

1.28 lakh farmers to get Rs.60-cr. relief for crop loss

Compensation to be credited to their savings bank accounts

: The State government has sanctioned Rs.60 crore for the distribution of compensation to 1.28 lakh farmers who suffered more than 50 per cent crop loss due to drought, according to Collector N.Venkatachalam.

Presiding over a special drought relief meeting at the Collectorate here on Thursday, he said crops on 1.83 lakh acres, including paddy covering 9,919 acres, were damaged.

Crops on 1.47 lakh acres and perennial crops — mainly coffee plants — on 25,875 acres were also affected. Compensation totalling Rs.4.95 crore would be disbursed to paddy cultivators, Rs.44.69 crore to growers of other crops and Rs.10.34 crore to farmers of perennial crops, the Collector said.

"A compensation of Rs.4,000 per acre will be given to farmers who have irrigated lands and Rs.3,000 per acre given to those who have rain-fed lands," he said.

The compensation would be credited to the savings bank accounts of the farmers in nationalised banks and primary agriculture cooperative banks (PACBs). "For those who don't have bank accounts, the district administration will open accounts and credit the amount," the Collector said.

Details of the compensation would be displayed on the notice board of village panchayats and union offices and in front of the PACBs.

"We will write to the government about the large-scale damage caused to banana crop and appeal for the release of suitable compensation," he said.

More than 2,000 banana crops ready for harvesting were destroyed by a gale recently. He said Rs.20 crore – Rs.10 crore for rural areas and Rs.10 crore for urban areas – had been sanctioned for augmenting the drinking water supply. More borewells would be sunk to meet the growing drinking water requirement, he said.

Details of compensation

to be displayed

on notice board

Diploma course in farm services launched

A diploma course in Agricultural Extension Services for input dealers in the district commenced on Thursday.

The course, introduced by the National Institute for Agriculture Extension Management, is aimed at equipping the distributors of agricultural inputs with the latest developments in the field. Equipping the input dealers with knowledge on agricultural technologies, pest management, seed management and fertilizer application will ensure effective flow of information to the farming community. They will be able to pass on the latest information to the farmers effectively, speakers said at a programme organised to mark the inauguration of classes for the course held on Thursday.

“Information is the key to success in any field. We can use the information to improve our agricultural productivity. The primary objective of the course is to help distributors to pass on their

knowledge to the farmers,” Director of Extension Education, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University K.A. Ponnusamy said in his speech.

Presiding over the meeting, Collector V.K. Shanmugam said the farming community in the country had lost its traditional knowledge because of the problems in sharing of information. “In the present world, information on any subject is available at the click of a mouse. We should make use of the information to fuel the growth of the agriculture sector,” he said.

Senior officials also spoke at the meeting.

‘Farmers should adopt latest techniques’

Festival offers opportunity to keep abreast of developments



Green shoots:Collector S. Jayandhi taking a look at the exhibits at a special expo held as part of the farmers' festival at Lingamanaickenpatti in Karur district on Thursday.

Farmers festivals connect farmers with recent and emerging technology which would result in increasing the revenue of farmers through increasing productivity and profitability. The festivals would help in realising the cherished idea of Chief Minister Jayalalithaa to increase the income levels of rural people, District

Collector S. Jayandhi said at Lingamanaickenpatti near Aravakurichi in Karur district on Thursday.

Addressing a farmers' festival at the village Ms. Jayandhi observed that the event offered an opportunity for the farmers to keep themselves abreast of the emerging trends, in particular aspects of agriculture. In doing so, the farmers were benefited by access to technology that would reduce their burden and chore besides improving their finances through better returns, she said.

While the first green revolution helped India attain self sufficiency in food, the second green revolution being ushered in by the State Government would help the farming community take a firm grasp over the agro economics, the Collector noted.

Important agricultural aspects such as soils sampling, pulses nursery raising, port tray method of raising nurseries, grading moringa and such other aspects would be detailed in the farmers festivals.

The farmers could utilise the events to know more about markets, costing, to enhance their benefit out of agriculture, Ms. Jayandhi said. She also disbursed integrated farmers handbook to four beneficiaries, a power tiller worth Rs. 1.10 lakh to an adi dravida farmers group, Rs. 15,000 to a farmer who stood first in productivity contest, besides giving away power sprayer to two farmers.

Joint Director of Agriculture M. Deivendran, Pallappatti Town Panchayat president Syed Ibrahim, Assistant Director of Agriculture Kailasapathy and officials from sister departments participated in the programme. The Collector also inaugurated an expo as part of the farmers' festival.

Farmers plan to lay siege to Collectorate

Farmers here plan to lay a siege to the Collectorate with tractors on May 6 in protest against giving permission to private contractors for desilting water bodies.

A resolution to this effect was passed at a meeting of farmers' associations which was held at Thathayarkulam on Thursday. A. Vins Anto, chairman of project committee, Kodayar irrigation system, Water Resource Organisation (PWD), who presided over the meeting, said that the government itself should desilt all water bodies as well as Pechipparai, Perunchani, Chittar 1, Chittar 11 and Poigai dams so that more water could be stored for irrigation and drinking purposes.

Under 'Kudimaramathu Act,' farmers could take silt from the water bodies and use it in their fields to enrich the fertility of the soil. However, the practice had been stopped and the work given to contractors. Hence, the district administration should take immediate steps revive that practice. On May 6, the farmers would assemble at Ozhuginessery and proceed to the Collectorate.

KVK comes up with a farm innovation

Cutter-cum-punching machine for vendors of tender coconut

Tender coconut is no more a 'hard nut to crack' — thanks to the coconut cutter-cum-punching machine devised by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), attached to the Christian Agency for Rural Development (CARD).



Innovation: Working of a coconut cutter-cum-punching machine, devised by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Thelliyoor, near Kozhenchery, being demonstrated on Wednesday.

The innovative, easy-to-use machine has been made by a team led by K.S. Sreekanth, agriculture engineer at KVK, Thelliyoor, near Kozhencherry, KVK programme coordinator P.V. Robert says.

The machine's design allows easy and swift cutting and punching of tender coconuts. It takes hardly a minute to make a nut ready to serve. Women find the machine more safe and user-friendly than the conventional machete, Dr. Robert says.

The machine was formally launched on International Workers' Day on Wednesday.

The cutter, weighing 15 kg, consists of a 30-cm blade, 50-cm lever, and an iron stand.

The commercial production of the machine is progressing at KVK and the product in steel would be on sale at various CARD-KVK retail outlets in the district at a retail price of Rs.1,500, Dr. Robert says.

The machine will be of use to vendors of tender coconut, he adds.

Farmers seek measures to protect palmyra trees

Expressing concern over the dwindling population of palmyra palm trees in the State, the Federation of Tamil Nadu Agriculturists Associations has appealed to the State Government to restrict the erection of borewells and prevent felling of palmyra trees.

C. Nallasami, secretary of the association, said that the number of palmyra palm trees had come down from 35 crore about 40 years ago to the present five crore in Tamil Nadu.

“Unrestricted erection of borewells in and around the farming areas has been one of the main reasons that led to the ‘death’ of many palmyra trees since the species mainly draw water from beneath the earth’s surface for its survival,” he said.

The federation also wanted the Government to impose ban on cutting of palmyra palms for sometime so as to protect the area coverage.

“In Sri Lanka, unauthorised cutting of palmyra palms invite punishment. We need to implement similar curbs here to protect the species,” Mr. Nallasami opined.

The association called upon the Tirupur district administration to take steps for preventing the alleged theft of water meant for irrigation.

“The water sent as ‘life irrigation’ for coconut farmers in the areas under Lower Bhavani Project are being tapped en route using motor pumps by people other than the farmers and this needs to be stopped immediately,” Mr. Nallasami said.

He said that the government machinery should not reduce tapping wind energy thinking it as ‘seasonal in nature’.

“To overcome the present power crisis in the State which has significantly crippled the farming activities, no avenues for utilisation of clean energy generation should be left untouched,” he added.

18 more commodities under Amma Hastam, says Ganta

Launches the programme in the city



Minister for Infrastructure and Investments Ganta Srinivasa Rao along with Government Whip Dronamraju Srinivas distributing provisions under 'Amma Hastam' at Indira Priyadarshini Stadium in Visakhapatnam on Thursday.

Eighteen more commodities will be added to the present nine for distribution to the people under the Amma Hastam programme, Minister for Investment and Infrastructure Ganta Srinivasa Rao said while launching the programme in Visakha South Assembly constituency at the GVMC Stadium here on Thursday. The State government has allotted Rs. 660 crore for the Amma Hastam programme and in Visakhapatnam 11 lakh people would be benefited. He asked the ration shop dealers to extend their support to the programme and ensure that there were no complaints.

The Minister explained the development works taken up in the old city area.

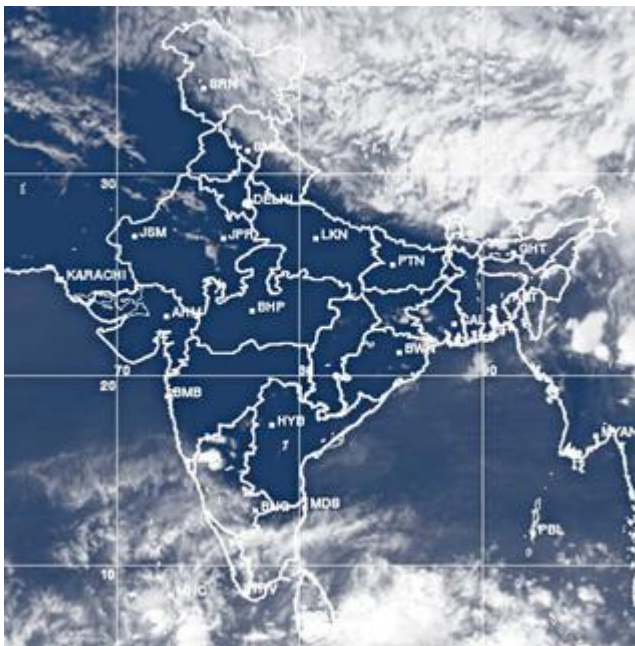
Government Whip Dronaraju Srinivasa Rao said the government was implementing programmes for women empowerment and each

pack of commodities being distributed under Amma Hastam, costing Rs. 292 in the market were given at Rs. 185.

Collector V. Sheshadri warned ration shop dealers that severe action would be taken if discrepancies were found in implementation of Amma Hastam. GVMC was also a part of implementation of the programme, said Municipal Commissioner M.V. Satyanarayana. Steps were being taken to implement the programme all over the district, Joint Collector Pravin Kumar said.

Mr. Srinivasa Rao also handed over 1,250 LPG connections under the Deepam scheme and Rs. 21.95 crore as bank linkage to 1,178 SHGs. District Supply Officer Jwala Prakash, Zonal Commissioner Viswanadham and other officials organised the programme.

weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on May 2nd.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	40	22	0	26
New Delhi (Sfd)	39	22	0	22
Chandigarh	38	19	0	26
Hissar	39	19	0	41
Bhuntar	32	13	0	139
Shimla	24	13	0	113

Jammu	35	23	0	36
Srinagar	19	6	1	173
Amritsar	38	17	0	10
Patiala	39	22	0	25
Jaipur	39	24	0	14
Udaipur	39	21	0	15
Allahabad	45	25	0	11
Lucknow	41	22	0	1
Varanasi	44	25	0	21
Dehradun	36	20	0	39
Agartala	35	28	0	158
Ahmedabad	43	26	0	6
Bangalore	36	24	0	25
Bhubaneshwar	41	28	0	52
Bhopal	43	22	0	53
Chennai	36	27	0	32
Guwahati	30	21	15	126
Hyderabad	41	28	0	51
Kolkata	38	28	0	32
Mumbai	33	27	0	0
Nagpur	46	26	0	24
Patna	42	26	0	14
Pune	41	26	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	34	26	43	155
Imphal	32	18	12	131
Shillong	27	17	0	106

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 a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh and. Weather was dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Kukarnag and Gulmarg 1 each.

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES: The maximum temperatures fell in Jammu and Kashmir and changed little elsewhere. They were above normal in east Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 44.7°C recorded at Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 04th May 2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 24 hours and on 04th may. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on 04th may. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 04th May 2013: Mainly clear sky.

Water level

The water level in Periyar dam was 112.50 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) with an inflow of 100 cusecs and discharge of 100 cusecs on Thursday. The water level in Vaigai dam was 36.29 feet (71) with no inflow and discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit was 1,942 mcft. Rainfall recorded (in mm): Sothuparai 74, Manjalaru 24, Gudalur and Veerapandi 3 each.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Thursday stood at 60.10 feet (permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 21.55 cusecs and 603.50 cusecs was discharged from the dam. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 82.62 feet (118 feet).

The dam had an inflow of 11 cusecs and 55 cusecs was discharged.

Nagercoil

The level in Pechipparai dam stood at 14.90 feet. It was 28.10 feet in Perunchani, 2.98 feet in Chittar I and 3.08 feet in Chittar II.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Friday, May 3

Max 34° | Min 27°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 70

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:47

Sunset: 06:24

Barometer: 1004

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Saturday, May 4

Max 36° | Min 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday May 5	Monday May 6	Tuesday May 7	Wednesday May 8	Thursday May 9
37° 27°	35° 27°	34° 27°	34° 28°	35° 27°
Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Cloudy	Cloudy

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Tamil Nadu to set up 4 more wild life sanctuaries

CHENNAI: In a bid to ensure overall development of forest resources and wildlife, the [Tamil Nadu](#) government has proposed to set up four more wildlife sanctuaries in the state, in addition to the existing [10 wildlife sanctuaries](#).

[Chief minister J Jayalithaa](#) said in the assembly on Thursday that Cauvery wildlife sanctuary will come up in Dharmapuri-

Krishnagiri region, Point Calimere wildlife sanctuary will come up in Nagapattinam, Thanjavur and Tiruvarur areas, Kodaikanal sanctuary will cover some areas of Dindigul and Theni districts and a spotted deer sanctuary will be set up in Gangaikondan in Tirunelveli district.

Jayalalithaa said the state was giving utmost importance to the management of forests, as it played a vital role in sustainable development. "The sanctuaries will be set up for the protection of wildlife and birds, besides benefiting the people," she said, recalling the biodiversity conservation and [greening projects](#) implemented by the state with financial assistance from the Japan international cooperation agency.

THE  NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

Honey, Mango Fest from tomorrow

By Express News Service - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

01st May 2013 10:53 AM

Mangoes are here again to tickle the sweet tooth of city dwellers this summer. A 10-day national Honey and Mango Fest - 2013 will be on at the Kanakakkunnu palace from May 2 to May 12. Nearly 100 tonnes of mango from the south Indian states, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh will arrive at the festival jointly hosted by State Horticulture Mission and HortiCorp.

"It is expected that 10 tonnes of mango will be sold a day. The majority of mangoes will come from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. About one lakh visitors are expected for the fest. Artificially ripened mangoes using calcium carbide will strictly be kept off limits from this fest," said K Prathapan, director of State Horticulture Mission.

Quintessential varieties in Kerala, such as neelam, varikka, kalappadi, sindooram, chandrakkaran, nambiar maanga, chakkarakutti, kottoorkonam, varikka, moovandan, kilichundan, pharangiladuva will be displayed. From other states, there will be jahangir, daseri, selam, banglora, alphonso, banganapalli, malgova and mallika mango varieties. Besides, mango tree saplings will also be available for sale.

Bee breeders and bee keepers from Kerala will come up with 'cheruthen', 'vanthen' and 'kaattuthen' at the honey fest. A section having a variety of honey drinks is also expected to draw crowds. Value-added honey products will also make an appearance. The entry fee for the festival will be Rs 10. Tickets will be available from the counter on the Kanakakkunnu palace premises and from the branches of Indian Bank in the city. Entry is free for kids aged below 10.

The fest will be inaugurated by Agriculture Minister K P Mohanan at 4 pm on Thursday. K Muraleedharan MLA will preside over the function. The inauguration of the pavilions will be performed by Health Minister V S Sivakumar. Mayor K Chandrika will be the chief guest.

Cookery contest

T'Puram: As part of the Honey-Mango fest, a cookery competition of mango delicacies is to be conducted on May 9 on the premises of the Kanakakkunnu palace. Those interested to participate may present at the office of Horticulture Mission office in the city before May 6 at 5 pm and register by remitting Rs 100. Details can be had from the office of the Mission or from the telephone numbers 0471-2330856, 2327732.

Mango vendors fleecing customers in the city

By Express News Service - HYDERABAD

02nd May 2013 12:05 PM

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This one-kilo weight actually weighed 830 gm when placed on an electronic weighing machine.

Summer has set in, and pushcart vendors selling the delicious yellow mangoes are slowly becoming ubiquitous. However, think twice before you buy the fruit from markets at Koti, Essamiah Bazar, Badi Chowdi, and Jambagh, because the semblance of cheap prices and friendly vendors might just be a guise to rip you off.

A quick raid by the legal metrology department found that many sellers in these places have been fleecing customers by giving them much lesser quantities than what people had bargained for.

“We had raided those areas Tuesday, and booked 16 cases. Most vendors have weights of one kilogram, which are actually then reduced in weight but the symbol of ‘1 KG’ remains,” said K Bhasker, assistant controller of flying squad of legal metrology department. The raids were conducted following several complaints made to RP Thakur, controller, legal metrology. More than 50 faulty weighs were seized the team. Bhasker explained that vendors were delivering almost half a kg lesser per two kgs of purchase.

“Most customers buy at least 2-5 mangoes, as no one goes to the market everyday. It means they are being fleeced by

anything between ` 30 - 90. People think those places are where fruits are cheap, but they are just getting cheated," he mentioned.

"The only way of knowing whether the weight of the fruits are correct is by checking at some other place later," Bhasker said.

Bhasker pointed out that when they measured the seized items on their electronic weighing machines, each of the one Kg bar had a deficit of at least 170 grams.

"These vendors go to a blacksmith and saw off a small portion of the weights. They then use it to cheat their own customers," Bhasker said, adding that the fine amount for the errant sellers was between ` 500-2,000. "They cited poor economic condition as the reason behind the guise, but we told them they can't cheat people on that pretext and penalised them," he stated.

Business Standard ^{beta}

Market pulse for agro commodities : Mangal Keshav

Arrivals of jeera crop declined to about 19,000- 20,000 bags & the same were traded at auctions held at Unjha market

Arrivals of chilli crop increase to more than 50,000 bags while off-take remained steady supported by demand from stockist as Guntur market. Spot rates were closed slightly higher but remained around '50-'55 per kg, based on crop quality.

Arrivals of jeera crop declined to about 19,000- 20,000 bags & the same were traded at auctions held at Unjha market. Spot rates were up & quoted around

'123-'125 per kg, as per local traders.

Spot rates of pepper garbled were steady at '356 per kg and that of un-garbled was unchanged at '341 per kg while arrivals declined to 44 tons & the same were traded at auctions held at Kochi market, as per IPSTA.

Arrivals of turmeric crop eased marginally to ~15,000 bags at Nizamabad market, declined below 5,000 bags at mandis of Erode & about 4,000-4,200 bags at Sangli market. Spot rates were unchanged at '53-'55 per kg, as per local traders.

Average price of small cardamom declined to '620.1 per kg while maximum price offered was down at '1,032 per kg, as per spice board. Total inflow of small cardamom crop declined to 58.5 tons from which 58.3 tons were sold at CPMC auction held at Kumily.

Arrivals of Soya bean crop declined to 1,500 bags at mandis of Indore & were down ~0.4lakh bags at MP market while supply was steady ~0.19- 0.2lakh bags each across mandis of Rajasthan & Maharashtra, as per local traders.

Spot rates of soya bean crop offered by planters were up at '39.5-'41 per kg while rates across major mandis of Indore were up at '38.5-'39.5 per kg, as per local traders.

Inflow of mustard seed crop declined to 76,856 quintals, while average of closing spot rates were down at '3,044.1 per quintal, as per agriculture marketing board of Rajasthan.

Total arrivals of mustard seed crop fell below 4.5lakh bags across major trading center while spot rates were steady & quoted at '33-'36 per kg based on quality & location, as per market reports.

Chana futures continued their bearish trend on the exchange counter while spot rates too were down at '34-'34.5 per kg, pressured by increase in supply due to higher output. Off-take remains steady supported by local demand.

Spot rates of mentha oil fell by another '25-'30 per kg, on poor demand & higher supply of about 180-200 drums at local market. Futures too were down, following cues from the spot market.

Crude palm oil falls almost 1% on profit-booking

Weak spot markets trend on sluggish demand affected the trade



Crude palm oil futures for May declined by Rs 4.30, or 0.93%, to Rs 454.30 per 10 kg in 245 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the June contract traded lower by Rs 4.10, or 0.89%, to Rs 452.10 per 10 kg in 101 lots.

Prices fell as speculators booked-profits at prevailing higher levels driven by weak spot markets trend on sluggish demand.

Weakening trend in overseas markets also put pressure on oil futures prices.

On the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange (MDEX), crude palm oil declined 1.20% to \$740 a tonne, the lowest price for the most-active contract since April 23.

Soybean declines almost 2% on weak global cues

Prices slumped on all-round selling by traders



Soybean futures for June contract lost Rs 73, or 1.90% to Rs 3,764 per quintal in 82,590 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract also looked down by Rs 69.50, or 1.77%, to Rs 3,862.50 per quintal in 36,550 lots.

Prices slumped on all-round selling by traders.

Weakening international markets mainly put pressure here on futures prices.

Mentha oil declines more than 2% on profit-booking

Prices lost trade as speculators indulged in profit-booking



Mentha oil futures for May fell by Rs 23.90, or 2.50%, to Rs 931.50 per kg, with a business volume of 778 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the June contract drifted by Rs 18.80, or 1.98%, to Rs 929.10 per kg in 133 lots.

Prices lost trade as speculators indulged in profit-booking driven by subdued domestic demand.

Sentiment weakened further due to adequate stocks position following increased arrivals from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh.

Less industrial demand for the commodity also influenced the prices.

THE HINDU Business Line

Global black tea output up 16%

Coonoor, May 2: March tea production data for Malawi and Indonesia have come out and both show a loss of one million kg (mkg) compared to March 2012.

Malawi's output dropped to 6.60 mkg from 7.60 mkg and Indonesia's to 4.70 mkg from 5.70 mkg.

Collectively, in the first quarter of current calendar, Malawi's output has fallen by 3.60 mkg to dip to 17.70 mkg. Indonesia has lost 2 mkg to total 13.70 mkg.

“According to our compilation, global black tea production so far this calendar has risen by 28.19 mkg to total 205 mkg,” Rajesh Gupta, Publisher of annual Global Tea Digest, told *Business Line*.

This marks a growth of 15.94 per cent.

This has happened because of a massive recovery in crop in Kenya. Last year, Kenya had lost 8.35 mkg over 2011 due to adverse weather. So far this calendar, Kenya's output has increased by 29.27 mkg over the corresponding period of 2012 and reached 83.89 mkg.

Campaign against ‘iron-fortified’ genetically modified bananas

New Delhi, May 2: Anti-genetically modified (GM) food groups on Wednesday announced a campaign against the Government's move to promote “iron fortified” GM bananas to save Indian women from anaemia.

As part of the campaign, an online petition opposing the move has been initiated by Navdanya, Mahila Anna Swaraj, Diverse Women for Diversity, Initiative for Health & Equity in Society, Guild of Services, Save Honey Bees Campaign, etc.

At a press conference here on Wednesday, Navdanya founder, Vandana Shiva, even questioned the credibility of James Dale of Queensland University, who was being funded by Gates Foundation for “innovation” in GM bananas.

India's Department of Biotechnology has signed an agreement with Queensland University for research and field trials over the next four-five years and launch the GM bananas within six-10 years.

“Dr Dale does not have a single paper related to iron fortification of bananas. This work has been done by the Bhabha Atomic Research Team. (Gujulla B. Sunil Kumar & Lingam Srinivas & Thumballi Ramabhatta Ganapathi),” she said in a release.

Pitching for Indian solutions to anaemia that leads to child-birth deaths in India, Shiva said “Bananas are rich in nutrition but have only 0.44mg of iron/100 gram of edible portion,” she said.

But, according to the BARC scientists, they can achieve a six-fold increase in iron content in GMO bananas.

This makes it 2.6mg, which is 3,000 per cent less than iron in turmeric, or niger, or lotus stem, 2,000 per cent less than amchur (mango powder), she said and added that safe, biodiverse alternatives were multi-fold in India.

Shiva said Indian taxpayer money was also funding this project, which was “a waste of money and time”.

The National Banana Research Centre, while conserving 200 varieties, has already put the development of GMO bananas in its Vision Document 2030, she said.

“The solution to malnutrition lies in growing nutrition,” such as iron-rich plants, she added.

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Spot rubber rules flat with futures

Kottayam, May 2: Spot rubber was mixed on Thursday. The market remained almost neutral following a similar trend in the domestic futures market. The absence of follow up buying and the discouraging reports from the global trendsetters kept the commodity under pressure during the day.

Meanwhile, ungraded rubber lost marginally on low demand while ISNR 20 extended gains on fresh enquiries.

Sheet rubber finished flat at Rs 163.00 a kg, according to traders. The grade improved to Rs 162.50 (Rs 162.00) both at Kottayam and Kochi as reported by the Rubber Board.

In futures, the May contracts inched up to Rs 162.30 (Rs 162.24), June to Rs 161.70 (Rs 161.34), July to Rs 159.99 (Rs 159.24) and August to Rs 158.40 (Rs 157.84) while the September futures weakened to Rs 156.06 (Rs 157.66) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 158.12 (Rs 159.61) at Bangkok.

The May futures closed the session at ¥249.3 (Rs 137.94) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg: RSS-4: 163.00 (163.); RSS-5: 159.00 (159.); Ungraded: 153.00 (154.); ISNR 20: 153.00 (152.50) and Latex 60%: 102.00 (102).

Bengal hikes potato cold storage rentals by Rs 19/quintal



A file photo of a worker carrying a sack of potatoes inside a cold storage.

Kolkata, May 2: Cold storages in West Bengal will start unloading potatoes starting Friday with the State Government approving the industry's long standing demand for a hike in rentals.

According to Patit Paban De, member of West Bengal Cold Storage Association, the State Government has approved a rental hike of Rs 19 a quintal on storage of potatoes.

The opening up of cold storages will help check rise in prices of the tuber in the State.

Backed by a steady demand from other States, potato prices inched up by almost Rs 150 a quintal in the last fortnight.

Wholesale price of the tuber (Jyoti variety) was ruling around Rs 900 this week, against Rs 750 during the second week of April.

“Usually around this time of the year, farmers have a reasonable quantity of potatoes left with them.

“However, this year there is hardly any stock left even while the production has been very good. If cold storages do not start unloading, then prices could rise further as the demand continues to be good,” De told *Business Line*.

Lower than expected

West Bengal Cold Storage Association had urged the State Government for a hike of Rs 36 on rentals in order to be able to make good for the rise in operation costs.

West Bengal and Tripura are the only two States in the country where potato cold storage rents are controlled by the State Governments.

Cold storages in West Bengal have been reeling under losses due to a 50 per cent rise in input costs in the last three years.

Electricity tariffs have increased by 50 per cent from Rs 30 about three years ago to Rs 45 now, while diesel prices have increased by 48 per cent from Rs 35 to Rs 52. Labour costs have also gone up during this period, thereby, exerting pressure on profitability, De said.

“There has been no hike for the last three years and now though the hike has come but it is way too less than what the industry had

expected. It is difficult for the industry to sustain on this kind of rentals,” he said.

The last hike happened in January 2010 when rentals increased by Rs 14.

The hike took into account the rise in operational costs in 2009 over that in 2008.

Cold storages spend nearly Rs 150 for storing one quintal of potatoes during the storage season extending between mid-February to end of November.

However, till last season, the rental for storing potatoes was Rs 101.

Mamata Banerjee-led State Government had set up an expert committee to look into the issue.

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Jeera likely to be stable despite export demand



Rajkot, May 2: Traders expect jeera prices to be stable despite getting fresh export demand because of rising supplies and higher production hopes.

Jeera futures declined on the back of profit booking by traders.

However, spot prices remained unchanged as demand was normal.

On the NCDEX, jeera for May delivery decreased Rs 82.50 to Rs 12,805 a quintal with an open interest of 6,933 lots.

NCDEX jeera June contract was down Rs 105 to Rs 12,970 with an open interest of 12,312 lots.

About 16,000-17,000 bags of jeera arrived in Unjha mandi of Gujarat and price for the best quality was quoted Rs 2,250-2,350 for 20 kg and medium jeera was traded at Rs 2,040-2,140.

Some fresh export demand has come as supplies from other producing countries are negligible due to political unrest.

Traders, however, do not expect any sharp upside in prices because supplies are rising and production is also estimated to be higher than in the previous year.

Traders expect the output of the spice to be around 34 -35 lakh bags, up 1 lakh bags from last year. This is mainly due to better crop productivity in some areas of Gujarat.

Chicken may be dearer until June



Chennai, May 2: After experiencing a brief lull due to seasonal uncertainties, broiler prices are inching up on short supplies and the onset of summer.

The Broiler Coordination Committee (BCC) has hiked the price of live birds to Rs 70 a kg from Rs 67 last week. Earlier in February, prices touched a record Rs 82/kg.

Following the outbreak of bird flu in Bangalore earlier this year, the broiler industry cut its output by 20 per cent from 1 crore kg a week and most of the poultry farms were running at half their capacity. Now with consumption picking up, prices too are scaling up due to shortage of birds.

Demand for animal protein gains momentum during summer and prices are unlikely to come down till June.

Soaring feed prices that account for one-third of cost of production is also one of the prime reasons for price hike. A 75-kg bag of broiler feed costs Rs 2,410 in March this year against Rs 1,919 during the same period previous year.

Meanwhile, prices of layer birds remained flat at Rs 55 a kg. The National Egg Coordination Committee (Namakkal zone) has slashed the price of an egg by 20 paise this week to Rs 2.90 a piece.

Namakkal and Palladam prices are the benchmarks for eggs and chicken respectively in the country.

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Poor upcountry demand could drag turmeric



Erode, May 2: Turmeric prices are set to fall further in the absence of any upcountry demand and arrival of quality produce.

Growers are bringing limited stocks to the market despite having a huge inventory with them due to lower prices.

Spot turmeric prices decreased sharply for want of demand.

“Turmeric prices are still leading towards downward trend and the arrival and sales are very poor. This is due to want of upcountry demand. The price of the yellow spice in the Regulated Market Committee declined sharply on Thursday. Similarly, the price was down Rs 200 a quintal in other three markets also due to quality and demand,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,209-7,509; the root variety Rs 3,699-6,189 a quintal.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 5,363-8,409; the root variety Rs 4,900-6,606. Of the 899 bags that arrived, only 35 per cent was sold. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,109-7,129; the root variety Rs 6,003-6,959. Of the 478 bags that arrived, 431 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety ruled at Rs 6,129-7,699 and the root variety Rs 5,699-6,867. Of the 550 bags on offer, 521 found takers. At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,688-7,877; the root variety Rs 6,289-7,012. All the 247 bags on offer were traded.

Mustard oil slips on sluggish offtake



Indore, May 2: Weak demand and decline in buying support at higher rate pulled down mustard oil prices in mandis across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Slack demand dragged mustard oil prices in Indore mandis today by Rs 5 to Rs 635 for 10 kg. Similarly in Neemuch, mustard oil declined by Rs 5 to Rs 630, while it was down Rs 2 in Moorena where it ruled at Rs 638.

In Rajasthan mandis also, mustard oil fell by Rs 5 on slack buying support with its prices in Kota and Ganga Nagar ruling at Rs 630 each, while it slipped to Rs 645 in Jaipur. In Gujarat, mustard oil declined by Rs 10 to Rs 625 .

Contrary to mustard oil, mustard seeds ruled slightly higher on comparatively week arrival. In Indore mandis, mustard seeds on Thursday rose to Rs 4,000-4,200 a quintal (up Rs 50), while raida also perked up by Rs 50 to Rs 3,100-3,200. On the other hand, mustard seeds traded lower in futures on weak buying support with its May and June contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 3,423 (down Rs 30) and Rs 3,474 (down Rs 31).

Similarly, plant deliveries also declined to Rs 3,400-3,425 on weak demand from crushers.

Arrival was recorded at 4.25 lakh bags. Rajasthan led the arrival with 2.69 lakh bags, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 40,000 bags, Uttar Pradesh - 35,000 bags, Punjab/Haryana - 40,000 bags, Gujarat - 30,000 bags, while remaining 30,000 bags were offloaded in other mandis of the country.

Wheat seen range-bound on restricted trading



Karnal, May 2: A range-bound to steady movement in wheat price is likely by in the coming days, according to traders. Restricted trading coupled with easy availability of stocks pulled dara wheat prices marginally down, while flour remained unchanged on steady demand on Thursday.

About 18,000 bags of wheat arrived at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal. Quality of the stock was medium and procurement was done by the government agencies at the minimum support price.

Radhey Sham, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that only need-based buying is taking place in the market at present. The Government may announce Rs 100 bonus over MSP soon and wheat prices may increase after the announcement, till then market may continue to rule around current levels, he added.

In the physical market, Dara wheat eased by Rs 10 and quoted at Rs 1,400-1,405 a quintal. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,400 while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,405.

In Delhi's Lawrence road market, a benchmark for the country, wheat mill quality traded at Rs 1,445-1,465 a quintal.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat futures traded positive on good buying support. Wheat for May contracts increased by Rs 7 and traded at 1,485 with an open interest of 10,030 lots. June contracts went up by Rs 8 and traded at Rs 1,510.

Fresh buying by flour mills to meet the current demand mainly led to rise in wheat prices. Wheat spot prices on the exchange improved by Rs 12.5 and traded at Rs 1,400.

Flour Prices

Despite a fall in wheat, flour remained unchanged and quoted at Rs 1,670 . On the other hand, Chokar improved by Rs 25 and sold at Rs 1,250-1,275 a quintal.
