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First centre to monitor climate change comes up in Chennai

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI India's first centre dedicated to monitoring climate change and finding country-specific solutions was opened at Anna University by R.K. Pachauri, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, on Friday.

"Tamil Nadu has always been a few steps a head of the nation when it comes to innovation. The centre here in Chennai will serve the interests of the State as a whole and its people. I hope this will be one of many," Dr. Pachauri said.

"The impact of climate change is serious. India is very vulnerable and Tamil Nadu is perhaps one of the more vulnerable States," he said. India, he said, needed to plan to adapt. This implied re-vamping drainage systems and rethinking hydroelectric power in the light of encroaching seas and changes in rainfall; preparing fisherfolk for changes in marine life as



MAKING HIS POINT: *R.K. Pachauri Director-General The Energy and Resources Institute, New Delhi (centre), with D. Viswanathan, Anna University Vice-Chancellor, at the inauguration of the Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation Research at Anna University in Chennai on Friday. School Education Minister Thangam Thennarasu is in the picture. - PHOTO: S.S. KUMAR*

migration patterns changed; educating the people about the growth of vector-borne diseases and the regular cycle of heat waves, changing cropping patterns and agricultural practices and investing in research and development for crops suitable for the new

conditions.

"We have to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising on the ability of future generations to meet their needs," he stressed, adding that climate-friendly energy, such as solar power, offered India the

chance to reach out to those for whom conventional energy has failed today.

Minister for School Education Thangam Thennarasu said that the State government, which had earmarked Rs. 1 crore for the centre, was committed to the cause of understanding climate change. He announced that the government would be undertaking a concerted campaign to sensitise students to global warming by setting up eco-clubs in schools.

The centre's new director A. Ramachandran said it would bring government agencies and universities together for integrated research to generate local data to understand the impact of climate change. Faculty members would be trained in the latest climate-modelling techniques in the U.S., Canada and Japan and the centre aimed to get the latest technologies such as carbon monitoring towers. A further Rs. 12 crore was expected from Central and State funds.