

CM launches basic income scheme for women

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI/KANCHEEPURAM

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin launched the Kalaigal Magalir Urimai Thogai Thittam in Kancheepuram on Friday, the birth anniversary of DMK founder C.N. Annadurai.

Under the scheme, ₹1,000 will be given as a rights grant every month to 1.06 crore women heads of family in Tamil Nadu.

He formally launched the scheme and also the distribution of ATM cards to the beneficiaries at an official function held in Kancheepuram, the birthplace of Annadurai, former Chief Minister.

Mr. Stalin said the scheme could not be implemented soon after he entered office in 2021 because of the State's financial position.

CM launches income scheme for women



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurating the women's basic income scheme on Friday. B. VELANKANNIRAJ

"Only because you voted for the DMK's symbol and those of our allies, am I able to implement these welfare measures," he said, addressing the women gathered at the venue. The function was held at the Pachaiyappa's College for Men in Kancheepuram.

Lauding women's role in society, Mr. Stalin said the scheme was meant to recognise the work of home-makers. Making strong comments against those who had prevented women from pursuing education and playing various roles in society, he took a dig at "people who support child marriage even today".

Recalling how women were oppressed by patriarchal forces over the years, Mr. Stalin said that under the 'Dravidian Model' of governance, the role of women was being recognised through several measures. Referring to his mother Dayalu Ammal, wife Durga and daughter Senthamarai, Mr. Stalin recalled the support they gave him every day.

Stressing that the government's welfare schemes were being keenly watched by other States, Mr. Stalin said, "When I attended the dinner hosted by the President for the G20 Summit, even some Union Ministers were interested in our schemes."

Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena said there were reports that in one of the districts, some women got calls asking them to share the one-time password (OTP). He clarified that the government had not asked for either the OTP or the bank account details of the beneficiaries.

The scheme was simultaneously launched by Ministers in the other districts. Earlier, Mr. Stalin paid floral tributes to the statue of Annadurai at the Kancheepuram Municipal Corporation office.

IIT-Madras will collaborate with State government on green hydrogen initiative

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Indian Institute of Technology - Madras (IIT-M) and the IIT-M Research Park will work with industries and research institutes on industrial research and development needs, skill development, creating incubators, testing and validation standards and policy advocacy in the green hydrogen sector.

The project is part of the Hydrogen Valley Innovation Cluster in Tamil Nadu (HVIC-TN) initiative, comprising 30 companies working in the hydrogen sector, including IITMRP, Guidance Tamil Nadu and Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation besides a few consulates. The aim is to make HVIC-TN the hub of industrial



The project is part of the Hydrogen Valley Innovation Cluster in Tamil Nadu initiative, comprising 30 companies. FILE PHOTO

R&D requirements to bring green hydrogen at an economical price and scale.

At a stakeholders' meeting held at the institute recently, Industries Minister T.R.B. Rajaa said the State government would work with the institute on HVIC. The HVIC-TN would cater

to the State's needs of green hydrogen ambitions by providing technological solutions, support on research and development, skill development, infrastructure building, techno-economic feasibility and policy or regulatory recommendations.

IIT-M launches Jal Dhan campaign on its campus

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) launched a campaign, Jal Dhan, on its campus on Friday in the presence of Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The campaign was inaugurated during the national-level water conclave organised on the theme of sustainable agriculture with a focus on millet, water conservation and rainwater harvesting in industrial sectors.

Mr. Choubey said the government had been working to rejuvenate 75 waterbodies in each district in the country.

Institute director V. Kamakoti said the conclave aimed to sensitise people

to the changing climatic conditions in the world.

Balaji Narasimhan, professor in the Department of Civil Engineering, said the institute had started reusing and recycling water, and the city sought the institute's expertise.

"There is a project where 260 million litres of sewage is being treated daily, and the water is being let back into lakes, which are in turn treated and supplied to meet the water requirements of Chennai," he said.

Mr. Narasimhan said the institute wanted to be carbon neutral by 2050. The campus was bicycle-friendly with good green cover. "We are proud to be a zero-discharge campus. We have a beautiful lake with a capacity of 104 million litres. We harvest as much rainwater as possible."

Jal Jeevan Mission remains a pipe dream

In Mahoba district of Uttar Pradesh which has seen a dramatic spike in official tap water connections under the Central Scheme, residents say they only have pipes, not taps, and there is often no actual supply of water flowing through them; officials say the shortcomings will be rectified by Nov.

Jacob Koshy
MAHOBHA

In Independence Day, 2019, the water-starved Mahoba district in south-eastern Uttar Pradesh reported only 1,612 households with tap connections. Four years later, 1,29,209 households – or about 98% of all rural homes in the district – have water connections, according to the public dashboard of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), the Centre's ₹3.6 lakh crore scheme that aims to provide piped water to every village home by 2024.

No other district in India has reported such a dramatic increase in tap connections. However, a visit to some of the villages here suggests that a household certified as "connected" in JJM parlance does not always mean one with an actual water supply.

Claim versus reality

Even in villages officially certified as having 100% coverage of functional household tap connections (FHTC), many households

do not actually have taps. Some do have taps, but are not getting any water through them; even in the best case scenario, such households get no more than two hours of water.

According to the scheme's definitions, an FHTC household is one where at least 55 litres of potable water per person a day is made available to every household.

A senior official in the district administration told *The Hindu* that in 100 out of the 398 villages in the district, eligible household tap connections had been fully connected with running water supply. However the JJM's official dashboard reports that all 385 villages have a "100% household tap connection".

All of these households are included in Uttar Pradesh's official claim of 1.6 crore households which have functional tap connections, up from 5.1 lakh households in 2019, conveying the impression that they all have access to tap water. The State has reported a dramatic surge of such tap connections in



Wide gap: A resident filling water from a well at Luhari Village in Mahoba district of Uttar Pradesh. SHIV KUMAR PUSHKAR

the past two years; they make up about 6% of the 13 crore rural households in the country connected to tap water.

Charkhari (one of four blocks in the district) has 48 villages with 24,037 households, each of which has been marked as having a tap connection. Residents of Asthaun, a village with 420 households, gripe that only half the households have taps and no water actually flows through them. Noting that half the village is in a low-lying area, resident Sunil Tiwari says that without a submersible pump, which

"only the rich could afford", water simply did not make it to most houses. The village is still reliant on groundwater from hand-pumps for domestic drinking purposes.

Supply challenges

In Luhari village, whose 295 houses have all been marked as having 'tap connections', village *pradhan* (head) Bhan Singh told *The Hindu* that most of the houses have pipes, while the metal taps are present in a "few houses". Here, too, the challenge is water supply. His own house relies on groundwater drawn

from a borewell.

In the Kunata village of the adjoining Panwari block as well, all 185 households have been marked as having a household tap connection. However, conversations with villagers – and visits to some of their residences – suggest that many houses do not even have the pipes, let alone the taps, that have been promised as part of the Har Ghar Jal scheme. Many of the access roads into the village have been cleaved to install the central pipeline that is expected to bring in water from the nearest water reservoir, but the pipeline itself is still missing.

Women here continue to walk to the several hand-pumps or to the village well to draw water. Water-scarce Mahoba has historically relied on lakes and ponds for irrigation, but the region's rocky sub-surface means that perennial sources of groundwater are few. The Har Ghar Jal mission's overarching aim is to wean villagers off their dependence on groundwater and handpumps, and

instead provide piped water sourced from dams and rivers. Given that such water is often contaminated, the Mahoba administration has commissioned five large water treatment plants that will draw in water from some of the large reservoirs in the district, treat them, and then supply them as piped water to households. "These treatment plants are in various stages of commissioning and the water is frequently tested for purity," said Zubair Baig, Additional District Magistrate, Mahoba. "If the water quality doesn't meet standards, supply is stopped for cleaning."

He said that a major challenge of the mission was commissioning pipes that ran for hundreds of kilometres over undulating terrain, given that a crack or leak can cause disruptions in supply. He added that the State had set itself a deadline of ironing out all the creases and having "full water supply" by 2024; in Mahoba itself, the deadline is November this year.

Srinivasan K. Swamy elected Chairman of Audit Bureau of Circulations for 2023-24

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Srinivasan K. Swamy, Executive Chairman of R.K. Swamy Hansa Group, has been unanimously elected Chairman of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) for 2023-2024.

Mr. Swamy currently serves as Chairman of the Asian Federation of Advertising Associations. He was earlier President/Chairman of the International Advertising Association (IAA), IAA India Chapter, Confederation of Asian Advertising Agency Associations, Advertising Agencies Association of India, Advertising Standards Council of India, All India Management Association, Madras Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Madras Management Association.

Riyad Mathew, Chief Associate Editor and Director of *Malayala Manorama*, representing publisher members on the council, has been unanimously



Srinivasan K. Swamy

elected Deputy Chairman of the Bureau for 2023-2024.

Mohit Jain, Executive Director of Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd., representing publisher members on the council, was unanimously elected Secretary of the Bureau. Vikram Sakhuja, Partner & Group CEO Media & OOH of Madison Communications Private Ltd., representing advertising agencies' members on the council, was unanimously re-elected Treasurer of the Bureau.

Among the members on the Bureau's Council of Management for 2023-2024 are advertising agen-

cies' representatives: Srinivasan K. Swamy, R.K. Swamy Ltd. (Chairman); Vikram Sakhuja, Madison Communications (Treasurer); Prasanth Kumar, Group M Media India Private Ltd.; and Vaishali Verma, Initiative Media (India) Private Ltd.

Publishers representatives include Riyad Mathew of *Malayala Manorama* (Deputy Chairman); Pratap G. Pawar of Sakal Papers; Shailesh Gupta of Jagran Prakashan; Praveen Someshwar of HT Media; Mohit Jain of Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. (Secretary); Dhruba Mukherjee of ABP Private Ltd.; Karan Darda of Lokmat Media; and Girish Agarwal of DB Corp Ltd.

The advertiser representatives are Karunesh Bajaj, ITC Ltd.; Aniruddha Haldar, TVS Motor Company Ltd.; and Shashank Srivastava, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. Hormuzd Masani is the Secretary General, according to an ABC release.