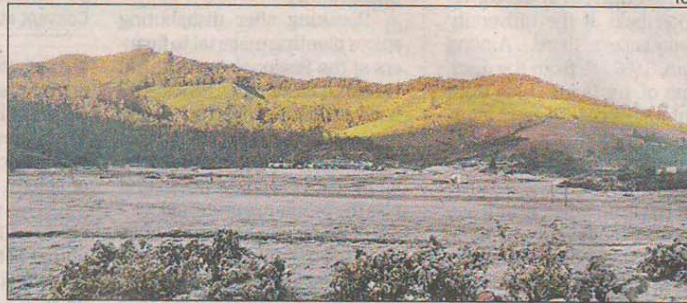


# TIMES OF INDIA

Delayed Winter in Munnar gives tourism a leg-up

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## Delayed winter in Munnar gives tourism a leg-up



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Sandeep Thomas | TNN

**Idukki:** The hill station of Munnar is experiencing a delayed winter due to the change of pattern of the winter season. The normal winter season starts in November with temperatures dipping below zero degrees Celsius by the first week of January. But this year, in the first week of January, winter eluded the hill station.

But for the past three days Munnar has been experiencing sub-zero climate. Latchmi Estate recorded -1 degrees Celsius on Thursday while it was 1 degree Celsius at Munnar UPASI and Chenduvarai. On Wednesday, Nallathanni, Chenduvarai, Seven Malai and Silent Valley experienced zero degrees Celsius.

The lowest temperature recorded in Nallathanni Latchmi, Seven Malai and Silent Valley respectively was 0, -1, 0 and 2 degrees Celsius on Tuesday as per the data from United Planters Association of South India (UPASI) tea research foundation.

The mercury started dipping by the end of December and the temperature later increased with the unexpected January rains. For the past three years, Munnar has been experiencing a change in the winter pattern.

Climatologist Gopakumar Choyalil said, "Munnar experienced a

long winter in 2019 February and many reasons were cited for the phenomenon. This year, Munnar missed the winter in the first week of January due to unprecedented rains. The state received over 100mm rainfall during that period while the earlier record for the period was 90mm."

"The winter pattern changed due to the unexpected rainfall. Once the rains recede, the hill station experiences winter. Now, we can't predict for how many days the winter will last," said Choyalil.

However, the late arrival of winter has provided an extra boost to the tourism sector in the district.

District tourism promotion council (DTPC) secretary in-charge Gireesh P S said, "After the lockdown Idukki district emerged as one of the main tourism destinations in the state. In 2019, a total of 2,47,392 tourists visited the district. Post-lockdown, 1,41,396 tourists visited the district and the district recorded over 70% tourist inflow while comparing with last year."

"After lockdown, more Malayali tourists seem to have chosen destinations in Idukki," the official added.

Eravikulam National Park range officer Job J Neriampampil said that 2,581 people visited the park on Republic Day alone.