Chennai: Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Sunday extended support to Rally for Rivers— a nationwide public awareness campaign aimed at rejuvenating India’s waterbodies. By promoting his government’s backing for initiatives to improve green cover and prevent forest fires, the Tamil Nadu chief minister has been actively involved in the campaign led by spiritual guru Jaggi Vasudev of Isha Foundation. The rally, which began on September 3 in Kanyakumari, will see Vasudev travelling 7,000km covering 38 states to give a clarion call — to let our rivers flow again.

After travelling through the parched bed of the Cauvery delta, mobilising the highest echelons of power in two states and demonstrating the narratives of humble farmers struggling to make the soil of their ancestors bear fruit, the campaign finally wound its way to the concrete environs of Chennai on Sunday. A dash of blue in the clothes they wore, the boards they held and the pamphlets they shared—was how people showed their support for the cause on Sunday. “But this isn’t enough,” said Vasudev. “Our battle shouldn’t end with this campaign. Everyone who believes in this cause should undertake their own rallies on cycles, cars, bikes or on foot through villages to let them know they aren’t Values,” he said.

The movement, he said, known as caste, creed or political allegiance. He shared an anecdote of a recent meeting held with leaders of farmers’ associations in Karakata and Tamil Nadu as an example. “When they met, they didn’t identify themselves as Tamils or Kannadigas. They said they were the sons of the Cauvery. And the river speaks no language, except that of life,” he said.

Besides chief minister Palaniswami, the function was attended by other prominent faces from his cabinet, including deputy chief minister O Panneerselvam. While the chief minister promised to fulfil the campaigners’ request to increase green cover on government land, Panneerselvam recalled the government’s other green initiatives, including planting 48 lakh saplings this February to mark late chief minister J Jayalalithaa’s birthday. However, Vasudev, in his talk later, said the state’s routine practice of planting trees in February every year to mark the former chief minister’s birthday in a futile exercise as only 10% of them survive at that time of the year. “July is an ideal time to plant. The government should rethink,” he said.

He also appealed to the state to set aside an acre of land in every village and two acres exclusively for children under five years. “We are working with the government to plant five different types of fruit trees so children will know the joy of eating a fruit straight off a tree,” he said. The rally will hit Amravati and Hyderabad next before winding up an end in New Delhi on October 3.

K‘tsaka Asks Farmers To Switch To Drought-Resistant Crops, Tells TN To Use River Water Only For Drinking

A month ago, Karnataka’s chief minister Siddaramaiah had said he would release Cauvery water free for all farmland, but with a condition: The water was primarily for drinking. “Under no circumstances should it be used for agriculture,” he said. Siddaramaiah followed it up with an appeal to farmers to stop growing paddy and sugarcane, and switch to semi-arid crops such as ragi and millet. “We’ve had the lowest rainfall in 46 years, and have water available only for drinking,” he said.

Starting at the possibility of drought — rains failed to have fulfilled, legal complications limited the amount of Cauvery water the state could use, dams

Cauvery over farmers’ use of Cauvery

T he Karnataka government along with Isha Foundation will plant 25 crore saplings on river banks covering over 100,000 hectares. The forest department will plant 20,000 saplings on river banks and 23,000 small saplings by Isha volunteers on river banks. The government has set aside 300 acres in Chikmagalur, Belagavi and Hiriyur for farming. The government has also allocated 50 acres on the banks of Cauvery for farming.