

Israeli expert hails HC ruling on dyeing units

K A Shaji | TNN

P Sreedharan

Coimbatore: The recent Madras high court verdict ordering the closure of all dyeing units in Tirupur in an attempt to protect the dying Noyyal river will inspire movements across the world for protection of rivers and water bodies for future generations, said Dr Yoram Oren of Ben-Gurion University in Israel.

An internationally renowned water expert, Yoram was in Coimbatore on Tuesday to address a seminar on water management strategies organised by Karunya University. An expert on desalination and reverse osmosis, it is the second time that Yoram is in the city. During his first visit, he stayed at the university for four months, and helped set up a unique electro-chemical water lab at the water institute, which, according to Yoram, can purify even the most contaminated water. A passionate advocate of water rights, Yoram visited Tirupur before reaching Coimbatore and interacted with people living on the shores of Noyyal river.

“Indian laws are the best, if implemented properly, to prevent water contamination and industrial pollution. But the authorities must have the courage to implement it as in the case of Tirupur,” he told The Times of India. “A few European countries have succeeded in preventing industrial units from polluting water bodies by forcing industrial units to discharge only treated water. Countries like In-



WORDS OF WISDOM: Dr Oren addresses the seminar on Tuesday

dia must be more vigilant in allowing industrial units from over exploiting rivers and water bodies,” says Yoram.

In his opinion, Tamil Nadu needs to focus more on protecting water bodies than other states. “The state has more arid and semi-arid zones when compared to other southern states. Protection of water bodies in such areas along with rainwater harvesting can help meet drinking water needs. The state needs to be more serious about water conservation,” he said.

Talking about his home country, Yoram said Israel continues to be a big success in preventing wastage of water. “It also has a proven track record in reusing treated waste water. Each local body there is very concerned about treating and reusing waste water. This is a model that Indian municipalities should emulate,” he said.

shaji.ka@timesgroup.com

Commercialising wetlands will further pollute water resources, say experts

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The recently constituted Central Wetland Regulatory Board (CWRB) will soon issue a notification directing state governments to identify lakes, ponds, tanks and other waterbodies that require urgent renovation. Based on the information available from states, the board will prepare a national-level priority list of wetlands and waterbodies for revival and conservation, as per the guidelines set by the Union ministry of environment and forests.

Noted water expert and CWRB member Dr E J James termed the move as a historic one. It will help prevent filling up of waterbodies by land mafia apart from augmenting groundwater recharge. Desilting along with

detoxification form part of the action programme and this will help meet the water needs of urban societies along with flood management.

“Proper conservation of tanks and wetlands along with promotion of judicious use of water resources is the only way cities like Coimbatore can meet challenges of the future. The objective of renovating waterbodies must be the recharging of groundwater and management of floods. Renovation with recreational and tourism facilities under the private-public partnership would turn counter productive in the long run by further polluting the water resources,” said James when asked about the recent move to hand over waterbodies to private parties to develop them with tourism facilities.

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Workshop on water management



A two-day national experience-sharing workshop on water management strategies for arid and semi-arid zones was inaugurated by Sushil Kumar Gupta, consultant in isotope hydrology, at Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, in Chennai on March 22. Paul P Appasamy, vice chancellor of Karunya University, was also present at the workshop and highlighted the theme of the World Water Day 2011, which is Water for Cities, an issue that's currently plaguing a majority of the urban world ■