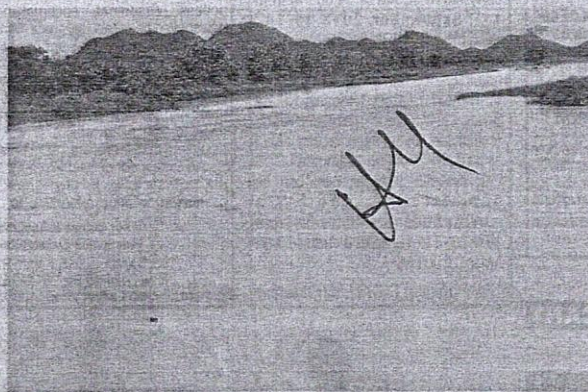
Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik reviewed the flood situation in three districts of the State on Monday and announced financial assistance for the people affected by the deluge.

The Baitarani river is in spate and has so far affected about 7.5 lakh people in Bhadrak, Jajpur and Kendrapara districts of Odisha.

## Financial help

According to the Chief Minister's announcement, adults will be given ₹60 per day and children below 12 years ₹45 per day for seven days, besides relief materials. The government will transfer the money directly to the beneficiaries' bank accounts.

Mr. Patnaik spoke to the Collectors of the three flood-



The Vamsadhara river in spate after huge inflow from catchment areas in Odisha. ■ FILE PHOTO

hit districts through video-conferencing and asked them to submit damage assessment report within seven days.

He also told the Collectors to ensure that people get relief materials, food and safe drinking water in the flood-

hit areas. Free treatment for their livestock and vaccination will also be provided by the State government.

The review by Mr. Patnaik revealed that at least 903 villages under 17 blocks and four urban local bodies of the three districts have been

affected by the flood. At least 40,000 people living in low-lying areas have been evacuated and sheltered in relief camps where cooked food is being served.

Officials said that 90 metric tonnes of fodder have been distributed in the flood-hit areas for the livestock and the health department has provided medical aid to the people in the deluge-hit villages.

At least 50,000 hectare of agricultural land in the three districts remained submerged, the officials said.

Meanwhile, sources in the Special Relief Commissioner's office said that though the water level in Baitarani had come down, villages of Bhadrak and Jajpur districts remained inundated while 31 villages in Kendrapara district remained marooned.



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Business standard

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CWC.

सोन नदी: बाणसागर से 6 लाख क्यूसेक पानी

## मध्यप्रदेश ने छोड़ा पानी, ११-११ बिहार में बाढ़ की आशंका

पत्रिका ब्यूरो

patrika.com

**पटना.** मध्यप्रदेश सरकार ने 24 घंटों में बाणसागर बांध से सोन नदी में लगभग छह लाख क्यूसेक से ज्यादा पानी छोड़ा है। यह पांच दिन में बिहार पहुंचेगा।

सोन नदी के जलग्रहण क्षेत्र में वर्षा से पानी पहले ही बढ़ कर चार लाख क्यूसेक हो चुका है। ऐसे में मध्यप्रदेश से आए पानी के बाद राजधानी पटना समेत आसपास इलाकों के लिए खतरे बढ़ जाने की आशंका लोगों को सताने लगी है।

उधर, नेपाल की तराई वाले इलाकों में जारी लगातार बारिश से कोसी और महानंदा नदियों का

जलस्तर भी बढ़ सकता है।

जल संसाधन विभाग ने चेतावनी जारी की है। मध्यप्रदेश के पानी से सोन का जलस्तर पटना के निकट मनेर में खतरे का निशान पार कर जाएगा। सोन नदी गंगा के जलस्तर में वृद्धि का बड़ा आधार है। अभी यह खतरे के निशान से 11 सेमी नीचे बह रही है।

उधर, कोसी और महानंदा तथा उसकी सहायक नदियों का जलस्तर बढ़ने से कोसी और मिथिलांचल में बाढ़ की आशंका गहरा गई है। हालांकि, आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरण की ओर से दावे किए गए हैं कि किसी भी संभावित खतरे से निबटने की तैयारियां पूरी की जा चुकी हैं।



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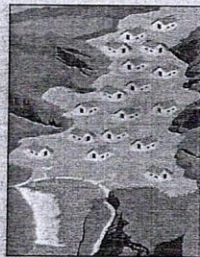
Business standard

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CWC.

## Man-made Devastation?

*Kerala's major dams filled up halfway through the monsoon, raising questions on dam management*

A study for the water resources ministry, by a team from Central Water Commission, pointed out that many of Kerala's major dams were filled to the brim even ahead of the torrential rain in August. This finding highlights again the state of dam management in India and its role in exacerbating the damage from floods. Kerala suffered devastation following extraordinary rainfall in the first three weeks of August. Floods were perhaps an inevitable outcome of this scale of precipitation. But what may not have been inevitable is the scale of devastation.



According to ecologist Madhav Gadgil, sensible dam management necessitated a gradual filling up of reservoirs as the monsoon progressed. In Kerala, halfway through the monsoon, the dams were filled to capacity. It rendered them ineffective in mitigating the impact of the August deluge. It speaks poorly of governance in India that questions about dam management arise every year when 164 of the 5,264 large dams are over a century old. Government has classified about 14% of India's land area as flood prone. On average 7.169 million hectares are affected annually due to floods. This may be a recurring cycle. But repeating the same mistakes over and over again makes them doubly unacceptable.

Some of these mistakes have showed up in Kerala. Stone quarrying, some of it illegal, has led to siltation. Encroachment of floodplains and reclamation of wetlands have compounded the problem. During a performance audit of Tamil Nadu government's role in mitigating the 2015 Chennai floods, CAG identified some of the standard mistakes. For example, allowing encroachments which shrunk storage capacity in Chennai is a governance failure – with devastating consequences – common to many states. With extreme weather events becoming more frequent, states need to ramp up governance standards. Else the scale of devastation can only get worse.



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## TELLING NUMBERS

### Kerala floods: 1.16 bn cubic m space available in dams, 2.19 bn cubic m inflow in 3 days

A CENTRAL Water Commission (CWC) report on the Kerala floods, released Monday, explains how three days of intense rainfall (August 15-17, 414 mm) brought in more water than the state's dams could accommodate, making it necessary to release water. From the catchment tapped by the dams, excluding barrages, the report estimates that the runoff generated during the three-day period was 2.19 billion cubic metres (BCM), out of a total runoff of 12 BCM for the state. "The total live storage of Kerala is about 5.8 BCM. Even with 20% of the live storage availability on 14 August 2018, the available flood moderation extent would have been only 1.16 BCM against the estimated inflow of 2.19 BCM," the report states. "It shows that in any case, it was essential to make releases from reservoirs."

The report refers to two previous floods, in 1924 and 1961. During July 16-18, 1924, heavy rainfall occurred on almost entire Kerala, causing heavy loss of life and property. "The centre of the 1-day and 2-day rainstorm was located at Devikulam in Kerala which recorded 484 mm and 751 mm of rainfall respectively. The centre of 3-day rainstorm was located at Munnar in Kerala which recorded a rainfall of 897 mm in 3 days," says the report, which also compares the amount of rainfall during the three peak days of 1924 and the three peak days of 2018.

In 1961, floods were unusually heavy both in duration and in intensity of precipitation, with the monsoon getting violent towards the last week of June and in the early days of August. The average rainfall was 56% above normal.



A man returns to check out on his house in Alappuzha last week. AP

### 2 FLOODS, 3-DAY RAINFALL (IN MILLIMETRES)

Sub-basin	1924 Jul 16-18	2018 Aug 15-17
Kallada	268	289
Pamba	551	538
Periyar	604	588
Bharathapuzha	378	373
Chaliyar	599	331
Valapattanam	512	336
Rest of Kerala	362	364

### RAINFALL & RUNOFF

Date(s)	Rainfall mm	Runoff BCM*
August 15	140	4.08
August 15-16	316	9.21
August 15-17	414	12.06

Rainfall & runoff figures in second table for entire Kerala (area 38,863 sq km)

\*BCM = billion cubic metres

Source: Central Water Commission



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# Rains boost Kharif-sown area

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** In what could be a good signal to farm sector and overall economy, total sown area under kharif (summer) crops crossed the last year's corresponding period figures for the first time during the ongoing sowing operation last week - thanks to the pace it set after receiving better rainfall in deficit areas of eastern and northeastern India in the past two weeks.

Quantitatively, the country continues to be in 'below normal' rainfall category reporting a total deficit of 7% as far as cumulative rainfall (June 1-September 10 period) is concerned. August was the third consecutive month of rainfall deficiency, but improved acreage can be attributed to better distribution of rainfall.

Latest sowing data, released by the agriculture ministry, shows that the increase in sown area as compared to 2017 is mainly marked by higher acreage of paddy (rice) and oilseeds. Though the acreage of pulses and coarse cereals continue to be less than the last year's corresponding sown area figures, officials believe that the acreage of these crops too will improve as farmers still have two to three weeks of sowing operation this season.

Figures show that the total sown area under kharif crops stand at 1,041.65 lakh hectares (LH) as of last Friday as compared to 1,039.57 LH during the same period last

year. "It's a good sign as sowing remained subdued in first two months of this season due to poor rains in eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and most of the north-eastern states - mainly the paddy growing area," said an official who has been tracking the development.

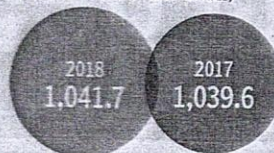
Since adequate acreage is crucial for good production of foodgrains, the higher sown area is seen as a positive development. "It's important as we are looking at new record of foodgrain production in 2018-19 crop year (July-June) after reporting two consecutive years of record production in 2016-17 and 2017-18. High production boosts rural demand and this, in turn, drives overall economy," said the official.

Though the country as a whole reported 7% deficit in cumulative rainfall, the gap in central and north-west India narrowed during the period. The highest deficiency (24% deficit) was recorded in eastern and northeastern India. The south peninsula, on the other hand, received 2% more rains than the normal, while central India and northwest India recorded deficit of 3% and 2%, respectively.

In fact, the distribution of rainfall saw most of the country's major reservoirs receive adequate water during the period. It'll help sowing of irrigation-backed winter crops (rabi) during November-February period, making it a good crop year in terms of overall production.

## ACREAGE BETTER THAN IN 2017

Status as on September 7  
Total Area (in lakh hectares)



Normal of corresponding week:

**1,018.8**  
lakh hectares (LH)

(Sown area under kharif crops is not only higher than normal acreage but also than last year's acreage)

### CROP-WISE FIGURES AS ON SEPTEMBER 7

	2018 (in LH)	2017 (in LH)
Rice	382	373
Coarse Cereals	174	181
Oilseeds	174	169
Pulses	134	137
Cotton	118	121
Sugarcane	52	50
Jute & Mesta	7	7

Figures are rounded off



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## A PEEK INTO FUTURE

# Drones to map and locate areas in disaster, monitor dams

LIZ MATHEW

ZURICH, SEPTEMBER 10

WHEN IT was hit by the recent unprecedented floods, one challenge the government and local administrations in Kerala faced was in locating exactly where people were stranded in the state's densely populated villages and towns. As a result, rescue workers not familiar with the area and terrain spent precious time finding ways to reach them.

Now imagine a small flying machine, capable of taking 3D images of the area, giving precise locations of the people, and ways to reach them.

Welcome, then, to the world of unmanned aerial vehicles

(UAV), or drones as they are commonly called. Experts and industry insiders say UAVs can do much more than take pictures or be used for surveillance — they can deliver medical supplies, make high-risk jobs safer, help plan disaster prevention, improve farming, and protect endangered species.

Switzerland, with its reputation for excellence and innovation and a long history of precision engineering, is becoming a hub of this micro-technology.

Earlier this year, an association for drone manufacturers — Drone Industry Association — was formed in the country. The association calls itself Home of Drones, and already claims to have nearly two dozen members.

"For the last few years, there has not been many innovations other than optimising what we already have, in aviation or automobile industries. Innovation is taking place in the drone industry, the days of drones used for transportation and carrying people are not far," Simon Johnson, vice-president of Drone Industry Association, said.

The association was formed to represent, defend, promote drone companies in Switzerland and to boost export.

Johnson said drones will be a great help in monitoring dams, nuclear plants and even making tourism much more exciting.

Johnson, who pointed out that the industry has already provided more than 3,000 jobs in the

last two years in Switzerland, is already talking about drone ports — a spot for fixing, re-charging and making parts.

Stringent regulations or absence of proper policy prevent drones from meeting their potential growth. But Robert Leake, sales manager at SenseFly, the Lausanne-based company that produces drones, is excited to see that the Indian government has firmed up regulations.

Founded in 2009, SenseFly manufactures approximately 100 drones a month. It is into researching and developing drones that can give efficient topology monitoring that would come in use in disaster management.

"Geospatial (industry) is the main market for drones as of now

and flood management is one of the main component in it," Leake said. "If drones can be used for relief and rescue operation during floods, they can be used to map flood... (or) to prepare against it. Exact aerial views are beneficial in understanding the nature of flood and infrastructure can be built to protect those areas," Leake explained.

The price of these drones — which can fly up to 59 minutes at once — range from approximately Rs 12.6 lakh to Rs 21 lakh depending on the area it can map.

(The reporter is in Zurich as a guest of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

FULL REPORT ON  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)



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## Offerings for the people

Wealth lying idle in Kerala's temples should be used to rebuild the state

ATANU PURKAYASTHA

THIS YEAR, KERALA has witnessed unprecedented rains and devastation. The death and destruction that took place were of epic proportions and it will take quite a while for the affected people to recover from the shock of the calamity and rebuild their lives.

The indomitable spirit of the people of Kerala held fast in trying circumstances and every one contributed their might to help the people struck by the disaster. It is also encouraging to see how ordinary people and youngsters came up with unique ideas to reach the affected people and carry out rescue missions.

I hope someone in the Kerala government collects the stories of heroism, ingenuity and solidarity, and comes out with a publication for the benefit of people in other parts of the country. It is also important that the Department of Disaster Management of the Government of Kerala pens down how the disaster built up and the real-time response of the related line departments of the government and identifies the shortcomings, if any, and formulates a protocol for the future.

Now that the rains have subsided, the role of mitigation and rebuilding efforts becomes

paramount. This calls for not only identifying and allocating funds, but also men and material. It is important to identify the source of raw materials for reconstruction, and this takes time.

The established procedure after a natural disaster is funding the initial mitigating efforts from the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF), which is a fixed kitty. The amount being allocated to the affected state from the NDRF depends largely upon the extent of the damage suffered and the number of other states affected during the year. It will be wrong to think that the Government of India or any other source will be able to provide the full allocation for the reconstruction of the damages. While it is heartening to see that many states, organisations, chambers of commerce and private individuals have come forward in cash and kind to help the affected people, it is difficult to imagine that such efforts would suffice for the rebuilding of Kerala. There are also reports of external aid, which possibly have not materialised. Then how does one rebuild "Gods' own country"?

Kerala is home to some of the richest temples in the country — Lord Padmanabha

temple, Guruvayur temple, Sabarimala temple, etc. These temples have received donations as offerings from the public over centuries. People have donated jewellery, gold, precious stones, cash and wealth to the presiding deity for their peace and prosperity. Collectively, the present wealth of these three temples possibly runs into at least Rs 1 lakh crore. These offerings were mainly from Keralites. Thus, the wealth accumulated in these temples over the years is largely donated by the ancestors of the present population of Kerala, who have faced the recent calamity.

In the good old days, these temple treasures were often allowed to be used by the public to tide over difficult situations, like shortage of foodgrains. The temple wealth was used to buy foodgrains to be distributed free among the affected population. Documented evidence is available in support of such claims. The fact that the temples in the country organised daily *langar khana* or *bhog* ceremonies bears testimony to the fact that the wealth of the temple is meant for the well-being of the people.

However, with the institutionalisation of the democratic form of government, the

onus on tiding over difficult times became the responsibility of the state exchequer. However, the collection of temple treasures continued and has resulted in the accumulation of unused wealth. These temple treasures are people's money.

The present situation in Kerala is an opportunity to use the treasures of temples to rebuild the state. Instead of looking for funds elsewhere, the state government should take a decision to use the temple funds and no one should have any objection to such a decision. The state government must, of course, subject every paisa so taken to CAG audit and public scrutiny.

Kerala has been a path-breaking state — it has highest literacy rate, lowest infant mortality, highest sex ratio, highest remittances from abroad, etc. Let the state now break another path — to use idle temple treasures in a productive way. Who knows, such an act may further propel philanthropy among the people of the region and they may donate more to the temple in gratitude, to be used in the difficult times in the future.

The writer is former secretary, Central Information Commission



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# To put Kerala back on its feet

After the floods, women's group farms hold the key to reviving rural livelihoods



BINA AGARWAL

DURING LAST YEAR'S Onam festival, women cultivating bananas in their group farms in Thrissur district — one of the worst affected by Kerala's floods — would have reaped a substantial profit, and used it for investments, home needs, or gifts for their families. This year their fields lie in ruin. If Kerala has to truly recover, it needs to restore the flourishing livelihoods that existed prior to the floods, especially those built on women's labour. Indeed, just as women's groups are the backbone of the ongoing cleaning drives in Kerala's cities, so women's group farms can provide the key to reviving Kerala's rural livelihoods.

Over the past 20 years, Kerala has set in place a unique system of group farming. In 2016, there were over 62,000 such farms across all 14 of Kerala's districts. Constituted of four to 10 members, the groups lease land and members pool their labour and capital to cultivate jointly, taking decisions collectively, and sharing costs, risks and returns equitably.

Although the idea of group farming is not new, earlier efforts — globally and in India — were largely failures, both under the coercive collectivisation of former socialist regimes and the poorly conceived 1950s/60s efforts in post-colonial developing countries, including India. Since then, we have advanced greatly in our understanding of successful collective action. Kerala's group farms embody basic principles: They are voluntarily formed, small sized, participative, and egalitarian.

Constituted of women belonging to village neighbourhood groups, the farming groups are linked to area development societies at the ward level and community development societies (CDSs) at the panchayat level. Each CDS is registered as an independent society. They are supported by the State Poverty Eradication Mission or Kudumbashree Mission (K Mission), and the Kudumbashree network of CDSs (K network). This institutional structure provides the resilience which physical infrastructure alone cannot.

Conceptually, we would expect resource pooling for group farming to have many advantages: More investible funds, scale economies, skill diversity, saving on hired labour, greater bargaining power in markets, etc. We would thus expect them to perform better than small family farms. But does that happen in practice?

To assess this, I studied 250 farms in Thrissur and Alappuzha over 2012-14. The sample contained 69 women's group farms and 181 individual small farms (95 per cent male managed) for which weekly data were collected for each crop's outputs and inputs (including labour) over 12 months. In-depth focus on group discussions provided qualitative insights. How well did the groups perform, relative to individual farms, in productivity and profits? Strikingly well, overall.

The full results are given in my paper "Can group farms outperform individual family farming" (*World Development*, 108:57-73, 2018), but consider some highlights given in Table 1. The annual value of output per gross cropped hectare is 1.8 times higher for group farms than individual family farms. Those growing bananas in Thrissur have 1.6 times higher yields (Rs/ha) than individual farms. After controlling for inputs in my regressions,

the banana yields of group farms were 348 per cent higher than of individual farms.

Similarly, in net returns, calculated by subtracting all paid out costs from the total value of output, but without imputing values to owned land or family labour, 82-84 per cent of both group and individual farms got positive returns. But the net returns per farm for the groups, as we can see, were five times more than those for the individual farms, and almost three times more than the state average of Rs 42,500 in 2012-13. Also 78 per cent of the group farms earned over Rs 50,000 in net returns.

Although all farmers calibrate their harvests and sales to get the best banana prices during festivals, women's groups worked the market with particular success. Some negotiated contracts with temples for special banana varieties. As a group, they could assure quality produce in adequate quantities to fulfil the contract. This underlies the sizable potential of group farming in high value commercial crops. Only in paddy — measured for Alappuzha farmers — were group farms at some disadvantage, since the women depend on leased land, and most high quality paddy land is self-cultivated by male owners.

The women used their earnings for investment, purchasing household goods, children's education, health-related expenditure, or settling family debts. But notably, some Thrissur groups made enough profit to buy land collectively. Many of these women were earlier home bound with limited exposure to public institutions. They learnt to deal routinely with banks, agricultural extension services, land and input markets, and panchayats. Effectively, they moved from being mere farm wives to farm managers.

These achievements have not come easily. The biggest challenge is land access. Although, on average, women's groups in the

## KERALA (THRISSUR AND ALAPPUZHA) PRODUCTIVITY AND NET RETURNS

Measure (means)	Individual farms (N=181)	Group farms (N=69)
Annual output per gross cropped hectare (Rs/ha)	1,01,156.2	1,79,183.7
Banana output (Thrissur) Rs/ha (for farms growing the crop)	2,58,064.1	4,13,734.2
Annual net returns (Rs) per farm	23,578.3	1,21,048.5

Source: Author's survey: Weekly data collected in 2012-13, supplemented in 2013-14

C.R. Sasikumar

Women's group farms can play a critical role in rebuilding Kerala's rural livelihoods. Reviving them should thus be prioritised by the state government. High yields require not just physical infrastructure but also institutions. Kerala's institutions, especially its group farms, can provide a foundation for recovery. Indeed an important indicator of recovery should be the returns on women's group farms. Only when they reach — or can better — the levels of production and profits they had before the disaster struck, can we say: The state is indeed back on track.

sample cultivated 1.22 hectares (ha) while individual farms cultivated 0.48 ha, the latter largely own this land, while 87 per cent of the groups lease most or all of theirs from non-group members. This involves high transaction costs and acquiring good land in a single plot is difficult. The absence of written leases also deprives the groups of government subsidies and crop insurance in case of crop failure.

At the same time, the institutional structure, under which Kerala's group farming functions, has provided important support, especially to help women overcome entrenched gender biases. The K Mission and K Network facilitate technical training, including for organic farming and new vegetables, efficient input use, area and production incentives and subsidised credit through NABARD. Being educated no doubt helps women in their learning process, information access and market dealings.

Given that the floods washed away innumerable fields, we cannot say yet how these farmers and their families have fared, or how intact their groups are. What we can, however, say is that women's group farms can play a critical role in rebuilding Kerala's rural livelihoods. Reviving them should thus be prioritised by the state government. High yields require not just physical infrastructure but also institutions. Kerala's institutions, especially its group farms, can provide a foundation for recovery. Indeed an important indicator of recovery should be the returns on women's group farms. Only when they reach — or can better — the levels of production and profits they had before the disaster struck, can we say: The state is indeed back on track.

The writer is professor of development economics, GDI, University of Manchester (UK) and former director, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi



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## 'Hunger stones' tell Elbe's centuries-old tale of drought

The boulder, which was embedded deep in river, has reappeared in the Czech Republic after a dry spell

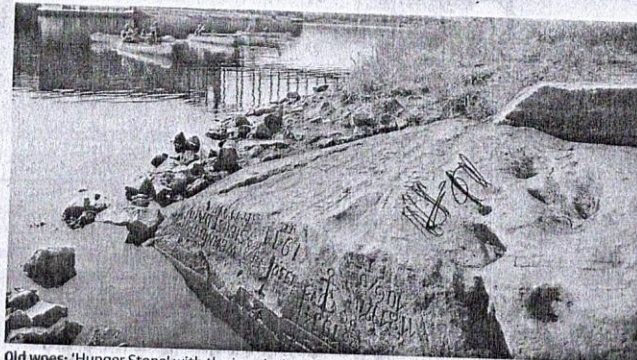
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
DECTN

Once an ominous harbinger of hard times and even famine due to critically low water levels, a massive "hunger stone" embedded deep in the Elbe River has reappeared in the Czech Republic after Europe's long, dry summer.

The boulder in the town of Decin, north of the capital Prague, is roughly the size of a van and bears the foreboding inscription, "If you can see me, then weep".

Boatman and riverside innkeeper Franz Mayer etched the words in German - "Wenn du mich siehst, dann weine" - during a period of low water in 1904 in the days when the country was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

"Over the centuries, many people earned their living on the Elbe as rafters, and when there wasn't enough water to



Old woes: 'Hunger Stone' with the inscription 'If you can see me, then weep', at Decin. • AFP

float their rafts, they lost their livelihoods," Vlastimil Pazourek, head of the museum in Decin, said.

"The rafters engraved the dates of those bad years on the soft sandstone boulders typical for this region, hence the name 'hunger stone',"

Mr. Pazourek said.

About 20 such boulders, engraved with markers and dates going back centuries, can still be found on the banks of the Elbe, a major central European waterway running from the Czech Republic through Germany to

the North Sea.

Marked "1616", the hunger stone on the river's left bank in Decin, which lies 20 km from the German border, bears one of the oldest dates.

A lot of water has since flowed under the bridges on the Elbe, which is no longer

the same river that Franz Mayer knew when he left his etched lament.

### Flow changed

The riverbed has been deepened to ease navigation and its flow has also been altered by nine dams built during the 20th century on the Vltava, its main tributary.

At three metres (10 ft), its average water level in Decin today is about 1.5 m lower than in 1904, according to Mr. Pazourek.

Parts of the hunger stone are usually visible for more than 100 days a year when the water level on the Elbe drops to 160 centimetres, he said.

"The hunger stone is certainly more than just a historical curiosity," said Jiri Petr, head of dispatching at Povodi Labe, the state-owned company managing river traffic on the Czech stretch of the Elbe.

Prague experienced its hottest summer since records started in 1775, the weather institute said last week.

"Complications arise when the level of the Elbe in Decin is down to around 250 cm, and if it drops below 115 cm, river transport is no longer viable," Mr. Petr said.

"A similar situation occurred in 2015 and 2016, but this year, the water level has fallen more rapidly in a way that hasn't been seen in the last two decades," he said.

Experts predict ebbing river levels will become the norm in coming years.

"Due to climate change, low river levels will be even more frequent," the Prague-based Arnika environmental NGO quoted a hydrology specialist, Tobias Conradt, as saying. "What we consider extreme today, will become an everyday reality in the decades to come," he added.



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# Much must change in Kerala

After the devastating floods, Kerala society as a whole now needs to reorient its relationship with nature



PULPAPRE BALAKRISHNAN

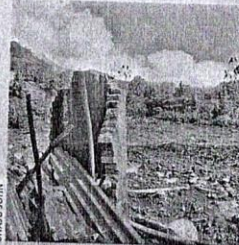
In a national calamity, people look towards a leader to extend them empathy, a sense of somebody being in charge and a route to a more secure future. By any measure, Pinarayi Vijayan, the Chief Minister of Kerala, has lived up to expectation on the first two aspects and may be expected to play a role in identifying the third after the State has had to face its biggest disaster in a century in the form of floods. He has reflected gravitas, displayed pragmatism and expressed a willingness to take assistance from any source. The last is a necessary corrective at a time when false pride, standing in the way of accepting the hand of friendship extended from the outside, is projected as a desirable nationalism. At the very same time, it is necessary to acknowledge the extraordinary outpouring of humanity and material assistance towards the people of Kerala from the rest of India. It is difficult to recall something on this scale as a response to a calamity in a distant corner of the country in recent times.

## Natural capital and progress

Now that the Chief Minister has affirmed that the "last person has been rescued", rehabilitation is progressing and plans are afoot to rebuild Kerala, it is hoped that the last will be approached with an open mind. This would be a mindset that recognises that much must change in Kerala's civil society, which in turn would trigger change at the level of governance.

Indeed a paradigm shift, being a profound change in the perception of progress, is needed. The central element in this new perception must be that a continuous decline of a society's natural capital cannot be seen as compatible with progress. Kerala has justifiably been identified as having carved out a niche, and not just in India but globally, as a society with high human development at a relatively low level of income. While it may be pointed out that globally, many other societies, particularly to the east of India, have achieved the same in terms of some standard social indicators, it must be remembered that, as a part of India, it had also to deal with an ossified social structure in the form of caste and the inequalities it perpetuated. Social stratification was far less in east Asian societies making it easier for them to transform. For Kerala to have overcome this burden through a non-violent political revolution is a considerable achievement.

At times though, stories of our success relayed across the world may lead us to be somewhat swayed by praise. This may have happened to the leadership of Kerala society which extends beyond the political class to its intellectuals. While focussing on certain aspects of a society, external observers could miss others that are just as crucial in evaluating its development. Laudatory evaluations of Kerala have masked the decline in natural capital and associated ecosystem services that have accompanied the rise in income. The decline in natural capital has ranged from deforestation that contributes to rainwater run-off contributing to landslides, to sand mining that leads to rivers overflowing their banks, and building on the flood plains that were



meant to provide a cushion. All of these contribute to flooding.

## Too much consumption

When we have it upon the word of Madhav Gadgil - who may be considered India's ecological voice and has studied the Kerala topography and its alteration - that human action may have exacerbated the consequences of the unusually heavy rain this year, we would be advised to hear the message. We know exactly the corrective actions necessary to reverse, possibly only at a glacial pace at that, the accumulated man-made factors responsible for this. At the centre of it is consumption. In relation to the ecological damage that it can wreak, Kerala consumes too much. At the centre of this consumption is luxury housing and commercial holiday resorts, of course luxurious. Structures much larger than necessary cover the soil with concrete, heightening rainwater run-off, and through their weight increase subsidence. Houses here have historically been built with sand mined from rivers. Once this source got exhausted, river sand has been replaced by manufactured sand which is a by-product of quarrying. Large-scale quarrying has meant looting off the top of hills and allowing water to seep into them, making them un-

stable. So at the back of much of the human factor that has exacerbated the flooding by changing the landscape is luxury housing. It is significant too that some of this housing is not even used or has very few persons living in them. This is hardly a rational use of a scarce resource such as land, especially when it has known catastrophic consequences.

## Unsustainable trajectory

Altogether, Kerala's much-claimed development trajectory is unsustainable as demonstrated during the recent floods, and needs a change. The needed change is radical and the reality is that its past cannot be a guide to its future. This past has been one of human development, but Kerala society as a whole now needs to reorient its relationship with nature. However inclusive this development may have been - and there is reason to believe that some of the claims made are exaggerated - that by itself does not ensure that the assault on nature will now end. Only the State's civil society can guarantee its future on this score. Political parties are loathe to speak the language of responsible consumption for fear of losing out on votes.

While, going forward, a path-breaking environmental movement in Kerala's civil society is necessary, it does not mean that governance in Kerala should be left unaccountable out of concern for peaceability. Even in a past that has witnessed progress in the form of an elimination of social barriers, government in Kerala has remained unaccountable with respect to the economy. Malayalis have had to migrate in large numbers, leaving their families behind, to keep the home fires burning. Now with the new challenge of ec-

ological sustainability arising, government - by which is meant the entire public sector - needs to assume accountability for the depletion of natural capital. Someone has to take responsibility for the pattern of land use in Kerala, the pathologies of which extend to building resorts on hillsides, turning every public space into a refuse dump for used plastic, and the continuous alienation of agricultural land, all of which may have had a role in exacerbating the floods. It is by now clear that the decentralisation of government has been unable to prevent these developments. Land use in the State needs review at the level of the State government.

## Calling for a public review

Mr. Vijayan has been statesman-like in saying that he will take material assistance from every quarter. He must now extend this approach to listening to independent voices on the rebuilding of Kerala. The obvious place to start would be to institute a public review of the dams in Kerala and how they are operated, focussing in particular on how their operation may have affected the flooding. Such a demand has been made by a section of Kerala's legislators. Even a conservative body such as the World Bank had instituted an independent review of the Sardar Sarovar Project in the 1990s, and tailored its policy accordingly. Considerations of both transparency and confidence of the people in the functioning of the government machinery demand that such a review be instituted at the earliest.

Pulpapre Balakrishnan is Professor of Economics of Ashoka University, Sonapat, Haryana and Senior Fellow of IIM Kozhikode, Kerala