

Rs. 27-crore programme to help farmers

KOLKATA, February 6, 2014 - : In a bid to help farmers preserve crops and take them to the market fast, the Mamata Banerjee government has embarked on a Rs. 27 crore programme, under which grants will be remitted directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts.

The programme comprises scheme to help farmers create assets such as facilities to store grains and vegetables and another to enable them buy vehicles to transport their produce to markets.

Informed sources said Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had asked the agricultural marketing department to finalise the two schemes by February 28.

Farmers are also being asked to meet the block-level officers in this regard.

The block-level applications will be vetted by a committee headed by the district magistrate. Farmers would get a one-time grant varying between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 25,000 for building storage facilities, the sources said adding that proper preservation of agro products was a priority for Ms. Banerjee.

While a thatched grain silo costs Rs. 5,000, the cost of building a facility for onion storage was higher at Rs. 25,000.

In respect of transport facilities, Rs. 10,000 would be given for buying handcarts or cycle-vans. The grants would be made available either through Kisan Credit Cards or bank accounts.

☑ ***Two schemes to be finalised by February 28***

☑ ***Farmers to get a one-time grant varying for building storage facilities***

Farmers demand hike in cane price



Farmers staging a stir demanding higher price for sugarcane at Ariyalur on Wednesday.

ARIYALUR, February 6, 2014 - : Members of the Tamizhaga Eri Matrum Aatrupasana Vivasayigal Sangam staged a demonstration in front of the Taluk

Office here on Wednesday in support of their charter of demands, including hiking the procurement price of sugarcane.

The procurement price of Rs. 2,650 a tonne fixed by the government was far less than the cultivation cost incurred by the farmers, P. Viswanathan, state president of the Sangam said, and urged the government to fix the same at Rs. 3,000 per tonne.

Mr. Viswanathan, addressing the farmers, said that the procurement price was far less than the cultivation cost. The possibility of the sugar factories not effecting the revised price could not be ruled out, he said, urging district administration to direct sugar factories to disburse revised price.

He also said that the cotton growers had suffered a serious loss this season. Attractive price at Rs. 7,000 a quintal should be fixed for procuring the cotton. He also wanted check dams to be constructed across the Marudaiyar for preserving storm water to be utilised for

irrigating crops. K. Subramanian, Ariyalur union president, said that the district administration should recommend adequate relief for the farmers who had incurred heavy loss due to drought conditions. Maize, cotton kumbu and ragi growers were the worst hit. R. Rajendran, district secretary of the party, V. Ulaganathan, state general secretary said that all the tanks in the district should be dredged.

Turn system sought

NAGERCOIL, February 6, 2014 - Farmers in the tail-end areas of Kanyakumari district are concerned over the depletion of storage in all dams — Pechipparai, Perunchani, Chittar-I, Chittar-II and Poigai. They have demanded immediate implementation of turn system as it would be difficult to save the standing paddy crop in the prevailing water scenario.

Farmers in east Kanyakumari, which includes Thoivalai, Chenbakaramanputhur, a portion of Anjugramam, Azagappapuram Kottaram, Myladi, Tamaraikulam, Asaripallam, Rajakkamangalam and Muttom, have cultivated paddy on over 19,000 acres. As the crop in the tail-end areas, which has attained the 'milky stage,' needs more water, farmers have urged the district administration to introduce the 'turn system' at the earliest.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on Wednesday, the chairman of Kodayar Irrigation Project (Water Resource Organisation), A. Vinsanto, pointed out that the government used to issue a special order every year on March 1 for water release in Padmanabhapuram-Puthanar channel up to March 15 for devotees to take a holy dip during Mondaicadu Bhagavathy Amman Masi Kodai Viza. Water also would be released in Thoivalai and Ananthanar channels during the Mondaicadu festival. This step will benefit farmers in the tail-end areas.

While paddy raised around the dam head needs water for only 15 days more, those in the tail-end areas need it for a month. Thus, farmers in Kottaram and surrounding areas have urged the PWD officials to implement turn system immediately before the special G.O. is issued.

Over the years, cultivable area in the district has shrunk from 35,000 hectares to 25,000 hectares owing to conversion of land into sites for houses. In the absence of remunerative price for paddy, farmers have switched over to cash crops like banana and rubber. Though the district administration has taken steps to create awareness of the need to protect water bodies under the 'Nanneer Kumari' initiative, it is yet to take off due to poor cooperation from farmers, according to officials in the Department of Agriculture.

Farmers hope to see barrage opened on CM's birthday

KARUR, February 6, 2014 - *It could store up to 1.04 tmcft, carry 5.40 tmcft during flood*

Farmers on either side of the Cauvery in Tiruchi and Karur districts would be hugely benefited if the just-completed Rs. 234 crore Mayanur barrage was expeditiously opened. Chief Minister Jayalalitha could gift the farmers on her birthday, Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association has pleaded.

The project forms the basis of intrastate river link programme and recharge of fast depleting groundwater to a distance of 30 km on either side of the river, working president of the association Mahadanapuram V. Rajaram told *The Hindu* on Wednesday.

The drought, absence of water flow in the Cauvery, and the onset of summer would be addressed at one stroke if the Chief Minister decided to dedicate the facility to the farmers coinciding with her birthday on February 24.

This was the prime time when the farmers needed water for saving the standing crops and people for drinking purposes, Mr. Rajaram said.

The Chief Minister must direct the PWD officials to release adequate water from Mettur dam so that at least one tmcft. was stored at the 1,233-metre Mayanur barrage for recharging ground water in the upstream course of the river for a distance of 15 km on either side benefiting Tiruchi and Karur farmers.

Kulithalai banana farmers apprised of new technology

KULITHALAI, February 6, 2014 - The Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Puzhutheri, organised a training programme and frontline demonstration in integrated crop management in banana at Rajendram village near here on Tuesday.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research sponsored the special programme for banana growers in Kulithalai region of Karur district for improving productivity and profitability.

V. Kumar, Senior Scientist (Horticulture) from the National Research Centre for Banana, Tiruchi, during the technical session explained the important technologies involved from sucker selection, sucker treatment, planting systems, water management, integrated nutrient management, to integrated pest, and disease management, pre-harvest spray of sulphate of potash, bunch cover usage, and the overall profitability of adoption of improved technologies.

Dr. Kumar stressed on the need for proper adoption of the technology for getting the desired results. He shared with the participants examples of farmers who benefitted from the improved technologies.

He said integrated crop management technologies could help farmers overcome adverse situation and would enable them get remunerative returns from banana crop.

Vijayakumar, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Kulithalai block, spoke on the efforts made by the department in helping farmers learn the improved technologies through exposure visits to successful farms and fields.

J. Diraviam, Programme Coordinator of the KVK, outlined the efforts of the KVK over the years to spread improved technologies among banana farmers. He stressed on the need for banana farmers to come together to form a producer organisation with the support of NABARD and the Department of Agricultural Marketing to reap the benefits of collective input mobilisation, and marketing of banana products.

Successful banana farmers Senthilkumar of Kulithalai and Velanmai Chemmal award-winner Duraisamy of Kumaramangalam village shared their experiences in adoption of improved production technologies such as high-density planting system and drip irrigation system that had helped them overcome drought as well as weed menace, resulting in assured returns even during unfavourable seasons.

Farmers were encouraged to start clubs with the support of the NABARD and KVK for spread of technologies and to pave the way for the formation of Farmer-Producer Organisations. Earlier, the technical team visited farmers' fields where improved technologies were adopted.

KVK scientists P. Kaviyarasu and P. Karuppasami coordinated the arrangements.

📌 ***Farmers encouraged to start clubs with NABARD's support***

📌 ***Integrated crop management may help them get better income***

Consider setting up debt relief panel for farmers

MADURAI, February 6, 2014 - *Judges hope that it is beneficial to farmers in Tamil Nadu*

The Madras High Court Bench here on Wednesday directed the State Government to consider constituting a Farmers Debt Relief Commission (FDRC) on the lines of a commission already established in the State of Kerala to provide assistance to drought affected farmers. A Division Bench comprising Justice Satish K. Agnihotri and Justice R. Sudhakar passed the order while disposing of a public interest litigation (PIL) petition filed last year by State Agriculture and Horticulture Diploma Holders Association represented by its secretary V. Balakrishnan.

“We hope and trust that the Government will consider the request positively as it is beneficial to farmers in the State of Tamil Nadu,” the Bench said after pointing out that the Virudhunagar Collector alone had filed a report in the case without spelling out the government’s stand on constituting the FDRC.

The report, filed in March last year, merely stated that the Government was taking all possible efforts to implement two different crop insurance schemes — National Agricultural Insurance Scheme and Weather based Crop Insurance Scheme — for the benefit of agriculturalists in the State. Further a Government Order passed by the Revenue Department on February 2, 2013 and annexed to the Collector’s report, stated that the Government had sanctioned Rs. 3 lakh each to the families of nine farmers who committed suicide in Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Pudukottai, Virudhunagar and Tirunelveli districts. On the other hand, the petitioner association claimed that the agony undergone by farmers, who often land in trouble due to crop failure and inability to pay back debts, could be reduced to a great extent if an FDRC was constituted in the State to scrutinise plea for debt relief on a case by case basis.

It claimed that the State Government had failed in effective implementation of insurance schemes in the State as the Agriculture Insurance Company of India data stated that crop insurance penetration in Tamil Nadu was just 3.12 per cent as against 25 to 40 per cent recorded in other States.

Citing the instance of Kerala, the petitioner said that farmer suicide rate in the neighbouring State had come down considerably due to the State Government acting promptly on various recommendations of the FDRC including the declaration of entire Wayanad district as drought affected.

☑ ***Form a commission similar to the one in Kerala***

☑ ***Agony of farmers will be reduced: petitioner***

Farmers seek use of ethanol-based fuel

SALEM, February 6, 2014 - Farmers attached to the Tamil Nadu Toddy Movement (TNTM) will operate vehicles using ethanol as fuel to spread awareness of its advantages at an event on Saturday.

“It is an attempt to draw attention to our long-pending demand for manufacturing ethanol on a large scale for use as fuel,” C. Nallusamy, convener of the movement, said on Wednesday.

Support

Mr. Nallusamy said for the Lok Sabha polls, farmers in the region would only support a party whose manifesto included the promise to promote the use of ethanol on a large scale.

“Otherwise, our movement will field candidates in all the constituencies,” he said.

After chairing a State-level consultative meeting of the movement here, he said, “we will use a blend of ethanol and petrol at 85:15 ratio to run two-wheelers, four-wheelers and tractors at a demonstration from 11 a.m. on Saturday at Selvam College of Engineering and Technology in Namakkal,” he said.

“The ethanol that will be used on that day has been produced in cottage industries. Over the years, some farmers have produced ethanol on a small scale and conducted trials at their fields. Saturday’s event will be open to all and environmental activists, farmers,

students and representatives of truckers' associations have been invited to have a first-hand look at how vehicles run on ethanol," he said.

Mr. Nallusamy contended that ethanol-mixed fuel offered many advantages. "Compared to fossil fuel, it requires 50 per cent less oxygen for burning. The cost of production is less. When produced and used on a large scale, it would bring down the burden of importing fossil fuel," he said.

The farmers said that ethanol-mixed fuels had many advantages over fossil fuels

Seed Farm on the path to recovery



Agriculture Officer and Farm Manager V. Vasanthamani inspecting the high quality maize raised at the State Seed Farm near Pongalur in Tirupur district. — Photo: R. VIMAL KUMAR

TIRUPUR, February 6, 2014 - With simple ideas laid through a planned approach, the Agriculture Department officials in the district have put the State Seed Farm at Devanampalayam near Pongalur on

the path of an incredible recovery in the last few months.

The 39.05-acre farm, established in 1956, was lying idle for more than five years till the second half of 2013 due to administrative lapses as well as a few other supplementary reasons. Channelising funds from various Government-sponsored schemes and involving participation of different stakeholders, the agriculture officials here restarted the activities and the results are overwhelming;

The revival of activities, which involve creation of a seed repository through production of foundation and hybrid seeds of crops that are conducive for the cultivation in the district, is not only helping the farmers to get high quality seeds at lower prices but also providing employment to labourers in the vicinity. At the moment, 25 persons are employed on an average a day in the raising of maize on 8 acres in various blocks, cowpea on one acre, red gram on 1.5 acre and cholam on 5 acres.

"More people will be able to get work as we are planning to grow more crops such as groundnut and black gram in the coming days for the production of foundation seeds," Joint Director of Agriculture Mohammed Kalimullah Sherif told *The Hindu*.

This apart, the Farm has widened the activities from being a mere seed producer to raising crops for commercial purpose. "Now, tenera oil palm is being cultivated under a contract farming methodology on a buyback arrangement entered with a private firm," Mr. Sherif said.

With the Farm regaining some of its lost glory, the agriculture students and researchers have started arriving on the premises to study the latest farming practices adopted in the cultivation, harvest and seed production stages.

Amendment to forests Act to benefit farmers

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, February 6, 2014 - : The government was considering yet another amendment to the Kerala Forests (Vesting and Management of Ecologically Fragile Lands) Act, 2003 to ease the disposal of claims of farmers with landholdings less than two

hectares, which had been notified under the Act, Forests and Transport Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan said in the Assembly on Wednesday.

Replying to a submission by Sunny Joseph, MLA, on the hardships of farmers whose small landholdings had been notified as EFL, he said the government had declared 112 plots measuring 14,810 hectares of land. He said 482 plots of landholding less than two hectares had also been included in the EFL list.

The EFL Act had been amended in 2009 so that farmers with landholding less than two hectares could file an application before the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests for settling the dispute whether the land was EFL or not within six months. The claims were further referred to an EFL Claim Disputes Redressal Committee, with the DFO as the chairman.

The committee had so far examined 109 claims and another 68 had been settled. About 292 claims were yet to be examined by the committee, Mr. Radhakrishnan informed the House Infrastructures Kerala Ltd. (INKEL) would launch a new Cancer Centre in Malappuram district soon, Health Minister V.S. Sivakumar said, while replying to a submission by K.

Mohammedunni Haji regarding the need for a cancer detection and treatment centre in Malappuram district. The Industries Department had already given sanction to INKEL for the Cancer centre project, Mr. Sivakumar said.

t. This apart, cancer care facilities, including chemotherapy and follow-up management, were being extended to district hospitals across the State by the government, as part of decentralising cancer care, he said.

Minister for Social Justice and Panchayats M.K. Muneer said district-level monitoring committees were being set up to monitor the functioning of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).

Farmers block inter-State highway

RAICHUR, February 6, 2014 - *They want water to be released for standing crops*



Angry: Farmers from tail-end areas of the TLBC staging a protest near Raichur on Wednesday. — PHOTO: SANTOSH SAGAR

Around 3,000 farmers from tail-end areas of the Tungabhadra Left Bank Canal (TLBC) blocked the inter-State highway at Saath Mile Junction, around 11 km from

Raichur, for four-and-a-half-hours, demanding that water be released for their standing crops.

As the police were aware of the protest plan, they diverted traffic.

Tipparaj Hawaldar (BJP), Raichur Rural MLA, and Shivaraj Patil (JD-S), Raichur City MLA, led the farmers, along with KRRS leader Lakshmangowda Kadagamdoddi.

“Release a minimum of 3,500 cusecs of water into the TLBC,” Deputy Commissioner S.N. Nagaraju told B. Mallikarjun, Chief Engineer, Irrigation Centre Zone, Munirabad. The farmers blocked the road at 9 a.m. and continued the protest till Mr. Mallikarjun accepted the farmers’ demand at 1.30 p.m. Mr. Mallikarjun assured that a water-level of 4.5 feet would be maintained at the 104th mile point of TLBC till the Ganekal Balancing Reservoir was filled to capacity.

He then instructed his subordinates at the Tungabhadra Reservoir in Munirabad, over the telephone, to release 3,500 cusecs of water into the TLBC. “Officials will release the water into the TLBC right now and it will reach the 104th mile point within two days. The water will continue to flow at this rate till the Ganekal Balancing Reservoir is filled to capacity,” Mr. Mallikarjun said.

Mr. Hawaldar cautioned that another agitation would be launched on February 10 if the Chief Engineer failed to keep his word.

Karnataka - Chief Minister holds pre-budget consultation with farmers' leaders

BANGALORE, February 6, 2014 - As part of pre-budget consultation, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah held discussions with leaders of eight farmers' organisations here on Wednesday.

He met leaders of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and Hasiru Sene, the Karnataka State Non-political Farmers' Welfare Committee, the Karnataka State Federation of Farmers' Organisations and the National Farmers' Association, and MLA K.S. Puttannaiah.

Relief sought

Later, Mr. Siddaramaiah, who also holds the Finance portfolio, told presspersons that the leaders listed out their demands and sought relief for farmers.

President of the Karnataka State Sugarcane Growers' Association Kurubur Shanthakumar, however, said the meeting was convened keeping in mind the Lok Sabha elections. He said sugar factories had defied the government directive to pay Rs. 2,500 for tone of sugarcane and that they owed Rs. 100 crore to growers. He urged Mr. Siddaramaiah to take steps to ensure that the factories paid arrears to growers immediately.

KRRS president Kodihalli Chandrashekar said his organisation would take to the streets if a populist budget was presented keeping in mind the Lok Sabha elections. He said 50 per cent of the budget allocations should be earmarked for the welfare of farmers, and agricultural income guarantee and price guarantee commissions should be set up.

'Quarterly meetings'

Chukki Nanjundaswamy, daughter of the former KRRS president late M.D. Nanjundaswamy, was of the opinion that such pre-budget general discussion with farmers would not serve any purpose. She said the Chief Minister should instead hold quarterly meetings and solve farmers' problems. Ms. Nanjundaswamy urged the Chief Minister to bring about agrarian reforms and regularise 'bagair hukum' cultivations.

Farmers' leaders B.P. Sheri and B.M. Hanasi demanded remunerative prices for maize, jowar and cotton, and action against companies that supply substandard seeds.

Now, bio-fuel derived from farm waste



Now, gasoline-like fuels can be made from cellulosic materials such as farm waste. The feedstock for the new process is levulinic acid, produced by chemical processing of straw, corn stalks or even municipal green waste.

Farmer's notebook



New model: The machine is capable of picking both small and big stones (not boulders) from a depth of 15 – 25 cm in the soil.—Photo: Special Arrangement
Priced at Rs. 1,50,000 in a day it can be used to clear five acres

Farmland turns into a bustling colony

VISAKHAPATNAM, February 6, 2014 - *Sri Venkateswara Colony charms one with a combination of bungalows and apartment blocks*



Sri Venkateswara Colony near Sheelanagar in Visakhapatnam. — Photos: C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

What used to be a farmland has been converted into a beautiful expanse providing home to 400 families in an extent of 23.82 acres.

Sri Venkateswara Colony near Sheelanagar that came up on a nearly

24-acre site charms one with a combination of huge bungalows and tall apartment blocks. A part of Tunlam village, the colony's land was mostly owned by farmers and had been sold out to employees of various sectors.

The place attracted many working in the Hindustan Shipyard, Bharat Heavy Plate and Vessels, Port Trust, Export Processing Zone, and Visakhapatnam Steel Plant in the year 1986. Later, they purchased the plots and built their dream houses.

Owing to lack of roads, decades ago, inundation was one of the serious problems faced by the residents.

But, seven years later, the scenario has changed.

"We have taken the initiative of laying roads associating with HUDCO. Now, the colony has 14 lanes in total, each leading to the dead-end of the road. With the downstream of Meghadrigedda passing through the adjacent colony, we are blessed with good supply of groundwater," says N. Kalidas, Director of Institute for Solid Waste Research and Ecological Balance and a resident of the colony for the last 20 years.

Residents visit either Gopalapatnam or Gajuwaka for their shopping requirements. With the port road situated close to the main road, the city is just 9 km away.

Women in the colony say they have plenty of free time and wish to utilise it constructively. A group of like-minded women formed Sri Venkata Padmavathi Mahila Mandali to pursue their hobbies.

“It’s a club of 100 women. Initially, the mandali created avenue to train the colony women in diverse crafts such as tailoring, cooking, and painting.

Now, due to lack of trainers, we focus on conducting social activities and awareness programmes,” says 22-year-old president of the mandali T. Annapoorna.

M. Rama, one of the residents, appears to be quite content with the bus facility.

“In no time, we can reach anywhere we want to go. The place is surrounded by a number of educational institutions. Icon Krishi Hospitals caters to our medical needs. Our mahila mandali and Sri Venkateswara Colony Welfare Association are in place and most of the issues are sorted out amicably,” she adds.

Managing false smut disease in rice

False smut infestation in rice has been reported from many places in the State in an alarming proportion. In Cauvery delta zone, the disease has been reported to an extent of 10-20 per cent during kharif and rabi seasons.

Another name

Also known as Lakshmi disease, it is caused by a fungus and was believed to be an indication of a bumper crop in the year.

Due to the infection, individual grains of the panicle get transformed into greenish spore balls of velvety appearance. Spore balls are small at first growing gradually to reach one cm or more in diameter.

They are slightly flattened, smooth, yellow and are covered by a membrane. The membrane bursts as the result of further growth and the colour of the ball turns orange and later yellowish-green or black.

Under congenial conditions like high moisture or rainfall accompanied by cloudy days during the period between flowering and maturity of grains, the development of false smut is rapid and causes considerable loss.

Yield loss is not only due to the occurrence of the smut balls but also due to increased sterility of kernels adjacent to the smut balls.

The disease not only reduces the yield but also affects the quality of grains or seeds.

Prominent high yielding rice varieties like CO 43, CR 1009, ADT 38, ADT 39 and BPT 5204 are found susceptible to this infestation.

Late planting of rice during kharif and rabi seasons, are more susceptible to this problem.

Management

- Healthy disease free seeds alone should be used for sowing.
- Seeds should not be taken from false smut affected fields.
- At the time of harvesting, infected plants should be removed and destroyed
- Field bunds and irrigation channels should be kept clean.
- Excess application of nitrogenous fertilizer should be avoided.
- Regular monitoring is very essential. Spraying of copper hydroxide at 2.5 gm per litre of water or propiconazole at 1.0 ml per litre will be more useful.

(Dr .K.Karunanithi is professor, Plant Pathology and Dr.R.Rajendran, Director in charge, Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute, Aduthurai – 612 01, email: dirtrri@tnau.ac.in, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.)

High Court attention drawn to pesticides in fruits, veggies

NEW DELHI, February 6, 2014 - The Delhi High Court was on Wednesday told that the Centre and the city government have failed to address the issue of banned pesticides in fruits and vegetables.

The submission was made in a report placed before the court by the amicus curiae appointed to examine if banned pesticides are being used on fruits and vegetables and what steps the authorities have taken to address the issue.

The report was opposed by the Delhi Government. - PTI

Producers' strike: milk supply unaffected

CHENNAI, February 6, 2014 - *Aavin continued to maintain supply across the State as protest entered day 2*

Aavin milk supply to the city remained unaffected on Wednesday despite a strike by milk producers in the State seeking a hike in procurement prices.

The Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation, popularly known as Aavin, supplies around 11.50 lakh litres of milk a day to the city and suburbs.

R. Sridharan, a resident of Kodambakkam, said he had been worried after having read news reports of the strike. However, he said, Aavin milk packets were delivered at his home on time on Wednesday, the second day of the strike.

Sources in Aavin said on Monday, the procurement stood at 21.69 lakh litres and on Tuesday, it was 21.30 lakh litres from 8,000 societies in the State.

"Only a total of 34 societies did not supply milk and in 166, supply was partially affected. Milk supply was maintained all over the State," said a source.

Asked about the producers' demand for hike in procurement prices, the source explained the State government had hiked procurement prices only recently. "The hike came into effect from January 1, 2014. The price of cow milk has gone up from Rs. 20 to Rs. 23 per litre and buffalo milk from Rs. 28 to Rs. 31 per litre," he said.

Strike to continue

Tamil Nadu Milk Producers' Welfare Association president K.A. Sengottuvel said the effected hike of Rs. 3 per litre was not sufficient when the cost of production was Rs. 34 per litre.

"Due to an increase in cost of cattle feed, we had sought a hike of Rs. 10 per litre. We were not consulted when the latest hike was affected," he said, adding the strike would continue.

N. Ganesan, the association's joint secretary, said even though the hike was Rs. 3 per litre, only those supplying milk with 4.5 per cent solids that are not fat (SNF) get Rs. 23 per litre.

"Otherwise we get only Rs. 21- Rs. 22. When private dairies pay Rs. 27 – Rs. 28 a litre, many producers are wondering why they should continue with the cooperative societies," he said.

☑ **Only 34 societies did not supply milk**

☑ **State's producers have been seeking hike in procurement prices**

Milk scarcity causes concern among residents

Drastic reduction in supply by Aavin cited as reason



Government was taking sincere steps to address the issue, says official. — Photo: S.S. Kumar

PUDUCHERRY, February 6, 2014 - Residents of Puducherry have been experiencing an acute milk scarcity in the last few weeks.

Sources said the Pondicherry Milk Producers' Cooperative Union, which mainly depends upon Aavin and private dairy farms in Tamil Nadu for supplying milk to residents of Puducherry under

the name of 'Ponlait,' has reduced production to 40 per cent out of its total capacity. There were reports that people had to wait at Ponlait booths to avoid being told that there was no stock.

The drastic reduction in supply of milk by Aavin in Tamil Nadu to Pondicherry Milk Producers' Cooperative Union is said to be the main reason for the scarcity.

Reports said that Aavin, which was expected to supply 70,000 to 80,000 litres a day, had been maintaining supply of just 30,000 litres a day during the last few weeks. Though the issue was brought to the notice of authorities at Aavin, there was no improvement in supply.

Trouble reportedly started since the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Tamil Nadu that resulted in poor milk production. Though there was marginal improvement in milk supply by cattle growers in the recent weeks in Tamil Nadu, it had not made any remarkable difference in supply of Aavin milk to Puducherry.

Acknowledging the scarcity, G. Ragesh Chandra, Secretary, Cooperatives, told *The Hindu* that Puducherry required 1 lakh to 1,10,000 litres of milk a day. Supply from local cattle growers had not gone up beyond 15,000 litres a day. However, a minimum supply of milk to residents was being maintained to manage the situation. Stating that the government was taking sincere steps to solve the issue, Mr. Chandra said private dairy farms in Tamil Nadu had been approached to improve the situation. There would be some improvement in the days to come.

Aavin has been supplying 30,000 litres a day in last few weeks against the usual 70,000 to 80,000 litres a day

Water level

The water level in the **Mettur dam** stood at 51.63 feet on Wednesday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 437 cusecs and the discharge 1,000 cusecs.

Water level in the **Papanasam** dam on Wednesday stood at 76.60 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 196.29 cusecs and 1,154.75 cusecs of water is discharged from the dam. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 82.23 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 18 cusecs and 140 cusecs of water is discharged.

Kanyakumari - The level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 17.10 feet, while it was 49.10 feet in Perunchani, 8.03 feet in Chittar 1, 8.13 feet in Chittar 11, 4 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

Back-end fish marketing facility mooted

NAGAPATTINAM, February 6, 2014 - A proposal for a back-end fish marketing facility is under consideration jointly with the Tamil Nadu Fisheries University. The proposal was voiced at the district planning committee meeting here on Tuesday.

The back-end facility will tap the resources of Tamil Nadu Fisheries University and provide capacity building and value addition for the catch.

Collector T. Munusamy said under the scheme for equitable development, the State government has identified 100 blocks and municipalities for equitable development with a cumulative allocation of Rs. 100 crore.

Under this, the district had been allocated municipality areas. Nagapattinam Municipality, Mayiladuthurai Municipality, and Thalainayar Town Panchayat have been identified for development works.

Accordingly, a drainage facility for rainwater during monsoons had been proposed at a cost of Rs. 1.17 crore to include Nambiyar Nagar, Nalliyar Thottam to Devi Theatre, and other select areas. Salavai Kulam and Gandhi Nagar Kulam would be taken up for dredging at a cost of Rs. 33 lakh. A proposal for dredging of these water bodies had been sent to the government and was awaiting clearance, said Collector T. Munusamy.

Proposals from various departments towards the goals of raising per capita income, standards of sanitation, and education had been sent to the government for clearance, Mr. Munusamy added.

NSS volunteers from fisheries college begin service camp

NAGAYALANKA (KRISHNA DISTRICT), February 6, 2014 - National Service Scheme volunteers from Mandali Venkateswara Rao Fisheries Polytechnic College, Bhavadevarapalli, began a week's service camp at Kummaripalem village in Nagayalanka mandal on Tuesday.

Plea to students

Bhavadevarapalli Branch Syndicate Bank Manager Sai Kumar called upon the students and the villagers to make the week meaningful by taking up clean and green works at the village.

Queries from locals

The volunteers are also scheduled to address the queries of the local farmers on agriculture, and aquaculture. They will also take up campaign on health issues in the village during the camp, which is being conducted under the guidance of the Polytechnic College Principal K.S. Krishna Prasad.

☑ ***Students and villagers asked to take up clean and green works***

☑ ***Volunteers to undertake campaign on health issues in the village***

Solar energy facility for dry fish products not in use



potential wasted: Around 250 kg of fish could be dried within four to eight hours in the chamber in Kovalam —Photo: D. Gopalakrishnan

KANCHEEPURAM, February 6, 2014 - An effort to encourage hygienic preparation of dry fish products by women engaged in fish trade at Kovalam by tapping

renewable energy has flopped.

The integrated solar hot air generating system installed at a cost of Rs. 8.98 lakh in 2005 has no takers now.

Built under Swarnjayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY) scheme, the 1,200 sq. ft building has solar panels installed on the roof to heat air up to 60 to 65 degrees Celsius. The air was blown into the fish-drying chamber.

Four high-speed fans were used to ensure even distribution of hot air inside the chamber containing two racks, with a capacity to hold 56 trays, for quick removal of moisture from fishes.

Around 250 kg of fish could be dried within four to eight hours, depending on the size and variety, using this facility.

Being a common facility set up using SGSY funds, a group of around 20 women self-help groups, engaged in the fresh fish trade in Kovalam, were roped in and a woman SHG federation formed to operate this unit in association with the local body, official sources said.

This common facility did elicit some response from the beneficiaries initially. However, it was slowly abandoned as the beneficiaries realised that the immediate disposal of the catch was more remunerative when compared to marketing of dry fish products, said Janakiraman, panchayat president, Kovalam.

Further, the difficulties in marketing dry fish and lack of experience/exposure in manufacturing and marketing of value added products using dry fish as the main ingredient, led to the closure.

Mr. Janakiraman said that he had asked the Fisheries Department not to set up another solar-powered fish drying unit in the hamlet when the officials approached him with one such proposal recently.

He had also suggested that existing facility might be renewed and a value-added product manufacturing facility be added to it.

However, he added that with the sea remaining rough on most days and the strike calls given by various fishermen associations to highlight issues affecting the fishermen community in the State, local fishermen hardly get to venture into sea regularly.

Weatherman forecasts yet another warm day

Maximum temperature on Thursday expected to be 26 degrees Celsius and minimum will be 11 degrees

Delhiites enjoyed a sunny day on Wednesday, with the maximum temperature touching 24.8 degrees Celsius, three degrees above normal.

The minimum temperature was 11.8 degrees Celsius, also three degrees more than what is considered normal for this time of the year.

“But just because we have one warm day, or two extra-cold days, does not mean that the summer is coming earlier than usual or the winter will last longer,” said India Meteorological Department Director B. P. Yadav.

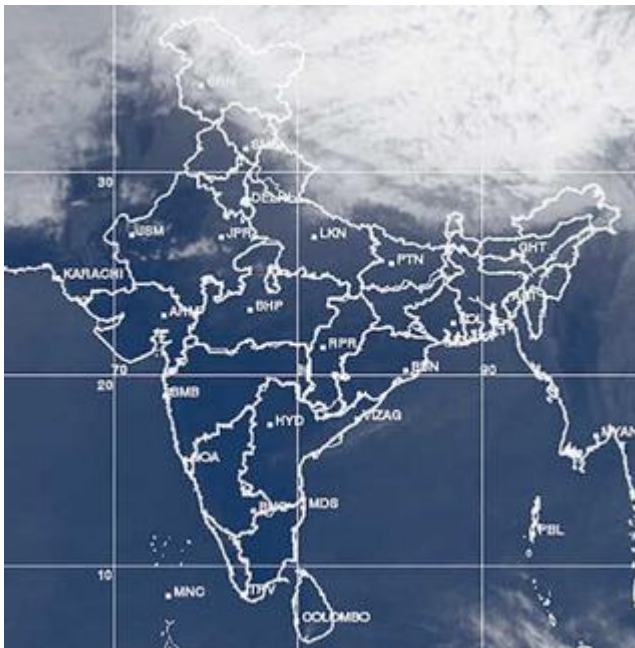
The weatherman has forecast light to moderate fog on Thursday morning and possible thundershowers from noon onwards in some areas of Delhi and the National Capital Region.

“The maximum temperature will be 26 degrees Celsius and minimum will be 11 degrees Celsius,” a Met official said.

The official added that Wednesday’s unusually high temperatures were because of “Western disturbance, which is an extratropical storm that originates in the Mediterranean”.

Mr. Yadav said the Western disturbance was likely to occur around four or five times in any given month. The Western disturbance initially increases the temperature and then brings sudden winter rain and snow to the Northwest region of India. The moisture in these storms usually originates over the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on February 05.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	34	17	0	0
Arogyavaram	32	14	0	0
Bapatla	31	18	0	0
Calingapatnam	31	19	0	0
Gannavaram	33	20	0	0
Hanamkonda	33	17	0	0
Hyderabad AP	33	15	0	0
Kakinada	31	21	0	1
Khammam	33	20	0	0
Kavali	31	20	0	2
Kurnool	35	19	0	0
Mahabubnagar	33	17	0	0
Machilipatnam	32	21	0	0
Narasapur	32	22	0	0
Nellore	32	21	0	tr

Nizamabad	33	17	0	0
Ongole	33	20	0	2
Ramagundam	33	13	0	0
Tirupathi AP	32	16	0	1
Tuni	33	20	0	0
Vizag AP	31	20	0	3
Vizag	29	21	0	19

KARNATAKA

Agumbe	34	14	0	0
Bangalore AP	31	16	0	0
Bangalore	32	16	0	0
Bagalkote	33	13	0	0
Belgaum AP	33	13	0	0
Bellary	35	15	0	0
Bijapur	33	13	0	0
Chitradurga	33	14	0	0
Chickmagalur	31	15	0	0
Chintamani	31	12	0	0
Gadag	32	17	0	0
Gulbarga	35	18	0	0
Hassan	30	12	0	0
Honavar	35	19	0	0
Karwar	36	21	0	0
Madikeri	29	13	0	5
Mangalore AP	34	22	0	0
Mysore	32	20	0	0
Mandya	33	17	0	0
Panambur	34	23	0	0
Raichur	33	16	0	0
Shirali	34	21	0	0

KERALA

Alappuzha	33	23	0	1
Kannur	33	25	0	1
Kochi AP	32	22	0	0
Kottayam	33	23	0	0
Kozhikode	34	25	0	tr
Punalur	35	19	0	1
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	31	23	0	140
Thiruvanantha				
-puram City	33	22	0	45
Vellanikkara	35	23	0	0

TAMIL NADU

Adiramapattinam	32	18	0	12
Chennai	31	20	0	tr
Chennai AP	31	19	0	1
Coimbatore AP	33	19	0	0
Coonoor	22	11	0	12
Cuddalore	30	19	0	tr
Dharmapuri	33	15	0	0
Kanyakumari	32	22	0	85
Karaikal	29	21	0	7
Kodaikanal	18	9	0	17
Madurai AP	34	21	0	10
Nagapattinam	30	22	0	7
Palayamkottai	34	22	0	31
Pamban	29	22	0	63

Parangipettai	31	20	0	6
Puducherry	30	19	0	1
Salem	35	17	0	0
Thanjavur	32	22	0	1
Tiruchi AP	32	18	0	1
Tirupattur	35	15	0	0
Tiruttani	33	16	0	2
Tondi	30	20	0	43
Tuticorin	31	22	0	21
Ooty	21	7	0	0
Valparai	29	7	0	12
Vellore	32	16	0	1

LAKSHADWEEP

Amini Divi	33	25	0	68
Minicoy	32	23	0	11
Kavarathi	—	—	—	—

OTHER STATIONS

Kolkata (Alipore)	28	16	0	0
Mumbai	31	21	0	1
New Delhi	26	12	tr	11

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since January 01, 2014.

DRY WEATHER IN KERALA

CHENNAI: Dry weather prevailed over Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

The minimum temperature fell appreciably at one or two places over North Interior Tamil Nadu, fell at one or two places over South Interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, rose at one or two places over Telangana and changed little elsewhere over the region.

They were markedly below normal at one or two places over North Interior Karnataka, appreciably below normal at many places over Tamil Nadu, at a few places over Telangana, at one or two places over Interior Karnataka, Rayalaseema, below normal at a few places over Tamil Nadu, North Interior Karnataka, at one or two places over South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, above normal at one or two places over Coastal Karnataka and were remained normal elsewhere over the region.

Adilabad recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 12 degree Celsius in the plains of the region.

FORECAST (valid till Friday morning): Dry weather will prevail over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Outlook For Subsequent Two Days: Fair weather.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, Feb 6

Max 29° | Min 20°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 41

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:34

Sunset: 06:11

Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Friday, Feb 7

Max 29° | Min 20°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Feb 8



31° | 20°

Sunny

Sunday

Feb 9



31° | 21°

Sunny

Monday

Feb 10



25° | 21°

Overcast

Tuesday

Feb 11



24° | 21°

Overcast

Wednesday

Feb 12



25° | 20°

Overcast

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Workshop on e-learning for agriculture, life sciences

VARANASI: A two-day collaborative workshop organized by [Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University](#) (BHU) and Agricultural Innovation Partnership (AIP), a project of USAID, began on Wednesday.

The theme of the workshop is research support services in agriculture and life sciences, library and e-learning.

Addressing the workshop, national coordinator of AIP, C Ramasamy, emphasized the need for development of digital repositories and skills of faculty and students in the field of library science. Bahiru Duguma, director, office of food security, USAID, spoke on the major programmes of AIP and USAID.

Meanwhile, director of Albert R Mann library, Cornell University, Mary Ochs, spoke on libraries of India and USA and emphasized the need of agriculture development by means of advancements in library and information sciences.

Ravi Pratap Singh, director, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, also highlighted the efforts of the institute and AIP programme in agricultural development and encouraged teachers and students to be a part of e-learning services.

The function was also addressed by dean of students, Vinay Kumar Singh, university librarian AK Srivastava, and head, department of extension education AK Singh.

Annual sports day function: The Banaras Hindu University is going to hold annual sports day function on the campus on Thursday.

THE HINDU Business Line

Kerala to procure rubber directly

Kottayam, February 5: A high-power committee presided over by Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has decided to procure rubber from growers at a price that will be Rs. 1 higher than the price fixed by the Rubber Board.

The procurement will continue till the price touches Rs. 171 a kg for the RSS 4 grade.

The Kerala Cabinet will decide the agency which will be entrusted the responsibility to procure rubber. To a question raised in the State Assembly Finance Minister K M Mani said that the State had allocated Rs. 10 crore for rubber procurement. The Government will write to the Centre to stop zero duty imports under the advance license scheme for six months.

Spot rebounds

The domestic rubber prices strengthened on Wednesday. The commodity, recovered sharply following the Government's decision.

There were no quantity sellers in the local trading houses, as growers and dealers preferred to hold their stocks. Sheet rubber improved to Rs. 145 and Rs. 144 (Rs. 142.50) respectively, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

The grade firmed up to Rs. 141 (Rs. 139.50) as reported by the dealers.

February futures increased to Rs. 146.10 (Rs. 144.53), March to Rs. 148.25 (Rs. 146.85), April to Rs. 150.60 (Rs. 149.78) and May to Rs. 153.65 (Rs. 151.93) while the June futures dropped to Rs. 154.01 (Rs. 154.30) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs. 134 (Rs. 134.77) at Bangkok. February futures closed at ¥213 (Rs. 161.52) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs. /kg: RSS-4: 145 (142.50); RSS-5: 143 (140.50); Ungraded: 140 (138); ISNR 20: 141 (140) and Latex 60%: 117 (115.50).

State Ministers, MPs, MLAs, top officials of the Rubber Board, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation, State Marketing Federation, Rubber Marketing Federation and Indian Rubber Dealers Federation attended the high-power committee convened by Chandy.

As rice bran oil gains traction, output rises

Ahmedabad, February 5: Rice bran oil production is increasing by about 50,000 tonnes every year in the country even as consumer awareness about the oil remains a challenge, according to industry players.

Of the total global production of around 12 lakh tonnes (lt) annually, India currently produces 9 lt. However, with growing awareness and rising demand, the production is increasing, said the Solvent Extractors' Association of India.

“India has the potential to produce around 15 lt of rice bran oil. We are producing about 9 lt but only 3 lt goes for direct consumption. As the awareness rises, the production will increase too,” said BV Mehta, Executive Director, SEA, at a press conference on Wednesday. After India, Japan is a distant second in production of rice bran oil at about 70,000 tonnes, followed by Thailand which produced 60,000 tonnes and China whose output is 50,000 tonnes.

Sugar up on firm freight rates

Mumbai, February 5: Sugar prices ruled marginally higher on Wednesday on firm freight rates which rose further by Rs. 5-6 to around Rs. 110-130 a quintal at producing centres for Mumbai.

At the Vashi wholesale market, old stocks sold Rs. 5-10 lower, while new production ruled Rs. 5-10 higher. Naka and mill tender rates were unchanged. Producers were continuously selling for liquidity. Arrivals at the Vashi market were around 56-57 truckloads (100 bags each), while local dispatches were 55-56 loads.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs. 2,662-2,800 (Rs. 2,682-2,800) and M-grade was Rs. 2,802-2,962 (Rs. 2,802-2,966).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs. 2,630-2,690 (Rs. 2,630-2,690) and M-grade Rs. 2,750-2,860 (Rs. 2,750-2,860).

Costlier inputs drive poultry-feed prices up

Karnal, February 5: POULTRY-FEED UP ON HIGH INPUT COSTS

Prices of poultry-feed increased this week following an uptrend in prices of key ingredients over the last few days. Prices of feed products have increased by Rs. 30-40 for a 50-kg bag. In the physical market, after witnessing a downtrend in recent past, soyameal improved by Rs. 1,300 to Rs. 35,000 a tonne, while bajra remained unchanged at Rs. 13,000 a quintal. Di-calcium phosphate moved up marginally by 10 paise to Rs. 34.80 a kg, while maize gained Rs. 40 at Rs. 1,500 a quintal. DRB went up by Rs. 300 to Rs. 8,700, rice bran oil was unchanged at Rs. 54 a kg, MBM was at Rs. 44 while mustard de-oiled cake decreased by Rs. 150 to Rs. 14,600 a tonne. Layer concentrate 35 per cent improved by Rs. 40 at Rs. 1,175 respectively. Broiler concentrate improved by Rs. 30 to Rs. 2,040 for a 50-kg bag. Our Correspondent

Rose exports set to turn fragrant on long Valentine weekend



Bangalore, February 5: Cut flowers (rose) exporters from South India are banking on a long Valentine weekend, production drop in China and Africa to help their profits bloom this year.

“We see this long buying season (three days) an opportunity to sell more roses. Traditionally, long weekend means daily sale for three days,” V Jhansi

Laxmi, Vice-President, South India Floriculture Association (SIFA), told *Business Line*.

Exports to rise

“In addition to long weekend, harsh winter in Europe, production drop in China and Africa is likely to help growers get higher prices,” she added. Grower-exporters, mainly small and medium units, spread across Bangalore and Hosur in Tamil Nadu are expecting a surge of 20-25 per cent in exports this year.

“This Valentine season, we expect exports to be in the range of 5- 6 million rose stems compared with 4 to 4.5 million rose stems last year,” said Laxmi.

Exports are heading mainly to European cities such as Amsterdam and London, Gulf countries, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. This year, the Russian market has opened for India.

“According to early trends and indications, we are likely to see Indian roses getting higher premium,” said Jayaprakash Rao, General Secretary, SIFA. He said: “We are all waiting for the flower auctions at Amsterdam to commence this Friday. This is expected to determine the quantum of premium Indian roses will fetch in Europe.”

M Sridhar Chowdary, Managing Director, Vinayaka Agritech Limited, said: “This season (October to March) is likely to be good for the industry. We already saw good sales during Christmas and Pongal. Now, we are banking on Valentine sales to end the season on a high note.”

Mite menace

Meanwhile, all is not rosy for the flower trade.

The industry is also facing severe rejections in major markets abroad.

According to VH Prasad, Director, Blooms & Greens, this year due to widespread mite presence, we are seeing 25 to 30 per cent rejections in addition to phytosanitary issues.

The industry has brought to the notice of State and Centre the lack of phytosanitary certification facility at the new Kempe Gowda International airport. This is impacting exports severely,” he said.

The local market for flowers and cut flowers (roses) in India has picked up well with the tradition, culture and festivals to celebrate, in addition to weddings.

This has led to demand for roses coming from Hyderabad, Chennai and other north Indian cities led by Delhi.

Higher prices

This rise in demand has resulted in prices hardening. Prices of roses have already begun to move up.

Flowers prices are up 45 per cent this year at Rs. 8 a stem compared with Rs. 5.5 last year.

“To give a boost to growers and to broaden the domestic market, SIFA and International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB) have come up with a plan to sell about 2.5 (25 lakh stems) million during the Valentine week (February 8-14). For this we are involving 180 growers and 80 buyers registered with IFAB,” said CG Nagaraju, Managing Director, IFAB.

Coir Board draws up plans to avert fibre shortage crisis

Kochi, February 5: The Kerala Government will bring together farmers’ societies set up by the Coconut Development Board and coir societies formed by the Coir Board to procure husk and process it. This is part of its plan to tackle shortage of coir fibre. According to Rani George, Coir Secretary, the coir industry is facing shortage of raw material despite introducing various schemes such as Husk Collection Scheme. The industry has to depend largely on Tamil Nadu for coir fibre, she said speaking at a seminar on “Challenges and Opportunities in Kerala’s Natural Fibre Production” held at Coir Kerala 2014.

“The scheme, due to certain practical difficulties, failed to take off as we expected. So now, we have decided to form tie-ups between farmers’ societies and coir societies to ensure that the husks are collected and processed to extract fibre from it. A meeting will soon be held to discuss the modalities for establishing the tie-ups. The Government is seriously

contemplating providing portable fibre extracting machines to the farm societies at subsidised rates," she said.

KR Anil, Director, National Coir Research Management Institute, said that though the State was producing 600 crore coconuts annually, the annual production of retted fibre was 30,000 tonnes.

Nearly 70 per cent of the coir is supplied to the industry from Tamil Nadu where husk procurement and processing is done in an organised manner. Compared to Kerala where coconut farming is more of a household activity, in Tamil Nadu, there are plantations.

Business Standard

MP might pip Punjab in FY14 wheat production



The country's wheat crop is expected to be higher than last year if the weather remains consistent. The interest this year is in who will be the second biggest producing state - [Punjab](#), the traditional one in this position, or Madhya Pradesh.

According to Indu Sharma, Director, Wheat Research Institute, Karnal: "Total production might touch 100 million tonnes (mt) if good weather conditions prevail.

Last year, we had 92.45 mt."

Uttar Pradesh remains the top producing state, due to its large area under [cultivation](#). In 2012-13, it produced 30.3 mt of wheat, followed by Punjab's 16.1 mt and MP's 13.1 mt. The third ranker is, riding on a strategy to boost agriculture production in general, hoping to surpass Punjab in wheat this year.

According to a senior official of the state's farmer welfare and agriculture department, "With assured canal irrigation, covering fallow land under cultivation, warehousing and infrastructure, credit management, agriculture extension and technology, fertiliser supply management and, above all, regular electricity supply, we expect this year we will produce 19.2 mt wheat against last year's 16.1 mt (it claims this figure, saying the Centre refused to accept this and pegged last year at only 13.1 mt)."

WHEAT OUTPUT

State-wise production & area in 2012-13

State	Area (mn hectares)	Production (mn tonnes)
Uttar Pradesh	9.73	30.29
Punjab	3.52	16.10
Madhya Pradesh	5.30	13.13
Haryana	2.50	11.17
Bihar	2.22	5.37
Rajasthan	28.20	8.95
Gujarat	1.05	3.13
All India	29.65	92.45

Source: Department of Agriculture

M M Upadhyay, agriculture production commissioner in [Bhopal](#), said the state had expected 17.5 mt of [wheat production](#) this year but, "this might go up to 19 mt if conditions remain favourable".

MP says in the past seven years, seed replacement rates have gone up from 14 per cent to 25 per cent. Also, reduced interest rates (zero per cent for short-term agri loans) and an investment of Rs 7,052 crore on power rate subsidy had reduced the input cost in wheat cultivation. Indu Sharma says some increase is also expected from Punjab and Haryana, as yellow rust disease and rains in the latter state last year had both hit output. She said the country's total area under wheat was expected to increase

in 2013-14.

Arabica coffee prices post biggest gain since 2004



[Arabica coffee](#) extended its bull-market advance, posting the biggest gain in nine years, as drought drains dams to a record low in Brazil, the world's biggest grower and exporter.

Dry weather will persist through February 20 in the country's southeast, the main growing region, according to Celso Oliveira, a meteorologist at weather forecaster [Somar Meteorologia](#). Rains expected late this month and in March won't be enough to fill reservoirs before the dry season starts in April, he said. Prices jumped 19 per cent in five sessions, the biggest such advance since June 2010.

Coffee has surged 23 per cent in 2014, heading for the best start to a year since 1997. Brazil had the hottest January ever and the least rain for the period in 20 years, according to Marco Antonio dos Santos, an agronomist at Somar. The drought is also driving prices higher for sugar and orange juice.

"Dryness in Brazil's coffee-growing area is something that will propel the market higher," Sterling Smith, a futures specialist at Citigroup Inc in Chicago, said in a telephone interview. "Not enough rain is stressing the trees."

Arabica coffee for March delivery jumped 8.6 per cent to settle at \$1.3595 a pound on Tuesday on [ICE Futures US](#) in New York, the biggest increase since November 2004. On January 31, the commodity settled at \$1.252, up 23 per cent from a closing low in November and entering a bull market. Prices reached \$1.364, the highest since May 20.

Groundnut oil trading at four years low on weak demand

With higher availability of raw material for crushing and weak demand, [groundnut oil](#) has been trading at four year low in recent times. Also, poor export demand for groundnut has further resulted in drastic downfall in groundnut oil prices this year.

Since December last year groundnut oil prices have been on downhill run due to higher crushing following bumper production of groundnut which was almost three times compared to last year.

In January 2013, refined groundnut oil was traded at Rs 2,250 for a 15 kg tin, an all time high price, but currently the price of same was ruling around Rs 1,340-1,350, down by 40% from a record high. Current price levels in groundnut oil was last seen in January 2010.

[Suresh Kaneria](#), managing director of Kaneria Oil Industries said, "Main reason for downfall in groundnut oil prices is due to higher availability of groundnut for crushing. Most of the stock in groundnut has been diverted to mills as export of the commodity has been nominal this year."

During November and December last year there was good demand of bulk buyers. At that time over 250 tonnes of groundnut oil was traded per day, but after that retail demand decreased and till date buying activity has been not as per requirement. At presently, nearly 50-70 tonnes of groundnut oil is being traded every day.

According to [edible oil](#) industry sources, due to higher crushing activity, groundnut oil production is likely to increase to 300,000 tonnes as compared to last three years' average production of 200,000 tonnes.

Samir Shah, president of [Saurashtra Oil Mills Association](#) (SOMA) said, "Gujarat have major share in groundnut oil production. Out of total production, the state has produced more than 40-45% groundnut oil, while Andhra Pradesh share is about 15-20 percent."

On the other hand, export demand of groundnut from India fell mainly because of weak demand from China.

Vikram Duvani, managing director, Rachana Seeds Industries from Junagadh said, "Overall demand in international market for groundnut is very poor. India's export has declined because of weak demand from China."

As per Indian Oilseed and Produce Export Promotion Council (IOPEPC) data, during April-September 2013, India exported 189,867 tonnes groundnut. In the corresponding period previous year, India had exported 535,670 tonnes groundnut.

According to Duvani, this year India's groundnut export could be around 450,000 tonnes.

The IOPEPC has estimated kharif groundnut production for this year at 4.91 million tonnes from five states - Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu - which account for close to 90% of total output in the country.

This is higher by 2.1 million tonnes as compared to kharif 2012, when the crop was only 2.81 million tonnes in these states, owing to monsoon failure.

The, Solvent Extractors' Association of India recently issued a kharif crop estimate of the Central Organization for Oil Industry & Trade. The report stated kharif groundnut production for 2013-14 would be 4.71 million tonnes, against last year's 2.62 million tonnes.

Potato gains 1.16% on rise in spot demand



[Potato](#) prices moved up by Rs 13.20 to Rs 1,149 per quintal in futures trade today on buying by speculators following increased spot demand against restricted arrivals from the major producing regions.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in April rose by Rs 13.20, or 1.16 per cent, to Rs 1,149 per quintal, with a trading volume of 213 lots.

Potato for delivery in March also moved up by Rs 7.20, or 0.65 per cent, to Rs 1,100 per quintal with a trading volume of 359 lots.

Analysts said increased demand in the spot market against tight supplies from producing regions mainly pushed up potato prices at futures trade.

Coriander up 0.76% on good demand, tight stocks



[Coriander](#) prices rose by 0.76 per cent to Rs 8,940 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their holdings on firming spot markets trend.

The trading sentiment improved further following limited stocks on restricted arrivals from major growing belts.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, coriander for April delivery rose by Rs 67, or 0.76 per cent, to Rs 8,940 per quintal, with an open interest of 30,590 lots.

The February contract moved up by Rs 25, or 0.31 per cent, to Rs 8,081 per quintal, with open interest of 26,850 lots.

Marketmen said fresh positions created by speculators, driven by pick-up in demand in spot market against less arrivals mainly pushed up coriander futures prices.

Chana weakens 0.8% on profit-booking



[Chana](#) prices fell by 0.81 per cent to Rs 2,821 per quintal in futures market today as speculators booked profits driven by a weak trend at the spot market on sluggish demand.

Expectations of higher production in this season also put pressure on the chana futures prices.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for delivery in February fell by Rs 23, or 0.81 per cent, to Rs 2,821 per quintal, with an open interest of 50,760 lots.

The April contract lost Rs 7, or 0.23 per cent, to Rs 3,005 per quintal, with open interest of 74,920 lots.

Traders said besides profit-booking by speculators, subdued demand in the spot market at existing higher levels mainly led to the fall in chana prices at futures trade.

Crude palm oil up 0.7% on spot demand



Crude [palm oil](#) rose further by Rs 3.80 to Rs 541 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged positions on strong spot demand.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in March rose Rs 3.80, or 0.70 per cent, to Rs 541 per 10 kg in a business turnover of 26 lots.

The February contract was up by Rs 3.10, or 0.58 per cent, to Rs 536.60 per 10 kg in 132 lots.

Analysts said besides strong domestic demand, firming trends in the global markets, on speculation that demand may improve as dry weather hurt soybean output prospects in South America also influenced prices.

Meanwhile, palm oil prices for April delivery gained 0.90 per cent to 2,551 ringgit (\$767) a tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

Cardamom surges 2% on strong demand



[Cardamom](#) prices rose 2.06 per cent to Rs 823.80 per kg in futures trade today after traders and speculators created fresh positions on strong spot demand.

Hopes of a pick up in export demand also supported the upside.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for March contract rose by Rs 16.70, or 2.06 per cent, to Rs 823.80 per kg with a trading volume of 1,009 lots.

The February contract traded higher by Rs 9.90, or 1.29 per cent, to Rs 771.90 per kg, with a business volume of 519 lots.

Market analysts said rising spot and exports demand against restricted arrivals from producing regions mainly influenced cardamom prices at futures market.
