

**The Hindu - Bihar 14.08.2009**

## **Bihar formulates schemes for Central package**

*New deal meant to provide relief to 1.26 crore families living in 26 drought-hit districts*

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*Schemes have thrust on key sectors like employment, drinking water, irrigation, foodgrains*

*Memorandum to be sent to Centre in two days*

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Patna: In a bid to secure Central assistance to the tune of over Rs.12,500 crore, Bihar has formulated several schemes with thrust on key sectors like gratuitous relief, employment generation, drinking water, irrigation and storage of foodgrains for 26 drought-hit districts.

Several schemes have been formulated for the purpose of reaching relief and succour to over 1.26 crore families living in 26 districts declared as drought-hit by the State's NDA Government, State Disaster Management principal secretary Vyasji said on Thursday.

On delay in submission of the memorandum to the Centre seeking the special financial package for drought-hit areas, he said that after intensive review of the situation and formulation of the scheme, it came to the State Government's notice that it would require, apart from the

resources it has in hands, not less than Rs.12,500 crore from the Centre.

“The memorandum is now in the final stages of preparation in keeping with the financial needs of the key departments like agriculture, health, energy, food and civil supplies and animal resources to step up relief operations in the affected districts,” Mr. Vyasji said.

“We hope that the memorandum after being vetted by the State Government will be sent to the Centre within a day or two,” he added.

Mr. Vyasji said rescheduling of cooperative loans, collection of land rent, cess, irrigation taxes and electricity surcharge related to agriculture will be postponed for the fiscal 2009-10.

State Cabinet Secretary Girish Shankar said a crisis management group under Chief Secretary Anup Mukherjee would review the situation regularly with assistance from the district-level task force formed to implement the schemes in the affected districts.

## Cash dole

The State Government has also proposed providing cash dole with plan to distribute roughly around Rs.100 crore within a period of three months, besides distributing 1.26 crore quintal of foodgrains for a month, official sources said.

“We also plan to raise over 1200 make-shift camps for protecting cattle heads, besides arranging for fodder and medicines,” they said.

The future strategies also included seeking assistance in diesel subsidy for irrigation for Rabi, ensuring credit to all Kisan Credit Card holders and seed subsidy at 50 per cent for Kharif and Rabi, sources added.

Written by Administrator

Friday, 14 August 2009 07:37 - Last Updated Friday, 14 August 2009 07:39

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Installation of new hand pumps, deepening existing ones and providing mini piped water supply schemes in villages, supplying water through tankers, were among other plans for the drought-hit population, sources said.

Among the districts declared drought-hit are: Patna, Nalanda, Bhojpur, Buxar, Rohtas, Kaimur, Gaya, Jehanabad, Nawada, Arwal, Aurangabad, Munger, Sheikhpura, Lakhisarai, Jamui, Bhagalpur, Banka, Saran, Siwan, Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, Begusarai, Madhepura, Kishanganj, Katihar and Vaishali.

The paddy sowing in Bihar dropped by 59 per cent to 15 lakh hectares against the targeted 35.50 lakh hectares in the current crop season. During the last crop season, the sowing was 34.50 lakh hectares.

State Agriculture Department deputy director (statistics) Sanjay Singh said rainfall was 42 per cent deficient at 331 mm between June 1 and August 7, 2009. --PTI