

More Cauvery water brings cheer to Tamil Nadu

Thousands of people bathed in the Cauvery river at Mettur in Tamil Nadu, thankful for the brimming waters this season that would give a boost to farm production and electricity generation.

Heavy rains in Karnataka over the past week has led the neighbouring state to release over 35 thousand million cubic feet (TMC ft) of water into the Mettur dam.

'The inflow has certainly improved and over 35 TMC ft of water has flowed through here. Power generation too may look up,' N. Vishwanathan, an official said.

Thousands of couples bathed in the Cauvery last weekend, considered holy by the Hindus, at several points downstream praying for a long married life.

'Goddess Cauvery has at last answered our prayers and smiled on us benevolently. Not only will we have a decent harvest, the shortage of electric power too will be a thing of the past soon,' remarked R.M. Visalakshi, a housewife.

Her husband, R. Mahadevan, echoed the sentiment after the couple completed their bath and the traditional tying of a yellow thread around his wife's neck.

'The gods always test their devotees, but eventually bless their true ones. Seven generations of our family have worshipped mother Cauvery without fail,' Mahadevan said.

Rituals are observed on the 18th day of the Tamil month Aadi to pray for longevity and a better harvest. It fell on Saturday.

Said K.S. Manoharan, an agriculturist, on phone from Kumbhakonam 250 km downstream: 'When the water is less, we protest against the government and pray to the gods. It seems both have borne fruit this year.'

Ruling DMK politicians heaved a sigh of relief after copious rains fed the Cauvery upstream, improving the inflow into the dam here.

'The opposition thought it could attack us on the scanty rains earlier that led to a chain reaction of water and power shortage. Mercifully, we have been spared more trouble,' said a DMK legislator.

However, opposition-sponsored protests against the continuing power shortage are continuing in at least six cities in Tamil Nadu.

'The electricity and water situation is bound to improve and people will return to their work,' the DMK legislator predicted.

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