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UNPRECEDENTED RAINFALL IN MARCH 1960 AT THE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE, COIMBATORE

The Agricultural Meteorological Observatory, attached to the Agricultural College and Research Institute, Coimbatore, recorded a heavy rainfall of 3·60" during the 24 hours ending 0830 IST, on 9 March 1960. This is unprecedented in the month of March and surpassed the previous record of 3·33", recorded on 1 March 1915. On the same day at each of the adjoining Cotton and Millets Breeding Stations, situated at nearly six and eight furlongs towards the north of the Agricultural Meteorological Observatory, respectively, 4·59" of rainfall was recorded. At the Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore, a mile away to the west of the observatory, the rainfall was only 1·50" and at the Paddy Breeding Station at a mile towards the southwest of the observatory, the rainfall was only 1·81". At the Government headquarters hospital, Coimbatore, at a distance of 2½ miles to the east of the observatory, the rainfall was only 0·02". This indicates the highly localised nature of this heavy downpour.

This was followed by another heavy rainfall of 2·31" on 11 March 1960, at the Agricultural Meteorological Observatory. On this day the Cotton Breeding Station, Millets Breeding Station, Sugar Breeding Institute and the paddy Breeding Station recorded respectively 2·22", 1·81", 3·15" and 2·20" of rainfall, while at the Government headquarters hospital it was only 0·26". On this day also this heavy rainfall had been highly localised.

At the Agricultural College and Research Institute, Coimbatore, the total rainfall of 5·91", recorded on two rainy days, is unusual for March, ever since the setting up of the rain gauge in 1906.

This rainfall was highly beneficial to the summer crops of cholam and groundnut, but caused extensive boll and button shedding

in cotton. This also helped to augment the much-needed water supply in the wells, to facilitate irrigation in the forthcoming hot months.

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