

# THE HINDU Business Line

## **Water shortage leaves industry parched**

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A slowing economy and a crippling power crisis have given industry sleepless nights. Adding to its woes is the poor south-west monsoon, which threatens to leave water-intensive manufacturing units high and dry.

Companies that have invested on rain water harvesting and other water saving systems are managing to tide over the shortfall. But, production at a few manufacturing facilities has been hampered.

For instance, Southern Petrochemicals Industries Corporation (SPIC) has completely stopped production at its Tuticorin plant, in southern Tamil Nadu, as there is no water supply. The company said production has been suspended due to reasons beyond its control and that "production would resume once the water supply is restored."

### **DELAYED MONSOON**

Last month, Grasim Industries suspended production at its staple fibre plant in Nagda (Madhya Pradesh); also, output at its chlor-alkali plant was reduced by half. However, with the delayed onset of the monsoon, work at these plants resumed gradually.

Alkyl Amines Chemicals too faced production constraints with the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation restricting water supply to various industrial units in Kurkumbh. Water availability has improved at Kurkumbh, and the company's operations have been normalised. But industrial units in the area may still not be out of the woods.

For auto majors such as Hyundai and Daimler and glass manufacturer Saint-Gobain, which have invested in rainwater harvesting, the dependence on fresh water or government source is not so acute.

### **RAINWATER HARVESTING**

Hyundai has made "substantial" investments in four large rainwater harvesting ponds at its Sriperumbudur plant with a storage capacity of 2.65 lakh kilolitres. It has also installed reverse osmosis systems and water treatment plants with a capacity of 2,000 kilolitres per day. The three-stage plant recycles water until solid waste is obtained from the dirty water. The recycled process water is used for industrial purposes, while the solid waste is disposed of. Hyundai plant's consumption is 6,000 kilo litres a day, primarily at the paint shop. "We are able to manage the situation with 40 per cent of our own resources," said the spokesperson.

The company says it has been able to save over Rs 2 crore per year by efficient water management alone while reducing dependence on government sources. "Hyundai Motor India, like other large investors in Tamil Nadu, has been assured of water supply under the State Government's industrial policy. At this moment we do not face any issue with water because of our ability to augment from our own investments made in water conservation and recycling."

Chemplast Sanmar has invested in desalination plants which supply the company's entire water. According to S. Gopal, Managing Director, in the last 10 years, the company has not drawn a single drop of water from the ground for its plants located in the coastal areas. "Every plant, including the oldest in Cuddalore, has zero water discharge facility. This ensures that not a drop of water is wasted."

*(With inputs from T. E. Raja Simhan)*