

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
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Cabinet

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Depleting water table forces govt to buy water from farmers

Now, tahsildars can decide on supplying potable water in tankers

BENGALURU: Fast plummeting groundwater table across Karnataka has set off alarm bells for the state government.

Worried about repeated incidents of borewell failure in almost all districts, the state cabinet, which reviewed the drought situation on Thursday, directed district authorities to 'purchase' water from farmers' borewells by paying more than Rs 15,000 per month as rent and supply water through tanks.

Moved by the compelling situation, the cabinet has also exempted digging of borewells from the tender purview. Earlier, the government had directed to float tenders if there was a need to dig borewells.

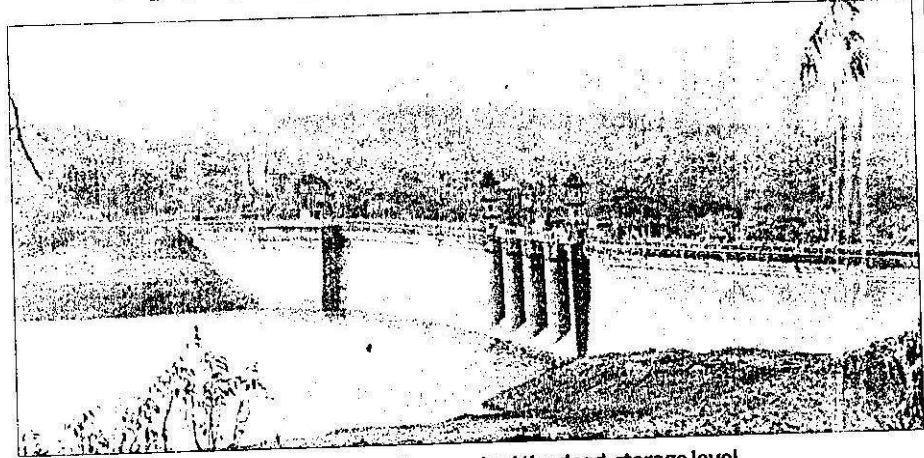
Speaking to media after the Cabinet meeting, Krishna Byre Gowda, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Minister, said, "We have relaxed the tender rule until June 15 for digging borewells, keeping in mind the drought situation. Until last week,

2,200 villages were declared drought-stricken. But till Wednesday, the numbers have increased to 2,575 villages."

The minister said the cabinet had empowered tahsildars to supply potable water through tankers in drought-stricken villages. "Earlier, Deputy Commissioners had to grant permission to supply water through tankers, but now tahsildars have been given powers," he stated.

The minister acknowledged that no matter how many borewells the government is getting drilled, most of them are turning dry fast. While the revenue department has set aside Rs 324 crore for potable water, the RDPR has reserved Rs 201 crore for the supply of water, according to the minister.

"Recent spell of pre-monsoon rains across south-interior Karnataka has brought some respite. But many parts in North Karnataka have witnessed severe shortfall of rains. If the region does not get pre-monsoon showers, the situation will be severe until the



The water in Harangi reservoir, Kodagu, has reached the dead-storage level.

DH PHOTO/B H SHIVAKUMAR

onset of monsoon," he said.

The Cabinet also resolved to hold drought review meetings in a week under the chairmanship of district-in-charge ministers in all the districts. The chief minister will hold a review meeting of all deputy commissioners on May 15, pertaining to the availability of drinking water, fodder and other issues.

DH News Service

Water level (in tmcft) in reservoirs of state

Reservoir	Maximum shortage	Present storage	Last year's storage
Harangi	8.07	1.10	1.36
Hemavathi	35.76	3.68	3.22
KRS	45.05	7.90	3.06
Kabini	15.67	3.72	1.64