

THE HINDU

Farmers demand more water from Bhavanisagar reservoir

Take out massive rally urging the govt. to return to previous norm

Farmers from the Thadapalli — Arakkankottai ayacuts took out a massive rally in Gobichettipalayam on Monday demanding more water from the Bhavanisagar reservoir. More than 10,000 farmers, including a large number of women, participated in the rally demanding the Central and State governments to provide water to the two old ayacuts of Bhavani river as per the old practice.

About 25,000 acres in these two ayacuts received water from the Bhavanisagar dam for a period of 10 months starting from April 15 every year. This was a practice followed for several years. But this had been reduced to 65 days a year based on the final verdict of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. The quantum of water released to the two ayacuts was also reduced from 14 tmcft to 4.65 tmcft.

Claiming that injustice had been meted out to the farmers in the two ayacuts, the agitators wanted the government to return to the previous norm of releasing water for 10 months. “The norm had been followed since the construction of the Kodiveri anaicut 500 years ago. We cannot accept the reduction of the number of days and the quantum of water to the two old ayacuts,” Thadapalli — Arakkankottai Farmers Association Subi. Thalpathi said.

The reduction of water to the two old ayacuts would affect the livelihood of thousands of farmers, he added.

Since the Tamil Nadu government could not get its share of Cauvery water, it was trying to draw more water from the Bhavani river and provide it to the delta districts. Instead of depriving the farmers in

the western region of water, the government should try hard to get the due share of water from Karnataka, farmers demanded. Farmers threatened that they would resort to a series of agitations if the government continued to implement the tribunal's order and reduce water to the two old ayacuts.

Water-stress conditions become a blessing for WG paddy farmers

Set to reap a bumper harvest in current rabi



Showing the way: Workers drying paddy at Tadepalligudem in West Godavari district.—Photo: A.V.G. Prasad

The amazing and worth-emulating experience of farmers in paddy cultivation in the current rabi season under water-stress conditions in the Godavari delta region has become a topic of interest for the experts engaged in agricultural research and extension activities. As per the initial reports, West Godavari district with nearly 4.45 lakh acres of paddy area is all set to harvest a bumper crop in the season in spite of acute water shortage in the Godavari river.

The yield is expected to go up to 45 bags per acre, disproving all the predictions of scientists and officials from the Department of Agriculture over the possibility of low-yield on account of the late-transplantations and the 'moisture stress' which the crop was expected to be exposed to.

The yield in the current season is estimated to be higher by 30 per cent over the previous kharif. To quote Krupadas, Joint Director,

Agriculture department, the district is likely to produce 12.9 lakh tonnes of paddy in the rabi, higher than the initial estimates by one lakh tonnes.

“It is a subject matter of discussion in the Krishna and the Godavari basins which have been experiencing more yields at times of less inflows from the river systems in the last few years,” comments Yerneni Nagendranath of the Andhra Pradesh Rytanga Samakhya. He called for a regulated water supply system regardless of the levels in the rivers.

Dwindling water levels

In view of the dwindling levels in the Godavari, the Irrigation department has supplied canal water in the rabi at the rate of one cusec of water for 70 acres as against 100 acres in the normal course. The farmers were constrained to wet the fields on a weekly basis through the turn system introduced by the administration. Water supply on a weekly basis has provided a natural environment, marked by intermittent drying and wetting, which helped the crop having more tillers with robust growth of panicles.

Besides, the condition has also led to good oxygen supplies to the root zone which in turn continued to be hale and healthy till harvesting, says M. Bharatalakshmi, Associate Director of Research, Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural Research Station at Maruteru.

The crop required only a thin-film water depths ranging from 2 to 5 cm during its critical stage from panicle initiation to grain hardening. But the farmers were found to be maintaining depths up to 15 cm for want of awareness, leading to a drop in yields due to various reasons, she added.

- ***West Godavari is likely to produce 12.9 lakh tonnes of paddy in rabi***
- ***Nagendranath of Rytanga Samakhya calls for regulated water supply system***

Farmers unite



Up in arms: Bharatiya Kisan Union activists staging dharna in Allahabad on Tuesday against demolition by the civic administration. - Photo: Brijesh Jaiswal

Loans for farmers increased to Rs.70,000 crore: Sunitha

Minister for Women and Child Welfare V. Sunitha Lakshma Reddy said that the government was committed towards the welfare of the farming community and all efforts were being put in place in that direction.

While addressing farmers after giving away Ugadi Puraskarams for farmers and officials at the Collectorate in Sangareddy on Tuesday, Ms. Sunitha Lakshma Reddy said that the government had spent about Rs.56,000 crore in the last financial year to extend loans to

farmers and in the current fiscal it would be enhanced to Rs.70,000 crore.

Referring to Medak district, the Minister said that the farmers would get the loan amount increased from Rs.900 crore in the previous year to Rs.1,100 crore in the present year. She also said that Rs.300 crore was being spent by the government to supply free power for the farming sector.



Minister for Women and Child Welfare V. Sunitha Lakshma Reddy with the awardees of Ugadi Puraskarams at the Collector's office in Sangareddy on Tuesday.– Photo: MOHammed ARIF

She said that the 198 'Pala Pragati Kendralu' being run in the district were performing well.

Some famers including B. Linga Reddy, C. Arogyayya, G. Sangareddy, C. Balakishtaiah and B. Shiva Reddy were honoured by the Minister for their excellence in cultivation of paddy, cotton and oil seeds. Some officers were also felicitated.

Collector A. Dinakarbabu, JD (Agriculture) Umamaheswaramma, JD (Animal Husbandry) K. Laxma Reddy, DRDA PD P. Ravinder were present.

Silken splendour

EXHIBITION Of saris at Silk India 2013



VIBRANT HUES AND TEXTURES On display

With its incredible variety of textures, weaves and designs, with colours that span the muted and earthy to jewel tones and with its wonderful regional diversity, Silk India 2013 is an ode to the Indian silk weaver's celebrated skills. On display are muga, tussar and mulberry silk saris from the North East as well as silks, silk-cottons and cottons from other regions of India. Presented in their pristine textured beauty with typical borders and motifs or embellished with an array of block prints, embroidery and zari, the textiles literally unfold the sari culture of the country.

The choice on offer is dazzling be it bridal Banarasi saris woven with 'jaal' and 'amri' motifs or smart two-toned Banarasis for the evening. West Bengal's delicate Phulia along with matka silk saris with splashes of temple borders, kalamkari hand-painted silks, brilliant tissue kotas, Chattisgarh's raw silk saris with woven temple borders, Pochampalli ikat and Mysore silks and georgettes are among the many saris on display.

Subtle innovative touches add charm to the evolving sari expressions. Among them are Andhra's ikat with jute borders, kantha saris celebrating designer whorls and abstractions, Chanderis with touches of gota, vegetable-dyed Phulias and more. Silk India 2013 concludes today at Valluvar Kottam, Nungambakkam.

Strong winds uproot crops

One lakh banana trees destroyed

A strong gale that hit the district in the past 24 hours destroyed long-term crops like coconut and annual crops like banana in over 100 acres in Cumbum valley. Drumstick plants were also damaged.

Over one lakh banana trees with fruits ready for harvest in 100 acres at Seepalakottai, Sengalpatti, Kokilapuram, Erasakkanaickanur and Muthalapuram villages were uprooted owing to strong wind, thus incurring a loss to the tune of Rs.1.5 crore to farmers.

“I have lost 4,000 of the 5,000 trees I have. I had planned to harvest the fruits in 10 days and now the loss is around Rs.8 lakh”, said banana grower M. Murugesan of Govindhanagaram near Sengalpatti village.

Another farmer S. Jayakumar lost crops in eight acres. Horticulture officials inspected the spot and assessed the damage as Rs.6 lakh, he said.

Loss to coconut growers is worse as they now have to wait for at least three to four years for harvesting, said Manigandan, a coconut grower at Kokilapuram.

Due to the introduction of drip irrigation, the roots of coconut trees do not penetrate the ground much and hence they are uprooted soon, say coconut farmers.

Though no rain was reported in Chinnamanur, a powerful lightning struck the agraharam of Sri Sivagami Amman Temple last night.

One coconut tree was burnt and more than 20 television sets in the area were damaged.

Flag hoisting ceremony as part of Chithirai festival of Sri Sivagami Amman temple had taken place on Monday. Lightning strike without any spell of rain is seen as a bad omen by the people here.

In Andipatti due to strong winds, the metal sheet and wooden poles of a private rice mill was blown away. It fell on a house, injuring a 13-year-old girl and damaging the compound wall.

Dindigul

Some parts of Oddanchatram and Kodaikanal hills received moderate showers on Monday night.

- ***Loss to banana farmers has been put at***

Rs.1.5 crore

- ***Coconut growers in Theni district are worst affected***

Commodities missing from Amma Hastam package?

‘Amma Hastham’, the programme for distribution of nine essential commodities for Rs.185, was officially launched in Ranga Reddy district at Shahbad on Tuesday.

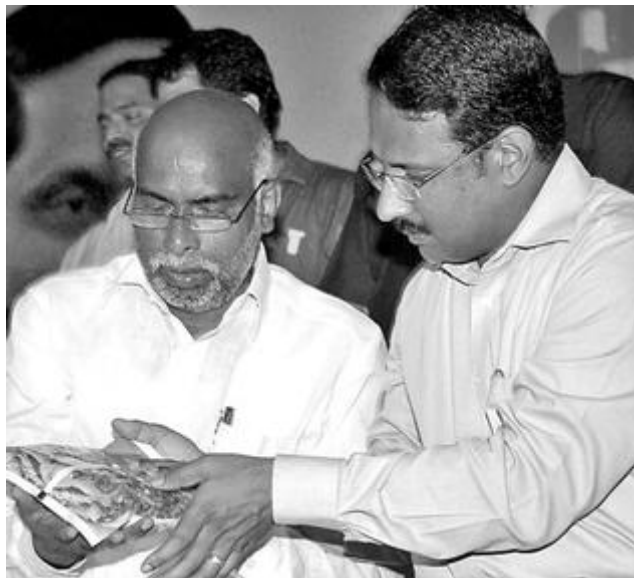
Minister G. Prasad Kumar formally launched the programme by handing over bags containing turmeric, chilli powder, red gram,

wheat, tamarind, wheat flour, palm oil, salt and sugar, to the beneficiaries below poverty line.

Meanwhile, sources from Shahbad said that quite a few beneficiaries received only four or five commodities in place of nine, even as money for nine was collected from them. - Staff Reporter

Amma Hastam provides food security, says Dokka

SC/ST sub-plan has no parallels in the country, says Dokka



Boon to poor:Collector S. Suresh Kumar (right) showing a packed commodity to Rural Development Minister Dokka Manikya Vara Prasada Rao during the launching of `Amma Hastam in Guntur district on Tuesday.— T. Vijaya Kumar

Rural Development Minister Dokka Manikya Vara Prasada Rao has said UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi has taken several revolutionary steps like bringing the Right to Education Act, the Right to Information and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and asserted that she is committed to alleviating the plight of poor people.

Drawing inspiration from her, Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy introduced the 'Amma Hastam' scheme under which essential commodities are supplied to white ration card holders at a subsidised price of just Rs 185 per pack containing nine items.

It is going to provide food security to the poor who are leading a hand-to-mouth existence. The Right to Food Bill which is set to become an Act of Parliament in the near future will save the hungry millions from deprivation, he said. Launching 'Amma Hastam' at a programme held at Sri Venkateswara Vignana Mandiram here on Tuesday, Mr. Vara Prasada Rao said Chief Minister Kiran Kumar Reddy has introduced 'Amma Hastam' scheme to protect the poor people from the debilitating impact of inflation.

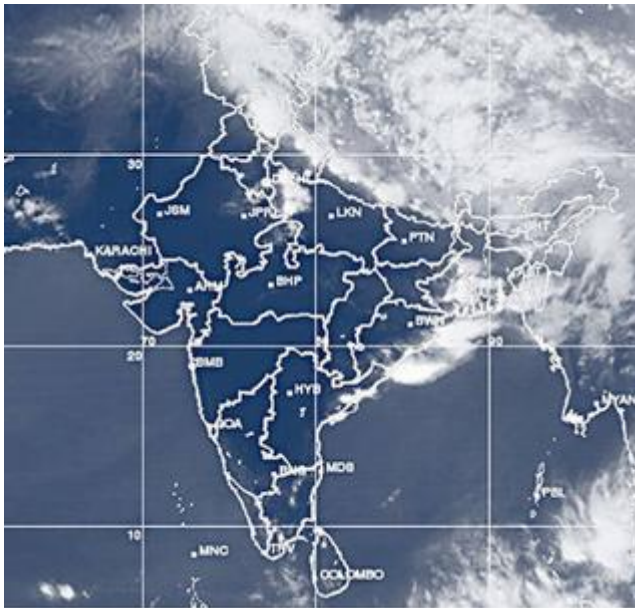
The SC/ST Sub-Plan which is the Chief Minister's initiative has no parallels in the country. He is doing many such things for the welfare of poor. The 'Mana Biyyam' scheme is another scheme that is helping the poor a lot. Under 'Amma Hastam', each white card holder will be enjoying a subsidy of Rs 107 per packet. The scheme entails a total expenditure of Rs 5,000 crore per year.

MP Rayapati Sambasiva Rao asked the people not to believe the promises being made by TDP President N. Chandrababu Naidu and YSR Congress. He claimed that the schemes that were introduced by former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy are being scrupulously implemented.

In fact the present government is doing much more than that, he said and asserted that welfare is possible only with Congress.

MLC Singam Basavapunnaiah, Guntur East MLA Sk. Mastan Vali, Collector S. Suresh Kumar, Joint Collector D. Muralidhar Reddy and others were present.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on April 16th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	37	22	0	26
New Delhi (Sfd)	36	21	0	22
Chandigarh	34	21	0	26
Hissar	37	18	0	40
Bhuntar	28	11	0	129
Shimla	22	13	0	108
Jammu	34	21	0	34
Srinagar	24	9	14	108
Amritsar	36	18	0	5
Patiala	36	20	0	23
Jaipur	38	23	0	7
Udaipur	38	23	0	0
Allahabad	41	22	0	11
Lucknow	38	20	0	1
Varanasi	41	23	0	7
Dehradun	32	18	0	18
Agartala	36	18	31	64
Ahmedabad	41	25	0	1
Bangalore	36	21	3	22
Bhubaneshwar	40	27	0	1
Bhopal	39	24	0	21
Chennai	37	28	0	32
Guwahati	30	19	1	36
Hyderabad	39	25	0	42
Kolkata	36	26	0	1
Mumbai	31	24	0	0
Nagpur	43	24	0	16
Patna	37	23	0	1

Pune	38	16	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	33	25	0	105
Imphal	29	16	8	81
Shillong	23	12	4	26

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st March.

DRY WEATHER

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over Jammu and Kashmir and at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh . Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Kokernag and Kathua 3 each and Srinagar, Bhaderwah, Kupwara, Gulmarg 1 each.

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES: The maximum temperatures rose appreciably in Himachal Pradesh and changed little elsewhere. They were above normal in Jammu and Kashmir and west Rajasthan and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 42.8°C recorded at Barmer (Rajasthan).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 18th April 2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh during next 24 hours and at one or two places during subsequent 24 hours.

Rain/thundershowers may also occur at a one or two places over Uttarakhand during next 48 hours and over north Punjab and north Haryana during next 24 hours. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

WARNING: Thunder squall may occur at one or two places over Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during next 24 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 18th April 2013: Mainly clear sky

becoming partly cloudy sky with possibility of very light rain/thunderly development towards evening/night.

Water level

Water level in Periyar dam was 112.50 feet with nil inflow and discharge of 100 cusecs on Tuesday. The water level in Vaigai dam was 45.47 feet with an inflow of 16 cusecs and discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit was 2,038 mcft. Kodaikanal recorded 8 mm rainfall in the region, PWD officials said.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Tuesday stood at 69.10 feet (maximum level is 143 feet).

The dam had an inflow of 119.61 cusecs and 396 cusecs is discharged from the dam.

The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 85.11 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 29 cusecs and 5 cusecs is discharged.

Kanyakumari

Water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 12.90 feet, 26.40 feet in Perunchani, 3.77 feet in Chittar I, 3.83 feet in Chittar II and 1.60 feet in Poigai dam.

Weather Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Wednesday, Apr 17

Max Min

35° | 28°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:55

Humidity: 66

Sunset: 06:21

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1005

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Apr 18

Max Min

35° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Apr 19	Saturday Apr 20	Sunday Apr 21	Monday Apr 22	Tuesday Apr 23
36° 27°	34° 28°	34° 27°	33° 26°	32° 27°
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Harvest of suicides

Rahul Udebham's wife talks to me about the morning before it happened; when the loan shark came to claim payment of all the debts, walked about like a madman among the cotton plants screaming: "If you don't pay, this land will be mine!"

Rahul disappeared and returned drunk. That night, he left home. That was the last time she saw him alive. Next morning, she found Rahul writhing in agony amid the plants, where he died.

She says Rahul, 35, was a devoted father, respected by all in Kelzar, a hamlet in the Vidarbha region. The drought had killed all his crops.

This meant no income and he could not stand the prospect of losing his land to the loan sharks. A small bottle of pesticide was enough to finish his agony.

One Indian farmer kills himself every 37 minutes. More than 2,70,000 farmers, according to the National Crime Records Bureau, have taken their lives between 1995 and 2011. About 14,000 did so only in 2011.



Many reports explain that the farming sector's decline in India began in the 1970s. Before that, the farmers didn't use chemicals on their crops.

But ever since, the Indian government began the Green Revolution, fostering the use of hybrid seeds and chemicals (fertilisers, pesticides etc) with the aim of increasing the country's crop yield.

In the short term this resulted in a higher yield, especially in the regions with regular rainfall.

"After some time it was impossible to avoid salination, the depletion or over-exploitation of aquifers, together with heavy pollution of soil and water with pesticides," explained Brahmachari Eknath of the Mata Amritananda Math foundation.

By the end of the 1980s, the government sought credit from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank (WB), which was



granted in exchange for applying the usual "plans for structural adjustment": the privatisation of public institutions involved in farming, cutting back state funding, deregulation of prices and removal of protective laws on the sector and custom tariffs.

This allowed for free flow of foreign farming products to India's domestic market.

From 1991 to 2011, the country's GDP grew from 274 billion euros (approx Rs. 19 lakh crore) to 1,840 billion euros (approx Rs. 130 lakh crore).

But this growth was not felt by all. The WB pointed this out in 2011: nearly 69% of the population was living on less than 1.56 euros (approx Rs. 110) a day.

The removal of tariffs and cutback of state funding spelt doom for small farmers.

Since the price of many foreign products is kept artificially low by subsidising it, many farmers cannot compete with this and resort to taking loans. Of course, this does not solve anything.

It only buys time, and the problem gets bigger as the months go on. At some point, it becomes untenable.

By the time Rahul committed suicide, the loan sharks had already been leeching off rural India for years.

They offered credit at a disproportionate interest, sometimes up to 50%, to be repaid in as little as six months.

In India, where men are still deemed responsible for providing for the family, farmers who can't fulfill this role feel that their honour has been shattered and it drives many to suicide.

Ecology and evolution are intertwined, say researchers

LONDON: Overturning the common assumption that evolution occurs gradually over hundreds or thousands of years, researchers have found significant genetically-transmitted changes in laboratory populations of soil mites in just 15 generations, leading to a doubling of the age at which the mites reached adulthood and large changes in population size.

The researchers at the University of Leeds worked with soil mites that were collected from the wild and then raised in [18 glass tubes](#). Forty per cent of adult mites were removed every week from six of the glass tubes.

Lead author Dr Tom Cameron said "We saw significant evolutionary changes relatively quickly. The age of maturity of the mites in the tubes doubled over about 15 generations, because they were competing in a different way than they would in the wild. Removing the adults caused them to remain as juveniles even longer because the genetics were responding to the high chance that they were going to die as soon as they matured. When they did eventually mature, they were so enormous they could lay all of their eggs very quickly."

The initial change in the mites' environment—from the wild into the laboratory—had a disastrous effect on the population, putting the mites on an extinction trajectory.

Dr Cameron said: "The [genetic evolution](#) that resulted in an investment in egg production at the expense of individual growth rates led to population growth, rescuing the populations from extinction. This is evolutionary rescue in action and suggests that rapid evolution can help populations respond to rapid environmental change." The study has been published in the journal Ecology Letters.

Professor Tim Benton, of the University of Leeds' Faculty of Biological Sciences, said: "This demonstrates that short-term ecological change and evolution are completely intertwined and cannot reasonably be considered separate. We found that populations evolve rapidly in response to environmental change and population management. This can have major consequences such as reducing harvesting yields or saving a population heading for extinction."

Short-term ecological responses to the environment—for instance, a reduction in the size of adults because of lack of food—and hard-wired evolutionary changes were separated by placing mites from different treatments into a similar environment for several generations and seeing whether differences persisted.

Professor Benton said: "The traditional idea would be that if you put animals in a new environment they stay basically the same but the way they grow changes because of variables like the amount of food. However, our study proves that the evolutionary effect—the change in the underlying biology in response to the environment—can happen at the same time as the ecological response. Ecology and evolution are intertwined."

The size at which cod in the North Sea mature is about half that of 50 years ago and this change has been linked to a collapse in the cod population because adult fish today are less fertile than their ancestors.

Jails in Tamil Nadu turn organic vegetable farms

CHENNAI: Last year, Puzhal prison produced 1,000kg of pumpkin and brinjal along with other vegetables that managed to feed more than 2,000 people for a year. The vegetables, worth 5 lakh in the market, ensured that prisoners and staff members ate healthy food. And it did not cost the exchequer anything.

In the last three years, the nine central prisons in the state have produced vegetables like bottle gourd, broad beans, cluster beans, tomato, lady's finger, brinjal, spinach and radish and fruits like sapota, guava and papaya. The initiative was so successful that TUCS (Triplicane Urban Cooperative Society) last year thought of buying organic vegetables from Puzhal.

"The figures are for just vegetables produced on six acres. We have more than doubled the land cultivated to 15 acres, and expect the yield to be much higher," said a police officer. Just 30 inmates produced enough fruits and vegetables to feed an entire school full of children for a year.

The kitchen gardens were set up in 2011 as part of the 'green prisons' initiative that began in May 2009, when former ADGP R Natraj invited Nizhal, an NGO involved in tree planting, to

make prisons greener. "The prisons have large tracts of land, between 80 acres and 120 acres, and we felt they could be used more effectively," says Shobha Menon of Nizhal. It decided to introduce organic farming in Puzhal in 2009 as a pilot project and slowly extended it to other prisons. "Experts guided them on soil specific choices of vegetable/ fruit cultivation," says Menon.

The initiative of growing vegetables, now used by prison kitchens only, has, authorities believe, given the inmates an opportunity to learn another livelihood. "We realized this is something they could do in their own backyards. They could also go work as farmers," said the officer. "Today we hear that organically farmed vegetables are three times more expensive," he added. The inmates seemed sceptical at first. "Initially, 10-15 inmates participated, but by the end of the first year at Puzhal nearly 30 joined," said T D Babu, a volunteer.

In prisons like Madurai, where land area was not large, composting was introduced. In Coimbatore prison, which already had a cow, panchakavyam as organic manuring technique was taught. Palayamkottai prison campus recently brought in a few cows to convert the leaf and biodegradable kitchen waste into rich manure. Senior prison officials plan to start selling the manure from composting when the prison bazaar opens.

1,500 groups of farmers formed to supply veggies

NASHIK: The [agriculture department](#) has started work on a project to supply fresh vegetables to mega cities under the central government's scheme-National Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters (NVIUC). Accordingly, around 1,500 groups of farmers have been set up in the district.

Nashik district has been identified as one of the potential areas in the state for the Centre's scheme, with an aim to supply fresh vegetables to citizens of Mumbai at affordable rates. [NVIUC](#) is being implemented in the state with an aim to set in motion a cycle of production and income for farmers and assured supply for consumers. The [National Horticulture Mission](#) (NHM) has identified four districts in the state - Thane, Raigad, Pune and Nashik, as potential areas where vegetables could be grown, collected and supplied to Mumbai.

A senior official from the agriculture department said, "We have formed 1,500 groups of farmers, with 10 to 12 farmers each group. The main objective of this project is to eliminate middlemen between farmers and consumers and pass on the benefits to both. The consumers will get vegetables at moderate rates, while farmers will get good prices as they will have fixed markets. All green and other vegetables will be grown by the farmers. Of the 1,500 groups, 750 will grow vegetables and fruits, while the rest will focus on producing foodgrains."

He added, "We also have a plan to set up a collection centre at the tehsil level and vegetables collected there will be supplied directly to consumers in Mumbai. The Maharashtra State

Agricultural Marketing Board is also conducting surveys on ideas regarding selling fresh vegetables and fruits from farmers directly to consumers in Mumbai. It is also planning to appoint aggregators, who will collect the produce of farmers from collection centres and sell it to consumers."

There are issues at the production as well as consumption level. The farmers do not get good prices due to lack of awareness regarding the market, erratic behaviour of market prices, lack of knowledge about advanced technologies, high cultivation costs, heavy post harvest losses and unavailability of post harvest infrastructure, among other reasons. To overcome these problems, the productivity of crops and profitability of farmers will be enhanced by encouraging 'off-season' production under protected cultivation in greenhouses and shaded net houses to generate income throughout the year. The group of farmers will be provided with good quality seeds, plants, shaded nets, refrigerated vans and pack houses with cold storages, as per their requirements.

DECCAN Chronicle

Mixed reaction to Cauvery sanctuary



Krishnagiri: The move of the Hosur forest division to establish a Cauvery wildlife sanctuary (CWLS) here in the western ghats to prevent man-animal conflict and protect wild animals, including jumbos, has received mixed reactions with the tribals fearing displacement and others welcoming it.

The proposed CWLS, along the course of the river Cauvery, on 529.6 square kilometres of forest cover, has about 400 jumbos, including a few migrating elephants, and other wild animals like leopards.

CWLS has been delayed since 1972 and the Hosur forest division, after considering the importance of the sanctuary, has sent a fresh proposal that awaits the approval of the principal chief conservator of forests before an official announcement by the state.

K. Sundara Moorthi, an advocate of Hosur, welcomed CWLS and said the proposed sanctuary, south of Hosur forest division, will help prevent man-animal conflict and crop loss to farmers. “The CWLS will prevent entry of elephants into villages, man-animal conflict and damage to agricultural crops,” he said.

But, the tribals who dwell in the western ghats fear displacement and said the sanctuary should not come up at the cost of their livelihood. “Many live in fear of displacement after forest officials informed villagers about the formation of CWLS,” said V. Sakthivel of Pullahalli village and former member of Bettamugalalam panchayat. Forest department sources said the tribals in villages in the western ghats may face displacement if the state takes over their agricultural lands for CWLS.

45-day ban on fishing to improve fish culture



With the 45-day ban on fishing commencing from Monday fishermen at Kasimedu harbour repair their nets. — DC

Chennai: Almost 800-odd mechanised boats will keep away from the sea as part of a 45-day ban on fishing from April 14, initiated by the fisheries department to improve fish culture in the coastal marine area.

Fishermen say they were provided financial support but want the government to come up with more sustained efforts to create a favourable fish habitat. “Scientific methods had to be identified to increase fish population. The entire north Chennai coastal region is extremely polluted and the fish catch is declining every year,” said Bharathi, a fisherman.

Meanwhile, filing of nominations to fishermen’s co-operative societies began on Monday amid ruckus at several booths with the opposition parties claiming attacks against them by ruling AIADMK members to prevent them from filing nominations.

“A mob did not allow us inside. Moreover, police just watched helplessly. An inspector in Lighthouse area, instead of helping the opposition to file the nomination papers, joined the mob and threatened us,” charged an Opposition party member.

Meanwhile, the agitated fishermen filed a petition with the state election commission, and said the latter had promised action.



Cauvery: UDF call to utilise Kerala's share

By Express News Service - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

16th April 2013 12:34 PM

In the backdrop of the severe drought gripping the state, the UDF meeting held here on Monday demanded that the State

Government should envisage a project to effectively utilise the state's due share of Cauvery waters - 30 TMC water, as notified in the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal.

UDF convenor P P Thankachan said that the only issue discussed at the meet was drought situation in the state. The UDF asked the government to take steps to convince Tamil Nadu Government to get more water released from Parambikulam - Aliyar project. "The meet demanded that State Government should ask Tamil Nadu Government to immediately release 3 TMC water," he said.

The meeting reviewed the work being carried out across the state for drought relief and suggested that like the meeting convened by district collectors, the RDOs and thasildars should convene review meetings to reach out to people.

The meet demanded that the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act should be strictly enforced in the state.

Greens seek urgent action on eco issues

By Express News Service - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

16th April 2013 12:33 PM

In the wake of severe drought in the state, environmentalists led by Sugathakumari met Chief Minister Oommen Chandy here on Monday and submitted a memorandum seeking immediate action on a number of environmental issues.

The team of environmentalists pointed out the loss of several life supporting systems in the state - over 5 lakh hectares of paddy fields disappeared in the state between 1975 and 2012, over 6 lakh hectares of wetlands between 2004 and 2011, and over 20,000 hectares of riverine ecosystem between 2004 and 2011.

The destruction of such ecosystems affects the water cycle and water availability. The state, where over 60 per cent of

households depended on well water, is now threatened by the rampant and often illegal use of borewells, often for development projects, they said.

Besides, whatever is left of the water resources, both underground and surface water, is getting polluted because of a number of reasons, a major one of which is indiscriminate sand mining. "While the water-availability in the state is going down day by day because of unscientific practices, we are pained to see the indifference shown by the government.," the memorandum pointed out.

The signatories to the memorandum prepared by the Kerala Paristhithi Aikyavedi include M K Prasad, C R Neelakantan, V S Vijayan, R V G Menon, R Sridhar, A Latha, Harish Vasudevan, S Usha and Mullakkara Ratnakaran MLA.

Organic fair begins

By Express News Service - KOCHI

16th April 2013 11:27 AM

The organic fair being organised by the Organic Kerala Charitable Trust began at the Ernakulam Town Hall on Monday. The fair which will end on Thursday has showcased a wide range of organic and indigenous products, handicrafts, organic farming methods, seed and seedlings, fashion and textiles.

The fair is intended to promote organic vegetable and fruit farming in urban areas and to extend maximum support to small farmers.

"Food which forms major need of the humans has to be safe and healthy. This can be ensured only by practicing organic farming and consuming organic food," says Renjith K.U, joint convener of the organic fair.

The fair focuses to promote a strong advocacy movement to educate farmers and consumers about the sustainable alternative of organic practices and its effect on soil fertility

and the environment, apart from the beneficial health aspects organic food themselves.

Besides, Fr Abraham Memorial National Seminar, consisting of three sessions, on the 'Green Policies and Future Development of Kerala', 'Gadgil Committee Report and Conservation of Western Ghats', 'Ensuring Safe Food and Implementation of Food Safety Standards' will also be held at Sacred Heart College, Thevara on Tuesday.

A one-day gramasree mla will also be held at the Edakkattuvayal panchayat where organic farmers will meet to discuss on advancement of organic farming.

Environmentalists demand government action on many issues

By Express News Service - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

16th April 2013 12:05 PM

In the wake of severe drought in the state, environmentalists led by Sugathakumari met Chief Minister Oommen Chandy here on Monday and submitted a memorandum seeking immediate action on a number of environmental issues.

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The destruction of such ecosystems affects the water cycle and water availability.

The state, where over 60 per cent of households depended on well water, is now threatened by the rampant and often illegal use of borewells, often for development projects, they said.

Besides, whatever is left of the water resources, both underground and surface water, is getting polluted because of a number of reasons, a major one of which is indiscriminate sand mining.

“And while the water-availability in the state is going down day by day because of unscientific practices, we are pained to see the indifference shown by the government.

We are apprehensive of the move to amend the paddy land and wetland protection laws just as we are about the privatisation of water. Wherever water has been privatised, the prices have risen uncontrollably and the poor have been denied water,” the memorandum pointed out.

The signatories to the memorandum prepared by the Kerala Paristhithi Aikyavedi include Sugathakumari, M K Prasad, C R Neelakantan, V S Vijayan, R V G Menon, R Sridhar, A Latha, Harish Vasudevan, S Usha and Mullakkara Ratnakaran MLA.

The key demands raised

The memorandum was drafted based on the discussions held on the World Water Day, organised by the Kerala Paristhithi Aikyavedi, in the capital city. Some of the key points raised include:

The right to mine, stock and sell sand should be with the State Government alone. The mining in rivers that have shriveled should be immediately stopped. No private agency or individual should be given the right to mine sand from rivers or lakes.

Catchment areas of rivers and river banks should be protected with community participation.

Connections for new borewells should be given only after a comprehensive study is done on the water table and illegal borewells should be strictly prevented.

Measures should be taken to raise groundwater levels, with people’s participation. Awareness should be created on the disadvantages of concreting the courtyards.

Give up plans to construct airports over wetlands and paddylands in Aranmula, Anakkara and Chekkalloor.

Withdraw notification to privatise water and instead strengthen water authority.

Close down all illegal quarries.

Revive agriculture in fallow lands as a government initiative and on a war-footing.

Create wetland registry for the state and the conservation of wetlands should be with the respective panchayats.

re you ready for some mango delights?



Summer is getting hot, hotter and hottest in Chennai, but with the spiralling temperature also comes the delight of the spurt in a variety of mangoes. Taking a cue from the season Park Hyatt Chennai brings out a range of dishes with the seasonal fruit as the base.

The vegetarian menu includes all things mango, from mango chips, mango relish and charcoal grilled mango to healthy dishes like herb salad, chilled soba noodles and many more.

Mango blends, however, aren't for just the vegetarians. There is a plethora of options non-vegetarian on the menu – Malay duck and mango curry, lobster, mango and cucumber rolls and spiced pork belly with raw mango salad.

And what's a meal without an equally delightful dessert. For the dessert come mango sticky rice, Valrhona chocolate and mango cake along with mango and vanilla soft serve ice cream.

The vegetarian dishes are priced from Rs 245 to Rs 995. The non-vegetarian dishes range from Rs 895 to Rs 1395. Desserts begin from Rs 425.

The dishes will be on the menu from April 24 at the Flying Elephant, Park Hyatt. Contact 044 7177 1234

Business Standard^{beta}

Potato down 3% on high supply

Prices fell as speculators offloaded their positions



Potato futures for June fell by Rs 32, or 2.96%, to Rs 1,048.10 per quintal in 68 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the May contract traded lower by Rs 27.10, or 2.54%, to Rs 1,039.10 per quintal in 28 lots.

Prices fell as speculators offloaded their positions, driven by weak spot market trend.

Increased supplies in the spot market from producing regions further pulled down the prices.

Almond falls almost 3% on subdued demand

Fresh arrivals from overseas markets put pressure on almond futures

Almond futures fell by 2.92% to Rs 441 per kg as speculators offloaded their positions.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the April contract fell by Rs 13.25, or 2.92%, to Rs 441 per kg in a single lot.

Adequate stocks in physical market amid subdued demand also put pressure on almond futures prices.

Fresh arrivals from overseas markets also put pressure on almond futures prices.

Cardamom down almost 4% on weak demand

Prices fell as speculators reduced their positions



Cardamom futures for June declined by Rs 33.20, or 3.92%, to Rs 812.30 per kg in 242 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the May contract shed Rs 24.60, or 3%, to Rs 797 per kg in 1,119 lots.

Prices fell as speculators reduced their positions amid adequate stocks in physical market against weak demand.

Besides, profit-booking at prevailing levels also put pressure on prices.

India likely to export 7.5 MT wheat, says UN body

According to the FAO report, wheat plantings in India are around last year's good level



India's wheat exports are likely to touch a record high of 7.5 million tonnes in the current marketing year ending June 2013, on account of record crop and larger carry-over stocks, while many other exporting nations are expected to face tight supplies, an Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report said.

In 2011-12 marketing year (July-June), shipments from the country remained lower, as wheat export was allowed via private trade only after lifting the ban on the same in September 2011, according to market experts.

“One striking feature of this season is the exceptional size of wheat exports by India, which are forecast to reach 7.5 million tonnes,” the FAO said in its latest report. Wheat shipments from India, the world's second biggest grower, are anticipated to surge on account of estimated record harvest and larger carry over stocks, it said.

To reduce stocks built up due to record harvest, India is encouraging export of government-held stocks. It has already allowed state-run firms to export 4.5 million tonnes of wheat. Recently, it permitted private traders to ship additional five million tonnes of the grain.

According to the FAO report, wheat plantings in India are around last year's good level and another bumper crop is in prospect although forecast slightly below the 2012 record (93.90 million tonnes) because of limited rainfall in some important producing areas.

At global level, total wheat trade is expected to decline five per cent to 140 million tonnes in 2012-13, as against 147 million tonnes in the previous year, it said.

Russian Federation, EU, Australia are forecast to face tight supplies which will lead to reduced exports from these countries, but larger exports by India will help ease the market situation, the report added.

The expected sharp retreat in global wheat imports in 2012-13 reflects reduced purchases by several countries, namely, Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Turkey and Uzbekistan, it added.

Cashew kernel exports may see 18-20% fall

Fall in consumption across EU, US and consolidation of Vietnam in global cashew trade have hit India's exports



In the 11 months ended February, India's cashew kernel exports stood at 93,029 tonnes, a fall of 23.5 per cent compared to the year-ago period. According to estimates, exports in March could stand at 12,000-15,000 tonnes. Overall exports in 2012-13 could be 18-20 per cent lower than in 2011-12, when India exported 1,31,760 tonnes of cashew kernels, valued at Rs 4,391 crore (this was 24.6 per cent higher than in 2010-11).

Official data for 2012-13 is being compiled by the Cashew Export Promotion Council of India.

"The fall in consumption across the European Union and the US, key markets for Indian cashew, and consolidation of Vietnam in the global cashew trade have hit India's exports. Also, India's kernel prices are higher compared to Vietnam, owing to higher production costs in India," Pankaj Sampath of Mumbai-based Samsons Traders told Business Standard.

Vietnam has been pushing its kernels at prices lower than India's. The cost of processing in India was 20-30 per cent higher compared to that in Vietnam, as the Indian processing industry largely depended on imported raw nuts, Sampath said. India imports about half its raw cashew requirement. Between April 2012 and February 2013, India imported 8,52,674 tonnes of raw cashew nuts; domestic production during this period was estimated at 5,00,000

tonnes, Sampath said.

Vietnam exports about 1,80,000 tonnes of cashew kernels. Its share in the global export market has risen from 40 per cent about five years ago to 65 per cent. During the same period, India lost its first position in exports.

With consumption of 1,80,000 tonnes, India is the world's largest consumer of cashew nuts. In value terms, India's exports in the first 11 months of 2012-13 stood at Rs 3,636 crore, a fall of 9.5 per cent compared to Rs 4,017 crore in the year-ago period. Average unit value realisation fell 18.5 per cent to Rs 391 a kg, against Rs 330 a kg in the year-ago period.

In dollar terms, exports in April-February 2012-13 were worth \$668 million, against \$841 million in the year-ago period, a decline of 20.5 per cent.

In 2012-13, net realisation from whole kernels declined. Prices of broken grades also fell, due to a steep rise in the production of broken grades. Sampath said in recent months, the difference in the prices of broken grades and whole kernels had fallen to \$0.5.

Wheat procurement in Punjab gathers steam

Govt agencies procured 0.36 mn tonnes till date, whereas pvt traders procured 4,070 tonnes of wheat



Wheat procurement in Punjab picked up momentum as government agencies and private millers procured more than 0.36 million tonnes of wheat till last

evening.

Of the total procurement of 0.36 million tonnes of wheat across all the procurement centers of Punjab, government agencies procured 0.36 million tonnes till date, whereas private traders procured 4,070 tonnes of wheat.

A spokesman of the Punjab government today said strict instructions have been issued for payments to be made to farmers within 48 hours of lifting of the wheat from mandis. The state government has constituted Dispute Redressal Committees in every mandi/purchase center. Besides, the food and civil supplies department has established 24-hour control rooms at its headquarters in Chandigarh as well as in district offices, where farmers can contact in cases of emergency. The Punjab Mandi Board has also made arrangements for water and shade for the farmers, the spokesman added.

He said the state government has made all arrangements to ensure lifting of the wheat within 72 hours of purchase.

Madhya Pradesh soya output seen at record high

The commissioner land records has projected 82 lakh ton of soya production this year against last year's 64.97 lakh ton



State claims to attain record production of soyabean have stunned processors which according to them are 'shocking and unbelievable'. The commissioner land records has projected 82 lakh ton of soya production this year against last year's 64.97 lakh ton produced last year. However acreage posted a

minuscule increase from 57.86 lakh hectare to 60.62 lakh hectare.

The state land records in its third and final forecast has project soya yield at 1,363 kg per hectare against 1123 kg per hectare. Speaking to Business Standard SOPA spokesperson Rajesh Agrawal said, "Since acreage of soya has not gone up and yield may not go up as high, it is unbelievable." On the other hand the agriculture officials do not subscribe to what SOPA says.

"We have initiated ridge and furrow method in soyabean. Ridge and furrow topography was a result of ploughing with non-reversible ploughs on the same strip of land each year. Farmers do planting on the top or side of the ridge made in their fields and a certain depth at a certain distance. In this method, the rainwater is conserved in the furrow and avoids water logging.

Make sure that soil has fully charged with rainwater or irrigation to ensure good and uniform germination and seedling emergence. More and more farmers are using it which is why our output is higher than the previous year," said D N Sharma, director, agriculture department.

Madhya Pradesh grows 80% of the soyabean of the country and the processors consume almost all soya grown in domestic fields. Barring last year the acreage and productivity remain stagnant and hovers between 50 lakh hectare and 50-55 lakh tonne of production. In year 2008-09 the soyabean acreage stood at 52.95 lakh hectare with productivity stands at 59.24 lakh ton with an yield of 1,120 kg per hectare.

Similarly in 2009-10 the acreage was 54.54 lakh hectare but production improved slightly better at 64.28 lakh ton at 1,180 kg per hectare. During 2010-11 the production stood at 67.77 lakh ton from an acreage of 55.52 lakh hectare with an yield of 1,222 kg per hectare. The year 2011-12 witnessed a record production in agriculture when growth rate stood at 18.91% in farm sector. The soyabean production during the year also healthy at 64.97 lakh

NEW PEAK			
Soya production in Madhya Pradesh			
Year	Acreage	Yield	Production
2008-09	5.30	1,120	5.92
2009-10	5.54	1,180	6.43
2010-11	5.52	1,222	6.78
2011-12	5.79	1,123	6.50
2012-13	6.06	1,363	8.26

Note: Acreage in mn hectares, Yield in kg/hectare and production in mn tonnes
Source: Soybean Processors Association of India

ton from an acreage of 57.86 lakh hectare with an average yield of 1,123 kg per hectare.

THE HINDU Business Line

Export demand helps cardamom maintain its flavour



Kochi, April 16: Good demand from both export and domestic markets has kept the cardamom prices nearly steady last week despite rise in arrivals at the auctions .

Having lost hope of a rise in the prices, which have been ruling steady for several weeks, the growers/primary market dealers were releasing their stocks and that has created a surge in the arrivals.

However, the rise in supply has not pushed the market down due to good export buying following arrival of good colour capsules of 7mm and above.

Exporters are estimated to have bought around 120 tonnes of the material at Rs 850-875 a kg last week, P.C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC. told *Business Line*.

Bold capsules having good green colour are not available from any other sources and hence it is bought by exporters for the select markets overseas which preferred this kind of material, they said.

Arrival of this variety of material constituted 15 to 20 per cent of the total arrivals, he said.

Similarly, the upcountry buyers having liquidated their stocks were also covering as the prices were moderately good.

Auction prices

Thus, there has emerged a good buying support which in turn has arrested a potential decline in prices last week following increase in arrivals, trade sources in Bodinayakannur said.

The individual auction average continued to stay below Rs 700 a kg and vacillating between Rs 610 and Rs 690 a kg for over a month now.

Much of the material arrived in the market at present are of inferior quality from the last round of picking and that has been keeping the prices low. This kind of material was also responsible for the poor prices, they said.

The harvesting of the current crop is over now. Whatever material arrives at the market now is of stock held by the farmers.

Last Sunday there was no auction on account of Tamil New Year. At the Saturday auction, 44 tonnes of cardamom arrived and of this 41.6 tonnes of the material were sold. The maximum price was at Rs 848 while the auction average stood at Rs 628.14.

Arrivals

Total arrivals and sales during the current season from August 1, 2012 to April 13 were at 10,915 tonnes and 10,397 tonnes respectively. Total arrivals and sales during the corresponding period last year were at 16,068 tonnes and 15,561 tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on April 13 stood at Rs 745.09 against Rs 609.49 on the same date last year.

Prices of graded varieties (Rs/kg): AGEB 890-900; AGB 640-650; AGS 625-635 and AGS -1: 600-610.

Board to push for coconut oil as bio fuel



Kochi, April 16: The good old coconut oil may soon be in the list of emerging bio fuels in the country, if the latest initiatives of the Coconut Development Board are any indication.

The board is currently exploring the possibilities of using coconut oil as a fuel through tie-ups with academic and research institutes, according to T.K. Jose, Chairman of the Board.

“We already had extensive discussions with scientists of IIT-Chennai on the possibility of including coconut oil in the bio fuel research studies,” he told *Business Line*.

The Mechanical Engineering department of IIT-Chennai has made advancements on research in bio fuels, he said adding that revolutionary changes are possible in this sector if 10 to 20 per cent coconut oil is used in diesel vehicles or 20 per cent of the diesel vehicles start using coconut oil as fuel.

prospects

Coconut oil, as bio fuel, has great prospects since the price of diesel is on the rise commensurate with international price. Jose said that a time has come now when both the prices of diesel and coconut oil are matching. Hence, the Board has to expedite the process of making bio fuel from coconut oil.

Earlier, when research studies were undertaken on using coconut oil in lieu of diesel, the apprehension was that diesel could be substituted with coconut oil, only if the price of coconut oil is below Rs 35/kg. At that time, the price of coconut oil was Rs 75 and that of diesel was only Rs 24 a litre.

Now, the price of coconut oil and price of diesel without subsidy at par and this has necessitated for further studies in this regard. This is the apt time to relook into the earlier research in association with institutions such as IIT's, NIT's, prominent engineering colleges and other fuel research institutions, he said.

Pilot testing

Institutions such as School of Engineering and Technology, Institute of Bio-sciences and Biotechnology of SCMS, Kochi have successfully conducted pilot testing of automobile engines running with coconut oil in lieu of diesel.

Since the trade deficit is a threat to the country's economic development, coconut oil can play its role in minimising the trade deficit of the country. By using coconut oil in lieu of diesel, the imports of petroleum products can be reduced to a certain extent, thereby reducing the foreign exchange outgo, he added.

Globally accepted

He pointed out that there are other countries such as Philippines, Indonesia, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia are way ahead of India in making coconut oil as engine fuel.

In all these countries, they use it as automobile fuel in lieu of diesel and use it for generation of electricity. None of these countries are technologically advanced than India, he added.

Private wheat exporters, millers turn active in UP as arrivals pick up

But exports suffer on higher prices; Govt undecided on cutting floor price



Huge inflow: Labourers cleaning wheat at the wholesale grain mandi (file photo). Daily arrivals in various markets in Uttar Pradesh are estimated at 8-10 lakh tonnes.

New Delhi, April 16: Private players – led by wheat exporters such as ITC, Emmsons International and Cargill – stockists and millers have turned active buyers in Uttar Pradesh, covering their positions as arrivals gain momentum.

Trade sources estimate the total wheat arrivals in various UP markets between 8 and 10 lakh tonnes a day, half of which is being bought by the exporters at prices ranging between Rs 1,300 and Rs 1,451 a quintal.

Uttar Pradesh is the largest wheat producing State followed by Punjab and Haryana. The private trade is more active in the UP markets compared with other States, as the Government procurement is largely inactive.

Meanwhile, procurement by State agencies in Haryana and Punjab has also gained momentum.

In Punjab, procurement has touched 3.65 lakh tonnes.

Tenders floated

The Food Corporation of India on Tuesday floated tenders to empanel exporters for sale of wheat from the 2011-12 crop year at a floor price of Rs 1,484 a quintal, from the Central pool stocks from Punjab and Haryana.

The Government has decided to allow the private players to export about five million tonnes from the Central stocks.

The idea is to create storage space for fresh wheat that is arriving in the mandis of Punjab and Haryana.

This export is in addition to the 4.5 million tonne allowed to ship by the State-run agencies – STC, MMTC and PEC.

Meanwhile, exports from India by State-run agencies seem to have slowed down, as buyers are staying away from high-priced Government stocks.

Slack exports

While Indian wheat is priced at \$310-315 a tonne, the ones originating from Black Sea are commanding a price of around \$280 a tonne.

However, on Tuesday, State Trading Corporation received the highest bid of \$302.48 from Peter Crèmer for 40,000 tonnes of the 70,000 tonnes offered by the State agency from the Chennai port.

“There were only three bidders for the STC tender on Tuesday against 10-11 bidders for such tenders about a month ago,” an analyst said. Such a trend reflects that buyers are staying away from the high-priced Indian wheat from Government stocks.

Floor price

Exporters have been demanding that the Government revise the floor price downward in tune with the global market. However, the Government is undecided on the reducing the floor price.

Wheat stocks with the Government stood at 24.2 million tonnes as on April 1, and by June 1, the stocks are expected to rise to 62 million tonnes.

Pepper falls on bearish reports

Kochi, April 16: Pepper prices fell on bearish reports of easier trend in Vietnam and aggressive selling in Karnataka on Tuesday. Overseas reports said Vietnam was offering at \$6,575 a tonne (c&f) US for May/June shipments. Karnataka was reportedly selling at Rs 325-330 a kg delivered anywhere in India on cash and carry basis and transporters were carrying at Rs 10-12 a kg. The futures market was highly volatile as usual. 17 tonnes of fresh material arrived and that were traded afloat at the average price of Rs 344 a kg.

April contract on the NCDEX decreased by Rs 395 to Rs 36,000 a quintal. May contract fell by Rs 575 to Rs 35,000. Total turn over dropped by 84 tonnes to 802 tonnes. Total open interest declined by just 3 tonnes to 1,423 tonnes.

Spot prices dropped by Rs 300 to Rs 34,400 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,900 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,850 (c&f) prompt shipments (Europe) while April full was at \$6,800 (c&f) and May at \$6,750 a tonne (c&f).

Rubber skids on weak futures

Kottayam, April 16: The rubber market declined on Tuesday. The prices fell further in the local markets tracking the overall weakness in the domestic and international futures.

Selling from certain dealers and the absence of genuine buyers kept the commodity under pressure during the day.

The volumes were dull.

Meanwhile, the Tokyo rubber futures fell extending the previous session's six per cent decline to a five-month low as renewed worries over the global economy initiated selling in commodities and stocks

In spot, sheet rubber weakened to Rs 162 (163) a kg, according to traders.

The grade slid to Rs 162.50 (163.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi as reported by the Rubber Board.

In futures, the May series improved to Rs 159.30 (158.83) and June to Rs 158 (157.31) a kg while the July series dropped to Rs 157.20 (157.70) and August to Rs 156.25 (157.17) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

RSS 3 declined at its April futures to ₹248 (Rs 137.33) from ₹248 a kg during the day session but then remained inactive in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 162 (163); RSS-5: 158 (160); Ungraded: 153 (155); ISNR 20: 151 (151) and Latex 60 per cent: 107 (108).

Monsoon may break earlier

Thiruvananthapuram, April 16: The South-West monsoon is expected to break over the Kerala coast two to three days earlier than usual, says P.V. Joseph, eminent monsoon meteorologist and researcher.

Joseph has been a former director of India Meteorological Department (IMD) and is professor emeritus in the atmospheric science department at Cochin University of Science and Technology.

CLOUD BAND

He told *Business Line* on Tuesday that the long-term mean date of onset of monsoon over Kerala was June 1. A cloud band with rain-bearing thunderclouds had formed over extreme South Bay of Bengal.

This cloud band was expected to intensify and move northwards and give light to moderate rain in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and south Bay of Bengal during the next few days.

This cloud band is called the 'pre monsoon rain peak,' which is an indicator of the date of onset of South-West monsoon over the Kerala coast.

BAY 'WARM'

The pre-monsoon rain peak is reached when surface temperature of seawater in the Bay of Bengal off India's east coast rises about 35-40 days before the monsoon, and clouds near the Equator move north.

Joseph's pre-monsoon rain peak is among the key parameters used for its own forecast by IMD. He is often consulted by the department while finalising its forecast.

Joseph said that last week's average of sea surface temperature measurements obtained from Indian satellite Kalpana-1 as on April 15 had shown that the Central Bay of Bengal is 'very warm.'

Sea surface temperatures have measured to more than 30 degree Celsius, a pre-condition for the formation of the pre-monsoon rain peak.

PAST TREND

It is the western edge of this rain band that normally gives moderate rainfall over Kerala and Tamil Nadu during this season. The Bay Islands have already been getting rain.

It has been noticed in the past that once central Arabian Sea too warms up to 31-32 degree Celsius, a rain band would form over south Arabian Sea as well.

This rain band would intensify to bring about the monsoon onset over Kerala. While doing so, it would also induce the formation of the low-level jet stream of monsoon, a current of strong south-westerly winds.

Increased inflows, profit booking pound chana



Indore, April 16: Notwithstanding weak futures, increased arrivals and profit booking dragged chana prices by Rs 50 to Rs 3,450-75 a quintal (Rs 3,500-3,525).

Chana (desi) ruled at Rs 3,300, chana (mausmi) at Rs 3,400-3,500, chana (annagiri) at Rs 3,000-3,300 and Kabuli bitki ruled at Rs 3,200-3,400.

Chana prices for the past one week had been witnessing an uptrend with speculators pushing up its prices to as high as Rs 3,600 on weak arrival. However, rise in arrivals and profit booking at the higher rates have dragged its prices in the past two days.

Chana dal ruled firm on subdued demand with chana dal (average) being quoted at Rs 4,125-50, chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,225-50, while chana dal (bold) ruled at Rs 4,400-4,425.

Compared with last week, chana dal is ruling Rs 100 a quintal lower.

Dollar chana ruled firm at Rs 4,200-5,200 on subdued demand with arrival continuing to be on the higher side.

Compared with last week, dollar chana, however, is down Rs 300. In the container, dollar chana has declined by Rs 200 on week export demand. On Tuesday, dollar chana (42/44 count) ruled at Rs 6,325-50; 44/46 count at Rs 6,100-6,125; 46/48 count at Rs 5,900-5,925; while dollar chana (58/60 count) ruled at Rs 4,275 and 60/62 count at Rs 4,175 .

Arrival of dollar chana in in Madhya Pradesh was recorded at 58,000-60,000 bags. Indore mandis recorded an arrival of 11,000-12,000; Dewas 5,000- 5,500; Ujjain 3,000-3,500 and Ratlam recorded an arrival of 2,500-2,800 bags.

Cautious sentiment in edible oils



Mumbai, April 16: Edible oils witnessed steady to weak trend on Tuesday on routine demand.

Flat closing of Malaysian palm oil and weak domestic soyabean oil futures with thin volatility kept overall sentiment calm and cautious.

Ruchi sold 750-800 tonnes palmolein at Rs 511-513 and 80-100 tonnes soyabean refined oil at Rs 675 for delivery up to May. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 511-514, super palmolein Rs 545 and sunflower ref oil Rs 780. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 513 Patalganga, soyabean ref oil Rs 675 and sunflower ref oil at Rs 771; Allana super palmolein at Rs 545.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives

Exchange, soyabean ref oil May futures dropped to Rs 698.50 (Rs

703.40), June declined by Rs 5 to Rs 684.15 (Rs 689.15) and July was lower by Rs 4.85 to Rs 676.10 (Rs 680.95).

In Malaysia BMD, crude palm oil May futures settled at MYR 2,284 (MYR 2,280), June at MYR 2,297 (MYR 2,293) and July at MYR 2,301 (MYR 2,301) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): Groundnut oil 1,200 (1,210), soya refined oil 675 (679), sunflower exp. ref. 685 (690), sunflower ref. 775 (775), rapeseed ref. oil 710 (710), rapeseed exp ref. 680 (680), cottonseed ref. oil 645 (645) and palmolein 510 (510).

Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai, quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 550 ex-Chennai; \$913 CIF JNPT April delivery; \$910 CIF JNPT May delivery; \$912 CIF, Haldia April delivery; \$910 CIF Haldia May delivery in 10-12 days.

Groundnut oil rules firm on dull inquiries



Rajkot, April 16: Groundnut oil and cotton oil remained unchanged on Tuesday as demand was below normal. According to traders, hardly few inquiries came from brands.

Groundnut oil loose was traded at Rs 1,215-1,220 for 10 kg, *teliya tin* price stood at Rs 1,865-1,866 for 15 kg and groundnut oil new tin quoted unchanged at Rs 2,075-2,080 for 15 kg. About 4-5 tankers of groundnut oil were traded from Saurashtra's mills.

Cotton oil wash stood at Rs 610-615 for 10 kg and cotton oil new tin remained steady at Rs 1,075-1,085 for 15 kg.

About 30-35 tankers of cotton oil were traded in the mills.

According to edible oil traders, brands were unwilling to make fresh deals, but they may enter in the market during last week of April to cater monthly demand of the next month.

HPS Saurashtra origin bold 50-60 count offered at Rs 75,000-75,500 a tonne; Rajasthan origin 50-60 count offered at Rs 73,500-74,000 (ex-mill).

Tamil Nadu origin 80-90 count HPS offered at Rs 68,000 (Chennai and Mumbai port delivery). Edible oil retailers said that demand in retail market for both groundnut and cotton oils was very limited. During past one week, groundnut oil declined almost Rs 20 a tin.

Weak physical buying, bearish futures sour sugar



Mumbai, April 16: Sugar prices, at the Vashi wholesale market, declined by Rs 10-20 a quintal on Tuesday on weak physical demand and bearish futures markets.

Ample supply from mills in local market in the absence of upcountry off take lead to sufficient inventories in the Vashi markets, hence, stockists kept away from fresh bulk buying.

As usual, local retail demand also eased in middle month. Under current of the market remained weak, said traders.

Sources said slack demand pulled down naka rates by Rs 10 for S-grade and Rs 45 for M-grade on higher selling.

Mill tender rates dropped by Rs 10-30.

Domestic futures prices were down by more than Rs 20 till noon as producers continued selling to ease inventory burden.

Neighbouring states buying is lacking since long in Maharashtra as prices in the other producing centres are ruling at par with Maharashtra's parity.

A wholesaler said "Traders are strongly opposing local body tax (LBT). Federation of Associations of Maharashtra (FAM) and Navi Mumbai Merchants Chamber have called a meeting on Tuesday evening to decide the future course of action.

Sugar market will decide what to do after that meeting. Majority of sugar traders are in favour of total removal of LBT."

In the Vashi market, arrivals were 62-64 truck loads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were 61-62 truck loads.

On Monday evening, only 20-22 mills offered tenders and sold 68,000-70,000 bags at lower price at Rs 2,940-3,020 (Rs 2,950-3,030) for S-grade and Rs 3,040-3,120 (Rs 3,040-3,150) for M-grade.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives

Exchange, sugar May futures dropped to Rs 2,940 (Rs 2,960); June contracts declined to Rs 3,002 (Rs 3,025) and July at Rs 3,046 (Rs 3,064) till noon.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,116-3,221 (Rs 3,122-3,221) and M-grade Rs 3,182-3,401 (Rs 3,200-3,401).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 3,060-3,090 (Rs 3,070-3,100) and M-grade Rs 3,125-3,225 (Rs 3,130-3,270).

Rising arrivals, slack demand drag wheat



Karnal, April 16: Wheat prices dropped by Rs 10 a quintal on account of increased supplies following rising arrivals of new crop in the market, amid slack demand on Tuesday.

Dara wheat prices have decreased by Rs 110 over the last 10 days. About 80,000 bags dara wheat arrived at the Karnal grain market terminal and stocks were procured by the Government agencies.

In the physical market, dara wheat price eased further by Rs 10 at Rs 1,410-1,415. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,410 while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,415. At Lawrence road market of Delhi, wheat mill quality traded at Rs 1,460.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat futures traded positive on Tuesday. April contracts increased by Re 1 at 1,445 with an open interest of 1,530 lots. May contracts went up by Rs 9 at Rs 1,435. A range-bound likely to be witnessed in the coming days, said market experts.

Wheat spot prices recovered by Rs 5 and traded at Rs 1,425. With a downtrend in wheat, flour too went down by Rs 5 and quoted at Rs 1,705. On the other hand, Chokar remained unchanged at Rs 1,250.

According to the trade experts, wheat arrivals at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal could fall this year.

The yield has decreased by 6-8 quintals to 16-19 for an acre, against the production of 24-25 last year.

Quality arrivals lift spot turmeric by Rs 200/qtl



Erode, April 16: Spot prices of turmeric increased by Rs 200 a quintal on Tuesday.

“Some exporters have received good orders from North India and so they have purchased reasonable stocks by quoting increased price.

“Due to arrival of quality turmeric in Erode and Gobichettipalayam, traders purchased more than 500 bags”, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Last year, the maximum price fetched was only Rs 3,689. But now, the price on Tuesday was Rs 9,280, which is three times higher than last year. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard,

the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,399-8,689, the root variety Rs 4,399-7,585.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 6,699-9,700, the root variety Rs 6,409-7,889. Of 1,642 bags that arrived, only 35 per cent stocks were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,439-8,809, the root variety Rs 6,537-7,599. Of the arrival of 336 bags, 285 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,874-8,929, the root variety Rs 6,889-7,889. All the 536 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,527-9,280, the root variety Rs 6,880-7,750. All the 113 bags were sold.

Coconut oil rules steady despite low offtake



Kochi, April 16: Despite low domestic consumption, coconut oil markets in Kerala and Tamil Nadu are showing a steady line this week.

Prices in Kerala stood at Rs 63 a kg (Rs 64.50) and Rs 61 in Tamil Nadu against Rs 62 quoted last week.

Copra also ruling at Rs 4,400 a quintal in Kerala against Rs 4,450 last week, while in Tamil Nadu, it was quoted at Rs 4,100 against Rs 4,200 last week.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), pointed out that the market is steady at lower levels and local demand, post-festival (Vishu) season, has declined. The market is likely to remain at the same level this week, he said.

He pointed out that upcountry demand for copra was also less even after the commencement of the season in Kerala where there is good availability of milling copra from the terminal markets.

He attributed the absence of a proper procurement drive by the designated agencies as the reason for low copra prices.

The other edible oils such as palm oil stood at Rs 52 a kg (53) and palm kernel oil remained at the same level of Rs 55, quoted last week.

However, procurement of raw coconuts at Rs 16 a kg by local cooperative societies on a limited scale in some parts of Kerala has brought some cheers to the coconut farming community.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, pointed out that the market is not showing any upward trend particularly because of the cheap availability of other edible oils.

Upcountry buyers are adopting a 'wait-and-watch mode', he said.
