

Heavy rain and flooding hit life in four southern districts of Tamil Nadu

Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi and Kanniyakumari bore the brunt of rain; many flights were cancelled or diverted. Holiday declared for educational institutions in Thoothukudi today

The Hindu Bureau
THOOTHUKUDI

Normal life was hit in the southern districts of Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi and Kanniyakumari as heavy rain lashed the region on Sunday.

Barring the early morning flight from Chennai to Thoothukudi, which arrived at 7.25 a.m. and returned, all other flights from Chennai were either diverted to Madurai or cancelled, officials said. The 11.55 a.m. flight from Chennai was diverted to Madurai, while the 4 p.m. flight from Chennai was cancelled. The 2.05 p.m. flight from Bengaluru returned, officials added.

In Tirunelveli, rainwater entered the Government Medical College and Hospital premises, officials said, adding that many low-lying areas were inundated.

Bus stand, railway stations and uzhar sandhais in these districts were inundated. In Kanniyakumari, AIADMK MLA Thalavai N. Sundaram and his team, who were travelling on the highway, rescued a group of "Ayyavazhi" pilgrims, from Tenkasi district, who were caught in a flood near Kalluvilai. The pilgrims



Rain woes: Most suburban areas in Thoothukudi district were affected by the downpour. N. RAJESH

were helped in getting out of a passenger van, and the vehicle was pulled to safety. He also visited the Tsunami fishermen colony in Kanniyakumari and helped the needy, a press release said.

Following heavy rainfall, Courtallam waterfalls was closed to tourists.

As a precautionary measure, all educational institutions in Thoothukudi district would remain closed on Monday. Collector G. Lakshminpathi, in a press release, has announced this following forecast of moderate to heavy rainfall by the India Meteorologi-

cal Department (IMD). Examinations scheduled for Monday shall be conducted another day, the release added.

Most suburban locations in Thoothukudi district were affected by the rain. Sattankulam recorded 258 mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours, while Srivai-kuntam received 200 mm and Tiruchendur recorded 121 mm.

Though the district administration had opened close to 100 relief centres, public were experiencing difficulties in reaching the camps. At least 20 people from Anna Nagar in Sattan-

kulam were rescued and taken to the nearest relief centre, officials said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has deputed Ministers and senior IAS officers to monitor the flood situation and relief works in the four districts.

Virtual meeting

An official release said Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena held a virtual meeting with Collectors of these districts and urged them to take all steps to avoid damage and loss. Fishermen in these districts have been asked not to venture into the sea for fishing.

TOE- 18/12/23

RED ALERT AS RAIN POUNDS SOUTH TN

PTI



BATTERED: People rescue an elderly man from a flooded area in Kanyakumari district on Sunday. IMD issued a red alert in Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin and Tenkasi districts till 8.30am on Monday

Incessant rain brings life to a standstill in four TN districts

Madurai: Very heavy rain under the influence of a cyclonic circulation lashed the four southern districts of Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Tuticorin and Kanyakumari on Saturday and Sunday throwing life out of gear and flooding many areas, especially in Tirunelveli and Nagercoil.

Moolaikaraipatti and Manjolai in Tirunelveli recorded

39.5 cm and 35 cm rainfall while Sathankulam in Tuticorin received 30 cm by Sunday night. Low-lying areas of Tirunelveli and Tuticorin districts were flooded. With the Thamirabarani river in spate, chief minister M K Stalin directed authorities to release surplus water into the Kannadian channel. Surplus water is being released from Pechiparai, Perunjani and Papa-

nasam dams in Kanyakumari.

Roads were submerged in Tirunelveli city and the district bringing bus transport to a standstill.

The CM has despatched ministers to oversee relief and rescue work. No loss of lives were reported at the time of going to press but there were instances of house collapses and trees falling in the region. **P7**

THE TIMES OF INDIA, CHENNAI
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TIMES REGION

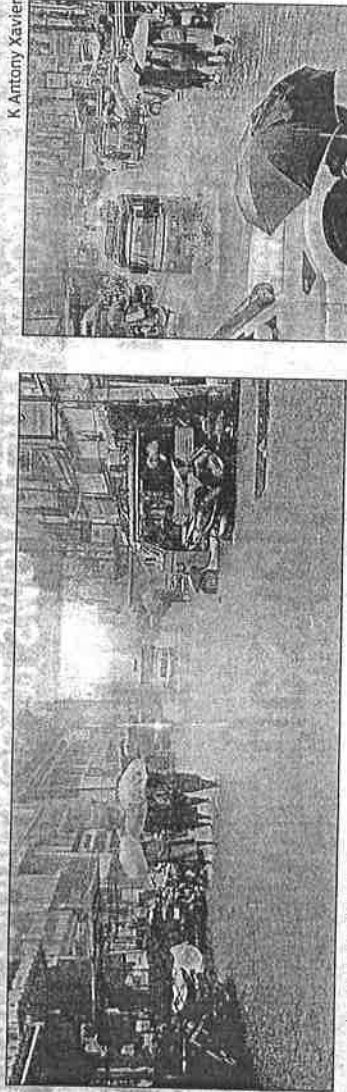
Tanks overflow, farms, homes go under

More Rain Likely, Red Alert In 4 Districts

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The incessant rain that lashed Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Tuticorin and Kanyakumari districts on Saturday night and Sunday caused many tanks to overflow leading to widespread inundation of residential areas and agricultural land. Water entered houses in low-lying areas and left vehicles stranded at several places. National and State Disaster Response Force teams have been deployed for relief and rescue.

Dams in Tenkasi, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari dis-



K Antony Xavier

LIFE AT STANDSTILL: National and State Disaster Response Force teams have been deployed for relief and rescue in four districts

tricts started receiving extremely high inflow crossing 10,000 cusecs by Sunday morning. Tirunelveli collector K P Karthikeyan said the district has received an average of 20 cm rain which is likely to last till Tuesday afternoon. More than 245 relief camps are ready and people are being moved to them.

Meanwhile, IMD Red alert issued to Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin and Tenkasi districts till 8.30am on Monday as isolated heavy to very heavy rain with extreme rainfall expected in one or two places. A Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) bulletin said a cyclonic circulation is now seen over the Co-

morin area and its neighbourhood, extending up to mid tropospheric levels.

Chief secretary Shiv Das Meena held a virtual meeting with district collectors of southern districts and tasked them to take appropriate preventive steps to tackle the situation due to rains. Earlier, chief minister MK Stalin an-

nounced that senior IAS officers have been deputed to handle flood emergencies.

"There was heavy downpour from Sunday morning. Houses are surrounded by water and we are keeping the cattle on the roof to protect them," said K Krishnaveni from Sathankulam in Tuticorin district. Sathankulam received more than 30 cm rainfall by Sunday night. Kudukulam town where the nuclear power plant is situated witnessed heavy flooding as Tiruchendur - Kudukulam road was submerged. Around 200 pilgrims visiting the Sundaramahalingam Swamy Temple on Sathuragiri Hills near Srivilliputhur in Virudhunagar district were forced to stay at the hilltop overnight on Sunday due to heavy rains in the Western Ghats.

Extreme rainfall cuts off four T.N. districts; rescue efforts on

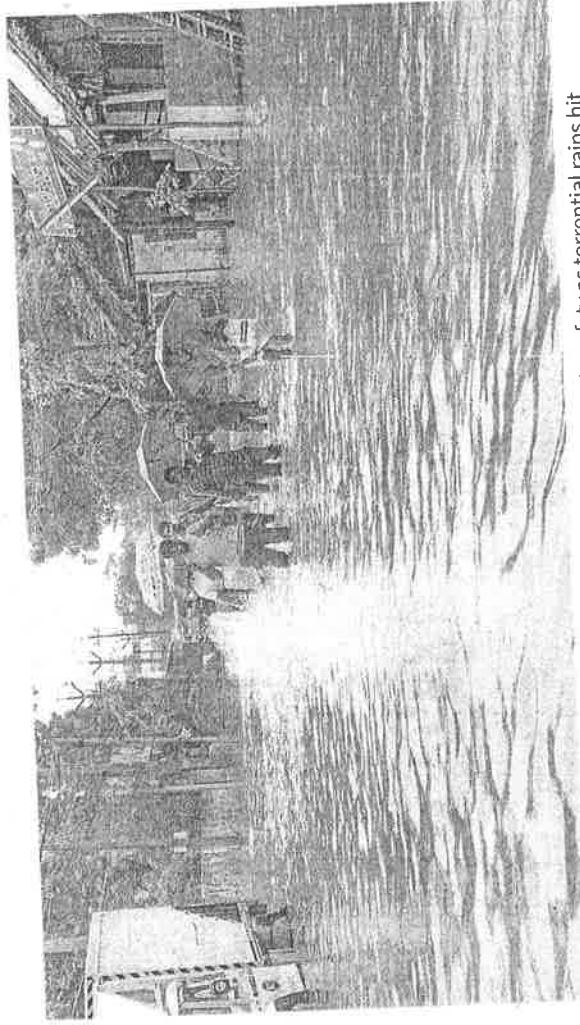
HINDU
19/12/23

Thousands of people stranded in Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi and Kanniyakumari; extensive damage to crops and properties; armed forces join relief operations; supply of food and water using aircraft likely to begin from today morning

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUNELVELI/CHENNAI

O vernight unprecedented rainfall and flooding paralysed life in Tamil Nadu's southern districts of Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi and Kanniyakumari on Monday. A massive rescue and relief operation is on with the help of defence forces to evacuate people from the marooned homes in the districts, which have been cut off from the rest of the State.

Asked about casualties, Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena told presspersons that the government was waiting for the water level to recede in heavily inundated areas. Extensive damage to crops on thousands of acres and properties was reported in the



Thrown out of gear: Residents wade through floodwater to get to safety as torrential rains hit Thoothukudi on Monday. THE HINDU

four districts.

Hundreds of vehicles were washed away by strong currents. The Thamarabarani river is in spate.

Chief Minister M.K. Sta-

lin reached New Delhi on Monday night for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday. He is slated to brief Mr. Modi on the situation in the southern districts and seek

monetary assistance to handle the devastation caused by floods in the four districts as well as in Chennai and its surroundings earlier this month.

The Navy, Coast Guard,

Army and Air Force have joined the rescue operations on a request by the State government. Boats were used to rescue people from many places.

The Chief Secretary said the priority was ensuring supply of food and drinking water. While the Thoothukudi airport could not be used on Monday, he said five helicopters and one more aircraft will be deployed from Tuesday morning for airdropping food in places inaccessible by boat.

Trucks with food supply and 100 heavy duty pumps for dewatering were sent from Chennai to Thoothukudi.

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HINDU-19/12/23

Upper air circulation dumping extremely heavy, widespread rain is rare, say experts

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Freak weather dumped widespread, extremely heavy rain in 39 places in southern districts, the highest being 95 cm in Kayalpattinam in Thoothukudi district. An upper air circulation dumping such mind-boggling amounts of rain in 24 hours is rare in the region, meteorology experts said.

While there were questions raised on insufficient forewarning about extremely heavy rainfall in the region on Sunday, officials of the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) said they had warned of the probability of very heavy rain since December 14. The forecast was upgraded to extremely heavy rain (which is above 21 cm) in isolated places 24 hours in advance.

Still, southern districts, particularly Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Theni, experienced a downpour that defied most predictions.

Besides Kayalpattinam, which received a whop-



Like a river: A view of the overflowing Buckle Canal in Thoothukudi city on Monday. N. RAJESH

ping 95 cm of rainfall, Tiruchendur and Srivaikuntam in Thoothukudi district received 69 cm and 62 cm respectively.

Some of the other places that recorded intense downpour include Moolaikaraipatti (61 cm) and Manjolai (55 cm) in Tirunelveli district; Kovilpatti in Thoothukudi (53 cm); Gundar Dam in Tenkasi (51 cm); and Oothu (50 cm), Nalumukku (47 cm) and Ambasamudram (43 cm), Tirunelveli.

Tiruchendur-Thoothukudi belt that normally has a semi-arid climate received its annual rainfall in

a day. Palayamkottai that had recorded 44 cm of rainfall had previously registered 20 cm of rain on December 10, 1931.

Weather variability

S. Balachandran, Additional Director General of Meteorology, Chennai, said the RMC gave forecasts in rainfall range and red-coloured warning was provided for areas where rains were expected to be above 21 cm. "The exact amount of the rainfall expected is not given as of now due to limitations and variability of the weather phenomenon and science. Majority

of international practices also don't specify amount [of rain] and prefer only rainfall probability range," he said.

A weak weather system like an upper-air circulation is not expected to bring such enormous amounts of rain during northeast monsoon. Multiple factors helped the slow-moving weather disturbance that remained stagnant near Comorin area bring torrential downpour over southern districts. It moved at a speed of 4 km from Sri Lanka to Comorin area. Besides good moisture influx, lower level convergence of winds, divergence at upper level and equatorial Rossby waves that moved in the region also aided the extreme weather event.

"With climate change, we have to prepare for such extreme rainfall events," he said.

Tamil Nadu's rain deficit changed to 5% excess overnight. The RMC has forecast heavy rain to continue in Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Tenkasi on Tuesday.

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2 INDIA - 19/12/23

Rescue efforts under way in full swing as south T.N. reels under record rain

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government on Monday said it had sought help from the armed forces in the relief and rescue efforts that were under way in full swing in the four southern districts that had been battered by extremely heavy rainfall.

Addressing the media, Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena said that a total of 17 State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams were working in Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi, which were the worst-affected districts. More teams would be deployed soon, he said.

Mr. Meena said that though the Regional Meteorological Centre had predicted extremely heavy rainfall – over 21 cm – in some areas, over 40 cm of rainfall was recorded in many places across southern Tamil Nadu, which was unprecedented.

Burst of rain

For instance, Kayalpattinam in Thoothukudi recorded 94.6 cm of rainfall in 24 hours – the amount it normally receives in a year.

He said once the rain stopped, the government expected the water to drain faster in Tirunelveli

Unprecedented event

The southern districts of Tamil Nadu bore the brunt of a freak weather incident as an upper air circulation dumped mind-boggling amounts of rain at 39 places in 24 hours

24-hour rainfall vs. expected rainfall

■ Rainfall in 24 hours between Dec 17 8.30 a.m. to Dec 18 8.30 a.m. (in cm)

Values outside the bars - Normal rainfall expected during northeast monsoon in a year



■ Over the course of one day, Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts received 82.5% and 76.2% of the total normal rainfall they should have received in these 79 days respectively

Places that received over 40 cm of rainfall

■ Tirunelveli ■ Thoothukudi



■ 13 places in these districts recorded over 40 cm of rainfall in the 24-hour period between December 17 and 18

■ Six State Disaster Response Force and four National Disaster Response Force teams were involved in rescue efforts in Tirunelveli district

■ 3 SDRF and 4 NDRF teams were deployed in Thoothukudi district

■ 9,705 persons were accommodated in relief camps as of Monday

Source: India Meteorological Department for district-wise rainfall, State Disaster Management Authority for other figure

due to its natural gradient. It could, however, take more time in Thoothukudi, which does not have that advantage.

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, who was in Coimbatore on Monday, conducted a review meeting online with Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Kanniyakumari, and Tenkasi Collectors to take stock of the situation. After reaching Delhi in the evening, he held another review meeting.

Apart from the senior bureaucrats and Ministers already deputed to these districts, he said four more

Ministers would be sent there to expedite relief and rescue operations. Ministers E.V. Velu, Udhayanidhi Stalin, R.S. Rajakannappan and P. Moorthy will join the efforts.

The Health Department has deputed 190 Mobile Medical Units to take up post-flood disease prevention/control activities.

Helpline numbers

The government said people in the affected districts could contact the helpline numbers 8148539914 and 9445869848 through WhatsApp.

They can also contact the toll-free numbers 1070, 1077, 0462 - 2501012 (Tirunelveli) and 0461 - 2340101 (Thoothukudi). Those with access to Twitter could reach out to the handles @tn_rescuerelief and @tnsdma. Those who wish to donate relief materials can contact 7397766651 on WhatsApp.

The government has extended the deadline for paying electricity bill to January 2, in these districts.

All types of consumers can pay as per the revised deadline without any penalty, a press release said.

HIMDU - 20 1/2/23

'Declare rain in south T.N. and Michaung as national calamity'

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin presented a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Tuesday urging him to declare Cyclone Michaung, and the torrential downpour in the southern districts of the State as national calamity.

He briefed the Prime Minister on the cyclone that had caused widespread devastation in Chennai and its surrounding districts and the measures undertaken by the State government on a war footing. Stating that Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and the Central team had visited Chennai earlier this month, he urged Mr. Modi to release an interim relief of ₹7,033 crore and a permanent relief of ₹12,659 crore soon, a release said.

The relief amount sought by the State government would be used to carry out various works, including repairing of roads, bridges, school buildings, government hospitals, electric transformers, overhead tanks and other public infrastructure.

Mr. Stalin further elabo-



CM M.K. Stalin meeting PM Narendra Modi on Tuesday.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

rated on the incessant downpour in the southern districts during December 17 and December 18, which brought the lives of lakhs of people to standstill.

Temporary repair

He also sought that ₹2,000 crore from the PM's National Relief Fund be released immediately for temporary repair works and helping people who had lost their livelihoods in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Kanniyakumari and Tenkasi districts.

Member of Parliament T.R. Baalu was present during the meeting, the release added.

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TOP - 2.12.23

IA THE TIMES OF INDIA, CHENNAI
ES THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2023

Villages cut off, half of Tuticorin city inundated

GH Still Flooded With Knee-Deep Water

Vivanesh.parthiban
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K Antony Xavier

Tuticorin: A semblance of normalcy returned to the flood-ravaged district on Wednesday evening with shops opening in a few areas of the city but many low-lying areas were still waterlogged. Many villages on the Tirunelveli-Tuticorin highway and Tuticorin-Tiruchendur highway remained cut off three days after roads were washed away in the torrential rain.

Residential areas in the city including Bryant Nagar, P&T colony, CEG Nagar, SBI colony, Golden Puram, S M Puram, Muthammal colony, Pushpa Nagar and Masilamani Nagar are the most affected. Till Wednesday evening, water level till the ground floor of houses was observed in Muthammal colony, P&T Nagar and CEG Nagar. Mobile connectivity in the whole city was down and the internet connectivity was completely disrupted. Due to this, most of the helplines opened by the state government were useless, said residents.

Important roads connect-



WASHED AWAY: Restoration work carried out in Anthoniyarpuram bridge, the main connecting point between Tirunelveli and Tuticorin

ing Tuticorin Government Hospital, railway station and bus stand remain flooded. Approach roads to villages on the Tirunelveli-Tuticorin highway are completely damaged and many villages including Madukarai, Nanalkadu, Arampannai and Padugaiyur were cut off. Villages like Athur, Kurumbur and Arumuganeri on the road between Tuticorin and Tiruchendur were cut off from the main road as connecting roads and a few culverts were washed away.

The ground floor of the Tuticorin Government Hospital is still under knee-deep water all along the approach

roads. Patients were moved to the first floor while a few who were critical were shifted to Tirunelveli government hospital.

As the corporation and state government officials struggle to supply food and essential commodities, NGOs, private colleges and traders association are pitching in to help the residents. MSA Gnanaelvam, secretary of association in Tuticorin, said many private organisations have started supplying food for people in the city. "Today, government officials have also provided necessary support to families stuck in residential areas," he added.