

Farmers want mobile procurement centres for buying cotton, onion

'This will help us in getting good price for shallot'



SEEDS OF HOPE: Farmers' representative highlighting a point at the grievance meeting in Perambalur on Thursday. — PHOTO: M. MOORTHY

PERAMBALUR, January 24, 2014 - Farmers on Thursday urged the district administration to introduce mobile procurement centres for the procurement of cotton, shallot (sambar onion), and maize to enable farmers to

get reasonable price for their produce.

Chelladurai, district secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, said at the farmers' grievances day meeting here that besides the poor yield of the rain-fed crops because of monsoon failure, farmers were worried at the poor price being offered by traders for their produce.

The price offered was lower than the expenses incurred by farmers.

Crumbs

The farmers were offered a paltry Rs. 12 a kg for shallot and for this too they had to depend on Tiruchi market. The district administration should make arrangements to help farmers market their produce at reasonable price and should come forward to open mobile procurement centres in the district.

He alleged that despite the assurance of the Chief Minister that price of milk supplied to consumers would not be increased, Aavin and the private milk societies had increased the same. The district administration should check this trend, he said.

P. Viswanathan, president of the Tamizhaga Eri Matrum Aatrupasana Vivasayigal Sangam – Tamil Nadu, made a forceful plea for dredging channels in Veppanthattai union.

A majority of the tanks in this union had dried up as the rainwater did not reach them because of bad condition of supply channels.

The dredging of supply channels would help recharge groundwater.

Stating that cotton, maize, kambu, onion, chilli, and groundnut crop had failed in the district, Mr. Viswanathan urged the district administration to recommend waiver of all farm loans.

Mr. Viswanathan pleaded for a meeting of farmers and officials and bankers every month to discuss the same.

RO plant

A. Rajendran, district vice president of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, complained that the reverse osmosis plants set up at the primary health centres were not functioning.

Darez Ahamed, Collector, who presided over the meeting, directed the health department officials to set right all the RO plants and give a report to him.

V. Jayaraman, district president, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, expressed apprehension that the district might face severe drinking water scarcity because of failure of monsoon and urged the district administration to take steps to ensure supply of potable drinking water.

Dr. Ahamed said the government had sanctioned Rs. 9.5 crore for the supply of drinking water during summer and the work on laying of pipelines had already begun. "The administration will ensure regular supply of water during summer", he said.

Farmers throng depots to get fodder for milch animals at subsidised rates



Farmers thronging the veterinary hospital at Narasothipatti in Salem to enrol them for obtaining fodder at subsidised rates during summer. — PHOTO: P. GOUTHAM

SALEM, January 24, 2014 - More than 3,300 farmers owning milch animals' (cows and buffalos) have registered to avail fodder at subsidised rates during summer in four days since registration began on Monday in the district.

“Registration will remain open till the end of January”, officials in the Animal Husband Department (AHD) said.

P. Shanmugam of Erumapalayam, who was among many who thronged the depot at Narasothipatti, said that he came to register his five animals. “I got enough straw for the animals for summer from the paddy I grew on 54 cents. This year I did not grow paddy due to poor rain and dropping underground water table”, he said and hoped that this scheme would help him save his animals.

Regional Joint Director (RJD) of AHD, Salem District, K.M. Sivaprakasam told *The Hindu* that the State Government sanctioned Rs. 12.5 crore to open 125 fodder depots across the state. The Government has launched this project for the first time to bring down distress sale of animals by poor and downtrodden farmers during summer, he said.

“Rs. 50 lakh has been sanctioned for five depots in Salem – veterinary dispensaries at Thalaivasal, Nangavalli, Narasothipatti, Konganapuram and Mecheri – at Rs. 10 lakh per depot. “These depots will procure paddy straw and sell it to farmers registering in those depots at Rs. two per kg. It will help them get the dry fodder at a subsidy of 75 to 80 percent”, the RJD said.

Dr. Sivaprakasam said that the registered farmers will get 3 kg dry fodder per animal per day. “Farmers can collect straw from the depots on a weekly basis. We have asked for quotations from traders to supply dry straw at less than Rs. 10 per kg. We will stock it in a couple of weeks and distribute it to farmers from the third week of February”, he added. Veterinarians in these depots said that farmers owning one cow to a dozen cows are enrolling under the scheme.

“To ensure that more farmers avail this benefit, we have made it clear that each farmer can get fodder for a maximum of five animals. Funds generated from selling fodder will be used for procuring more dry fodder, to benefit more farmers till the summer lasts”, they said.

A double whammy for cotton farmers

Deficient rain, mysterious disease damage crops

A woman labourer picking cotton at Thaapaai village near Pullampadi in Tiruchi district on Thursday.— Photo: A.Muralitharan



TIRUCHI, January 24, 2014 - Failure of monsoon and higher incidence of disease has hit cotton growers hard in Tiruchi and Perambalur districts . Cotton is raised in a cluster of villages bordering Tiruchi and Perambalur districts. Just as the uneven rainfall experienced by the villages bordering Perambalur, the damage suffered too varied from village to village or even from field to field within a firka, said S.Raja Chidambaram, State secretary, Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam.

A new disease had hit cotton crops in the region and Bt cotton growers had suffered severe loss due to the disease.

“We have not witnessed such disease in the past and the State government should conduct an exclusive study on Bt cotton and evolve remedial measure,” he said.

The worst affected are the cotton growers in and around Pullampadi. Karunanidhi, councillor, who raised the issue at the district panchayat council meeting held here recently, said that the cotton growers had lost the crop for the second consecutive season. Although the State government had sanctioned some relief for the loss suffered in 2012, the insurance companies had not disbursed any indemnity for that period (2012).

For the current season, he sought adequate relief from the State government and indemnity from the insurance companies. He said that about 30,000 acres had been damaged in and around Pullampadi. A farmer of Thaapaai village bordering Tiruchi and Pullampadi, R.Dharmaraj (32) said that he had invested Rs.15,000 to raise cotton on his one-and-a-half acres. Although he anticipated a return of Rs.50,000, he could realise only Rs.20,000.

Farmers demand proper assessment of crop loss

TUTICORIN, January 24, 2014 - Appeal to declare Tuticorin as drought-hit district



AGONY: Farmers with the withered maize crop in Tuticorin on Thursday.— Photo: N. Rajesh

Farmers have expressed concern over crop failure.

A large number of agriculturists who gathered for the grievance day meeting

here on Thursday, with withered maize crop, sought the intervention of Collector M. Ravikumar to declare Tuticorin as a drought-hit district so that they could get drought relief at the earliest.

The Collector said the failure of the northeast monsoon last year had led to crop failure. Rainfall recorded in 2013 was less than the level recorded in the previous year. The district had been witnessing rainfall deficit during the last couple of years.

As against the average annual rainfall of 662 m.m., the district registered a rainfall of 384.09 m.m. in 2013 and 439.86 m.m. in 2012 affecting the chances of crop cultivation.

During the northeast monsoon also, rain was not sufficient enough to support farmers. The rainfall recorded during the monsoon from October to December in 2013 was 267 m.m. The rainfall recorded during the corresponding period in 2012 was 342 m.m.

However, a team would assess the crop loss in the district and a report would be forwarded to the state government in three or four days.

Mr. Ravikumar said that crop insurance of Rs.740 crore had been released for paddy farmers in Tamil Nadu for 2012-13. But only 21 paddy farmers in Tuticorin district, who had paid the insurance premium, would get it. The insurance benefits were being extended through Central Bank of India to eligible farmers. Insurance benefits for other agriculture crops were expected in another 10 days.

S. Rajendran, former Kovilpatti MLA, demanded a sum of Rs.15, 000 as drought relief for an acre. Because every farmer had incurred an average expenditure of Rs.15, 000 an acre on farm works, fertilizers, farm inputs and labour, he said.

Many farmers alleged that village administrative officers were not proper in assessing crop loss area-wise and their assessment was not genuine. So, they sought the presence of other revenue officials along with VAOs during the crop loss assessment. The Collector said that necessary measures would be taken to avoid such a problem.

District Revenue Officer R. Muthu, Joint Director of Agriculture N.K. Dhakshinamoorthy, Sub-Collector of Kovilpatti K. Vijaya Karthikeyan, Tuticorin Revenue Divisional Officer V. Nagajothi, and Tiruchendur Revenue Divisional Officer M. Tamilrajan took part in the programme.

World Bank team inspects farms

VILLUPURAM, January 24, 2014 - A World Bank team headed by Edward Cook visited farms covered under IAMWARM (Integrated agricultural modernization and water bodies' restoration and management) programme and Integrated Agriculture Development Programme in some of the villages in Villupuram district on Tuesday and Wednesday. Collector V.Sampath; Director (Agriculture) M.Rajendran and other officials accompanied the team which visited places such as Vikkiravandi, Pappanapattu, Alanguppam, Neikuppam, Nolambur, Madapattu and Thachur.

At Madapattu, the team interacted with sugarcane farmer Rajamani who has raised crop on 5.5 acres. He told the team that the government was giving a grant of 100 per cent to small farmers and 75 per cent to big farmers for cultivating cane. Adoption of drip-irrigation system had enabled him to increase yield.

At Thachur, the team spoke to P. Ganesan, a beneficiary of integrated agriculture development programme. He had been following the System of Rice Intensification in his farm and set up a vermicopost yard and a gober gas plant.

Under the programme, the government was giving financial aid to the tune of Rs. 1.8 lakh for a farmer which contained a 50 per cent subsidy component or a grant of Rs. 90,000.

Farmers to get 7 hours three-phase power supply

BANGALORE, January 24, 2014 - Minister for Energy D.K. Shivakumar on Thursday announced in the Legislative Council that the government will extend the duration of three-phase power supply to farmers from six hours to seven hours with immediate effect. The announcement comes ahead of the Lok Sabha elections amidst shortage of power as admitted by the Minister himself. Responding to Allama Prabhu Patil on shortage of power in the State, Mr. Shivakumar said the supply during January 2014 has been 8,600 MW as

against daily demand of 10,334 MW. Mr. Shivakumar added that the shortage is likely to aggravate during the coming months.

DAILY AVAILABILITY OF POWER IN JANUARY



ENERGY SOURCE	IN MILLION UNITS	IN MEGAWATTS
Hydel	40	2,000
Thermal	47	2,500
Renewable	7	450
Captive power plants	23	1,100
Central quota	38	1,550
Total from internal sources	155	7,600
Short/medium-term purchase	25	1,000
Total	180	8,600

SOURCE: KARNATAKA ENERGY DEPARTMENT

Mr. Patil questioned the rationale behind purchasing power from outside and said it gives an impression of 'golmal' (irregularities) in the purchase deal. When the reservoirs catering to the hydel power plants are full, why shouldn't it be used to the fullest extent instead of reducing power production, he asked. Only if there was a need should power be purchased during the summer, he said. Mr. Shivakumar said the department has to be cautious about production as it has to ensure power supply during summer and the exam season. He said the power scenario in the State has been excellent and there is a possibility of many more industries entering the State. Many members of the Opposition demanded the three-phase power supply

to farmers should be provided during the day instead of at night. Besides losing their rest and sleep, many farmers have become victims of snakebite, members said. The Minister, however, said the electricity supply companies would take a call on the timing depending upon the local condition and requirement.

Responding to another question by B. Ramakrishna, Mr. Shivakumar said he has plans to increase the capacity of transformer banks in the State to ensure speedy replacement of faulty transformers and ensuring quick service to the public, he said.

A milk ATM?



Got change? Amul Milk dairy factory opens any time Milk ATM center in Anand, Gujarat on Monday. The machine will read Rs 10-currency note through a sensor and dispense a 300 ml pouch of Amul Taaza milk. Photo: pTI

Food production to touch 260 million tonnes this year

MYSORE, January 24, 2014 - India's food production is expected to touch a record 260 million tonnes this year improving the previous record of nearly 259 million tonnes achieved during 2009-10.

But the challenge is to sustain the production levels and grow an additional 10 million tonnes each year to keep pace with the demand and population growth.

This was stated by Gurbachan Singh, chairman, Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board, New Delhi, who was here on Thursday to inaugurate a national seminar on 'Recent advances and challenges in sugarcane research' organised by the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, and Visvesvaraya Institute of Sugar Technology.

He said the record food production was also bolstered by a similar output in horticultural products and the country was expected to reap a rich harvest of 262 million tonnes of fruits and vegetables in the current year. Attributing this to sustained efforts at the field levels by farmers and scientists backed by policy initiatives of the government, Dr. Singh said pulse production, which was stagnated for years at 15 million tonnes, too registered an increase to 18.4 million tonnes last year. But he cautioned against complacency as the country needed to increase the pulse output by nearly 4 million tonnes every year to cater to the demand and population growth.

Delving on the challenges plaguing the agricultural sector in general, Dr. Singh said young generation in rural areas was shifting away from agriculture due to declining income and a concomitant increase in input costs. While food production has to increase, the land holding size was declining while there were issues related to availability of water, soil productivity among others, he added. Vijayan Nair, director, Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore, said sugarcane farming was facing a serious crisis in terms of sustainability and operations but there had been path-breaking research in recent years to resolve some of these challenges.

M. Srinivasan, past president of Indian Sugar Mills Association; K.S. Rangappa, Vice-Chancellor, University of Mysore; K. Narayana Gowda, Vice-Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, were present.

📌 ***Production of fruits and vegetables expected to touch 262 million tonnes, says official***

📌 ***Food production during 2009-10 was 259 million tonnes***

Impasse in onion row ends



Exporters have agreed to buy onion in bulk from today

No more tears: Heaps of onion at the wholesale market in Dindigul.— Photo: G. Karthikeyan

DINDIGUL, January 24, 2014 - Onion

growers in the district heaved a sigh of relief over an amicable settlement on procurement of onion between commission traders and bulk buyers here on Thursday.

The exporters have agreed to lift onions in bulk from the wholesale onion market here from tomorrow onwards.

This decision was taken at a special meeting between members of exporters' association and onion commission traders in the presence of Dindigul east taluk tahsildar Varadharajan and Dindigul south taluk tahsildar Sinthamani here on Thursday morning. Both sides decided not to give much importance to the offering of sample onion for bulk procurement from farmers.

Exporters should not press growers to offer sample onions for procurement of every lot. At the same time, commission traders should not prevent farmers, if they wished to offer samples of their produce to exporters. If farmers gave sample, exporters could receive it. No coercion or compulsion at any side was permissible. These decisions were acceptable by both sides, keeping in mind the interest and welfare of onion growers, said revenue officials. Earlier, exporters had agreed to reduce the quantum of sample to half kg from one kg per 850 kg lot. (At present they get one kg per lot.)

Commission traders opined that there would be no problem in exporting them. Onions would perish and incur huge loss to farmers, if there was further delay in settling the dispute, said the officials.

It may be remembered that over 3,500 bags of onion had been lying in the market since Wednesday owing to a dispute over offering sample onions to exporters. Arrival was expected to touch 6,000 to 7,000 bags by Friday.

WATER LEVEL

Madurai



The water level in Periyar dam stood at 112.10 feet on Thursday with an inflow of 160 cusecs and a discharge of 344 cusecs. The water level in Vaigai dam was 35.56 feet with an inflow of 178 cusecs and a discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 1,166 mcft. **No rain** - There was no rainfall recorded during the last 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Thursday, PWD officials here said.

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 51.72 feet on Thursday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 316 cusecs and the discharge 2,000 cusecs.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Thursday stood at 92.75 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 272.52 cusecs and 882.25 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 84.33 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 54 cusecs and 30 cusecs of water was discharged.

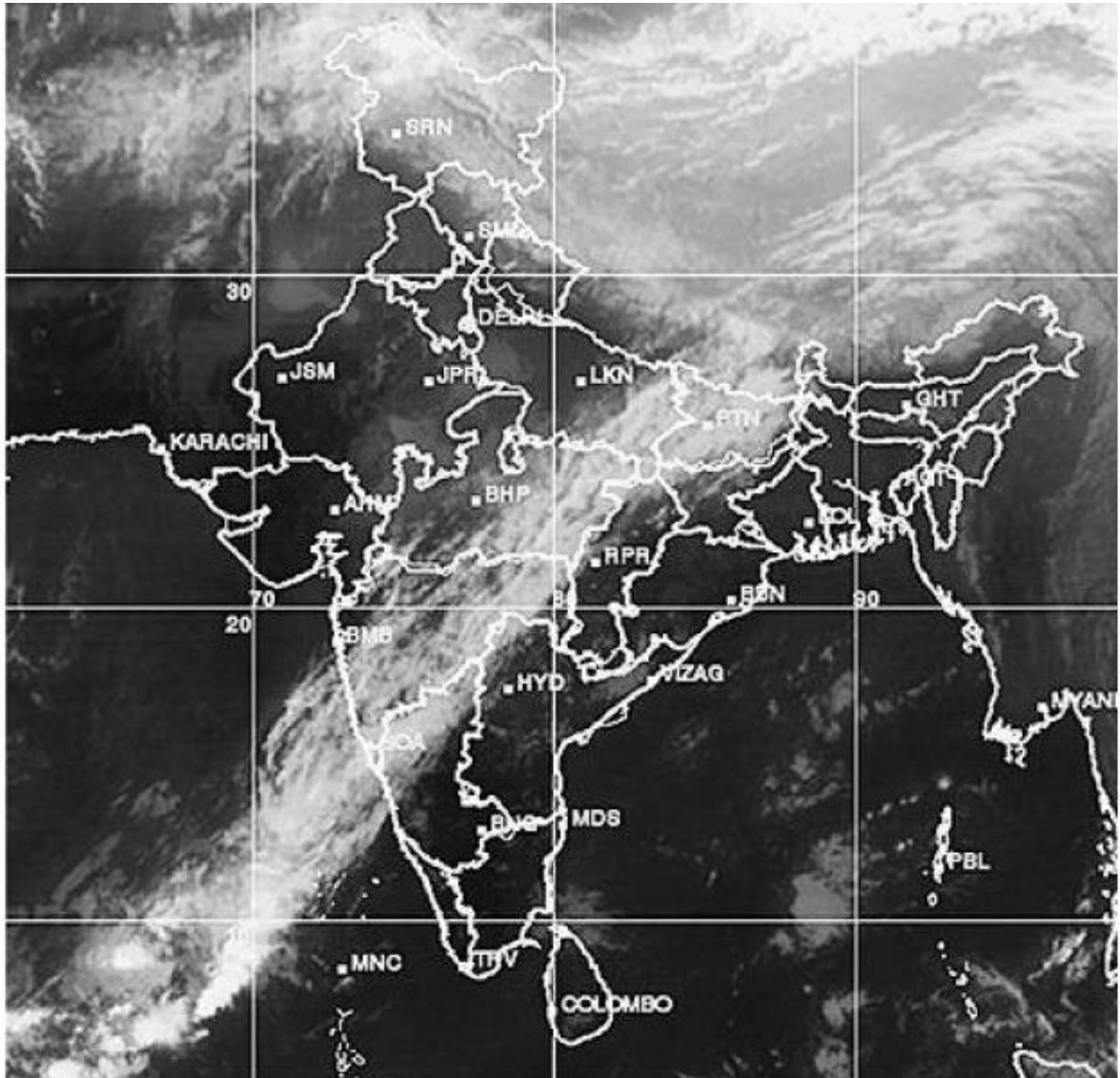
Kanyakumari - The level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 19.95 feet, while it was 53.85 feet in Perunchani, 10.82 feet in Chittar 1, 10.92 feet in Chittar 11, 4.40 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

Fishermen get training

NAGAPATTINAM, January 24, 2014 - A technology transfer programme was organised by the Institute of Fisheries Technology, Tamil Nadu Fisheries University here at Akkarapettai fishing hamlet on Wednesday.

The programme, as part of the pongal week celebrations, sought to impart training on “hygienic handling of fish and value addition of fish and fishery products”. The sessions entailed hands-on training in fish handling, and preparation of value-added sea food. Similar training programmes for fisherwoman on value addition was organised in other fishing hamlets in the district.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on January 23.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Rain: 0

Humidity: 78

Wind: normal

Friday, Jan 24

Max Min

29° | 21°

Sunrise: 06:35

Sunset: 06:06

Barometer: 1015

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Saturday, Jan 25

Max Min

31° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday

Jan 26



31° | 23°

Partly Cloudy

Monday

Jan 27



24° | 22°

Cloudy

Tuesday

Jan 28



25° | 22°

Overcast

Wednesday

Jan 29



24° | 23°

Cloudy

Thursday

Jan 30



24° | 22°

Overcast

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Debt-ridden farmers want loans waived

BELGAUM: Hundreds of farmers from Kadoli and eight villages near Belgaum blocked the road beside deputy commissioner N Jayaram's office with 20 bullock carts and staged a dharna on Wednesday, demanding that their bank loans be waived.

Potato growers say they have repeatedly lost their crop to drought and torrential rain in the last four years. This has run up their dues to banks to around Rs 2.45 crore.

Over the last three years, the district administration had intervened on their behalf and had directed banks not to auction the property of farmers defaulting on their dues. But banks have now reportedly stopped issuing loans to these farmers, pending their loan payments.

Farmers had received compensation from the Centre from the calamity relief fund in the first two years. But the amount was too low - just Rs 200 for per acre of lost crop.

Wednesday's protest was held under the banner of Karnataka Rajya Raita Sangh and Hasiru Sene.

Appasab Desai, the taluk president of Hasiru Sene who led the agitation, said many farmers from the nine villages were hanging on to the hope that the government would come to their rescue. "But, the government has not given any firm response on the issue despite

submission of hundreds of memorandums. This has made farmers panic. They fear that their houses and land will be taken over by banks. The government must take steps immediately before the situation gets out of hand."

Desai warned that if farmers' demands are not fulfilled soon, they will intensify their stir. The farmers withdrew their agitation after additional deputy commissioner Praveen Kumar assured them of intervention. He said Jayaram was in Bangalore to discuss the issue with chief minister Siddaramaiah. He assured them that the government is trying to come up with a solution. Kumar added that a meeting of banks and credit societies will soon be called to direct them against issuing notices on loan defaults.

Unseasonal rain leaves mango farmers worried

SURAT: The unseasonal showers over the last two days have left the mango orchardists of south Gujarat a worried lot.

They fear that if the spell continues, it would cause severe damage to their major cash crop. Experts claim that following a heavy dose of cold weather in the last one month, the flowering on mango trees is profuse and is the highest in the last eight years. Mango is cultivated in about 67,000 hectares in South Gujarat and flowering in abundance has started showing on trees in the last few days.

"For those trees where flowering has taken place and blooming is on, there will be a difficulty in fruit setting due to this weather," said professor NI Shah of Navsari Agriculture University (NAU). He said that the trees on which flowering has just started and flowers have not bloomed would be saved. However, in such cases the farmers will have to deal with pests and diseases as soon as weather returns to normal.

Along with the spell of cold weather, mango flowers need a good amount of sunshine during the day to bloom properly and kill any pests or fungus that grows on them.

Pointing that the next few days are critical for the mango crop, Dinesh Pataliya, assistant director of horticulture for Surat and Bharuch said, "If the sun starts shining from tomorrow as usual for six hours a day, there will not be any major damage as majority of the trees are just starting to flower. The fungus would be killed automatically and the flowers will survive."

The total production of mango in south Gujarat was recorded at 5 lakh and 5.6 lakh tonnes in the last two years and it was expected that the high amount of flowering would yield a bumper 10 lakh tonnes in the coming season.

Government to Launch Scheme to Increase Green Cover

The State Government is set to announce one more scheme to increase the area under forest cover in Odisha.

The scheme will be implemented over a period of eight years at an estimated Rs 517.12 crore. Of this, ` 424.625 crore will be sourced from Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Rs 50 crore from State Plan Scheme “Community Forest Protection and Management” and ` 42.50 crore from National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), a scheme of Panchayatiraj department.

The scheme, known as Ama Jungle Yojana (AJY), will be implemented in three phases and cover 5,000 Vana Surakshya Samitis (VSSs). While 1000 VSSs will be covered in the first phase, 2,000 VSSs each will be covered in second and third phases.

The scheme will include activities such as ground survey, demarcation and mapping, micro plan preparation, capacity building, construction of community buildings, livelihood support, forest restoration support and NGO support.

The livelihood support component will be funded by NRLM through Income Generation Activities (IGA) by self-help groups (SHGs), while the expenses towards the establishment cost of the dedicated Community Forest Protection and Management Programme (CFPMP) cell and other expenses will be funded from the State Plan.

Expenses such as ground survey, demarcation and mapping, micro plan preparation, capacity building and forest restoration will be funded through CAMPA.

The scheme will be executed in project mode through Odisha Forestry Sector Development Society (OFSDS). The dedicated CFPMP cell will be set up for day to day implementation, monitoring, supervision and management of the activities.

Technical Hurdles Push Farmers to Distress Sale

Large number of marginal farmers in the tribal-dominated Sundargarh district are denied minimum support price (MSP) for their kharif paddy due to technical hurdles and have little option but to resort to distress sale.

The district administration has set up 109 Paddy Procurement Centres (PPCs) to buy 66,176 tonnes through the Civil Supplies Corporation in the initial phase this year. The Farmer Identity Card (FIC) has been made mandatory to avail MSP and nine rice mills are authorised to process the crop.

But the farmers, who fail to comply with the guidelines, have to sell paddy for `1000-1150 per quintal in all 17 blocks of the district. The MSP is set at `1310 per quintal and `1345 for Grade A quality.

Since such beleaguered farmers do not have land records, they come under tenant-farmer category and are not issued the FIC. Tenant-farmer Abhimanyu Kisan of Bonai block said he had cultivated paddy in around 10 acres at Gogua village, but could not avail MSP in absence of FIC as land owner was reluctant to certify him. Another farmer Kapil Kisan shared similar view saying they borrow personal loans and to avoid mounting compound interest, sell their produce at whatever price is offered by traders.

Bonai Krushak Mahasangha president Dambarudhar Kisan said all the family members including children of tenant-farmers invest months of hard labour and personal resources but no protection is available for them.

It is not that the tenant-farmers are the only sufferers. Illiteracy and ignorance on the part of the farmers are also equally to blame for their plight. Butia Kujur of Juna Balanda in Lathikata block said he was unaware of the provision of MSP and procedure for obtaining FIC.

Sundargarh unit president of Krushak Morcha Rabi Chandra Patel said even eligible farmers face difficulty in getting FICs due to large scale vacancies in Revenue department. Farmers of remote areas are also unwilling to take FICs as they do not want to make several rounds to revenue office.

Farmer leader Niranjan Mahanta said since a lot of paraphernalia is involved in getting MSP, the farmers are not interested in taking FIC.

They have to wait for several days to sell their crops at MSP and get delayed payment. On the contrary, the middlemen or agents of rice mills reach the doorsteps of farmers, make instant payment and do not insist on Fair Average Quality (FAQ).

While the traders in Balishankara and neighbouring blocks are transporting paddy to rice mills in Chhattisgarh, in Bisra and Nuagaon blocks truckloads of paddy go to Jharkhand.

Sundargarh Collector Bhupendra Singh Poonia said procurement is going on smoothly as per the norms and the administration is alert on paying fair price to farmers. Occasionally, the administration receives complaints relating to FAQ but intervenes immediately, he said.

Civil Supplies Officer Abhiram Pradhan said till January 10, around 24,800 tonnes of paddy were procured.

THE HINDU Business Line

Argentina soyabean outlook

Recent hot/dry weather has put significant stress on pod filling soyabeans in Argentina. Some crop losses are expected in the South American country. Crop stress will ease later this week with some showers as well as cooling temperatures. The hot weather may also limit double-cropped soyabean planting.

India's rice output to fall, Pakistan's to rise



Indian exports also likely to suffer at the hands of other rice producers

Losing steam Three cyclones in Andhra Pradesh and deficient rainfall in West Bengal are reasons for fall in output.

Chennai, January 23: India's rice production is likely to be lower at 103 million tonnes (mt) this crop year to June, while exports could drop by 0.5 mt, according to the US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service.

Pakistan, on the other hand, will see its production and exports rise by 0.4 mt, the service said in its Rice Outlook. The projection for rice production is against last year's 104 mt and a record 105.3 mt the year before.

Adverse weather

Though area under rice increased this year in India and China, lower yield in both the countries is seen as the factor behind lower production. "The yield decline is partly due to adverse weather conditions," the outlook said.

Three cyclones affecting rice growing areas in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha; and deficient rainfall in West Bengal, the biggest rice producer in the country, are seen as reasons for the fall in production.

The Agriculture Ministry is yet to make any projection on rice production for this crop year, though it sees total foodgrain production exceeding 260 mt. It had projected production at 92.32 mt for the current kharif marketing season against 92.76 mt a year ago.

Raising milled production of rice to 471.1 mt for the current crop year, the Outlook pegged Pakistan crop higher at 6.4 mt against 5.8 mt last year. Though exports from India are expected to be lower, it will still continue to top the global exporters' list at 10 million tonnes. Last year, it is estimated to have shipped out 10.5 million tonnes.

Export growth

Vietnam, Thailand and Pakistan are expected to witness growth in rice exports this year. Global rice export growth is seen driven mainly by West Africa and China. West Africa is a major buyer of Indian non-basmati rice in recent years.

The views of rice trade on export prospects are mixed. Vijay Setia, former President of All-India Rice Exporters' Association, said regular demand for non-basmati from West Africa and for basmati from the Gulf, US and Europe will result in higher exports.

"We are one of the most competitive origins in the rice market and we see demand from every source," he said. India exports rice to about 140 countries.

RS Seshadri, Director of Tilda Riceland, said that there was a possibility of exports slipping a bit this year. However, non-basmati exports could make up for an expected drop in sales to Iran.

Thailand factor

India's exports have been helped by a weak rupee and a rice procurement programme in Thailand at rates that are higher than global prices. Besides, India also enjoys freight advantage in shipping to Gulf and West Africa.

The outlook said that Thailand's exports could rise to 8.5 mt from 6.7 mt this year.

Vietnam's exports could rise to 7.5 mt from 7.2 mt. Currently, India's 25 per cent broken white rice is quoted at \$350-360 a tonne, Thailand is quoting it at \$390-400 and Vietnam at \$375-385. Pakistan's quote for the variety is \$345-355 a tonne.

Rice seen gathering steam

Karnal, January 23: RICE PRICES RANGE-BOUND

Prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice ruled almost stable with nominal variation on Thursday. The market is range-bound but within a positive territory, said Amit Kumar, proprietor of Ginni Rice. Expectation of good buying in the coming days is supporting the market, he said. In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at ₹9,100-50, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at ₹8,100 a quintal. Pure Basmati (Raw) quoted at ₹12,500. Duplicate basmati (steam) sold at Rs 7,000. About 7,000 bags of different paddy varieties arrived at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal. About 5,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and went for ₹4,225-4,250, 1,000 bags of Sharbati went for ₹2,200-2,225, while 1,000 bags of PR sold at ₹1,300 a quintal. Our Correspondent.

Jeera up marginally

Rajkot, January 23: JEERA CRACKLES ON OUTPUT HOPES

Jeera futures decreased on hopes of a higher output. However, spot jeera price increased marginally, due to cold weather in growing areas of Gujarat and fresh export demand. About 3,000-4,000 bags of jeera arrived in Unjha mandi of Gujarat and prices increased marginally by ₹2-3 to ₹2,010-2,865 for a maund of 20 kg. It was traded for ₹2,140-2,310/20 kg. Our Correspondent.

Pepper market steady on limited activities

Kochi, January 23: PEPPER RULES STEADY

Pepper prices ruled steady with spot and February contracts ending unchanged on limited activities. Arrivals continued to remain thin. February contracts on the NMCE decreased by ₹217 to ₹51,200, while the March contract was unchanged at ₹51,816 a quintal. Spot prices were ₹49,000 (ungarbled) and ₹51,000 (garbled) a quintal. Export prices were at \$8,4,50-8,500 (c&f) for Europe and \$8,700-50 a tonne c&f for the US. GK Nair.

Sugar likely to fall further in the coming days

Mumbai, January 23: SPOT SUGAR UNDER PRESSURE

Sugar prices ruled weak on the Vashi wholesale market. Prices dropped further by ₹10-20 a quintal for the S-grade on Thursday. Higher selling by producers and need-based local demand, along with peak production, kept spot prices under pressure. Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade ₹2,732-2,865 (₹2,752-2,875), and M-grade ₹2,822-3,011 (₹2,822-3,011). Naka delivery rates were: S-grade ₹2,670-2,750 (₹2,710-2,810) and M-grade ₹2,800-2,920 (₹2,820-2,930). Our Correspondent.

With a GI tag in the bag, Udupi farmers cash in on rare green brinjal



Booster dose Farmers use intensive cropping pattern to raise yields. — AJ Vinayak

Mattu village (Udupi district), January 23:

'Mattu Gulla', a special variety of green brinjal grown in Karnataka's Udupi district for over five centuries now, is now attracting special attention from growers.

Grown in an area of about 60 acres between a

beach and a small river at Mattu village in Udupi district, 'Mattu Gulla' is a produce with GI (geographical indication) tag.

Legend has it that saint Vadiraja of Sode Math, Udupi, gave the seeds of this variety to the devotees from the village. That is why the villagers offer their first harvest to the Udupi temple every year, and the dishes made out of 'Mattu Gulla' have a special place in 'Anna Santarpanam' (mass feeding).

Raising yield

After getting GI tag for their produce in 2011, growers are now focusing on increasing the productivity of the crop with a bit of tweaking in cultivation methods.

During 2012-13, 26 growers from the village decided to adopt the cultivation methods, suggested by the Horticulture Department and scientists from the agricultural research station in the district, on 12.5 acres of land.

Under this, intensive cropping pattern was used for cultivation. The spacing was reduced from the earlier 2 ft X 2 ft to 2 ft X 1.5 ft. Saplings were planted in soil covered with plastic mulch.

Intensive cropping

This technique helped protect the plants from insect attacks and soil-related diseases. It also prevented the growth of weeds in the field, and the mulch prevented the evaporation in the field.

Lakshman Mattu, Secretary of the Mattu Gulla Growers' Association, said that the new technique has helped them improve their productivity. Earlier, farmers were getting 10 tonnes from an acre during the cultivation period of six months. Now, they are getting 18 tonnes/acre. He said that he got a net profit of ₹ 1.2 lakh an acre from the field, which was around ₹ 60,000 earlier.

Tech Adoption

Mohan Rao, President of Vadiraja Mattu Gulla Growers' Association, said that growers harvest the crop in 50 days with the modern techniques instead of 80 days earlier.

Encouraged by these results, 42 growers adopted these techniques on 25 acres during 2013-14, Sadashiva Rao, Senior Assistant Director (Horticulture), Udupi taluk, said.

The village has around 150 farmers growing 'Mattu Gulla'. Lakshman said that the objective is to convince all growers in the area to take up modern cultivation techniques. Though many growers are happy with the change over to new techniques, some growers see other problems associated with cultivation.

Drawbacks

Parameshwara Adhikari of the village said that some members who take others' land on lease and grow 'Mattu Gulla' are not entitled to benefits from the Government.

The market for Mattu Gulla

Mattu village (Udupi district), January 23: *Mattu Gulla* commands a premium when it enters the market in October-November period.

Mohan Rao, President of Vadiraja Mattu Gulla Growers' Association, attributes this to its taste, colour and the legend associated with its origin.

Giving examples of some people who tried to plant *Mattu Gulla* in other regions, he told *Business Line* that the quality did not match that of *Mattu Gulla*.

Farmers start cultivation of *Mattu Gulla* after October on paddy fields once they the standing crop is harvested. Harvest of the brinjal starts in December and continues till the onset of the Monsoon.

Considering the demand for this, some growers avoid cultivating paddy and start early planting of *Mattu Gulla*.

Such farmers, who bring the commodity early to the market in October-November, command a premium. Some of such farmers even got around ₹120 a kg during the initial days, said a grower.

The association has now been granted a temporary registration number by the Government of India's Trade Mark Registry. With this, members are planning to market their produce

directly under the brand name 'Mattu Gulla' from the next harvesting season, Rao said, hoping that this should help bring stability in the market. As of now, a grower from Mattu gets around ₹20-30 a kg during the peak harvesting period, Rao said.

Rubber rules flat in lacklustre trade

Kottayam, January 23: Physical rubber prices continued to rule unchanged on Thursday. There were no quantity buyers or sellers on any grade to set a definite trend in the market and the prices ruled at the prevailing levels amidst scattered transactions. Sentiments turned neutral tracking the overall weakness in the domestic and international trendsetters. Volumes were dull.

Sheet rubber finished flat at ₹151 a kg, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The grade was quoted steady at ₹148 by dealers.

February futures dropped to ₹153.45 (₹153.87), March to ₹155.69 (₹156.10) and April to ₹158.90 (₹159.38) while the May futures improved to ₹162.40 (₹160.90) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) slid to ₹144.07 (₹144.37) at Bangkok. January futures closed at ₹255.2 (₹151.47) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (₹/kg) were: RSS-4: 151 (151); RSS-5: 145 (145); Ungraded: 141 (141); ISNR 20: 146 (146) and Latex 60 per cent: 124.50 (124.50).

String of thundershowers keeps North-West wet

Thiruvananthapuram, January 23: Many parts of north-west and west India have been receiving thundershowers over the past few days which have reversed 'dry winter' conditions to some extent.

This is showing in the rainfall record during January 1-22 with most of the north-west region returning to either normal or excess during the period.

More to come

But west Rajasthan (93 per cent); Himachal Pradesh (43 per cent); Punjab (40 per cent); and Haryana (27 per cent) continue to show major deficits in that order. The rest – Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand – have all recorded normal or excess rains.

Latest outlook suggests that the deficit States can still look out for rain or thundershowers over the next couple of days. A weather-maker western disturbance will extend its stay over the region on Friday and still leave enough residual moisture to drop down as rain the next day.

Fog forecast

India Met Department said that the 24 hours ending Thursday morning saw rain or snow being recorded at most places over Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh.

Outlook for the next three days suggested that it will continue to rain or snow in the higher reaches on Friday. Similar weather is forecast for isolated places in adjoining Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Soyabean oil extends gain for fourth consecutive day

Mumbai, January 23: SOYA OIL FUTURES EXTEND GAINS

Edible oils ruled steady in the oils and oilseeds market on Thursday in the spot on hand-to-mouth buying, with soyabean oil extending gains for the fourth consecutive day in the futures market. On the Bombay Commodity Exchange, groundnut, cotton, sunflower and rapeseed oil ruled unchanged. Soyabean refined oil declined by ₹3/10 kg, while palmolein was up ₹1 on renewed demand. About 1,400-1,500 tonnes of edible oils were sold by local refineries during the day. Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: groundnut oil 790 (790); soya refined oil 645 (648); sunflower exp. ref. 600 (610); sunflower ref. 665 (665); rapeseed ref. oil 730 (730); rapeseed expeller ref. 700 (700); cottonseed ref. oil 625 (625); and palmolein 569 (568). Our Correspondent.

Business Standard

Palm oil up 0.2% on spot demand

[Crude palm oil](#) prices rose by 0.26% to Rs 531.10 per 10 kg in futures market today as speculators indulged in creating fresh positions on rise in demand in the spot market.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in January rose by Rs 1.40, or 0.26%, to Rs 531.10 per 10 kg in a business turnover of 6 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in February traded higher by the same margin to Rs 536.70 per 10 kg in 16 lots.

Analysts said speculators indulged in creating fresh positions on rise in demand in the spot market which led crude palm oil prices to trade higher at futures trade.

Cardamom up 0.3% on rising demand

Continuing its rising streak for the fourth day, [cardamom](#) prices gained 0.30% to Rs 739.60 per kg in futures trading today as speculators enlarged positions, driven by rising demand in the spot market.

Tight supplies in the physical market following less arrivals from producing regions also influenced cardamom prices.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in March gained Rs 2.20, or 0.30%, to Rs 739.60 per kg in a business turnover of 8 lots.

Likewise, the spice for delivery in February edged up by 90 paise, or 0.13%, to Rs 708.60 per kg in 57 lots.

Market analysts said rising demand in the spot market amid tight supplies from producing region led to the uptrend in cardamom for the fourth-day at futures trade.

Potato up 0.9% as demand picks up

[Potato](#) prices gained 0.90% to Rs 1,030.50 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions after pick-up in demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals from producing belts.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in March gained Rs 9.20, or 0.90%, to Rs 1,030.50 per quintal in a business turnover of 331 lots.

Likewise, the potato for delivery in April traded higher by Rs 8.20, or 0.79%, to Rs 1,044 per quintal in 92 lots.

Analysts said speculators created fresh positions after pick-up in demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals from producing regions which led to a rise in potato prices at futures trade.

Refined soya oil up 0.7% on pick-up in demand

[Refined soya oil](#) prices gained 0.76% to Rs 689.25 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions after pick-up in demand in the spot market due to the ongoing marriage season.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), refined soya oil for delivery in February gained Rs 5.20, or 0.76%, to Rs 689.25 per 10 kg with an open interest of 87,470 lots.

Similarly, oil for delivery in March moved up by Rs 4.20, or 0.62%, to Rs 677.10 per 10 kg in 81,990 lots.

Analysts said speculators created fresh positions after pick-up in demand in the spot market due to the ongoing marriage season led to a rise in refined soya oil prices at futures market.

Chana up 0.6% on spot demand

[Chana](#) prices rose by 0.62% to Rs 3,221 per quintal in futures market today as speculators created fresh positions on improvement in demand in the spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for delivery in April rose by Rs 20, or 0.62%, to Rs 3,221 per quintal with an open interest of 68,200 lots.

Similarly, the commodity for delivery in February gained Rs 15, or 0.49%, to Rs 3,068 per quintal in 83,850 lots.

Analysts said speculators created fresh positions on an improvement in demand in the spot market which led to rise in chana prices at futures market.

India may turn net importer of coffee as consumption rises

India, the world's sixth-largest coffee exporter, may turn a [net importer](#) the next decade, [Tata Coffee](#) Managing Director Hameed Huq said.

Domestic consumption is growing five-six per cent a year, while production is stagnating, watchers said. "Domestic [per capita consumption](#) is at 90g a year; even if the consumption goes up to 270g per person a year, the country will turn a net importer the next decade."

Consumption in India is estimated at 125,000 tonnes a year against a production of 315,000 tonnes. For 2013-14, production is estimated at 311,000 tonnes, a decline of two per cent from a year ago.

In 2012-13, India exported 308,916 tonnes, a decline of 10.3 per cent compared to 2011-12.

PIPING HOT

(Figures in tonnes)

Year	Production	Consumption
2009-10	289,600	102,000
2010-11	302,000	108,000
2011-12	314,000	113,400
2012-13	315,500	124,000
2013-14	311,000	NA*

*Not available

Source: Coffee Board & United Planters Association of Southern India

Note: The consumption growth data from 2011-12 is calculated at the rate of 5% annually, as stated by the Coffee Board chairman recently. The board is yet to officially publish data for the last three years

"The sector, with the Coffee Board of India, is actively working on many initiatives to spread awareness about coffee. One is the India International Coffee Festival (IICF). It plays an important role in promoting consumption in India. India is largely a tea-drinking country. Many tea-drinking countries such as Russia and China are progressively moving to coffee."

"We've got to make coffee easily available to the masses. We have to impart a certain amount of knowledge on the preparation of coffee. Critical to increasing consumption is setting up small roasteries, which can be driven by young entrepreneurs and growth in instant coffee. IICF can help in this. Today, there aren't many roasteries in India," he added. "If we can increase per capita consumption to 270g, the entire domestic production can be consumed in India."

Citing the example of Brazil, Huq said consumption there had risen from five million bags to 21 million in 15 years. "If India can emulate Brazil, it can consume all its production. We have all the learning from Brazil before us."

In Brazil, the economic growth combined with better income distribution and relatively low unemployment rates have encouraged coffee consumption. In India also, the growth in consumption in the last few years has been very impressive and encouraging.
