

THE HINDU

Crop production will double in 3 years, says Minister



Minister for Agriculture S. Damodaran (left) at a mega farmers' festival in Tirupur. —Photo : M.Balaji

Minister for Agriculture S. Damodaran recently inaugurated a mega farmers' festival - 'Uzhavar Thiruvizha', organised by Department of Agriculture to disseminate the latest farming technologies to farmers in the district and thereby meet the production targets envisaged under 'Second Green Revolution'.

“Under the 'Second Green Revolution' underway in the State, it has been planned to double the crop production and increase the revenue of farmers threefold over a period of three years ending 2015,” Joint Director of Agriculture Mohammed Kalimullah Sherif said.

The 'Uzhavar Thiruvizha', to be held till May 20, would not only cover the farmers involved in raising agriculture crops but also those in the fields of horticulture, sericulture, animal husbandry and fisheries.

Minister Mr. Damodaran released a handbook on the 'Uzhavar Peruvizha' in the presence of Minister for Public Works K.V.Ramalingam, Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable

Endowment, District Panchayat Chairman M. Shanmugam, Collector G. Govindaraj, Agriculture Director M. Rajendran, Mayor Visalakshi Appukutty and also Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Vice-Chancellor K. Ramasamy.

The Ministers distributed financial assistance and farm appliances worth Rs. 72.42 lakh to 114 beneficiaries at the function.

Hybrid agriculture crop varieties and farm gadgets were displayed at an exhibition held on the sidelines of the inaugural of the festival here.

Tuber crops under benevolent care

An Edavaka grama panchayat initiative



Planting success: Veena N. Madhavan, Sub Collector, Wayanad, inaugurating the germ plasm collection of the Edavaka grama panchayat by planting tuber crop at Kavanakunnu, near Mananthavady, on Thursday.

After scripting a success story in making the first people's biodiversity register in the State, the Edavaka grama panchayat in Wayanad is gearing up to replicate the success in setting up a tuber crop germ plasm.

Near Mananthavady

The project is being executed on one acre of the panchayat at Kavanakunnu, near Mananthavady, in association with Ferns, an environmental organisation.

Wayanad Sub Collector Veena N. Madhavan inaugurated the germ plasm project on Thursday.

The project is being implemented with financial assistance of the State Biodiversity Board.

As many as 53 species of tubers, including six wild species, will be planted under the project.

First phase

The project aims at collecting maximum species of tubers in the first phase, multiply them and propagate the seedlings with the help of farmers in the panchayat, H.B. Pradeep, president, Edavaka grama panchayat, said.

The traditional knowledge of the tribal people in the district on edible tubers was very vast but many species were on the brink of extinction, A.T .Sudheesh, project fellow, KSBB, said.

“We aim at sensitising the public on the significance of including tuber crops in daily diet and conserving its biodiversity as part of food security,” he said.

Easy cultivation

Many tuber crops could be cultivated easily without chemical fertilizers or pesticides, he added.

The project would be extended to neighbouring panchayats at a later stage, he added.

GM crops opposed

All-party farmers' bodies have alleged that some organisations working in the name of farmers have been misleading farmers and people by lobbying strongly for genetically-modified crops against the genuine interests of the farmers.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, they said such organisations were spreading misinformation that there was no future without GM crops.

BJP seeks Rs. 15,000 an acre for crop loss

The BJP has demanded compensation of Rs. 15,000 an acre for farmers who lost their crop on account of the recent hailstorm in eight districts.

Speaking to reporters after visiting affected villages near Bodhan in Nizamabad district, former Union Minister Bandaru Dattatreya said the party estimated loss over 70,000 acres in this district alone. The farmers invested up to Rs. 30,000 an acre but the government promised only Rs. 4,000 an acre after the disaster.

He said the farmers were hit just when they were about to reap the harvest.

The government was indifferent to their plight.

Collector distributes incentive to milk producers

Collector P. Sankar distributed incentive totalling Rs. 36.5 lakh to the milk producers who are members of the 880 cooperative milk producers' societies in Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts supplying milk to the Vellore-Tiruvannamalai Districts Cooperative Milk Producers Union (VTDCMPU), at a function at the Collectorate here on Thursday.

According to an official release, the sum of 50 paise to 60 paise per litre which is being deducted for administrative expenditure from the amount payable to the producers based on the quality of the milk supplied by them has been given back to them as incentive for supplying quality milk and enabling the Union to make profits.

The incentive was for the 71.62 lakh litres of milk supplied by the producers during February 2013.

The incentive for the month of March would be calculated and paid to the producers, the collector said, and appealed to the producers to continue to supply milk to the Union and benefit by it.

The Union procured on an average 2.60 lakh litres of milk daily from the 880 societies.

Of this, 80,000 litres is sold to consumers in Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts, while the remaining milk is sent to Chennai to meet the requirements of consumers there. The Union has been making profits for the last four years.

C. Sadasivam, General Manager, VTDCMPU, A. Dominic Divyanathan, Assistant General Manager, VTDCMPU, and Deputy Registrars K.R. Subramanian (Vellore) and N. Ramachandran (Tiruvannamalai) participated.

Centre accused of reducing PDS rice and wheat quota for State

This has triggered a cut in monthly grain quota for card holders with a family size of three units and above

Bharatiya Janata Party State unit president Pralhad Joshi on Thursday accused the United Progressive Alliance government at the Centre of reducing the quantum of allocation of foodgrains under the Public Distribution System to Karnataka from April to torment the BJP government just when the State is set to face the Assembly polls.

Not released

Addressing a press conference in Bangalore, he alleged that the Centre had not released 10,000 metric tonnes of rice and 8,320 metric tonnes of wheat scheduled to be given to BPL card holders coming under additional category.

Similarly, 28,832 metric tonnes of rice and 2,709 metric tonnes of wheat that was meant for APL card holders coming under additional category had not been released for April.

This had forced the State to reduce the quota of foodgrains to both the BPL and APL card holders with a family size of three units and more, he said.

Though Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar and Chief Secretary S.V. Ranganath had written separate letters to Union PDS minister and Food Secretary separately drawing their attention on the discrepancies in allocation of foodgrains, the Centre had only said the problem would be rectified in a few weeks from now.

“This would mean that the problem would be rectified only after the Assembly polls scheduled on May 5,” he said and wondered why the

Centre should snatch the foodgrains from the plates of poor people just to gain poll benefits.

Rooting for rice



*Rice saviours*A scene from the film that shows children harvesting a traditional variety of rice in Wayanad;(below) Suma Josson



documentary Suma Josson's short film In Search Of Our Lost Rice Seeds digs into traditional farming practices of rice seed savers from Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, writes Athira M.

Campaigns and movements to conserve rice, which is more than a dietary staple for Indians, have taken many researchers to the roots of our culture and civilisation. Indigenous rice varieties are being identified, popularised and conserved through seed banks and cultivation and sharing of experiences and seeds within the network of like-minded individuals and organisations. Real-life tales of such sustained efforts is the subject of a documentary *In Search of Our Lost Rice Seeds*.

Directed by Suma Josson, an award-winning documentary filmmaker and writer, it is an initiative of 'Save Our Rice' campaign, a nation-wide network to sustain rice cultivation that is facilitated by Thanal in Kerala and the Pesticide Action Network-Asia.

"The documentary points out the mistakes we've made. But it emphasises that there is hope for the future as exemplified by the work of paddy seed savers in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka," says Sridhar, programme coordinator, Thanal. Syed Ghani Khan from Mysore, for instance, has conserved over 500 varieties of rice. "Conservation means he is cultivating those varieties on his land," Sridhar explains. The documentary profiles farmers such as Raman Cheruvayal and Haridas from Wayanad, Boregowda from Mysore, Jayaram and Karikalan from Tamil Nadu and Nandish from Karnataka.

"It is believed that there were over 1.5 lakh varieties of rice in India once upon a time. There would have been a few base types and farmers would have developed more from them. Since the Save Our Rice Campaign was launched, we've been trying to identify those people who are collecting the traditional rice varieties seeds and sustaining rice cultivation," says Sridhar. Thanal has a 'diversity block' wherein such seeds are collected and distributed to farmers

for cultivation. While 120 varieties have been conserved in Kerala, over 70 traditional varieties are grown in Tamil Nadu. “As part of ‘Save Our Rice’ campaign, we organise paddy festivals, where the farmers come together and share the seeds among themselves. In Tamil Nadu alone, over 10,000 farmers have been part of the initiative,” Sridhar says.

The number of seed savers is more in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu because there is more land under the plough in these states, Sridhar points out. “Therefore they can afford to test the viability of cultivating traditional varieties, whereas in Kerala there isn’t enough land available for cultivation,” he adds.

Benefits of using traditional varieties are highlighted. Farmers are shown how such varieties are best suited for organic farming and how they give good yield for many years unlike hybrid varieties where the productivity goes down every year. Scientists, farmers and environmentalists also talk about work of the traditional paddy savers in the 40-minute documentary.

For Suma Josson, making the documentary was an eye-opener. “Eventhough I’ve been working on agricultural issues, I never knew what was happening to our staple food. I blame the farmers themselves for the situation. They were completely brainwashed by various quarters and were driven by yield and greed into adopting farming practices that were not always good for the soil or the crop,” says Suma.

It is heartening to see the work carried out by the seed savers, she says. “They are ready to take risks and have that drive to experiment with various rice types and improve productivity. They had reached a point of total desperation, but didn’t give up. It isn’t a business for them, but a passion,” she adds.

The documentary will be screened on April 23 at the Press Club at 5 p.m. Paddy seed savers from Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu will be present at the event.

Continuous rise in cotton yarn prices worries weavers

The prices of yarn register 20 per cent increase in the recent past



Over 60 per cent of the yarn produced in the country is being consumed by the units in the State About 50 per cent of the units in Erode region have already stopped their operations due to power crisis

The weaving industry in Erode region has expressed serious concern over the continuous rise in the cotton yarn prices.

The industry, which is already under severe stress due to power crisis and slump in orders, is finding it difficult to stay competitive in the market as the prices of yarn registered a 20 per cent increase in the recent past.

The prices of 20s and 40s count yarn, which were used by a majority of the power loom units in the region, witnessed a 30 per cent increase when compared the prices two months ago.

“We are fast losing our competitive edge in the fabric market due to the rise in the yarn prices. The power loom units are suffering heavy losses,” Confederation of Indian Weaving Industries President M. S. Mathivanan said.

The State has over five lakh powerlooms, which provide employment to a large number of people. About 60 per cent of the yarn produced in the country is being consumed by the units in the State.

“About 50 per cent of the units in Erode region have already stopped their operations due to the power crisis and slump in orders. Many of the units that are functioning now will also be forced to close if the prices continued to go up,” he said.

The weavers in the country would lose the orders to their counterparts in Pakistan, Indonesia and China, if the prices were not controlled immediately, he added.

Mr. Mathivanan wanted the government to ban the export of cotton yarn and stop speculative trading of cotton. “Only a few traders are benefited due to the export of the cotton.

The farmers are not receiving the benefits of the price rise. They are getting just the minimum support price announced by the government,” he pointed out.

- *Over 60 per cent of the yarn produced in the country is being consumed by the units in the State*

- *About 50 per cent of the units in Erode region have already stopped their operations due to power crisis*

Farmers' meet

Monthly farmers' grievances day meeting would be held on April 26 at the collectorate, according to a release from K. Baskaran,

Collector, on Thursday. Farmers who want to raise questions should register their names between 8.30 a.m. and 10 a.m. at the venue .

14,000 farmers benefit from festival

Over 14,000 farmers have benefited from the uzhavar peruvizha conducted in 58 of the 507 revenue villages in the district from April 14 to 17, Jayashree Muralidharan, Collector, said here on Thursday. In a release, she said the peruvizha had helped the administration collect basic details of 4,218 farmers. As many as 3,611 soil samples had been collected and integrated farmer guides had been distributed to 4,447. Besides, agri-inputs and implements worth about Rs. 16 lakh had been distributed to 6,204 persons.

Steps to promote agribusiness among small farmers

Enterprising small farmers would get financial support for their self-help ventures through the Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC), said Collector V. Sampath.

Estimated investment

Addressing a meeting of officials and farmers here on Thursday, the Collector said that the small farmers could prepare project proposals whose estimated investment would not exceed Rs. 75 lakh and submit the same to the SFAC.

The hill based project estimate could be higher than those to be set up on the plains, Mr. Sampath said.

The objectives of the SFAC were to integrate the farming community to intensify the agriculture and allied activities.

It aims to encourage the farmers to adopt better post-harvest technologies, to impart technical skills among them and so on.

Consortium address

The project proposals could be sent to: Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Union Ministry of Agriculture), NCUI Auditorium Building, 3, Siri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, Hauz Khan, New Delhi – 110 016.

Farmers take baby steps in Karnataka's apple revolution

Himachal's horticulturist introduces the crop in the State



Eye for apple: Chiranjit Parmar, a horticultural scientist in Himachal Pradesh, at an apple orchard at Batu in Jawa Island of Indonesia.

When an apple tree bore fruits in the farm of Ananthaiah in Shringeri, the grower was among those who took baby steps in the “near-revolution” in the cultivation of the fruit. Ananthaiah had three persons to thank, including two persons from this region for showing a new way for growers like him.

The first of them was Chiranjit Parmar, a Mandi-based horticultural scientist in Himachal Pradesh, who revealed that the fruit, though traditionally grown in temperate regions, could also be cultivated in Karnataka where the temperatures do not fall below 10 degrees Celsius. It struck to Mr. Parmar when he visited a place called Batu in the Jawa island of Indonesia along the equator. The Indonesians get two crops in a year and their average yield is about 65 tonnes

per hectare compared to six tonnes to seven tonnes per hectare in Himachal Pradesh.

Mr. Parmar visualised that “a near revolution in apple cultivation” may be possible in Karnataka.

The second person the Shringeri farmer could thank was Shree Padre, Executive Editor, Kannada agricultural magazine, who publicised this in Adike Patrike. Third person who helped them was a former banker Krishna Shetty from Mangalore.

Mr. Parmar said in a note on a forthcoming event that he sent 300 apple saplings to farmers in Karnataka from Bajaura, Kullu in January 2011 which were planted in 18 different locations in the southern State.

“The plants progressed well, grew incessantly and did not shed leaves during December-January when apple trees become leafless. This was a positive indication. The word spread and many more people evinced interest. So 600 more saplings were sent and planted in January, 2012,” he said in the note, informing that an interaction programme on the ‘scope for apple cultivation in Karnataka’ will be conducted at Sharada Vidyalaya, Kodialbail in Mangalore, on April 20 at 10 a.m.

The release added that the progress so far gave “a very strong indication that there exists a possibility of extending apple cultivation on lines of Indonesia, to those areas of South India where December-January temperature does not fall below 10-12 degrees C. This, however, is the beginning and the idea needs further testing on a larger scale, Mr. Parmar said.

A meet on ‘scope for apple cultivation in Karnataka’ at Sharada Vidyalaya

Farmers' convention in Udupi on April 22

The district unit of the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh would be organising a one-day district-level farmers' convention here on April 22.

Satyanarayana Udupa Japti, General Secretary of the district unit of the Sangh, told presspersons here on Thursday that nearly 1,000 farmers from different parts of the district would participate in the convention. Various topics related to agricultures at the two seminars to be held at the convention.

They include 'Challenges in marketing agricultural produce', 'Experiments in organic farming', 'Importance of dairy farming', 'Challenges in present-day agriculture' and 'Mechanised agriculture'. Stalls will display farm equipment at the venue.

Green fest to focus on traditional farming

The Kerala Agriculture Development Society (KADS) will organise the green fest at a specially arranged venue opposite to the Kanjiramattom bypass road in Thodupuzha from April 19 to 23.

"We will give priority to the native varieties of seeds and traditional foods, said municipality chairman T.J. Joseph, who is the general convenor of the programme and KADS president Antony Kanirickal.

Seed distribution

They said that the aim of the programme is to provide seeds and plants to the farmers on April 23, which is traditionally considered auspicious for planting seeds. It highlights the slogan of 'sufficiency in traditional seeds'. Noted farmers will be given reception and there will be seminars on traditional farming methods. The

experienced farmers will share knowledge on their traditional practices to increase production and methods adopted to protect crops from pest attacks.

Exhibition

The main items to be exhibited include various varieties of jack fruits and value added produces. Plantains of traditional varieties and other fruit items that are not included in the present day food habits will be exhibited.

Mr Kandirickal said that organic fruits and vegetables will form a major part of the exhibition. There will be facilities for free soil and water testing.

Farmers see saviour in 'master plan'

Drought mitigation plan prepared in 2004 yet to be implemented

The district, which is reeling under acute drought with its rivers, dams, and ponds almost drying up, is paying the price for not implementing the 'Master Plan for Drought Mitigation in Palakkad District,' prepared by the Centre for Water Resource Development and Management (CWRDM) in 2004.

When Chief Minister Oommen Chandy arrives here on Friday to review the drought situation, farmers intend to highlight the lapse on the part of the district administration and the departments such as Water Resources, Water Authority, Irrigation, and Agriculture in implementing the plan.

Muthalamthode Mani, general secretary of Desheeya Karshaka Samajam, told *The Hindu* here on Thursday that the plan, formulated in consultation with the farmers and other stakeholders, were not implemented by the successive District Collectors and the departments. There was no action plan to tackle drought, which had become an annual phenomenon in Palakkad, he said. If the

government had implemented the 2004 plan, the district would not have faced such a crisis, he added.

In his preface to the master plan, the then District Collector Sanjeev Kaushik wrote that “rapid-fire action needs to be taken, involving several departments across the district. Although each department official had his own micro view in his particular sphere, there was an astonishing lack of planning and coordination for drought mitigation.”

The former Chittur MLA and a leading farmer K. Krishnankutty urged Chief Minister Oommen Chandy to implement the plan. He said when 14 districts of Gujarat faced drought in 2004 they acted soon and now none of those districts had water problems.

The master plan had recommended a task force and a River Authority for Bharathapuzha. Both are yet to be constituted.

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- *Plan was prepared by CWRDM*
 - *It suggested a river authority for Bharatapuzha*
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Farmers at mercy of traders in Nalgonda market yards: survey

‘No change in situation since time of report of the Commission on Farmers’ Welfare headed by Prof. Jayati Ghosh’

A survey by the Human Rights Forum (HRF) has found that the government had abdicated its responsibility of supervising and regulating the agricultural marketing/procurement process in the agriculture market yards and Indira Kranti Patham (IKP) centres in Nalgonda.

This has resulted in farmers being left at the mercy of a limited number of commission agents who set the agenda of procurement and the pricing strategy obviously in line with the interests of the traders, primarily rice millers, the HRF team has found, after a visit of some market yards and IKP centres to assess their functioning.

Concerns remain

The team noticed that things had not really changed since the time of the report of the Commission on Farmers' Welfare headed by Prof. Jayati Ghosh. The same concerns have remained and the government has done nothing to facilitate fair prices and humane procurement processes for agriculture produce except for establishment of IKP centres which, if made functional, would be actually useful for farmers.

During its visit to Mothkur agricultural market, the team comprising G. Mohan, N. Amar and Ch. Guruvaiah saw only two farmers drying their paddy to be procured. One of them was waiting for seven days for his paddy to be procured. No tarpaulin sheets were provided for protection of farm produce. The yard was virtually non-functional and the officials themselves admitted that farmers had stopped coming as their dues were not cleared on time.

As the procurement process started late into the paddy harvest season at D. Repaka IKP centre, half of the region's produce had already been privately sold by farmers. Similar was the case in Addaguda IKP centre. The team saw Thirumalgiri agriculture market yard, a major procurement centre reduced to a platform for commission agents to deal with farmers in any way they want without any intervention or supervision of the market committee and its office staff. The Suryapet yard was in a "horrible mess".

The HRF team has demanded implementation of the Jayathi Ghosh Committee report, opening of more IKP centres and active involvement of FCI and State Civil Supplies Department.

Farmers Union seeks land regularisation for tribal ryots

Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Workers Union has urged the government to regularise the land cultivated by tribals in the forest and non-forest areas.

Talking to reporters here on Thursday, district president of the Union T. Shadrak and secretary Nageswara Rao said tribals were cultivating the land for long time but the authorities failed to recognise their land rights.

Mr. Shadrak said migration of farm workers was rampant in Kurnool district as MGNREGS failed to provide gainful employment to the workers.

He said the workers were migrating to other places in the absence of work that ensured daily wages of Rs. 150.

He said in most of the places, the workers said the average wages paid to women workers was around Rs. 30 per day. Apart from low wages, the MGNREGS programme was plagued by corruption. He said the attendance in schools had sharply declined in drought-prone areas where large-scale migrations took place.

He criticised the cash transfer scheme on the ground that it was meant for enticing the public in the election year but not aimed at improving the living conditions of the poor.

He said the Indiramma housing programme was mired in corruption and failed to solve the housing problem in rural areas.

Farm budget from next year: Kanna



Minister for Agriculture Kanna Lakshminarayana releases poster for the forthcoming Rythu Chaitanya Yatra at the Rayalaseema meet of agricultural officials, in Tirupati on Thursday.—PHOTO: K.V. POORNACHANDRA KUMAR

Minister addresses agriculture officials of five Rayalaseema districts

Minister for Agriculture Kanna Lakshminarayana has asserted that the State Government will present a special budget for agriculture next year, taking corrective measures from the hiccups faced recently.

“Though we focused on the technicalities and the departments to be involved in preparing a detailed budget, we did not concentrate on the Assembly procedures, which let us down, forcing us to dub it as ‘agricultural plan’. We will now be careful in presenting a full-fledged budget next year”, he said while addressing agricultural officials of Chittoor, Nellore, Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool at the Regional Pre-Season Workshop here on Thursday.

Emphasising on soil health, the first step for better yield, he sought revamp of the sample collection system. Similarly, the officers were clearly told not to spare those selling spurious/high price seed, fertilizers, etc., and the inactive progressive farmers. On the reported seed shortage, he dubbed it a bogey.

“The farmers, out of ignorance, ran after a single brand. We have proved that all brands are equally effective”.

On credit support to tenant farmers, he wanted the SHG model showcased to woo farmers and allay the bankers' concern, whereby the beneficiaries could enjoy interest-free loan, if they paid back the Rs. 1 lakh loan in a year.

The input subsidy of Rs. 1,816 crore released could not be disbursed, as a whopping five lakh farmers were found to be still not having bank accounts.

Mr. Lakshminarayana felt that though the State was doing a lot for the farmers, a general sense of dissatisfaction was still persistent due to reasons unknown and asked the officials to counsel the farmers on fertilizer application, seed development, credit, input subsidy and insurance during the forthcoming 'Rythu Chaitanya Yatras', for which he released the publicity material.

Commissioner for Agriculture K. Madhusudhan Rao wanted simultaneous tackling of soil nutrient deficiency, fodder grass and farm pond development to benefit the farmers.

Officials and scientists who were present spoke on farm mechanisation, seed village, Insecticide Act, crop insurance, 'Polambadi', soil testing and credit support at the day-long event.

Life of an Indian farmer



Photo: Ashoke Chakrabarty

I went to a village along with my parents. Seeing the diligent farmers working in their fields, I felt the need to interview them. I asked them about their life. I found out that an Indian farmer is incredibly hardworking. He gets up early in the morning even before the cock's crow, takes his plough and with his cattle walks briskly towards his field. He cares for nothing — may it be winter, summer or rain. Under the sun's scorching heat him, and sweat rolling down his face, he takes a torn towel and puts it over his head to prevent heat strokes. At noon, his wife or his children bring him his midday meal. With his rough hands cleaned, he eats his meagre food under the shade of a tree. Soon after, he resumes his work. Sometimes, he sings a song to break the monotony of his hardwork. He returns home only when daylight is out and it's too dark to farm.

At the door of his hut, he is greeted by his children. This is the happiest time of the day for him. At night, he enjoys the sight of his children having enough food and if something remains, he eats it to fill his stomach. Although farmers don't take in nutritious and hygienic food, they are stronger and healthier than the people living in cities! No villager wears a spectacle...But how?

It could be because of the fresh air and the sunshine in villages.

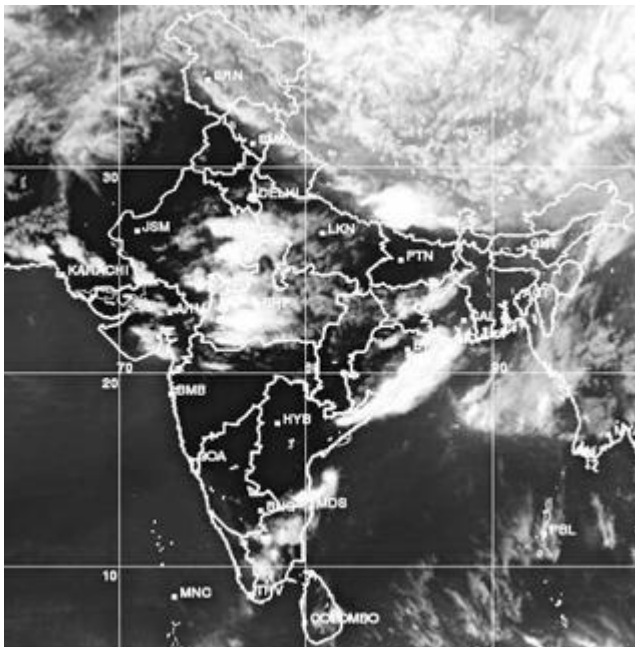
Despite such hardwork and sacrifice, farmers still lives amidst poverty. When pests destroy their crops, they are severely affected.

All the modern food we eat has its origin in the farmers produce. Imagine what would happen if all farmers go on a strike and reap crops for their own usage. All of us would be forced to go on a 'hunger strike'!

P.L. Sriram

Class 10, Chettinad Vidya Mandir, Karur, Tamilnadu.

Weather



	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	38	22	0	26
New Delhi (Sfd)	37	19	0	22
Chandigarh	35	20	0	26
Hissar	38	17	0	40
Bhuntar	26	7	1	133
Shimla	22	11	0	108
Jammu	33	18	0	34
Srinagar	17	8	0	140
Amritsar	35	15	0	5
Patiala	37	18	0	23
Jaipur	38	23	0	7
Udaipur	37	24	0	0
Allahabad	42	24	0	11
Lucknow	40	21	0	1

Varanasi	40	24	0	7
Dehradun	33	17	0	18
Agartala	31	22	0	67
Ahmedabad	38	26	0	1
Bangalore	37	23	0	22
Bhubaneshwar	40	28	0	2
Bhopal	38	25	0	21
Chennai	39	28	0	32
Guwahati	25	20	1	46
Hyderabad	40	27	0	42
Kolkata	35	21	11	12
Mumbai	33	24	0	0
Nagpur	43	22	0	16
Patna	34	22	0	1
Pune	35	19	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	35	27	0	105
Imphal	27	15	10	94
Shillong	21	12	7	36

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

RAIN AT MANY PLACES

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at isolated places Himachal Pradesh, east Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Weather was dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: **EAST UTTAR PRADESH:** Churk 1.

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES: The maximum temperatures rose markedly in Jammu and Kashmir, fell in Haryana and Punjab and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably below normal in Jammu and Kashmir and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 42.3°C recorded at Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 20th April

2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 48 hours and increase thereafter.

Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on 20th. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over south Rajasthan during next 24 hours. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 20th April 2013: Mainly clear sky.

Water level

: Water level in the Papanasam dam on Thursday stood at 68.20 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 177.27 cusecs and 394.75 cusecs is discharged. The level in the Manimuthar dam stood at 85.07 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 19 cusecs and 5 cusecs is discharged.

Nagercoil


Water level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 13.25 feet, 26.20 feet in Perunchani, 3.44 feet in Chittar I, 3.34 feet in Chittar II and 1.20 feet in the Poigai dam.

Water level in Periyar dam was 112.50 feet with an inflow of 100 cusecs and discharge of 100 cusecs on Thursday. The water level in Vaigai dam was 45.39 feet with an inflow of 39 cusecs and discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit was 2,031 mcft. The rainfall recorded (in mm) are as follows: Periyar: 2.4, Thekkadi: .2, Shanmuganadhi: 19, Uthamapalayam: 51, Sathiaru: 5, Kallanthiri: 1 and Kodaikanal 4.4.

Weather


Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather






 **Friday, Apr 19**
Max Min
34° | 28°

Rain: 0 **Sunrise:** 05:54
Humidity: 79 **Sunset:** 06:22
Wind: normal **Barometer:** 1006

Tomorrow's Forecast

 **Saturday, Apr 20**
Max Min
39° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday Apr 21	Monday Apr 22	Tuesday Apr 23	Wednesday Apr 24	Thursday Apr 25
				
38° 28°	37° 28°	37° 28°	36° 28°	37° 28°
Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Cloudy



Agricultural Almanac predicts prices of produce

By S Guru Srikanth - HYDERABAD

19th April 2013 07:57 AM

Want to know what would be the prices of the cotton, maize, groundnut, soybean etc during Kharif? Then, look up the

Vyavasaya Panchangam (Agricultural Almanac), released by the Chief Minister, N Kiran Kumar Reddy on Ugadi day.

The Vyavasaya Panchangam is different from the regular Panchagam. Instead of predictions based on planetary positions, it mostly contains advise to farmers based on scientific research.

However, since the last three years, Vyavasaya Panchangam, brought forward by Acharya NG Ranga Agriculture University (ANGRAU) contained a separate section on the likely prices of different crops in Kharif season.

“We give two price projections – pre-sowing and pre-harvest—for different crops for Kharif season. Pre-sowing price, which is generally given in May is being given in April for the last three years and included in the Vyavasaya Panchangam released on Ugadi,” said P Raghuram, head of Agriculture Market Intelligence Centre of ANGRAU, located at SV Agriculture College, Tirupati.

Former principal secretary (agriculture) V Nagi Reddy, also in-charge vice-chancellor of ANGRAU for some time, was the brain behind including price forecasts in the Agriculture Panchangam. “His idea was that farmers will have scientifically calculated information on expected returns for their crops during Kharif, which starts in June-July,” Raghuram said.

Price forecasts are arrived at based on different parameters. Apart from the study of different major markets for different commodities in the state over the last 20 years, they do computer-based econometric analysis of the markets and conduct market surveys.

“We disseminate information to farmers through various channels like ANGRAU official website www.apagrisnet.gov.in, ANGRAU toll free numbers, Doordarshan and AIR, Krishi Vigyana Kendras and the Vyavasaya Panchangam. The feedback from farmers is encouraging,” he said.

On April 11, chief minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy released the Vyavasaya Panchangam at Rabindra Bharathi in Hyderabad. It gave the likely pricess of nine crops: Cotton, groundnut, chilli, greengram, redgram, maize, soybean, sunflower and turmeric.

COTTON: One of the major crops of the country, cotton is exported to Bangladesh, Pakistan, China and other far-eastern countries. In 2012-13, the total area under cotton cultivation in Andhra Pradesh was 22.69 lakh hectares. The state stood second, after Maharastra and Gujarat, in cotton cultivation. Given the present market sentiments, the price forecast is ` 4000 per quintal during harvest (October 2013).

GROUNDNUT: One of the vastly-produced oilseed crops, groundnut has huge world market. In India, Andhra Pradesh, with a share of 15.23 percent, stands third in groundnut production. The forecast price is ` 4000-4200 per quintal (October).

REDGRAM: The second largest pulse crop in the country, is a kharif crop in Andhra Pradesh. After a econometric analysis of modal prices at Thandur makret for a 12-year period, forecast price for redgram is ` 3990-4000 per quintal during harvest period (December-January).

GREENGRAM: Another widely cultivated pulse crop in the state, the price of greengram, going by traders survey and the results of econometric analysis, is likely to be ` 4300-4400 per quintal.

SOYABEAN: Another important Kharif oilseed, Soybean is exported to Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, Indonesia and China. In Andhra Pradesh, soybean cultivation has been limited to Adilabad and Nizamabad districts. Forecast price (October) is ` 3200-3400 per quintal. (Prices might vary depending on the edible oil import policy of the government.)

SUNFLOWER: Another major oilseed, branded segment of sunflower oil in the country is growing at 20 percent annually. The forecast price given the present market sentiments for Kharif harvest (October) is ` 3500-3600 per quintal.

TURMERIC: The state accounts for 40 percent of the total turmeric area and 60 percent of total production in the country. The forecast price is ` 8000-9000 per quintal.

CHILLI: While India is the largest grower of chilli, Andhra Pradesh is the largest producer of the crop in the country by accounting for 58 percent of the total production.

Assuming that the area of cultivation to be normal and conditions favourable, the price at the time of harvest (January 2014) would be around ` 5000 per quintal for varieties like LC334, US341, Indole5, BJ335, BS273, Guntur Sangam and for Teja/Tejaswani, it would be around ` 6000-6500.

Business Standard^{beta}

Unseasonal rains damage groundnut at Gondal APMC

Over 300 bags of groundnut have been soaked in rain, damage estimated to be around Rs 75 lakh



Unseasonal rains in Gondal taluka of Rajkot on Wednesday late evening has damaged over 300 bags of groundnut which was lying in the open in the local Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) compound.

Other commodities that were soaked in the rain that lasted for over three

hours include red chilli, garlic, onion and potato. Gondal received 6mm of rain on Wednesday late evening.

APMC authorities said that the damage was not much as most of the arrivals were kept inside sheds and only some were out in the open.

According to sources at the APMC, around 300-325 bags of groundnut were soaked in rain and estimated damage to around Rs 75 lakh.

"Hardly few items were placed in open space. Most of the commodities that arrive in our APMC are stored under protective shed. Moreover, rain was not much on APMC side, it was on other side of the town, APMC officials said.

Other than groundnut, other commodities like chilli could be used after drying it in the sun, they added. Many parts of Rajkot district received unseasonal rains on Wednesday late evening, disrupting normal life.

THE HINDU Business Line

Rubber skids further

Kottayam, April 18: Physical rubber prices continued to remain under pressure on Thursday.

Sharp declines in the international markets and the absence of genuine buyers dampened the sentiments further despite a better closing on the NMCE.

A seasonal pick-up in the rubber production in Thailand, the world's leading producer might be one of the fundamental reasons for the global meltdown, analysts said.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 159 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi from Rs 160 and Rs 161 a kg respectively, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

The May series improved to Rs 157.54 (155.78), June to Rs 157.43 (155.42), July to Rs 157.20 (155.76) and August to Rs 155.62 (153.50) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

RSS 3 (spot) declined to Rs 148.71 (153.88) a kg at Bangkok. The April futures dropped ¥233 (Rs 127.91) from ¥239.1 during the day session but then bounced back to ¥240.2 (Rs 131.89) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 159 (160); RSS-5: 155 (157); Ungraded: 149 (151); ISNR 20: 147 (149) and Latex 60 per cent: 105 (106).

Silkworm farming turns money spinner for farmers



Good tidings: Gandhi, a farmer at Moranapalli, near Kuppam at his sericulture farm. He says silk worm prices have more than doubled in the last few months and hence making it more rewarding to cultivate mulberry as inter-crop. — Bijoy Ghosh

Chennai, April 18: G. Gandhi, a farmer near Kuppam in Andhra Pradesh, is all smiles when he says silkworm cocoons fetch better prices in the market these days.

Last week, Gandhi sold the cocoons, raw material for silk, at Rs 300 a kg. Six months ago, he was selling it for just Rs 150. “Despite the steep increase in price, there is good demand in the market,” he says.

Many farmers in the Andhra Pradesh-Karnataka border grow mulberry as inter-crop with chilli or capsicum. As silkworms feed on mulberry leaves, most of the farmers are also engaged in silkworm culture and are today reaping decent profits, says K. Mallikarjuna Rao, an aggregator in this area.

But around six months ago, farmers did not get a good base price from reelers who reel raw silk from the cocoons . So they have been forced to increase prices; otherwise it would have become unprofitable for them, says K. Sivakumar, Managing Director, RmKV, a silk sari boutique in Chennai.

Supply-demand

The demand-supply gap is another reason for the climbing prices. Mulberry cultivation has been hit, due to the failure of the North-West monsoon in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

With cocoon prices spiralling, the price of raw silk too has gone up. Silk prices have risen around 15 per cent over the last three months, from Rs 2,400 to Rs 2,800 a kg, on an average. All this has had its ripple effect on the retail prices of silk saris.

So much that when home-maker Sita Narayanan placed a customised order at a popular silk sari store in Chennai, she was in for a surprise. She was told that the price of her sari could go up if silk price increases during the time it takes to make the sari.

retail front

“With silk prices climbing steadily, I was told not to expect any guarantee on the final retail price. With my daughter’s wedding round the corner, I don’t have a choice,” says the 55-year-old.

About two months ago, RmKV hiked retail prices of its silk saris by 5-7 per cent. Despite this, RmKV says there is good demand for silk saris, especially during weddings and festivals.

Kamal Tandon, COO, Nalli Silks, says Nalli has not hiked retail prices. “This may mean taking a hit on margins, but we are not looking to hike prices. Even 1.5 years ago, silk prices were up to Rs 4,000 a kg before falling to Rs 2,000. Prices will fall again, but one cannot really predict when that will happen,” he says.

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Mangoes to become cheaper in Bengal on higher supply



Juicy and sweeter: Workers busy packing mangoes that have arrived from South India, at Mechua – the wholesale fruit market in Kolkata. Mango production in West Bengal is estimated to be 20 per cent higher this year compared with last year. — Ashoke Chakrabarty

Kolkata, April 18: Bengal’s favourite ‘Langra aam’ (mango) may be cheaper this summer. The production of mangoes in the State is expected to be higher by 20 per cent in 2013-14.

Bengal mangoes are yet to make their appearance into the market. However, prices of varieties such as Banganapalli from Andhra Pradesh and Gulabkhas from Bihar, which are currently available, are lower by over one-third this year compared with last year.

The average price of Gulabkhas in the wholesale market is nearly Rs 50-60 a kg compared with Rs 80-100 last year, said Chandan Mahato, a fruit trader at the Mechua wholesale market in Kolkata.

The early varieties of mangoes grown in West Bengal – Bombai and Himsagar – will start coming into the market by May-end. “Once

these mangoes start coming in the prices will come down further,” a fruit trader said.

High flowering

In 2012, West Bengal produced nearly 7.23 lakh tonnes (lt) of mangoes, registering a nine per cent growth over the year-ago period. The production in 2011 stood at around 6.61 lt.

According to P.K. Pramanik, Director, State Horticulture Department, the estimated rise in production is based on the early bloom situation.

However, the actual production would depend on the weather conditions.

Salil Das, owner of mango orchards at Lalgola in Murshidabad district – approximately 225 km from Kolkata – admits that early bloom may not necessarily translate into production. “A heavy storm or rainfall in the next few days can spoil the crop,” Das said.

However, the heavy flowering compared to last year makes him confident of an overall higher production come rain or shine.

Contract System

Nearly 60-70 per cent of mango cultivation in the State, particularly in the key growing districts of Malda and Murshidabad, takes place through the contract system.

Orchard owners enter into contracts for maintenance and production with traders for a period of two to three years.

This is primarily because the orchard owners have moved away from cultivation and finding it difficult to maintain the trees.

Das, for instance, has handed over his 10-acre orchard to a local trader at Rs 1 lakh a year. “This assures me a fixed return and I do not have to toil on the maintenance of the orchard. I am not even affected by the market price fluctuations,” Das said.

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Hopes of bonus boost wheat



Karnal, April 18: After witnessing a continuous fall in recent past, dara wheat variety recovered marginally while flour went further down on slack demand on Thursday. According to the market sources, expectations of a bonus on wheat mainly pushed dara price upwards.

Radhey Shyam, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that only need-based buying is taking place in the market and wheat prices may continue to rule around current levels for the next few days.

About one lakh bags of dara wheat arrived at the Karnal grain market terminal and procurement was done by the government agencies.

In the physical market, dara wheat price improved by Rs 10 a quintal and quoted at Rs 1,420-1,425.

Mill delivery was at Rs 1,420 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,425.

In the National Capital, a benchmark for the country, wheat mill quality traded at Rs 1,435-1,440, down Rs 5.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat futures witnessed a mixed trend on Thursday.

Wheat for April contracts increased by Rs 27 and traded at 1,461 with an open interest of 1,640 lots. It had touched a high at Rs 1,463 earlier in the day.

April contracts trade positive on due to weather and crop conditions, said market experts.

May contracts went down by Rs 4 and traded at Rs 1,446.

While, wheat spot prices on the exchange recovered by Rs 1 and traded at Rs 1,387.5.

Flour Prices

Following reduced off-take, flour went further down by Rs 20 and quoted at Rs 1,685. On the other hand, Chokar remained unchanged and sold at Rs 1,250.

Export demand for jeera likely to rise



Rajkot, April 18: Spot jeera and futures moved up on the back of fresh buying support from domestic and exporters on Thursday. According to market sources, prices may gain further as export demand is likely to increase.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, jeera May contracts increased by Rs 152.50 to Rs 13,332.50 for a quintal, with an open interest of 11,586 lots.

NCDEX June contract gained Rs 150 at Rs 13,530 a quintal with an open interest of 6,921 lots.

Spot jeera quoted Rs 20-25 higher for a *maund* of 20 kg at Unjha market of Gujarat on Thursday.

Jeera medium price was quoted at Rs 2,060-2,160, and the best quality quoted at Rs 2,250-2,350 at Unjha.

Meanwhile, jeera arrivals in Nagaur market stood 4,000 bags and the rough quality was offered at Rs 2,300. In Singapore, one per cent Indian jeera was offered at \$2,450 a tonne f.o.b, Mumbai.

According to jeera traders, higher exports data coupled with fresh export enquiries as well as a pickup in the domestic demand supported an upside in the prices.

New crop from Rajasthan has also hit the markets.

Higher sowing as well as conducive weather in Gujarat, the main jeera growing region, has increased output expectations.

According to Gujarat State Agri Dept, sowing in Gujarat is reported at 3.35lakh ha in 2013 compared with 3.719 lakh ha last year.

Spot turmeric drops with futures



Erode, April 18: Prices of spot turmeric decreased by Rs 200-500 a quintal taking cues from the futures market. Quality of arrivals was also average leading to a downtrend despite lower arrivals.

“At the Regulated Market, the arrival was moderate, but prices of both varieties decreased. The finger variety decreased by Rs 500 a quintal, ” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that exporters and local traders have purchased very limited stocks by quoting lower prices. Stockists hold huge stocks.

The decrease is also due to the drop in the futures market. He said that the arrival of medium varieties also one of the reasons for the decrease in price.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,417-8,688, the root variety Rs 4,099-7,311.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,811-9,629, the root variety Rs 5,609-7,760. Of 1,815 bags that arrived, 30 per cent was sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,311-8,309 and the root variety Rs 6,389-7,512. Of the 755 bags on offer, 553 were picked up.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,071-8,796 and the root variety Rs 6,976-7,780. All the 639 bags put up for sale found takers.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,058-8,686 and the root variety Rs 7,500-7,806. All the 60 bags on offer were sold.

Mustard crackles on slack buying



Indore, April 18: Mustard oil prices declined in Indore and Neemuch mandis on slack buying support at the higher rate on Thursday. In Indore, mustard oil declined to Rs 652 (down Rs 4), while it was down by Rs 6 in Morena to Rs 650 for 10 kg. In Rajasthan mandis also, mustard oil ruled stable with prices in Kota and Ganga Nagar being quoted at Rs 660 each, while it was Rs 675 in Jaipur. In Gujarat also, mustard oil declined by Rs 5 to Rs 640. According to trade experts, notwithstanding slack demand, the bullish trend in soya oil and soya seeds both in the physical and future markets has added to current uptrend in mustard oil and it will likely to continue in the coming days.

Notwithstanding higher crop output which is expected to increase by 20 per cent to 71 lakh tonnes, mustard seeds have also been witnessing bullish trend for the past couple of weeks.

Currently, mustard seeds in Indore mandis have gone up by Rs 300-400 a quintal and are ruling at Rs 4,100-4,300, while raida is ruling at Rs 3,100-3,300.

Till last month, mustard oil and seeds had been ruling low on increased arrivals. However, in the current month, mustard seeds prices have gone up by six per cent.

Steep rise in soyabean and soyameal prices in the current month has been stated to be the reason behind bullishness in mustard seeds and oil.

Soyameal prices in the current month have gone up to Rs 38,000-38,500 against Rs 33,000 last month.

Compared with last year, soyameal prices have almost gone up by 42 per cent.

On Thursday with decline in buying support at higher prices, mustard seeds in the future traded lower with April and May contracts closing lower at Rs 3,544 (down Rs 12) and Rs 3,585 (down Rs 20) respectively on the NCDEX.

Plant deliveries of mustard seeds for Jaipur line have also gone up almost by Rs 100 in the past one week to Rs 3,570-90 on comparatively weak arrival.

Pepper moves up on all-round buying



Kochi, Apr 18: Pepper futures moved up on Thursday on buying support from exporters and domestic buyers.

April contract matured on Thursday with one tonne of pepper marked for delivery while 32 tonnes were cleared off.

May contract opened on an easier note at the lowest price at Rs 35,215 a quintal and touched the highest price of Rs 35,700 up by Rs 485.

Exporters, local arms of multinational companies with multi-origin operations were covering 550 GL pepper at Rs 345, Rs 346, Rs 347 and Rs 348 a kg while domestic dealers bought 575 GL high range pepper at Rs 350-352 a kg.

Low bulk density pepper of GL 500 and below were bought at Rs 320-325 from Wayanad and Karnataka under 'H' form, market sources told *Business Line*.

Good buying interest has aided the price rise. 120-125 tonnes of pepper were traded all afloat today, they said.

On the exchange 96 per cent of the turnover (199 tonnes) was in May, they said.

The trade said inquiries are floating from overseas markets for June/July/Aug shipments and that they are finding it difficult to quote in the absence of the futures trading on the exchange for these deliveries.

April contract, which matured on Thursday, increased by Rs 115 to close at Rs 36,200. May contract went up by Rs 355 to close at Rs 35,580.

Total turnover increased by 205 tonnes at 670 tonnes. Total open interest decreased by 197 tonnes to 1,162 tonnes. Of the 33 tonnes of open interest in April, 32 tonnes were cleared off and one tonne was marked for delivery.

May open interest dropped by 165 tonnes to 1,161 tonnes.

Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend and buying support increased by Rs 100 to close at Rs 34,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 36,000 (MG 1).

Indian parity in the international market moved up on rise in futures market price and strengthening of the rupee against the dollar, to \$6,900 a tonne (c&f) for April and \$6,800 a tonne (c&f) for May shipments.
