

Meeting to promote millets

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will conduct the national consultation on promotion of millets meeting on its premises on Tuesday at 9.30 a.m. The consultation is held under the aegis of the Revalorising Small Millets in Rainfed Regions of South Asia (RESMISA) Project. The objective is to bring all stakeholders — producers, consumers, seed companies, aggregators, small and large scale processors, food companies and manufacturers of machinery suitable for millets for an interaction to promote millet cultivation and create market for the millet-based products.

The objective is to bring all stakeholders together to promote and create market for millet-based products

600 acres more to be brought under sericulture

‘Cluster Promotion Programme’ yields good results

An additional 600 acres will be brought under sericulture in the eight districts in the central region this financial year and the Sericulture Department has been organising special camps to motivate farmers to switch over to the activity. While Pudukottai district has set a new trend in sericulture development, the area under sericulture was yet to gain momentum in Nagapattinam district, said S. John Egilson, Deputy Director of Sericulture. As much as 1,664 acres of land had so far been covered under sericulture in Tiruchi, Pudukottai, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Tiruchi, Perambalur, Ariyalur, and Nagapattinam. An additional 600 acres would be brought under cultivation in these districts under the “Cluster Promotion Programme”. He said the latest technology in sericulture had eliminated the myth that it was specific only for a specified period and regions with higher rainfall. He said that farmers in a couple of villages in Alangudi, Vadakadu, and Mangadu in Pudukottai district had set a new trend in mulberry cultivation and rearing cocoons. N.G. Selvaraju, scientist of the Central Silk Board’s Research Extension Centre in Tiruchi, said farmers of Pudukottai district had set up self-help groups for raising the nurseries of mulberry. They had been catering to the demand of the mulberry growers in the State and had been registering a good profit, he said. Mr. Selvaraju said there was a marked shift in the rearing of silk worms from the conventional cross-breeding variety to bivoltine (white silk). “Attractive returns from white silk is the major reason for the shift,” he said. “The per kg price for the conventional yellow silk ranged around Rs. 270 and Rs. 320 while the white silk ranged between Rs. 400 and Rs. 475. The plummet length of the silk is 800 metres and 1,200 metres respectively for the conventional and white silk,” he said.

Tomatoes selling at Rs. 60 a kg in Madurai

Price of country tomatoes at ‘Uzhavar Sandhai’ in Madurai touched Rs. 60 a kg on Monday which officials said was the highest price in the last one year.

Tea growers' plea

Members of the Nilgiri Tea Cultivators Association have emphasised the need to do away with the quota system being followed by tea manufacturers, particularly the Industrial Cooperative (INDCO) tea factories. In a memorandum submitted to the Nilgiris Collector P. Sankar, they pointed out that on account of the system small tea growers are suffering heavy losses. The Tea Board should process without delay applications for starting new factories and a committee should be formed to monitor the prices for the raw tea leaves of the small growers. The administration should ensure that an order of the Madras High Court regarding the payment of reasonable prices to the growers is implemented.

Officials in no hurry to open Mettur dam

With the Mettur dam's storage rising steadily, the talk of water release for irrigation has come to the fore. But the authorities would prefer to wait and watch before taking a decision. On Monday morning, the storage was 49.28 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) against the capacity of 93.47 tmc ft. The water level stood at 87 feet against the full level of 120 feet. While the inflow was 38,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs), the discharge was 800 cusecs. Though some parties and farmers' associations have been urging the government for early water release, officials say the need for the immediate release does not exist, going by two factors. One, there is no huge inflow of the Cauvery water though the present rate can, at best, be around 50,000 cusecs. In the last 20 years, there were several occasions when the river carried over one lakh cusecs. Now, only 50 per cent of the dam is full. Second, farmers going for the long-term Samba crop will require water for nursery only by the end of this month. Even if water is released now, it will not be of much use. Besides, this may put the entire crop, the main source of livelihood for lakhs of farmers, at the risk of vagaries of monsoon, if the amount of water released from the Karnataka reservoirs dips, and the northeast monsoon plays truant, says a seasoned agriculturist. However, the officials do not rule out a relook at the situation if water release from the Karnataka dams exceeds one lakh cusecs on a sustained basis. According to official data, the short-term Kuruvai crop has been raised on two lakh acres in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts. This has become possible because of the government's package and 12-hour three-phase supply to farmers, the officials explain.

Water realisation

As on date, the cumulative realisation of the Cauvery water, as recorded at Billigundlu, was 50.35 tmc ft, virtually wiping out the shortfall in receipt by Tamil Nadu. In June and July, the figures were 6.01 tmc ft and 34.46 tmc ft, against 10 tmc ft and 34 tmc ft prescribed by the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal in its final order. This month, 9.88 tmc ft has been realised so far, the officials say. The State's share for August is 50 tmc ft.

Good inflow into dam

For the first time since the onset of the southwest monsoon, the Idukki reservoir recorded the highest increase for a day with the water level rising by three ft to 2,346.12 ft on Monday. However, the water level was 41 ft below the level the same day last year, which was 2,385.38 ft. The reservoir had 42.59 per cent water storage on Monday and the rainfall recorded in the catchment area was 98.6 mm. There was good inflow through the main tributary of the Periyar with water inundating some areas of Karitharuvi Chappathu, Alady, and Upputhara upstream of the reservoir. The official said generation at the Moolamattom power house was at a low of 3.46 mu on Monday.

Chicken, poultry feed to be tested

K.A. MARTIN

The Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) will test both meat and poultry feed to ascertain the quality of chicken in the market. The move comes in the wake of reports that meat tested positive for antibiotics residue in the national capital. FSSAI sources said on Monday that samples would be gathered this week. The tests would be conducted at laboratories outside the State. FSSAI sources said traces of antibiotics may be found in the meat for four days to two weeks depending on the type of medicine used. If residue was found, its source had to be established. The source of harmful substances could be poultry feed too, they added. Chicken farmers in the State have denied using harmful substances to fatten birds or prevent diseases. They appealed to health authorities to conduct tests to bring out the truth. A meeting of the Kerala State Poultry Farmers' Association here on Monday slammed the "trial by the media which could end in a market crash for the product." President of the Poultry Farmers' Association Baiju Kadavan said the public's fear in this regard could cause much harm to about two lakh small and marginal farmers in the State. Many of them, he said, were subsistence farmers tending 1,000 to 2,000 birds. In Palakkad and Malappuram, some customers had already expressed apprehension, he said. Sources at the Meat Products of India and the Kerala Poultry Development Corporation, the government-backed meat suppliers in the State, denied any adverse impact on the market so far of the Delhi chicken test results and local media reports. Chicken price hovered above Rs.100 a kg in the retail market. At one store, the price was Rs.108.

Attempt is on to control price rise, State tells HC

K. C. GOPAKUMAR

The State government on Monday informed the Kerala High Court that its agencies were conducting inspections in open market to prevent hoarding of commodities and check artificial price rise. In an affidavit, the government said that raids were being carried out to detect violations of the Essential Commodities (Maintenance of Accounts and Display of Prices and Stock) Order.

‘All-India scene’

The affidavit added that that rise in prices of onion and other vegetables was an all-India phenomenon. As the State was a consumer State, the prices of vegetables including onion were usually affected by non-availability as well as natural calamity in the neighbouring States. This resulted in an upswing in the price of vegetables. The price of onion was on the rise in the last three months, and now, the price had come down. The government and its agencies had done everything possible to curtail the price of onion and to prevent hoarding. The affidavit also pointed out that necessary instructions had been given to all district supply officers to conduct inspections in the open market and take actions against the dealers who did not display the price boards. During festival seasons and other special occasions, inspections are being conducted in the open market to ensure exhibition of price/stock boards, and to arrest the rising prices of essential commodities. Besides, special squads at various levels, comprising district supply officers, taluk supply officers and rationing inspectors, were operating to conduct inspections. The Civil Supplies Department was taking earnest steps to protect the interest of the public. The affidavit was filed in response to a writ petition filed Basil Attipetty, High Court lawyer, seeking a directive to conduct raids in the open market to ensure that all the shopkeepers exhibited price board of essential commodities.

Early catch is a good sign, not falling prices



The fish landing centre at Kalamukku on Vypeen Island received substantial quantities of karikkadi prawns on Monday.—Photo: By special arrangement

While the early landings of karikkadi prawn post trawl ban period have helped allay fears of anxious fishermen, many of them are already complaining of its falling prices. The price of karikkadi fell about Rs. 100 a kg at the Thoppumpady and Kalamukku fish landing centres on Monday. The prawns that were sold at Rs. 160 on Sunday came down to Rs. 60 on Monday. Around 25 boats landed at the two fish landing centres on Monday with an average catch of 1,500 kg, said Joseph Xavier Kalappurakkal, a boat-owner here. About 25 medium-sized boats had landed their catch, mostly of karikkadi at Kalamukku on Sunday. Though the catches were meagre, the picture is expected to be clear by Wednesday when the big boats begin to arrive. He said that the boats averaged 600 to 700 kg of karikkadi on Sunday. But the prevailing conditions are good for the coming days as the seas have cooled raising the prospects of better landings. Karikkadi is a major export item. However, the most

important problem on the minds of boat-owners here is the rising cost of operations with margins falling to as low as about 10 per cent. A boat owner in Munambam said that boat operators were growing wary of going in for low value fishes like sardines because they do not cover costs. Though fish prices are not seen cooling immediately, it does not mean that boat owners are getting better prices for fishes like sardines, mackerels, anchovies, Russel scads, threadfin breams and lizard fish, the boat-owner added. He said that the first sale price of sardines ranged between Rs. 15 and Rs. 30 whereas it was selling for up to Rs. 100 a kg in the retail market.

Spices production to get a boost

T. NANDAKUMAR

PEPPING UP PRODUCTION

Productivity improvement of pepper, nutmeg, clove, turmeric, ginger

- Rs.14 crore for 2014-15 to:
 - Bring more land under spice cultivation
 - Use high-yielding varieties
 - Assist farmers in technology adoption

Other spices

- Nutmeg grafts
- Clove seedlings
- Productivity improvement of organic turmeric, ginger

Pepper

- 3,000 ha more to be under cultivation
- Rs.20,000 a hectare as subsidy
- 30 new nurseries
- 15 lakh rooted pepper cuttings
- Revitalisation of 495 ha of pepper gardens
- Popularisation of bush pepper

State	Area (ha)	Production (tonnes)
Karnataka	21,061	16,000
Tamil Nadu	3,009	10,500
Kerala	1,72,182	16,500

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The government has rolled out a programme to enlarge the State’s footprint in the spices market by turning the focus on productivity improvement of pepper, nutmeg, clove, turmeric, and ginger. An amount of Rs.14 crore has been earmarked in the annual Plan for 2014- 15 to bring more land under spice cultivation, use high-yielding varieties, and assist farmers in technology adoption for improved production. The lion’s share of the funds for programme, Rs.12.5 crore, has been allocated for pepper. Over the year, the Agriculture Department hopes to bring 3,000 hectares under cultivation with improved varieties of pepper. Farmers will be given a subsidy of Rs.20,000 a hectare to establish new pepper gardens. As many as 30 nurseries are to be established to produce 15 lakh rooted pepper cuttings. Director of Agriculture R. Ajithkumar said 495 hectares of pepper gardens would be revitalised under the programme. The old vines would be cut down and replaced with good quality vines. Pepper production in Kerala is marked by low productivity. Though the crop is grown in over 1.71 lakh hectares in the State, production is less than 20,000 tonnes. Karnataka produces the same quantity on just 20,000 hectares. The average yield of pepper in countries such as Thailand and Vietnam is three to five times that in Kerala. The main reason for the poor productivity of pepper in Kerala is that most of the vines are too old and infested with pests and diseases. One of the highlights of the programme is the promotion of homestead cultivation of bush pepper. “There is very limited scope for bringing more area under pepper cultivation. Bush pepper can be grown as an ornamental plant in pots or bags. Easy to manage and harvest, it provides an additional income for households”, says Mr. Ajithkumar. The scheme envisages the

establishment of good quality progeny orchards at 11 department farms to produce nutmeg grafts for distribution to farmers. Clove seedlings will also be supplied under the programme. Productivity improvement of organic turmeric and ginger is another part of the scheme.

Kudumbasree Mission to shift focus to cultivation of paddy, vegetables

MINI MURINGATHERI

Mission being emulated by other States, countries: Minister



Kudumbasree Mission, which has created a successful model in women's empowerment, will lay more thrust on the agriculture sector in the coming days, Minister for Panchayat and Social Justice M.K. Muneer has said. Speaking after inaugurating the district-level celebrations of the 16th anniversary of Kudumbasree Mission, the Minister said that the 41.5 lakh-strong Kudumbasree workers would make the State self-sufficient in paddy and vegetable production in the coming years. "Vegetables and rice, highly polluted by pesticides and chemical fertilisers, have been turning the people ill. We need pesticide-free vegetables and fruits. No other network can take this responsibility like Kudumbasree," he said. Not only other States in the country but also foreign countries have been looking forward to Kudumbasree to emulate their success model, he said. "The Kudumbasree Mission in Kerala will train five States, including Gujarat, to create a successful model for women's empowerment", he said. The credibility of the mission has prompted almost all government departments to take their help for their activities, the Minister said. "The Home Department has taken Kudumbasree Mission's help in 'Operation Kubera' for an awareness campaign and data collection. The electricity department has formed Oorja Sree so as the excise department that used the mission's network for campaign against liquor addiction. The mission has done crime mapping in the State about various crimes, including domestic violence and atrocities against children." The credit-link scheme and the social security scheme of the mission have become very successful. The Balasabhas and Bala Samithis of the mission with more than nine lakh children provide a strong platform for fighting for the rights of children. The Minister handed over awards for Varavoor, Nadathara, Muriyad, Annamanada and Alagappa Nagar community development societies (CDSes), which were selected as the best in

the district. Thermabil Ramakrishnan, MLA, presided over the function. Mayor Rajan Pallan; K.V. Abdul Khader, P.A. Madhavan, Geetha Gopi and Thomas Unniyadan MLAs; District Panchayat President C.C. Sreekumar; District Collector M.S Jaya; Kudumbasree executive director K.B. Valsalakumari; and others participated. The Mayor gave permission for opening 10 Cafe Kudumbasree units in the corporation limits. A food festival and various cultural programmes will be held in connection with the anniversary celebrations.

Staff Reporter from Alappuzha writes:

The 16th annual meet of the district unit of Kudumbasree Mission will be held at the Alappuzha Municipal Town Hall on August 5, 6 and 7. The three-day event will get under way with a cultural competition that will be inaugurated by district panchayat president U. Prathibha Hari. District Judge Mary Joseph and Kudumbasree executive committee member Bindu Krishna will participate in a seminar that will be held on Wednesday. A procession and a public meet have been scheduled to be held on Thursday. Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan will formally launch the district meet on the occasion. The chairpersons of the Kumarapuram, Mararikulam South, Chettikulangara and Kandalloor community development societies, which have been adjudged the best during the financial year, will be felicitated on the occasion.

Water level at Mettur

Water level in the Mettur Dam stood at 88.03 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 41,123 cusecs and the outflow 800 cusecs.

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Aug 5

Max Min

35° | 28°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:54

Humidity: 55

Sunset: 06:34

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1005

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Aug 6

Max Min

37° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Aug 7	Friday Aug 8	Saturday Aug 9	Sunday Aug 10	Monday Aug 11
37° 27°	37° 27°	37° 27°	37° 27°	36° 27°
Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy

Airport Weather

Chennai

Chennai

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:54

Humidity: 55

Sunset: 06:34

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1005



Onam Dampner: Rain to Set Vegetable Prices on Fire

With the late monsoon downpour damaging crops vegetable prices, which have already gone north on account of inflation, are set to burn holes in the pockets of consumers this Onam season. A rough estimate reveals that the crop loss caused by torrential rain in the past few weeks has already touched `75-crore mark. A preliminary assessment by the Agriculture Department shows that plantain farmers are the most affected lot across the state. Around 1.6 lakh plantain trees were damaged due to heavy rainfall in Kozhikode district alone. The department is yet to assess crop loss in terms of money. Director of Agriculture R Ajithkumar said prices are likely to skyrocket. "A few months ago, a drought-like situation prevailed in many parts of the state and it had affected crop production. Now, the flood-like situation has made it worse. There is no doubt that the prices will go up," Ajithkumar said. Alappuzha, with an estimated crop loss of `27.54 crore, is the worst hit. More than 3,460 hectares of paddy is lying inundated in the district. The Agriculture Department has estimated crop loss in around 520 hectares due to the breach of dykes in Kuttanad. In Palakkad, heavy rain has submerged 250.78 hectares of agricultural land, damaging plantain, paddy and vegetables. The estimated loss is `498.68 lakh. The tentative estimate of crop loss in Kozhikode district has been put at `4.13 crore, while in Wayanad loss suffered by farmers would come to `3 crore. In Pathanamthitta, agricultural loss due to the rain stood at `8.88 lakh. In Idukki, farmers lost produce in around 174.98 hectares of land, causing an estimated loss of `1.75 crore. Kottayam suffered crop damage in 52.64 hectares of land resulting in an estimated loss of `1.56 crore. In Kozhikode district, over 2,000 coconut trees, 4,500 rubber trees, nearly 14 hectares of tapioca and 43 hectares of paddy suffered damage. The crop loss spread in 174.98 hectare is estimated to be `1.75 crore. Organic farmers who commenced cultivation to provide poison-free vegetables are now not in a position to deliver. "We lost vegetables due to water-logging and nothing could be done to save the fields as the drainage system here is very poor," said Rejul, an organic farmer in Kozhikode. Raveendran, a farmer from Kizhakkumbadam, who used to provide bananas for Palayam market and major bakeries, has another tale of sorrow to share. "The summer showers were bad enough. The monsoon has now damaged most of my plantain crop," he said. According to farmers, vegetable growers are likely to suffer a decline in yield between 20 to 40 per cent. "The banana production will be down by around 40 per cent. "The banana production will be down by around 40 per cent. Lack of sufficient sunlight for weeks has adversely affected those engaged in hi-tech farming practices including poly-house cultivation," said C Narendranath, certified vegetable farmer hailing from Kottarakkara. "We have already contacted all the 81 Krishi Bhavans across the district to submit a detailed report. Once the report is received the compensation will be distributed through e-payment system," said C Haridas, Deputy Director of Agriculture.

Agriculture expert and former director of agriculture R Hali said the government should immediately evolve a marketing strategy incorporating the Agriculture Department, HortiCorp and Civil Supplies Corporation. “Unless the government initiates an immediate action plan, the coming Onam season would be the worst in the history of Kerala as far as prices of vegetables are concerned. Already, the prices are on the higher side,” Hali said.

“The main agenda of the Agriculture, HortiCorp and Civil Supplies Departments should be to book as much as crops as early as possible from Coimbatore, Mysore and Madurai regions. Besides, the government should ensure maximum procurement of local agriculture produce, which have survived the monsoon fury, by giving a premium price to farmers,” he said.

The Chill Continues

Heavy rainfall predicted

The Meteorological Department has warned of heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places till Thursday. It has also warned of strong onshore winds

Govt solace

The govt has announced a solatium of `2 lakh each to the families of those killed in the torrential rain. Those who lost houses will be given `2 lakh each

Rising water raises hopes

Water-level in Idukki dam is inching up slowly to reach 2,346.12 ft which is 42 pc of the total volume of the dam. Full reservoir level of the Idukki dam is 2,403 ft

Bodies of Kids Recovered: The bodies of the two children who had gone missing in the Tirur-Ponnani river were recovered from the premises of Kandanath bridge on Monday. Three boys had gone missing on Sunday evening

Agriculture Sector: NewGen Mission to Keep Farming Evergreen



Harping on the objective of ensuring remunerative prices for paddy farmers and attracting the new generation into the agriculture sector, the Evergreen Army of

Paracode in Adoor is making inroads into Central Travancore. The 92-member Evergreen Army, including 72 farmers trained by Kerala Agriculture University formed by the Paracode block panchayat, is planning to extend paddy cultivation from 200 acres to 2,000 acres in the coming 'mundakan' season. Binu Chackalayil, Paracode block panchayat vice-president and one of founders of the Evergreen Army, told 'Express' that the farm brigade was set up with the larger aim of revitalising paddy cultivation. The objective of ensuring attractive income to the farmers through mechanisation, preparation of paddy fields, planting of seedlings, harvesting, was already achieved during the pilot project of paddy cultivation in 200 acres spread over four grama panchayats.

Thrust on Productivity:

Binu Chackalayil said that to regain the confidence of farmers, thrust is given to maximise productivity. In the pilot project, the farm brigade could harvest a yield to the tune of 10 to 12 tonnes per acre, he said. The new work force has an advantage of having a team of unskilled hands, who got the expertise in handling both traditional and mechanised ways of paddy cultivation, Binu said.

Vegetable Cultivation

The Evergreen Army, who underwent training in vegetable cultivation under KAU, is exploring the prospects of vegetable cultivation on a larger scale.

Monitoring committee:

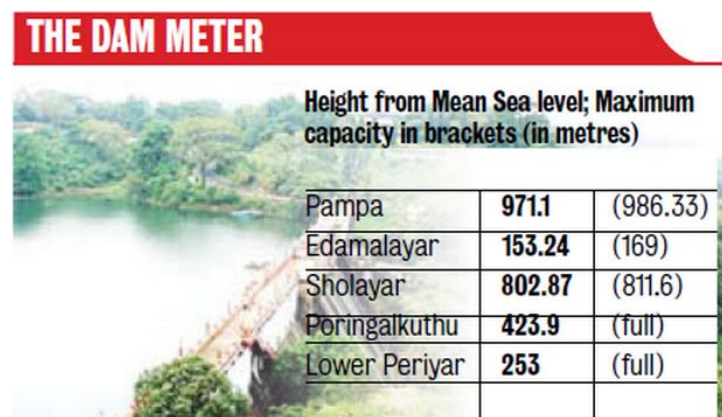
A monitoring committee under the chairmanship of Paracode block panchayat president and assistant agriculture director as deputy chairman is conducting the periodical review of the working of the Evergreen Army. With the Agriculture Department offering assistance on all fronts, the new brand of farm personnel could provide attractive revenue to the farmers and round-the-year attractive income for themselves, he said. The Evergreen Army joined hands with Kudumbashree units across the district as part of widening its activity and instilling confidence among cultivators. As per the new plan, 138 Kudumbashree units will be roped in for covering the new areas under paddy cultivation, Binu said.

Govt Relaxes Paddy Land Filling Norms

Do we need paddy land, wetland or IT parks? It seems the debate is not going to end in the near future. But, making its stand clear on the issue, the State Government has relaxed the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act-2008 for setting up 'private integrated' IT parks and technology parks in the State. The criteria, as per the government order (No 22/2014/ITD, dated July 22, 2014) is that 'the minimum land area shall be 20 acres, and shall be owned or leased in the name of the applicant in urban or suburban areas'. Experts point out that as per the new government order anyone in the State could fill paddy land and wetland to construct IT parks. But they must ensure that they fill over 20 acres of land. "The government's decision is a clear violation of the Paddy Land and Wetland Act. It questions the very purpose of the Act. To set up an IT park in the State, it is not necessary to fill paddy fields. The latest

order will only promote large-scale paddy land filling. “Though the order specifies that only urban and suburban areas will come under the purview of the order in Kerala, there is an urban area within every 10 km. “As a result, anyone can fill paddy land and wetland by saying that it is for setting up IT park, and they can easily back-off from the project after filling the land,” said environment and legal expert Harish Vasudevan. The government had earlier approved the guidelines and procedures for setting up private integrated IT and technology parks, on the basis of the new IT policy of 2012, by issuing an order (No 10/2013/ITD) on April 3, 2013. Further, it relaxed Section-2(xiv) of the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act-2008 by issuing another order (No126/2014/Rev) on February 28. The final amendment to the order came on July 22. “IT and technology parks having high investment potentials and employment opportunities can be set up on paddy land and wetland by including them under the clause of ‘public purpose’ of the Act,” the order said. “At a time when the Central Government also does not favour the filling of paddy land, the State Government has issued such an order. If people continue to fill paddy land and wetland to set up IT parks the remaining fields in Kerala would vanish soon,” said P Rajeev MP.

South-west Monsoon: Govt to Step Up Relief Measures



The south-west monsoon continued to lash the state with heavy rains leaving a trail of destruction even as the Meteorological Department predicted heavy rains in the next 48 hours. With heavy rain wreaking havoc, the government has decided to expedite relief measures and instructions were given to all district collectors to take measures to provide assistance without delay. The government has announced a solatium of Rs 2 lakh each to the families of those killed in the torrential rains. The government also decided to provide free ration to those affected, Revenue Minister Adoor Prakash told reporters here on Monday after a review meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Oommen Chandy. A total of 11 people were killed in the past one week as per the records available from the districts. A total of 82 people have lost their lives in the state after the monsoon struck the state in June, Adoor Prakash said. Regarding damage to the houses, the Minister said that an amount of `2 lakh each would be given to those who lost their houses. A total of 157 houses were destroyed and 4,027 damaged in the rains till today. About 8700 people were now housed in 51 relief camps across the state, he said and added that Alappuzha with 21 camps has the

largest number of relief camps. In Wayanad, 13 camps have been set up. While there are seven camps in Kottayam district, Thrissur and Pathanamthitta have four camps each and Kozhikode and Ernakulam one each, he said. The Chief Secretary has been asked to discuss with the Irrigation Department on removing the mud in the Thottappalli spillway that which could help in curbing floods in Kuttanad region. Reports from the various districts show that much damage has been caused to houses and standing crops. A report from Alappuzha said that villages in Upper and Lower Kuttanad were isolated. In Palakkad, as many as seven control rooms were opened to bring the situation under control. A report from Ernakulam said that there was a let-up in monsoon rains. Pathanamthitta also saw water-logging in many parts. A Wayanad report said that two shutters of the Banasura Sagar reservoir of the Kuttiyadi hydro electric project were further lifted on Monday owing to the heavy inflow from the catchment areas.

Big Push for Fishing Sector as Lean Period Relief Hiked

Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa on Monday announces a series of measures for the welfare of the fishermen community and to boost the fisheries sector in the State which included setting up of three more fish landing centres at a cost of `17.15 crore, fish farms in four places at a cost of `17.55 crore and hiking the relief for fishermen and fisherwomen during the 'lean period' each year. Making a suo motu statement in the State Assembly under Rule 110, the Chief Minister said in addition to the seven fishing harbours and 19 fish landing centres in Tamil Nadu, works were on to complete establishment of 11 more fish landing centres and four fishing harbours in the State. Besides, three more fish landing centres will come up at Kovalam (Kancheepuram district), Iraiyan and Thuthoor (Kanyakumari district) at a total cost of `17.15 crore. Through the new fish landing centres, over 8,300 fishermen in these areas would be benefited. Similarly, the fish farms would be established at four places — Parangipettai (Cuddalore district), Bhavanisagar dam (Erode district), Kodaikanal (Dindigul district) and Vaigai dam (Theni district) at a cost of `17.55 crore, it was announced. Under the National Savings-cum-Relief Scheme for Marine Fishermen, at present `1,800 is being given as relief during the 'lean period' months. Since the Centre had hiked its contribution to the scheme by `300, the State government too would extend a similar hike. Thus, the fishermen would hereafter get `2,700 during the 'lean period'. For this purpose, `6.30 crore and 2.1 lakh fishermen would be benefited by the scheme, the chief minister announced. Similarly, under the relief scheme for fisherwomen, the State government would hike its contribution to `1,800, while the contribution of the beneficiary would be `900. In all, the fisherwomen too would be getting `2,700 as relief. For this, `11.4 crore would be allocated and 1.90 lakh fisherwomen would be benefited, it was announced by the chief minister.

Regulate Use of Fishing Gears, Stakenets, Says Expert Panel

The Department of Fisheries should regulate the use of destructive fishing gears immediately and remove non-licensed stakenets within one year, considering their negative impact on resources, suggested an expert committee that studied the impact of trawling ban along the Kerala coast. The Committee also urged the State Government to insist on mesh size of 24 mm on the codend of stake nets, as recommended by the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT). It is recommended that the Department of Fisheries prohibit the operation of mini trawlers in a phased manner. "The Department should also formulate a registration and licence buyback scheme to help fishermen using mini trawlers to take up alternative vocations. "Mini trawlers should be phased out in five years, and the licences of the existing mini trawlers should not be renewed," the committee suggested. The Committee pointed out that the Marine Products Areas (MPA) would become necessary in the near future. "Therefore, the Department of Fisheries should initiate awareness campaigns, particularly in the Thiruvananthapuram district, in the next five years, so that the MPAs could be introduced within the next 10 years. The committee strongly recommended that the State Government urge the Ministry of Agriculture form proper rules and regulations for fishing, from 12 to 200 nautical miles, to stop fishing by foreign vessels that operate with Letter of Permission (LoP) from the Ministry of Agriculture. "If ring seiners (OBM and IBM)are using mechanised power to deploy and haul the net they would lose their traditional status and come under the category of 'mechanised'. Therefore, the 20/30-metre zonal restriction should be applicable to them," the Committee recommended. The 10-member Committee comprised top officials of the Department of Fisheries and senior scientists from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute and the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT). Aimed at the effective management of fishery resources, the Committee has also made several recommendations on subjects such as regulation of license and capacity of vessels and the period of trawling ban.

THE HINDU
BusinessLine

Pricier cardamom keeps buyers away; arrivals shrink



Cardamom prices continued to rule steady as demand is matching supply at auctions. Arrivals last week declined sharply due to heavy rains in the growing regions while the demand was equally low. Supply shown shrunk following a heavy downpour in the last one week which has disrupted harvesting and that has reflected on the arrivals last week, market sources told *Business Line*. Market sources told *Business Line* the capsules that arrived on Sunday were of the new crop. Some export buying also has taken place at an estimated 15 tonnes. The high prices, above ₹750 a kg, have been attributed to slow buying. At the Kerala Cardamom Processing and Marketing Company auction on Sunday, arrivals declined to 28.6 tonnes from 45 tonnes of capsules arrived the previous Sunday. The entire quantity was sold out. The maximum price was ₹974 a kg and the minimum ₹430.

Auction average

The auction average stayed steady at ₹759. During the current season that began this month, 82 tonnes have arrived against 161 tonnes last season. Sales are 77 tonnes against 158 tonnes. The weighted average price as on August 3 was ₹764.76 a kg against ₹572.08 on the same day last year. Total arrivals and sales in the first three days of the current season were 50 per cent lower due to the late crop and disruption in harvesting by heavy rains, official sources said. Prices of all graded varieties remained unchanged last week and they in ₹/kg at the weekend were: AGEB 975 - 985 ; AGB 800 – 810; AGS 770 – 780 ; and AGS -1: 750 – 760.

Kharif crop procurement target fixed at 300.50 lakh tonnes

The Government has set a procurement target for kharif crops at 300.50 lakh tonnes in the marketing season 2014-15 beginning October. In 2013-14, it had set a target of 320.59 lakh tonnes, but the actual kharif procurement was 266.49 lakh tonnes. This decision was taken in a meeting of State Food Secretaries held on Monday to set the procurement target for the kharif season. “Despite deficit monsoon and delayed sowing, the targets of procurement are comparable to the last season’s target and exceed the actual procurement of last year’s kharif crop,” the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution said. Monday’s meeting also reviewed arrangements for procurement of paddy and coarse grains. “States have been asked to open adequate purchase centres and deploy sufficient manpower. They have also been advised to make arrangements for publicising MSP (minimum support price), procurement centres through print and broadcast media and through pamphlets in local languages”, the Ministry said. State Governments have also been asked to give details of storage plans and have been asked to put in place an action plan to meet the deficit in storage requirement.

Coonoor tea rules at year’s low

Prices continue to rule at ₹66 a kg at Sale No: 31 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association – same as last week and the lowest so far this year. Still, as much as 5.18 lakh kg of tea worth ₹3.46 crore remained unsold as there were no takers for 27 per cent of the offer. Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC market

as RJ Tea Corporation bought it for ₹193 a kg. Deepika Supreme got ₹185, Crosshill Estate ₹180, Hittakkal Estate ₹177 and Vigneshwar Estate ₹175. In all, 59 marks got ₹125 and more per kg. Among orthodox teas, Kairbetta got ₹220, Kodanad and Chamraj ₹211 each, Havukal ₹191, Corsley ₹187 and Highfield Estate ₹185. In all, 36 marks got ₹125 and more per kg. Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging ₹43-48 a kg for plain leaf grades and ₹100-160 for brighter liquoring sorts. The prices ranged ₹45-49 for plain dusts and ₹120-175 for brighter liquoring dusts. On the export front, Pakistan bought tea at wide range between ₹49 and ₹111 a kg.

Global meet on novel methods in agriculture

The city will host the international conference on 'Novel agricultural and horticultural strategies for sustainable development' from October 27 to 29. Organised by the OMICS Group International, the third edition of the meet would discuss latest developments in agriculture and horticulture. All the stakeholders, including farmers, scientists, non-governmental organisations and government officials would take part in the conference. It would deliberate on agriculture, risk assessment and management, contingency planning, agricultural land and water use management, impact of GM crops and seed technologies, organisers said here in a statement on Monday.

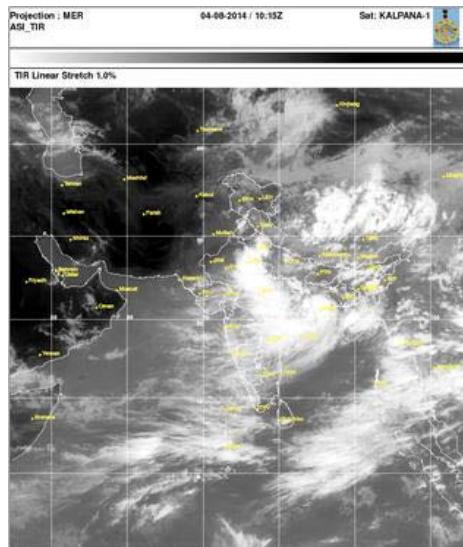
Peria Karamalai Tea to modernise; forays into pepper and cinnamon

The Peria Karamalai Tea & Produce Co has initiated measures to modernise its existing tea factories and diversify into pepper and cinnamon planting as well. Incorporated in 1913, this LN Bangur Group company is said to be one of the oldest black tea manufacturers in the country. The company owns an area of 1,550 hectares under tea cultivation across four gardens at Karamalai, Akkamalai, Vellamalai and Nadumalai in Valparai, Coimbatore district. The total annual production of tea from the gardens is over 40.5 lakh kg, the company's Chief Executive Officer SK Singh told *Business Line*.

The gardens were recently awarded the RFA (Rain Forest Alliance) Certificate.

This certificate issued by INDOCERT, an international certification authority, is in recognition of the company's adoption of sustainable agricultural standard under the Sustainable Agricultural Standard, July 2010 and Farm and Group Administrator Policy, January 2013. Singh explained that the tea gardens were in close to the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and intrusion of wildlife was quite rampant in that belt. "We initiated eco-friendly measures including soil preservation, sanitation, and animal welfare. Our focus is to create a path for achieving sustainable growth by replanting tea. To generate additional revenue, we have taken up pepper and cinnamon cultivation," he added. "The initiatives were audited by a separate team, before issuance of the certificate. We will now work towards improving these measures. The RFA certification is valid for three years," he said.

Monsoon spins up a second depression over land, signals heavy rain



The heavy to extreme heavy rainfall belt has shifted to the east as the latest low-pressure area in the northwest Bay of Bengal intensified twice over to become a depression this morning. This is the second monsoon depression during the season, but is expected to start weakening from tomorrow itself, according to the India Met Department. The depression is currently located over Gangetic West Bengal and is expected to travel west-northwest into the plains and foothills of the Himalayas.

Heavy rain

The US Climate Prediction Centre has forecast that the rains would sit heavy over east Rajasthan, west Madhya Pradesh and southwest and west Uttar Pradesh during the week ending August 9. The rains may lift from west and northwest India later, and open a new front once again to the east and particularly so over northeast India. The west coast may also be active during this phase; it will be interesting to watch if a 'monsoon break' would happen as it must after the season runs over a peak. The 'break' condition occurs when the rain is confined to the foothills of the Himalayas and parts of the east coast.

Business Standard

Jeera down 0.5% on supply pressures



Jeera prices fell 0.49% to Rs 11,185 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators offloaded positions amidst adequate supplies from producing regions. At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, jeera for delivery in August fell by Rs 55, or 0.49%, to Rs 11,185 per quintal with an open interest of 4,824 lots. Similarly, the spice for delivery in September shed Rs 55, or 0.48%, to Rs 11,380 per quintal in 4,809 lots. Analysts attributed the fall in jeera futures to offloading of positions by speculators on the back of adequate stocks position.

Turmeric up 2% on upsurge in spot demand



Turmeric prices shot up by 2.29% to Rs 6,780 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators indulged in creating fresh positions amid rising demand in the spot market. Besides, tight stocks position in the physical market following fall in supplies from producing regions also supported the upside in turmeric prices. At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, turmeric for delivery in September spurted by Rs 152, or 2.29%, to Rs 6,780 per quintal with an open interest of 6,560 lots. Similarly, the spice for delivery in August gained Rs 128, or 1.99%, to Rs 6,548 per quintal in 11,265 lots. Analysts said fresh positions built-up by speculators on the back of strong demand in the spot market pushed up turmeric prices at futures trade.

Chana down 0.7% on increased supply



Chana prices fell 0.69% to Rs 2,871 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators trimmed positions amidst increased supplies from producing regions in the spot market against weak demand. At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for delivery in September moved down by Rs 20, or 0.69%, to Rs 2,871 per quintal with an open interest of 1,15,010 lots. Similarly, the commodity for delivery in

August traded lower by Rs 18, or 0.64%, to Rs 2,787 per quintal in 92,020 lots. Market analysts attributed the fall in chana futures to increased supplies from producing regions in the physical market against weak demand from dal mills.

Cardamom up 0.7% as demand picks up



Cardamom prices rose 0.70% to Rs 890 per kg in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions amid positive cues from spot market on rising demand. Tight stocks position in the physical market following restricted arrivals from producing region also supported the uptrend. Cardamom for delivery in September moved up by Rs 6.20, or 0.70%, to Rs 890 per kg in a business turnover of 34 lots at the Multi Commodity Exchange. Similarly, the spice for delivery in August traded higher by Rs 3, or 0.32%, to Rs 930 per kg in 91 lots. Market analysts said apart from pick-up in demand in the spot market, restricted arrivals from growing regions led the rise in cardamom prices at futures trade.

DECCAN Chronicle

Rs 670 cr for farm irrigation



In a major thrust to agricultural production, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa announced Rs 670.5 crore worth of irrigation infrastructure projects for the state. Making a suo moto statement in the assembly on Monday, she said a barrage would be constructed across Kollidam river at an outlay of Rs 400 crore to store 0.6 tmc feet of water. Bar-rages would also be built between Athanur and Kumaramangalam villages in Cuddalore and

Nagapattinam districts. They would store storm water when the Cauvery flooded and help save water in the Coleroon, Ms Jayalalithaa said. She said that the sand vent of Uyyakondan Canal in Pettavaithalai village in Srirangam block and the Uyyakondan canal under the jurisdiction of Tiruchy corporation would be renovated at a cost of Rs 14 crore. Further, the reservoirs at Vadaseri, Piraatiyur, Ariyavur, Punganur and Inamkulathur in Srirangam block and seven reservoirs across Ariyaru in Manapparai would be renovated at a cost of Rs 16.85 crore, Kothamangalam reservoir for Rs 2 crore and 3 lakes in Thiruverumbur, Musiri and Thuraiyur at a cost Rs 2.70 crore. In addition, works to strengthen the right bund of the Cauvery would be carried out at an estimated cost of Rs 1.20 crore. About Rs 48 crore has been earmarked for irrigation facilities in Theni district. While 17 check dams would be constructed in Tiruchi district for `32 crore, similar infrastructure in Dindigul district would be executed for Rs 31 crore, she said.



Forest department, German agency unite to boost wetland tourism along creek

The state forest department has tied up with a German government agency, GIZ, to develop a grand Marine Interpretation Centre (MIC) on the Airoli coast along Thane creek. The centre will have a mangroves sanctuary. Visitors can enjoy the open mangrove creek spaces, learn more about the wetlands and even take a boat ride. This is the first time that such a centre is being planned. It is likely to come up by next year. N Vasudevan, chief conservator of forests (mangroves cell), told TOI, "The MIC will be similar to the Nehru Science Centre in Worli. Only it will be on a grander scale, covering the northern tip of Thane creek, and deal with environmental science and wetlands. It can be an ideal place for students and public at large, who want to enjoy and know more about nature." Vasudevan added that the idea of the centre was recently approved. GIZ has agreed to fund around Rs 1 crore to develop it. Construction of the MIC building will be taken care of by funding from the state forest department.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

India should follow Gujarat model in farming: Economist



India should follow the Gujarat model on agriculture to achieve food security, says noted farm sector economist Ashok Gulati, adding this state alone has managed to log three times the nation's growth in this crucial sector. "Gujarat has shown how technological innovation, proactive governance can assist primary sector and bring strong results even at odd situations. Having achieved almost double-digit growth for over a decade, Gujarat shows the way," Gulati said. More than 54 per cent of the Indian workforce is engaged in agriculture but for the past 20 years even 4 per cent growth in this area has been elusive, with an expansion of 3.2-3.3 per cent. "Then comes a state, which for a whole decade, from 2001 to 2011, achieves agriculture GDP growth of 9.8 per cent. The good show is still on. Statistically, the difference is three times higher than the rest of India," he said in an article in Inclusion magazine. The farm sector in Gujarat was growing at 2 per cent annually in the earlier decade. But suddenly, it reached 10 per cent. "That makes good difference in terms of what is called inclusiveness as agriculture employs a majority of working people," he said. "If we are able to achieve even 5 per cent growth in agriculture nation wide, it will lead to true inclusiveness. It's important to know what have been the growth drivers in Gujarat and how can these be scaled up nationally." ulati said, besides cotton, Gujarat has also witnessed a horticulture revolution. The state-run marketing arm has been cleaned up and has been keeping direct linkage with farmers who are keen on contract farming -- but not at the national level. According to him, if India was serious about food security over the next 20 years, it needed to focus on where water is -- like eastern India, which is floating on ground water. "You can have next 20 years food security and the second green revolution only from eastern India -- Bihar and further down towards the east -- but only if the mentioned flaws get fixed-up," he said. "Agriculture of future cannot be seen alone through farming. Gujarat gave us the milk model, similar model needs to be replicated for fruits and vegetables -- job creation, income and inclusiveness will come together."

