



### **HC directs to demolish cemented bank of holy Lake of Tripura**

The Tripura High Court on Tuesday asked the state government to demolish at least two sides of cemented embankment of Kalyansagar, holy lake of Tripureswari temple, in Udaipur of South Tripura within next two weeks to save aquatic life.

The division bench of High Court headed by Chief Justice Deepak Gupta and Justice Subhashis Talapatra asked the Chief Secretary to submit the status report of the lake and mentioning the steps taken to save flora and fauna as recommended by the scientists last year. The rare species of Bostami turtles housing in the lake has faced a serious crisis in breeding after cementing all four embankment of the lake a few years ago.

The cementing has gravely affected the health of aquatic beings in the lake and resulted into deaths of many turtles and fishes over the year. The environmentalists of the state had opposed the plan of concretisation plan of the lake and other ponds of the state by the government at the beginning but it was overruled. Finally, a PIL was registered to save the turtles and fish in Kalyansagar and separate PIL against cementing the embankment of other ponds.

Meanwhile, the state government had constituted an expert committee to review the situation. The committee also sought views of the scientists regarding aquatic life of Kalyansagar, which reiterated the recommendation of Wildlife Institute of Dehradun by Chief Wildlife Warden of Tripura A K Gupta in 2002. In 2014, the committee had recommended to demolish the cemented embankment and to facilitate a natural breeding ground for the water bodies.

They also recommended steps to improve Lake environment, shifting of some fish from the lake and sufficient supply of food for the turtles and big fishes, besides restriction on human activities disturbing the aquatic life. However, after expert advised and coming under pressure from the environmentalists, the administration demolished a small portion of the cemented bank and created a conducive environment for turtles breeding. After this small step, turtles were found laying hundreds of eggs and death of fish was stopped, petitioner lawyer Indrajit Chakraborty informed the court.

Tripura State Pollution Control Board had also suggested in 2006 to conduct aquatic census in Kalyansagar and shift some big fishes from the lake.

### **Tripura to present LED success story before PM**

Tripura will present the success story of Light Emitting Diode (LED) illumination of Agartala tomorrow to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and all other Indian city administrators at Vigyan Bhawan.

Tripura Urban Development Minister Manik Dey on Wednesday said that Ministry of Urban Development has convened a meeting of urban development ministers and city administrators of all states tomorrow followed by a one-day workshop on Smart city project on June 26.

We have been asked to make a presentation on LED illumination project of Agartala before the Prime Minister at opening session. Secretary Urban Development Lok Ranjan will present the success story of Tripura, • Dey said. He, however, pointed out that Ministry of Urban Development has indicated that existing city development project JNNURM launched by UPA-1 government is going to be changed with new AMRUT scheme including Smart City project. The Prime Minister will announce two new projects for Indian urban citizens altering the existing projects, Mr Dey stated, adding that the Centre has also proposed to go for new funding pattern with the states and beneficiaries in the project.

However, the ministry has appreciated successful implementation of LED illumination project in Agartala by Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL), an undertaking of Ministry of Power. More than 85 per cent of existing city illuminating system of Agartala has already been replaced with LED. The most modern energy efficient illuminating system in the city roads. This is not only reduce our energy billing, also provides better lighting on streets and gives a modern look, • Mr Dey stated. The Rs 18 crore project has been undertaken by EESL without any capital investment from the state government. The LED illumination is indicated to save about 50 per cent of the electricity bill of Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) annually. As per agreement between EESL and AMC, EESL will take back it's invested capital from the savings of electric bill annually for next five years and during this period

the operations and maintenance will be taken care of by EESL administration.

The LED system has auto-switching mechanism and already programmed by the engineers based on the requirement of lighting at night. All the lights will be on automatically at the sunset and gradually a few will be off at night as human activity reduces.

After mid-night, one-third of the lights are being operational based on requirement. As a result, consumption of power is automatically reduced, Mr Dey added.

As many as 33,816 sodium viber and CFL halogen illuminating system has been replaced with LED lighting in entire AMC area. Agartala is the third city of the country which replaced illumination completely with LED. Two Indian cities, Hyderabad and Vijayawada, have been replaced with LED lighting by EESL.

### **Northeast Microbial Database: a web-based databank of culturable soil microbes from North-East India**

Northeast Microbial Database (NEMiD) is a first of its kind digital database on microbial diversity from NorthEast (NE) India, which provides information on culturable microbes (bacteria, fungi and actinomy-cetes) isolated from soils of the region (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim and parts of North Bengal) distributed across landscape elements (LSE) spread in various ecosystems. The database is based on the primary data through survey, isolation and characterization of the microbes during 2008–2012.

Details about a particular microorganism in the database cover aspects of phylogenetic information on taxonomic outline and classification, morphological, biochemical and molecular characterization, general and cultural characteristics, geographical/location information, history of cultures and preservation details. Each microbe is identified based on cultural, biochemical and molecular characteristics leading to its taxonomic position upto the species level along with information on sampling sites comprising altitude, soil type, latitude, longitude, soil temperature, ambient temperature, humidity and soil pH.

### **Paddy to be cultivated in 7,040 hectares at Khowai**

In a bid to raise the production of paddy, Khowai agricultural department has taken the initiative to cultivate variety of “Amon” paddy at 7040 hectare of land at Khowai poddobil block area and Khowai block area.

Under the government scheme RKVY (SRI) paddy to cultivate in 1804 hector of land, 90 hector of land

will be cultivated with Hybrid (SRI) paddy and about 270 hector of land will be dedicated for RKVY (NFSM). However, 80% of paddy cultivation is already done, said Khowai Agriculture department SA Biswajit Das.

He further said that with SRI system of paddy cultivation the production will be increased in the coming days.

He also said that the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) methodology is aimed to be adopted for increasing the yield of rice production.

To reduce hunger and extreme poverty by improving productivity of rice and other crops based on environment-friendly agricultural practices that preserve and improve the natural resource base and help to better withstand changing climate conditions, the SRI is to be adopted, added Das.

It is to be mention here that in the previous year paddy was cultivated in 6000 hector of land and many of the farmers were benefitted with this cultivation.

The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) is a methodology aimed at increasing the yield of rice produced in farming. It is a low water, labor-intensive, organic method that uses younger seedlings singly spaced and typically hand weeded with special tools.

SRI technique will establish and increase yield and helps farmers get a better income. The system of rice intensification (SRI) is a new and evolving alternative to conventional methods of rice cultivation.

### **Mohanpur to move towards renewable energy**

With an aim to transform in to a model village, altogether four hospitals and one village panchayat of Mohanpur sub-division is making a move towards renewable energy ‘Solar Light System’, informed Sabadhipati of West Tripura District Council Dilip Kumar Das while addressing a general meeting of Mohanpur Panchayat Samiti.

Addressing the meeting Das mentioned that the state government has been taking several initiatives to provide house and land to the poor people who are deprived from land and houses and to enforce the initiatives soon, the District council was asked to come forwards for health work progress.

BDO Sandeep Chakraborty in the meeting informed that spending Rs. 35.63 crore, altogether 12, 07, 884 working days has been created under MGNREGA Scheme at eighteen village panchayet of Mohanpur. He said that by the current month a total of 1, 82, 197 working days will be generated. Presenting the data of the last financial year, he said that spending a total amount of Rs. 15.96 crore, 33 rain water

control dam, 239 new roads has been constructed at the village panchayet. Besides, 301 water bodies had dig-out and 225 water bodies have been mended.

However, it is worthy to mention that when the state government has been taking so much of initiatives for the poor and needy, then why the daily wages laborers of various parts of the state are merging out complaining that they are not receiving their wages on time and some complains that there payments are being discontinued as the state government is not sanctioning the money to the authorities.

During the meeting, ICDS officer of Mohonpur Sub-division informed that initiatives has been taken under ICC and RC Child Care project for the development of the children and mother of the Mohonpur through Anganwadi Centres.

However, when it comes to Anganwadi there are issues where the workers are not getting proper salary. Further about child care, where so much initiatives are being taken to improve the condition on the other hand huge number of embezzlement are coming in to lime light. Even children are getting sick due to the unhygienic supply of food in the Anganwadi.

Talking about the connectivity of roads, PWD informed that a new bridge will be constructed and repairing of work of various roads are going on.

However, where the officials urged to utilize the sanctioned money properly, on the other hand embezzlement of the sanctioned amount hampered the livelihood of the common people.

### **Pope sets up yearly Catholic Church day of care for environment**

Pope Francis, riding a wave of mostly positive reaction to his encyclical on ecology, on Monday set up a Catholic "World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation" to draw attention to the plight of the planet.

The day, to be marked by the world's 1.2 billion Roman Catholics each year on Sept. 1, is Francis's latest move to try to highlight global environmental concerns ahead of a pivotal U.N. summit on climate change in Paris in December.

"As Christians we wish to contribute to resolving the ecological crisis which humanity is presently experiencing," Francis said in a letter to two Vatican cardinals whose departments are involved in issues of justice, peace and Christian unity.

Sept. 1 is also when Orthodox Christians mark their day for the protection of the environment, giving the gesture added symbolism in relations between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity.

Francis said the day, to be marked with events in every Catholic diocese around the world, would

offer Catholics "a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation".

Francis said it would also be a chance to "thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live".

In June, the pope issued an encyclical on climate change, the first ever dedicated to the environment. The call to his church's members could spur the world's Catholics to lobby policymakers on ecology issues and climate change.

He has said he wants the encyclical and other Church initiatives to influence the U.N. Paris summit in December, the purpose of which is to reach a global agreement to combat climate change after past failures.

Last month, at a Vatican-hosted conference of mayors and governors from major world cities, Francis urged the United Nations to take a "very strong stand" on climate change at the summit.

### **Green Highways (Plantation & Maintenance) Policy-2015**

This "green highways policy" approved by road ministry sets aside one per cent of the civil cost of national highway development projects for the planting of trees in a planned manner, covering both existing NH sections and new routes that would be added to the network.

The road ministry has finalised a "green highways" policy to "tree-line" 140,000 kilometres of national highways. Under this policy, one per cent of the civil cost of national highway development projects will have to be set aside for the planting of trees in a planned manner, covering both existing NH sections and new routes that would be added to the network. The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) has formulated the new Green Highways (Plantation and Maintenance) Policy, 2015 after a series of reviews, which raised concerns about the poor quality and lack of maintenance of green cover along most national highways.

### **No rainwater harvesting, no water connection**

Houses without a rooftop rainwater harvesting system may not get water connection. Moreover, permission for boring will be denied. Under the legislation state government is planning to bring into effect to control and regulate use of groundwater, wastage of the resource might be a criminal offence. The stringent legislation which will be ready in "ten days" will have penal clauses. "We plan to bring it during the monsoon session," said Chandra Prakash, principal secretary, minor irrigation and groundwater department.

The legislation will be put in public domain and suggestions invited from people.

To hammer on the educational aspect, government has also ordered to include a chapter on rainwater harvesting system (RWH) in school books. The system has to be mandatorily installed in private houses of 300 square metre or more. The department, now plans to make it mandatory for houses having an area of 200 square metres and more to cover more households.

The groundwater level in the state is going down at an alarming average rate of 1metre annually. The previous government orders making it mandatory for the government buildings to have rooftop rainwater harvesting (RWH) system installed have not resulted into the needful because the use of groundwater in UP has never been governed by the Act. Besides, there has never been a monitoring and an enforcement agency to regulate extraction and use of groundwater.

Out of the 540-odd government buildings in the state which have the mechanism in place, at least 130 buildings are in Lucknow. But the UP groundwater department, the nodal agency for groundwater conservation has no record available of the buildings that lack the system or where the system is dysfunctional.

"We have deputed a special officer to ensure that rooftop rainwater harvesting is done in buildings besides monitoring that it is done in the rightful manner," said the official. The department has for the first time conducted training in installation and maintenance of rooftop RWH system in government buildings.

In February 2013, state government enforced groundwater policy. In 2010, it invited suggestions from people on UP Groundwater Conservation, Protection and Development (Management, Control and Regulation) (draft) Bill but it was never made into an Act.

## **Heavy rain leads to flash floods various parts of Tripura**

The incessant rain since Saturday has led to floods in many parts of the state , with several places in Agartala being inundated, officials said on Sunday.

The downpour lead to rise water level of major rivers in the state including - Howrah river. Many areas on the banks of the river were submerged in water up to the dome, said officials of the flood control department.

A large number of families in Agartala were evacuated and were now taking shelter in 10 relief camps set up in the district. Normal life was also affected in state capital due to the incessant downpour, the officials said.

Thousands of people have been affected by floods in the capital and its adjoining areas today with many forced to flee their homes. All the inundated villages were Aralia, Katashewla, Pratapgarh, Madhya Pratapgarh, Jaipur, Kashipur, Baldakhal, Chanpur, Kalikapur, Ranjitnagar, Mina Bari, Katakhal etc. Water entered those villages after level rose in the Howrah river following heavy rains in the state. Over 3000 people were rendered homeless in the capital and its adjoining areas when the Howrah river crossed the danger mark. The flood affected people took refuge in nearby schools. They were provided with beaten rice and molasses by Sadar sub-divisional administration.

Boats were employed in 10 places to carry out rescue and relief operations. The rising level of the Howrah River is threatened to inundate other nearby areas near Madhya Pratapgarh. Life in the town has been crippled following heavy rains, which left the roads flooded. Water entered houses, shops and markets leaving property worth lakhs of rupees damaged. Roads in several localities were submerged due to choked drains causing severe inconvenience to daily commuters.

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