

## **Farmers' debts rising, yield declining**

*Agriculturists in distress seek at least 8 hours of power supply to save crops*

“I have two acres of sugarcane crop. My crops are like my children, and I’m in the terrible position of seeing my children dying, but not being able to do anything about it.” R.Muralimohan, farmer and secretary of the Maduranthakam Co-operative Sugar Cane Farmers’ Association, is begging with folded hands for help to save his crops.

With the monsoons failing to provide adequate showers to Tamil Nadu, and the situation being compounded by long duration power cuts in the rural areas, farmers in various parts of the State are in much the same situation as Mr. Muralimohan. Multiple factors have worked towards increasing the indebtedness of farmers and reducing yields in the State.

“The truth is we have only three hours of power in Maduranthakam. How can we be expected to water our crops in this short while? Forget future crops, we are finding it tough to save our standing crops,” he says, agitation resounding in his raised voice. “Katri (the peak of summer) begins tomorrow, and we have no idea what we are going to do. Surely, this is going to be the toughest summer ever in my lifetime,” he adds.

Yogendra Naidu, yet another cane farmer from Chengalpattu, is angry when he says, “We do not even have continuous power supply at night. We are used to watering the fields at night at one stretch with the fields lighted up. Now, there are so many interruptions in

power supply, we have to work in darkness, and do a haphazard job. The crops suffer, and us farmers too.”

Debts are piling up, and he says, he and others in his area are unable to repay bank loans.

M. Thiruvengadam, who has been in agriculture since 1967, has been feted as a ‘model farmer’ for several achievements in the fields. “The lack of continuous power supply is our biggest problem. Even if there is just three hours power, we are saying give it to us without any break. At the moment, there is power for just an hour and then a break before we can start the motor after power supply resumes. There are about 115 villages in this region who are affected badly by this.”

## Drought-hit Namakkal farmers to get assistance

AREAS AFFECTED AND SANCTIONED RELIEF		
Taluk	Acres affected	Relief in Rs.
Tiruchengode	85,159.73	25,71,96,061.00
Namakkal	44,977.55	13,88,94,766.00
Rasipuram	27,239.98	9,18,85,344.00
Paramathi Velur	22,773.40	6,90,04,290.00
Koill Hills	830.59	41,52,934.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,80,981.25</b>	<b>56,11,33,396.00</b>

Farmers in Namakkal district will get the entire drought relief fund of Rs. 56.11 crore.

“The package will benefit a total of 1,17,458 farmers who suffered crop or yield loss of more than 50 per cent on an area of 1,80,981 acres, as on January 2013”, Collector D. Jagannathan told *The Hindu* on Friday.

An initial survey on the impact of the drought was conducted in January. A detailed report was submitted to the State Government and to a high level committee headed by Finance Minister O. Panneerselvam and five other Ministers. They conducted a study to

assess the impact of the drought across Salem, Namakkal and Erode districts on March 22. Mr. Jagannathan said of the total nine places visited by the committee in the three districts, six were in Namakkal. “This covered six of the 15 blocks in this district. Each spot had a detailed report on normal rainfall, drop in rainfall and impact of the drought with supportive photographs, and farmers reaction,” he added.

“The district has received the second highest relief in Western Tamil Nadu, only next to Tirupur. “We have fixed May 15 as the deadline for the relief amount to reach the affected farmers”, he concluded.

The area under rain fed-cultivation affected by the drought (1,65,204.80 acres) will get Rs. 49,56,14,391 as relief at Rs. 3,000 per acre. The 13,233 acres of irrigated cultivation (except paddy) will get Rs. 5,29,32,100 (Rs. 4,000 per acre). Paddy cultivation affected on 2,413 acres will get relief to the tune of Rs. 1,20,65,825 (Rs. 5,000 per acre).

Joint Director of Agriculture (In-charge) B. Muralidharan said that the areas that suffered more than 50 per cent crop loss was 53 per cent of the total area under cultivation in the district. “Area under cultivation that stood at 3,41,942 acres in 2012-13 is 60,000 acres less than the 4,01,375 average area under cultivation in the last 10 years”, he added.

## **Distribution of compensation to drought-hit farmers begins**

*Rs. 60.79 crore to be given to 1.59 lakh ryots in Perambalur*

Compensation to the tune of Rs. 60.79 crore will be disbursed to about 1.59 lakh drought-hit farmers in the district, said Collector Darez Ahamed while inaugurating the distribution of compensation

at the primary agricultural cooperative credit society at Esanai village panchayat recently.

Against the average rainfall of 908 mm, the district had experienced only 609 mm last year, the Collector said. Farmers who had raised maize , cotton, and onion in 1.93 lakh acres had suffered severe loss due to the drought prevailing in the district.



*Dolling out:Collector Darez Ahamed monitoring the distribution of compensation to drought-hit farmers at the primary agricultural cooperative credit society at Esanai village in Perambalur district .*

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Perambalur was declared drought-hit and a high-level committee of the State government, comprising ministers and officials, visited the district on April 12 to take stock of the loss suffered by farmers.

The Chief Minister has ordered a compensation of Rs. 5,000 per acre to paddy farms with irrigation facility, Rs. 4,000 for onion, pulses, and groundnut crop with irrigation facility, and Rs. 3,000 per acre to maize and cotton farmers.

About 9,519 farmers have raised paddy in 7,144 acres with irrigation facilities, 1,983 farmers have raised oil seeds in 1,537 acres, onion crop with irrigation facility raised by 13,343 farmers in 11,700 acres, and 510 farmers have raised pulses in 305 acres.

### **Other farmers**

Apart from this, oilseeds raised in 469 acres, pulses raised in 3,814 acres, cotton raised in 57,397 acres, and maize in 1.13 lakh acres have also been affected in the district.

The compensation would be distributed to farmers through the 52 primary agricultural cooperative credit societies in the district. The district administration has already distributed photo identity cards to all the affected farmers through the respective village administrative officers for collecting the compensation, Mr. Ahamed added.

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- *Compensation of Rs. 5,000 per acre to paddy farms with irrigation facility*
  - *Rs. 4,000 for onion, pulses, and groundnut farms with irrigation facility*
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## **KVK training for farmers**

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Vamban, will organise a day long free training programme for the benefit of the coconut farmers at its premises on May 7.

Interested farmers can contact phone number 04322 290321, an official press release issued here on Friday.

# **Farmers in Nilgiris district urged to form clusters**

The need to promote the formation of farmers' clusters was emphasised by Srinivas R. Reddy, Project Director, Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), here on Friday.

He was delivering the valedictory address at a five-day training course for farmers on "Resource Conservation Technologies for Sustainable Horticultural Production" organised by the Central Soil Conservation Research and Training Institute (CSCRTI) under the aegis of the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) here.

Stating that such an approach would facilitate better funding under the HADP, he opined that it would benefit both the clusters and the individuals.

He added that henceforth the HADP will insist on the formation of clusters.

It will apply to cultivators of annual crops as well as those growing plantation crops.

Underscoring the importance of updating knowledge periodically, Mr. Reddy said that farmers should stay abreast of latest technologies.

It will help improve the horticulture sector.

OO.P.S. Khola, Head, CSWCRTI, who presided, said that highest priority should be accorded to the conservation of water and soil.

Stressing the importance of such training programmes, he hoped that the beneficiaries would turn trainers.

G. Mohan, Joint Director of Horticulture, said that farmers should make use of the schemes being implemented by the Department of Horticulture.

Mr. Reddy distributed certificates to the trainees.

S. Manivannan, Senior Scientist, CSWCRTI, welcomed the gathering. K. Rajan, Senior Scientist, CSWCRTI, proposed a vote of thanks.

## **Kumaraswamy promises to waive farm loans**



*Wooing voters: The former Chief Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) State president H.D. Kumaraswamy speaking at an election meeting in Mandya on Friday. M. Srinivas, MLA, is seen.*

: The former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy promised here on Friday that all farm loans would be waived if the Janata Dal (Secular) was voted to power.

Addressing party workers at an election meeting, Mr. Kumaraswamy said the party aimed at completing pending irrigation projects across the State.

“Each and every Assembly seat is important for the party. People in north Karnataka have promised to elect at least 30 JD (S) candidates.

Voters in Mandya should also elect our party candidates,” he said.

The former Chief Minister also promised Rs. 5,000 as old age pension for those above 70.

Mandya MLA M. Srinivas, who is contesting from the Mandya Assembly constituency, was among those present.

## **Rs. 2,000 crore to be disbursed among farmers as input subsidy**

*Ministers interacts with ryots during 'rythu chaitanya yatra'*



*Agriculture Minister Kanna Lakshminarayana speaking at a meeting at P. Kothuru in East Godavari district on Friday.— PHOTO: S. RAMBABU*

Input subsidy to the tune of Rs. 2,000 crore will be disbursed among the eligible farmers in the ensuing 'Rythu Sadassu' programme, according to Minister for Agriculture Kanna Lakshminarayana.

Interacting with farmers during the 'rythu chaitanya yatra' programme held at P. Kotturu village of Karapa mandal on the city outskirts on Friday, the Minister said that disbursement of the input subsidy to farmers had been pending since 2008, which would be credited directly into the bank accounts of farmers.

He said that 'rythu chaitanya yatras' were aiming at creating awareness among the peasantry on the modern methods of farming

so that they could reduce their input cost and make farming profitable.

Referring to the welfare schemes launched by the State government for farmers, Mr. Lakshminarayana said that the government decided to distribute interest-free loans to the tune of Rs.72,000 crore during the current financial year. He recalled that the loans disbursed during the last fiscal were Rs. 52,000 crore and the government was bearing the electricity charges under the free power to the farm sector scheme. He said that keeping in view of the labour shortage, farm mechanisation was being encouraged by the government under which machines would be given to farmers on a highly subsidised price.

### **Modernisation works**

Collector Neetu Prasad called upon farmers to make better use of the farm mechanisation scheme. She said that last year the government allocated Rs.14 crore towards the mechanisation, in which farmers were able to use only Rs. 3 crore. She said that the delta modernisation works were going on at a brisk pace and they were yielding the desired results. The problem of inundation was addressed in many areas because of the modernisation works, she observed.

Agriculture Joint Director D. Prameela, ATMA Project Director K. Sitarama Raju and others were present.

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- *Farmers to get interest-free loans to the tune of Rs. 72,000*
  - *Collector urges ryots to make better use of farm mechanisation scheme*
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# **TDP writes to CM on black gram farmers**

Mylavaram MLA and TDP district president Devineni Umamaheswara Rao has dashed off letters to Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy and Minor Irrigation Minister T.G. Venkatesh on problems faced by the farmers and people in the district.

The MLA, in the letter addressed to the CM, said that the farmers cultivated black gram in 4.10 lakh acres in Rabi season in the district. The yield also doubled apart from acreage of cultivation. The Markfed, however, closed the purchasing centre.

He requested the Chief Minister to intervene and take immediate steps either to get funds from the Nafed or allot funds to the Markfed from market cess to enable the farmers to sell the black gram and maize at minimum support price.

In another letter, he asked the Chief Minister to direct the Irrigation officials to take up the Enikepadu UT (on Eluru canal) reconstruction work on a war- footing as a permanent measure under the Delta Modernisation programme to avoid frequent submersion of Vijayawada city and villages abutting Budameru drain and its catchment areas.

## **Stage set for vegetable show at Kotagiri**

Chosen to raise the curtain on the 2013 Summer Festival, Kotagiri has been decked up to host the 6th annual Vegetable Show at the Nehru Park on May 4 and 5.



*The Nehru Park in Kotagiri where the vegetable show will be held.*

## **Attraction**

The main attraction of the show will be a 15-ft-high and 15-ft-long swan made with about 2000 kilograms of white radish, according to the Joint Director of Horticulture G. Mohan.

Speaking to *The Hindu* here on Friday, he said that another highlight will be the participation of districts like Ariyalur, Perambalur, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Pudukkottai, Dindigul and Tirupur. They will showcase their horticultural products.

There will also be other stalls which will display the activities of various organisations like the Keystone Foundation which will make available traditional food items.

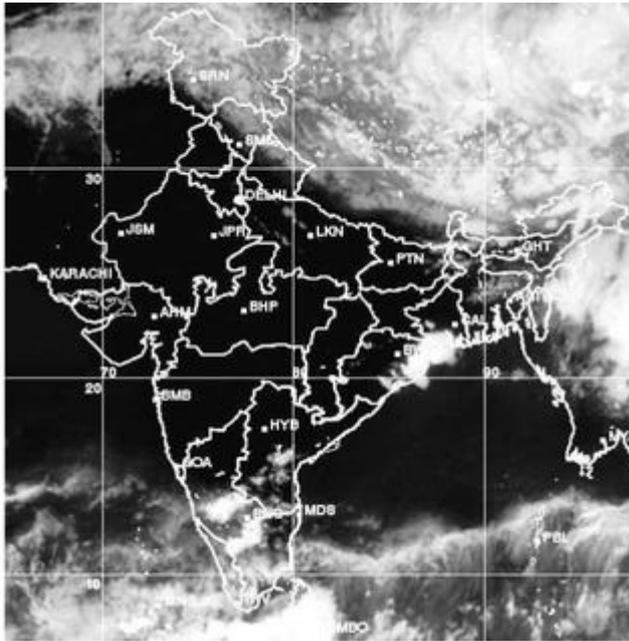
Stating that competitions for vegetable gardens will form part of the show, he said that seven rolling cups and 24 other prizes would be given.

Since the show will mark the beginning of the Summer Festival in the district, it will also feature light music and bharathanatyam programmes. The entry fee will be Rs. 20 for adults and Rs.10 for children.

It will be inaugurated by R. Kannan, Principal Secretary, Tourism and

Culture, in the presence of Hemant Kumar Sinha, Chairman and Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC), Satyabrata Sahoo, Commissioner, Horticulture. The Nilgiris Collector Archana Patnaik will preside.

## Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on May 3rd.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	38	22	0	26
New Delhi (Sfd)	37	20	0	22
Chandigarh	36	21	0	26
Hissar	37	17	0	41
Bhuntar	30	9	0	139
Shimla	23	14	0	113
Jammu	35	20	0	36
Srinagar	21	8	0	173
Amritsar	37	18	0	10
Patiala	37	21	0	25
Jaipur	38	22	0	14
Udaipur	39	22	0	15
Allahabad	44	23	0	11
Lucknow	41	21	0	1
Varanasi	44	23	0	21
Dehradun	34	18	0	39
Agartala	34	27	0	158
Ahmedabad	42	26	0	6
Bangalore	38	24	0	25
Bhubaneshwar	41	28	0	52

Bhopal	41	21	0	53
Chennai	37	28	0	32
Guwahati	35	21	13	139
Hyderabad	41	29	0	51
Kolkata	36	26	0	32
Mumbai	35	26	0	0
Nagpur	46	28	0	24
Patna	42	24	0	14
Pune	40	23	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	33	25	3	157
Imphal	27	15	16	147
Shillong	26	16	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:** Weather was dry over the region.

**MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES:** The maximum temperatures fell in Haryana, west Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and changed little elsewhere. They were above normal in east Uttar Pradesh, below normal in Haryana and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 44.0°C recorded at Varanasi Airport (Uttar Pradesh).

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 05th May 2013:** Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir from tomorrow onwards. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh on 04th may and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may also occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 05th May 2013:** Mainly clear sky.

# Groundwater level falls in Coimbatore district

*Result of failure of monsoons in 2012*

*in Metre*



<b>Average water level</b> (Below ground level)		
Unlon	Jan 2012	Jan 2013
Karamadal	7.88	11.42
Annur	12.06	15.06
P.N.Palayam	19.10	21.03
Sulur	10.70	21.23
Sulthanpet	8.35	12.15
Madukkaral	7.80	10.62
Thondamuthur	20.30	21.85
Kinathukadavu	8.75	15.28
Pollachi-North	4.40	8.60
Pollachi-South	2.10	9.90
Anamalai	2.80	6.42
Coimbatore	4.70	6.95
S.S.Kulam	24.50	25.60
Perur	31.00	39.50

Groundwater level in the district has gone down – drastically in a few places - thanks to the failure of monsoons in 2012. Recent reports with the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board suggests that the average drop in water level is five metres in the district.

The Board monitors water supply twice a year – before and after monsoon in May and January – using the 38 observation wells it has dug across the district, covering all the 12 panchayat unions.

The Board also studies the water level, which it says is potable in many rural areas.

The worst-affected areas in the district are the northern and eastern pockets.

In Sulur and Annur blocks, water is to be found only between 30 and 40 metres below ground level (BGL). In Karamadai, it is 15 – 20 m BGL.

Southern areas in the district fare better because the groundwater gets recharged because of the flow of River Aliyar.

The Board says that the January 2013 study, conducted after the 2012 South West and North East monsoons, has shown that the water level has considerably gone down. In 2012, the Board says the rainfall deficit was 39 per cent. The average rainfall for the district is 679.77 mm.

For example, water level in Irumborai Panchayat in Karamadai Union in 2013 January was 14.20 m BGL. In 2012 January it was 9.50 m BGL and in May it was 11.60 BGL.

Likewise, in Annur, the water level had dropped six m – from 22 m BGL in 2012 January to 28.10 m in 2013 January.

As part of its efforts to improve the groundwater level, the Board says it has built recharge structures – 202 check dams, taken up improvements of three *oorani* and also initiated efforts to recharge defunct bore wells.

To arrest and reverse the fall in groundwater level more such recharge structures are necessary, says K. Mylswami of Siruthuli, an NGO involved in water conservation.

Prior to the onset of monsoon this year, the Board should dig as many bore wells as possible to recharge groundwater and aquifers. A recommendation from the Central Ground Water Board is also along these lines.

He says that rural areas need more bore wells because the people there are dependent on bore wells for all their needs.

They do not have drinking water supply scheme like the Coimbatore city and the quantity of water they receive is lower compared to what their counterparts in the city receive.

The borewells and groundwater recharge structures that the Siruthuli has put in place have yielded rich dividends, he adds.

## Water level

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Friday stood at 59.10 feet (permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 103.24 cusecs and 604.75 cusecs was discharged. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 82.47 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 12 cusecs and 55 cusecs was discharged.

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## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

**Saturday, May 4**

Max Min  
34° | 28°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 67

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:47

Sunset: 06:24

Barometer: 1005

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Sunday, May 5**

Max Min  
36° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday May 6	Tuesday May 7	Wednesday May 8	Thursday May 9	Friday May 10
35°   28°	34°   27°	34°   27°	33°   28°	33°   28°
Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

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## Sugar factories owe farmers Rs 12,683 cr

Kolhapur: [Sugar factories](#) in the country have still to pay Rs 12,683 crore to farmers for their cane for the 2012-13 crushing season. The total payable amount is nearly Rs 48,585 crore.

Sugar factories blamed the pending payment on poor international trends and little demand from the future commodities' market. The situation would worsen as the country has a carry forward stock of 65 lakh tonnes sugar from the previous crushing season and 20 lakh tonne sugar is expected as surplus from the 2012-13 crushing season, a report by Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said.

The payment figures are based on the data prepared on April 22 in New Delhi. The fresh information about the payments made by the sugar factories after that is not available.

"Sugar factories are facing a crisis. There is no demand for sugar in the domestic or international market. The future too is not promising as the current international price quoted for December 2013 is about Rs 28,000 per tonne, which is not lucrative. Factories are not keen on exports and there is stagnation in the domestic market," ISMA's spokesperson said.

The association said the country consumes close to 2.2 crore tonne sugar annually, but the actual production in the current crushing season will be 2.4 crore tones leading to 20 lakh tonnes of surplus. Along with the carry-forward stock from

2011-12 will create a huge stock of 85 lakh tonnes by May-end.

"The state would produce 80 lakh tonne sugar by the end of the season, which is less by 10 lakh tonne than the previous season, but more than the demand," said Vijaysinh Mohite-Patil, chairman of Maharashtra State Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd.

The domestic market price for sugar is Rs 28,000 per tonne (Rs 28 to 30 per kg). The price that the factories have paid to the farmers plus sugar conversion cost takes the final selling price to Rs 28,000-Rs 29,000 per tonne. Production efficiency at the factory level and energy efficient machinery bring down the production costs, but are negligible.

"We cannot run the entire business on such thin margins. If the produced sugar is not sold, factories will have to store it at their own godowns or in rented warehouses, which will add to the maintenance cost," Mohite added.

Sugar factories may ask the Union government of creating a buffer stock where the government buys some portion of a commodity and stores it and releases it in the time of emergency or scarcity.

A few years ago, the Union government stopped keeping buffer stocks, as the demand and supply was balanced. This year, if the government buys some sugar stock, it would lower the burden on the sugar factories and they can clear the payments of farmers, Mohite-Patil said. "As of now, we may not make the entire payment of sugarcane to farmers as factories do not have sufficient funds," he added.

ISMA data also said that as on April 30, only 45 of 522 sugar factories in the country are crushing sugarcane, while the rest have stopped. In the last year, there were 100 factories crushing sugarcane during the same period.

The sugar factories in the country have crushed 243 crore tonnes sugarcane and produced 24.5 crore tonnes sugar with 10% recovery rate. The recovery rate is derived from production of sugar from crushing one tonne of sugarcane. Compared to last year, sugarcane crushed so far is less by 1%, while the sugar production is less by 3%. Besides, experts have said that water shortage has brought down the sugar content in the sugarcane.

## GRAPHIC

Problem of plenty

Rs 48,585 crore: Total amount payable to farmers

Rs 48,585 crore: Amount paid

2.2 crore tonne sugar consumed annually

2.4 crore tonne sugar produced in the current crushing season

243 crore tonne sugarcane crushed

85 lakh tonnes of surplus sugar stock to be created by May-end

Only 45 of 522 sugar factories are crushing sugarcane

## A 'crushing' season

The sugarcane crushing season begins by November every year and lasts till April end or mid-May across the country. In rare situations, the crushing season last till June. Since the last two years, the country reported uneven distribution of rainfall that directly impacted the water availability and water [stocks](#) in the dams. It discouraged some of the sugarcane farmers.

## Desperate measure

The sugar factories are also planning to request the Union government of creating a buffer stock of sugar. Under this system, the government buys some portion of a commodity and stores it and could release it in the time of emergency or scarcity. The government also bears the cost of such buffer stock.

# Farmers still up in arms against GAIL project

COIMBATORE: Even while trade and industry have been demanding the reopening of the GAIL pipeline project, citing the energy needs of the region, farmers are united against its unilateral implementation in its present form. Bodies representing farmers in Coimbatore, Tirupur, Erode, Namakkal, Salem, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts firmly believe that any pipeline running through their farmlands would negatively impact production. As suggested, GAIL should take steps to implement the pipeline along the highways, they feel.

The project in its present form is unilateral. They dug pits in our lands without our consent and threatened us with police force. Fortunately, chief minister J Jayalalithaa has come to our rescue. She directed GAIL authorities to hand over land to rightful owners in its original state," said K Kanthasamy of [Tamil Nadu](#) Vivasayigal Sanghom. 'More than 2400 farmers from 134 affected villages had taken part in the public hearing organized by the CM in Chennai, opposing its present alignments. Industry can ask GAIL to change its alignment and continue with the project," he added.

According to Knathamasamy, the most affected are small and marginal farmers and GAIL never addressed their concerns. The right to use enjoyed by GAIL under the Petroleum and Minerals Pipeline Act, 1962, over 1,491 acres of land would mean inability to undertake cultivation in a major portion of the land and render future development impossible. It was a significant victory over the might of GAIL," he said.

The pipeline would cause damage to their homes, poultry farms and water sources. There was also a possibility of gas leak or major accidents around residential areas and educational institutions in the vicinity," said K Ponnammal, a farmer from Sirukalanchiyur.

"GAIL had attempted to stifle our voices using police force. It was not democratic in its approach," said P R [Natarajan MP](#), who was in the forefront of the agitation by farmers. They tried to use police force, imposing on basic human rights and flouting all land acquisition rules," said P Sivakumar, leader of the umbrella body of agitating farmers' associations.

According to Natarajan, the main concern of farmers is their safety, which they felt would be compromised if the project was implemented. Secondly, they felt the compensation offered by the government was inadequate. Gail officials said that the compensation was being paid according to the Petroleum and Minerals Pipeline Act, 1962. However, farmers felt it was not in accordance with existing land prices.

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## Business Standard<sup>beta</sup>

# Foodgrain output seen rising 2%; storage woes likely for wheat

**Foodgrain stocks in state-run warehouses are estimated at 60 mt, almost thrice the required quantity**



For the 2012-13 crop marketing year ending June, India's wheat production is estimated at 93.62 million tonnes (mt), close to last year's record output of 94.88 mt. This could aggravate the already grim foodgrain storage scenario in the country.

According to latest data, foodgrain stocks in state-run warehouses are estimated at 60 mt, almost thrice the required quantity. With the government

planning to purchase an additional 40 mt of wheat from farmers this year, officials said the inventories could swell to about 90 mt by the first week of June.

Ramesh Chand, director, National Centre For Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, said, "Estimates of another year of a near-record wheat harvest in 2012-13 would surely aggravate the storage problem, as already, foodgrain stocks are at record levels and the storage capacity is limited. The only ray of hope is to aggressively promote wheat exports at whatever price possible, without thinking of a loss to the Food Corporation of India or anyone else."

Meanwhile, the government's third advanced estimate for the 2012-13 crop marketing year released today showed mustard seed production was estimated at 7.4 mt, 0.8 mt more than last year. In 2012-13, overall foodgrain production is expected at 255.36 mt, 3.96 mt less than last year, owing to the poor output of rice, coarse cereals and moong. The production of rice is estimated at 104.22 mt, 1.09 mt less than last year, while production of coarse cereals is estimated at 39.52 mt, against 42.04 mt last year. Moong production is estimated at 1.18 mt, 0.45 mt less than last year.

However, pulses production would exceed that in 2011-12, owing to good production of urad and tur. For 2012-13, production of pulses is estimated at 18 mt, a rise of 0.91 mt compared to 2011-12. The production of oilseeds is estimated at 30.7 mt, about 0.9 mt more than in 2011-12.

Soybean production is estimated at 14.1 mt, against 12.96 mt last year, while groundnut production is seen at about 5.4 mt, about 1.56 mt less than last year. Among cash crops, production of cotton is estimated at 33.8 million bales (1 bale=170 kg), against 35.2 million bales last year, while that of jute is seen at 10.6 million bales (1 bale=180 kg), against 11.13 million bales in 2011-12.

## GRAIN BASKET

Crop production in million tonnes 2012-13

Crops	2011-12*	2012-13#	% Change
Total pulses	17.09	18.00	5.32
Oilseeds	29.80	30.70	3.02
Rice	105.31	104.22	-1.03
Wheat	94.88	93.62	-1.32
Foodgrains	259.32	255.36	-1.52
Cotton	35.20	33.80	-3.97
Coarse cereals	42.04	39.52	-5.99
Sugarcane	361.04	336.10	-6.90
Jute	11.40	10.60	-7.01

Note: A crop year runs from July to June

\*Final estimate 2011-12; #Third advanced estimate for 2012-13

Source: Department of Agriculture

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# THE HINDU Business Line

## Copra declines on higher arrivals

**Erode, May 3:** Copra prices have started decreasing at the Avalpoondurai Regulated Market Committee auctions.

“We expected the price to go up this week. But buyers quoted lower price and purchased all the arrived quantity. This may be due to the decline in coconut oil price,” said the officials of the Regulated Market Committee, Avalpoondurai.

They said that last week the first quality copra was sold at Rs 4,400 a quintal, but this week it was sold at Rs 4,075-4,275.

The second quality fetched Rs 3,635-4,185. But the sales were encouraging, they said.

Arrivals stood at 1,288 quintals against 1,200 quintals last week.

The farmers said that due to severe summer the coconut trees were withering and the yield of coconuts has declined fastly.

They are having sufficient stock of copra.

# Masoor prices unlikely to fall



**Indore, May 3:** Barring chana, sluggish trend continued in pulses and pulse seeds on slack demand.

Masoor declined by Rs 50 to Rs 4,250 a quintal on sluggish offtake.

Masoor (medium) also declined to Rs 3,600-3,800 .

## **Imports costly**

Any major fall in masoor prices from its current level appears unlikely given weak domestic crop prospects and depreciation of rupee against dollar which has made masoor imports costlier.

Masoor dal (average) was at Rs 4,700-25, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 4,800-25, while masoor dal (bold) ruled at Rs 4,900-4,925.

## **moong**

Moong also witnessed downtrend on slack demand and steady rise in arrival of summer crop.

Moong (bold) declined to Rs 5,500-5,600 while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 4,900-5,100.

With steady rise in arrivals, bearish sentiment will likely to continue in moong in the coming days, said a trader .

Moong dal remained unchanged with moong dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 6,900-7,000 , moong dal (bold) at Rs 7,300-7,400 while moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,400-7,500.

## **urad**

Urad and its dal also ruled steady on subdued buying support with urad (bold) at Rs 3,550, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,200.

Urad dal also remained unchanged with urad dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 4,000-4,100, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,500-4,600, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,600-5,900 a quintal.

## **Coonoor tea prices drop to 6-week low**

**Coonoor, May 3:** Prices dropped to six-week low at this week's auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association (CTTA) which ended on Friday, reveals our analysis of the market reports.

Average price crossed Rs 100-a-kg mark for the first time in the 50 years of CTTA auctions on March 8. Since then, week-after-week, price had ruled above Rs 100. For the first time in eight weeks, average price dropped to below-Rs 100 level this week.

Price averaged Rs 97.45 a kg against last week's Rs 100.72. This was the sixth consecutive week of price falling over the previous week.

With inadequate demand even at reduced prices, the volume sold dropped to 8.78 lakh kg from last week's 8.87 lakh kg.

Collectively, the turnover this week dropped to Rs 8.56 crore from Rs 8.93 crore. This was the third consecutive week, turnover had been falling.

This also meant the turnover dropping by Rs 37 lakh or 4.14 per cent in just one week.

# Spot rubber gains with futures

**Kottayam, May 3:** Rubber markets regained their strength on Friday.

In spot, prices moved up on fresh buying and short covering tracking the moderate gains on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

Traders seemed to be taking advantage of another holiday in trend setting Japanese market which in fact gave them more space for speculation in the local platforms.

Overall, sentiments were bullish.

Sheet rubber firmed up to Rs.163.50 (Rs 163) a kg, according to traders.

The grade increased to Rs 163 (Rs 162.50) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi as quoted by the Rubber Board.

In futures, the May contracts improved to Rs 165 (Rs 162.30), June to Rs 164.95 (Rs 161.69), July to Rs 162.94 (Rs 159.79), August to Rs 161 (Rs 157.31) and September to Rs 159.95 (Rs 157.03) on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) weakened to Rs 157.30 (Rs 158.12) a kg at Bangkok. The Tokyo Commodity Exchange remained closed on account of 'Constitution Memorial Day'.

**Spot rubber rates Rs/kg:** RSS-4: 163.50 (163); SS-5: 160.00 (159); Ungraded: 154.00 (153); ISNR 20: 155.00 (153) and Latex 60%: 103.50 (102).

# Mixed trend in Kochi tea sale

**Kochi, May 3:** A mixed trend persisted for almost all varieties of teas at the Kochi tea auction.

In sale no 18, the quantity on offer in the CTC dust grades was 12,32,500 kg.

Though the market opened at Rs 5-10 lower, the decline was more to the tune of Rs 15 and above as the sale progressed.

The quantity on offer in the orthodox grades was 4,000 kg. The market for Highgrowns was dearer, while mediums barely remained steady.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted Rs 101-120, RD grades ruled at Rs 115-138, SRD fetched Rs 120-139 while SFD stood at Rs 125-145.

The leaf sale, however, witnessed a good demand and the quantity on offer in the Orthodox grades was 98,000 kg. The market for select best Nilgiri broken whole leaf and fannings was fully firm to dearer following quality. Others were irregular and sometimes lower.

Medium well made clean black tippy grades and whole leaf bolder broken were steady to firm. Others were irregular, while Corresponding fannings were easier.

The quantity on offer in the CTC grades was 102,500 kg and the market for select best good liquoring varieties was steady to firm and sometimes dearer. Others were irregular and lower by Rs 5-7 and sometimes more.

In the dust category, Injipara – Premium RD fetched the best prices of Rs 163 followed by Injipara – Premium SRD at Rs 162. In the leaf varieties, Chamraj Green FOP (S) quoted the best prices of Rs 354 followed by Pascoes Hyson Green at Rs 331.

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# Madhya Pradesh wants Bill on biotech regulator withdrawn

**New Delhi, May 3:** Opposition is building up against the Biotech Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) Bill, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha recently.

The Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled Madhya Pradesh has joined the list of those who want the Centre to withdraw the Bill, which provides for setting up a regulator for the sector.

“The BRAI Bill does seek to violate the spirit of federal polity in India, even though agriculture is a State subject as per the Indian Constitution” said the State Agriculture Minister, Ramakrishna Kusmariya, in a letter to the Science and Technology Minister S. Jaipal Reddy.

He said the Government should withdraw the Bill and hold widespread consultations on the biosafety law instead.

The BRAI Bill proposes single-window clearance for genetically-modified crops in the country.

Currently, the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee receives and gives permissions for field trials after the companies received no-objection certificates from the respective States.

“It is not just about the space for the State Governments in decision-making in the National Authority that is being proposed, but also decision-making powers in their respective States that should be upheld in any regulatory statute on this subject,” Kusmariya said.

## **Indian context**

Stating that GM technology was not required in the Indian context, Kusmariya said “There is more than adequate scientific evidence on the negative impacts of the genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) on health, environment as well as corporate control that accompanies this technology on our food and farming systems”.

He alleged that the Centre was bulldozing all concerns and scientific evidence in promoting GMOs and setting up the BRAI. “The fact that the Bill has been tabled despite even the Standing Committee on Agriculture’s detailed recommendations that what we need is a Biosafety Authority and not BRAI, is surprising,” he said.

A group of 16 members of Parliament had recently alleged that the Government was trying to circumvent the opposition on the GM crops across the country and had asked the Government to withdraw the Bill and introduce a biosafety protection law in its place.

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***The Biotech Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) Bill proposes single-window clearance for genetically-modified crops in the country.***

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## **Govt sees higher grain output on better wheat, rice crop**

(In million tonnes)

▶ Reaping less	2012-13 (Third advance Estimates)	2011-12 (Final estimates)
Rice	104.22	105.31
Wheat	93.62	94.88
Coarse cereals	39.52	42.04
<b>Total cereals</b>	<b>237.36</b>	<b>242.23</b>
Pulses	18.00	17.09
<b>Total foodgrains</b>	<b>255.36</b>	<b>259.32</b>
Oilseeds	30.72	29.79
Cotton*	338.00	352.00
Jute & mesta#	112.54	113.99
Sugarcane	336.14	361.00

\* lakh bales of 170 kg each  
# lakh bales of 180 kg each

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

**New Delhi, May 3:** The Government has revised upwards the foodgrain production estimate for 2012-13 by about five million tonnes to 255.36 mt.

The increase is primarily due to higher-than-estimated production of rice, wheat and coarse cereals, according to the third advance estimates of the Agriculture Ministry.

The Government, in its earlier estimates in February, had pegged foodgrain output at 250.14 mt.

### **Lower than last year**

Despite the upward revision in projections, the foodgrain output for 2012-13 will be lower than the 259.32 mt last year.

The decline over the previous year is mainly on account of drought affecting the output in States such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

According to the latest estimates, the production of rice is pegged at 104.22 mt, marginally higher than the targeted 104 mt for the year.

### **Kharif rice production**

This is mainly on account of a higher-than-targeted kharif rice production at 92.75 mt, while the rabi output is expected to fall short of the targeted 14 mt at 11.47 mt.

Rice production in 2011-12 stood at a record 105.31 mt.

Wheat output is pegged higher at 93.62 mt in 2012-13 from the earlier estimate of 92.3 mt.

However, the latest estimate will be lower than the record harvest of 94.88 mt achieved last year.

Harvest of wheat is currently going on in States such as Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh among others. The Government agencies have so far procured over 21.64 mt of the total market arrivals of 23.78 mt.

The high rice and wheat output could trigger storage problems for the Government, which is already sitting on a huge stockpile of grains.

As on April 1, foodgrain stocks in the Central pool stood at 59.67 mt, including 35.46 mt of rice and 24.20 mt of wheat.

The Agriculture Ministry has also revised the production of pulses upwards to 18 mt from 17.58 mt in February estimates.

In the 2011-12, pulses output stood at 17.09 mt.

The increase in current year's pulses output is mainly on account of higher gram output estimated at 8.49 mt.

### **coarse cereals**

The production of coarse cereals has been pegged higher at 39.52 mt in 2012-13, from the earlier estimates of 38.47 mt. In 2011-12 crop year, coarse cereals output stood at 42.04 mt.

The higher foodgrain output should help the Government manage better the food inflation, which has softened to around 8.73 per cent.

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## **Maharashtra drags sugar output by 3%**



**New Delhi, May 3:** Sugar output till end-April was down three per cent at 24.52 million tonnes due to lower recoveries, compared with the corresponding period last year.

As the 2012-13 cane crushing season comes to an end, about 45 sugar mills were still operational against 100 last year.

The sugar mills have crushed 243 mt cane with an average recovery of 10.09 per cent, about 0.17 points lower than last year, the Indian Sugar Mills Association said a statement.

One of the largest sugar producing States - Maharashtra - has produced 7.97 mt sweetener, about 10 per cent lower than last year. The State has crushed 69.9 mt cane and the recovery was 11.40 per cent.

About four mills, two each in Satara and Nagpur districts, were still operational against more than 40 than last year.

In Uttar Pradesh, about nine mills were still operational and the State has produced 7.43 mt sugar with a marginally better recovery of 9.19 per cent.

Sugar production in the State was up seven per cent, with mills in Western and Central UP reporting better recoveries.

In Karnataka, the crushing has ended and production was down by a tenth at 3.36 mt against last year's 3.72 mt.

In Tamil Nadu, 29 mills were still operational against 41 in the corresponding last year. Till date, Tamil Nadu has produced 1.57 mt, about one per cent lower than last year. Andhra Pradesh has produced 9.9 lakh tonnes of sugar, against 1.11 mt last year.

Despite the marginal dip in output, the sugar prices continue to remain bearish on ample supplies.

On the NCDEX, the near month contract for May 20 ended marginally lower at Rs 2,929 a quintal on Friday.

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# Storm brews in Bay of Bengal, could help onset of monsoon

**Thiruvananthapuram, May 3:** It is now more or less clear that the South-West Bay of Bengal, just off Sri Lanka, might whip up a storm next week.

What remains to be known is whether this weather system could bring in the South-West monsoon along. Seasonal rains normally reach the first outpost of Andaman Islands between May 15 and 20.

## **'LOW' FORECAST**

On Friday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that a preparatory cyclonic circulation would form over South-West Bay of Bengal by Sunday.

This is expected to strengthen over the next two to three days to become a low-pressure area, the IMD said, without mentioning its coordinates.

But international weather models expected it to intensify and become a full-scale cyclone.

## **CYCLONE WATCH**

European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts sees it anchoring into a position just off Chennai by May 13.

Climate Prediction Centre of US National Weather Services said the cyclone might move East-North-East into Central Bay and head for landfall over Myanmar/Bangladesh.

It also sees a splinter from this storm moving west over peninsular India and entering Arabian Sea, off Mangalore.

The Taiwan Central Weather Bureau said that the storm would most likely cross Chennai coast and move North-North-West into East-central India and weaken over east Maharashtra/Andhra Pradesh.

What helps storm formation is the very warm pool (over 32 deg Celsius) of ocean waters extending from North Sri Lanka and South Tamil Nadu and east into South-central Bay of Bengal.

Ocean warmth beyond a threshold 27 deg Celsius is one among the significant features a low-pressure area needs to strengthen. Storms and cyclones breed and thrive over warm waters.

## **STORM PATH**

While the European forecaster takes the storm to Chennai ( according to Friday's outlook), a US military weather model saw it buffeting Sri Lanka from all sides and grazing the tip of peninsular India.

Then, it could enter South-East Arabian Sea off the Kerala coast, bringing in a barrage of southwesterly winds.

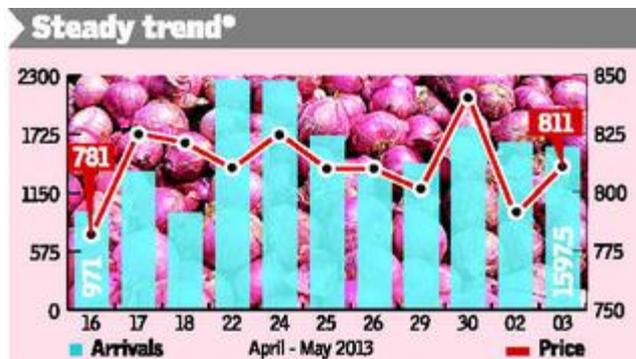
If this were to happen, it would lead to onset of the monsoon over mainland India along the Kerala coast.

From here, the path it could take would be very crucial.

Onset phase and onward progress has been spoilt in this fashion by away-going storms in the Arabian Sea (towards Oman/Yemen) a number of times in the recent past.

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# Onion likely to rule at Rs 800 a quintal till month-end



\* arrivals in tonnes; modal price in Rs/quintal at Lasalgaon APMC in Maharashtra  
Source: NHRDF

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## **Chennai, May 3:**

Onion prices are likely to rule stable around current level of Rs 800 a quintal at least until the end of this month with supply likely to match demand.

“Currently, quality onion commands Rs 850-900 a quintal, while the fair average quality is quoting around Rs 800,” said a trader over phone from Nashik.

At the Lasalgaon Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) yard, the modal price or the rate at which most trades took place was Rs 811 a quintal with nearly 1,600 tonnes arriving.

“Some farmers are bringing their produce to the market as the current price is good, while some are holding back expecting a rise,” said R.P. Gupta, Director of National Horticulture Research and Development Foundation.

During the same time last year, prices were lower than Rs 400.

“Farmers are happy with Rs 800 a quintal now. Very rarely do prices rule at this level during peak arrival of the rabi crop,” Gupta said.

While a section of the trade said that arrivals were of average quality, another section said that good quality onions were arriving in markets.

Gupta said though the area under rabi onion was 20 per cent lower this year, higher productivity has made up for the loss.

“Productivity is some 15-20 per cent higher this year,” he said.

A long winter, good sunshine and no rains around the time when the crop was maturing have all led to higher yield this year.

Exports, on the other hand, are also good with demand continuing for West Asian countries.

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## **Cotton seen stable on limited supply**



**Rajkot, May 3:** Cotton traders expect prices of the fibre to rule around current levels on short supply.

On the back of weak export and limited demand from mills, cotton remained unchanged on Friday.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton was traded on Rs 37,000-37,500 for a candy of 356 kg. Kapas or raw cotton for Kadi delivery stood at Rs

965-990 a *maund* of 20 kg, while kapas at Rajkot APMC was quoted at Rs 910-960.

About 20,000 bales of 170 kg each arrived in Gujarat and 58,000-60,000 bales arrived across the country.

Cotton traded stable in North India on Friday on weak demand from local mills and limited arrivals.

Cotton ready delivery was at Rs 4,005-4,100 a quintal in Punjab, Rs 3,955-3,970 in Haryana and Rs 3,955-3,970 in Rajasthan.

Traders said that at this time export demand is almost nil while domestic mills buying are also slow; against it arrivals are also short so that market may not fall much in near future.

Meanwhile, in its forecast for the crop released on Thursday, ICAC said that with farmers continuing to switch from cotton to more profitable alternatives,

India's cotton crop in 2013-14 (cotton year) is likely to fall 170,000 tonnes at 5.7 million tonnes (33.5 million bales).

## Buying by short position holders boosts pepper



**Kochi, May 3:** Pepper prices continued to crawl up on buyback by short position holders on Friday. In fact, despite the concerted efforts by the short position holders to pull the prices down the

market has been moving up, albeit marginally, market sources told *Business Line*.

On the spot, 124 tonnes of fresh pepper including 64 tonnes from Karnataka arrived and they were traded all afloat.

In order to avert a potential stalemate following non-listing of futures contracts from June onwards by the National Exchange, the Spices Board is understood to have decided to hold joint meeting of IPSTA, SB and the FMC soon, they said. IPSTA, they said, is moving ahead aggressively for the revival of commodity-specific regional exchange for pepper.

Primary market dealers from Idukki were also buying Karnataka pepper for mixing with the high range pepper . End users from throughout the country were also buying similar material at a discounted price of Rs 310-320 for pepper of below 500 GL and at Rs 325-335 a kg for 520-535 GL pepper.

May contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 55 to close at Rs 35,695 a quintal. Total turnover fell by 200 tonnes to close at 130 tonnes today. Total open interest decreased by 56 tonnes to close at 712 tonnes.

Spot prices remained unchanged at Rs 34,100 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,600 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,700 (c&f) for May shipments while for June \$6,800 a tonne (c&f), according to IPSTA prices, they said.

## Upcountry orders for turmeric likely from June



**Erode, May 3:** Rising mercury level has affected the turmeric trade as most of the merchants did not place any order for the yellow gold..

"Most of the places in North India, the summer season has started and because of the severe summer the merchants in most of the places did not place any order for the turmeric."

"Only after the temperature cools in North India, fresh orders for the yellow spice will be made by them. Till then, the price of the turmeric will be declining," said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. He said every trader is expecting that they will get fresh order from June.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,399-7,485 a quintal; the root variety Rs 4,299-6,017.

**Salem Hybrid Crop:** The finger variety fetched Rs 5,319-8,294; the root variety Rs 5,019-6,617. Of the arrival of 1,148 bags, only 30 per cent stocks were sold. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,193-7,194; the root variety Rs 6,109-6,733. Of the arrival of 474 bags, 442 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety ruled at Rs 6,019-7,633; the root variety Rs 5,937-6,799. All the 832 bags were traded.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,040-7,686; the root variety Rs 6,469-6,885. All the 251 bags were sold.

## **Rice market to witness uptrend soon**



**Karnal, May 3:** The non-basmati varieties of rice are expected to witness an uptrend in prices soon on the back of improved buying interest.

Rice market witnessed a mixed trend on Friday with prices of Pusa-1121 dropping further and Permal varieties improving marginally. While all other non-basmati and aromatic varieties managed to maintain their previous levels.

Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that lack of buying interest for the Pusa-1121 varieties mainly led this variety down. Demand for Permal varieties

is good in the market at present. According to market experts, sentiments are still largely positive and market may witness some good buying in coming weeks.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) eased further by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 8,000 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 7,050, Rs 50 down.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 9,000. Duplicate basmati (steam) traded at Rs 7,100.

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 4,100, Tibar sold at Rs 4,950 while Mongra was at Rs 3,100 a quintal.

In the non-basmati rice section, Permal varieties improved on buying interest while other non-basmati varieties remained unchanged on moderate buying. Traders expect that the market may remain around these levels for the next few days.

Permal (raw) moved up by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 2,600 a quintal while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,470 , Rs 70 up from previous levels. Sharbati (steam) quoted at Rs 5,400, while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 5,050. PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 3,400-3,450 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 3,100-3,150 . PR14 (steam) sold at Rs 3,200 a quintal.

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