

## **Farmers hail verdict on Mullaperiyar dam**

*'Ask Kerala police to leave the site'*

Farmers' representatives and other organisations have welcomed the Supreme Court judgment on Mullaperiyar issue, permitting the storage of water up to a level of 142 feet. They said that the judgment would protect their rights of the farmers of the State.

P. Maniarsan, general secretary of Tamil Desa Poduvudamai Katchi, said in a statement issued at Thanajvur on Wednesday the Public Works Department should immediately take control of 16 sluices. The Kerala State police personnel should be vacated from the dam site and its security should be vested with the Tamil Nadu police, he said.

P. Viswanathan, state president of Tamizhaga Yeri Matrum Aatru Paasana Vivasayigal Sangam, said the verdict would come to the rescue of farmers and people of Theni, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Ramanathapuram, and Dindigul districts, who largely relied on Mullaperiyar dam for irrigation and drinking water purpose. The Supreme Court ruling would augment irrigation activities on 2.5 lakh acres of land and water supply programmes in these districts.

## **Onion prices rising again**



### *Traders keeping a close watch on poll outcome*

The soaring prices of Bellary and sambar (small) onions in the past week has caused concern to the traders and the consumers alike.

The price of Bellary, which was at Rs. 18 a kg till a week ago, has gone up to Rs. 24 in the retail market. The price of small onion has been ruling at about Rs. 30 in the open market for a week.

The traders here are eagerly waiting for the poll outcome and the formation of new government. They expect the price of Bellary onion to go up further, if the new government decided to continue with the policy of bulk export of onion.

The Gandhi Market, the wholesale market, which caters to the most of the retailers in the central region, normally gets about 150 tonnes of Bellary from Maharashtra State and another 50 tonnes from Karnataka every day. Although the arrival was maintained as usual, the increase in the price of Bellary is said to be due to the drastic fall in the receipt of number one quality Bellary, particularly from Maharashtra.

The onion growing areas of Maharashtra experienced hailstones continuously for about five days, when the onion crop was ready for harvest. About 50 per cent of the onion suffered damages. Because of this, the arrival of best quality onion from Maharashtra has dwindled steadily, leading to price increase, says A. Thangaraj, general secretary, Tiruchi Onion Commission Mandi Traders' Association, and district treasurer of the Tamil Nadu Vanigar Sangangalin Peramaippu.

Of the 200 tonnes of Bellary received by the wholesale dealers of Gandhi Market, only 50 tonnes is best quality and the rest is the damaged and inferior quality Bellary. The wholesale dealers here have to pay higher price for fetching the best quality Bellary and this has led to increase in the price in the retail market, Mr. Thangaraj says. The price of

Bellary is expected to escalate to Rs. 30 during this month. Now, the price of onion was in the hands of the decision of the new government at the Centre on its export policy.

If the new government decided to restrict the export of Bellary, the price will continue to remain stable at Rs. 30 to Rs. 40. If the new government decided to continue with the export of onion, the price would go up, he said.

Meanwhile, the Gandhi Market continues to receive 150 tonnes of small (sambar) onion from Perambalur, Thuraiyur, Palladam, Dharapuram, and Udumalpettai directly. The price of best quality small onion is about Rs. 30 in the open market.

### **India dines on top quality mangoes after EU ban**

Indians are feasting on some of the world's most succulent mangoes after the European Union banned imports of the fruit from India this month, producing a glut and rock-bottom prices for local consumers.

Starting May 1, the EU banned imports of Indian mangoes including the Alphonso, considered the king of all the mango varieties grown in South Asia, because a large number of shipments were contaminated with fruit flies. The pests are considered a threat to crops grown locally in Europe.

For years, the Alphonso mangoes had been out of the reach of most Indians as the best of the fruit was shipped to the supermarkets of Europe and other parts of the world where it commanded a premium price.

In Mumbai, the capital of the main Alphonso growing region, the fruit is now selling for 150-550 rupees (\$2.50-\$9) a kilogram, about \$2-3 below prices last week. And sellers say they expect the prices to fall even further.

Mangoes start arriving in Indian markets in April, providing a juicy, delicious respite from summer temperatures and humidity as they start climbing to oppressive levels.

Piles of mangoes are cooled in refrigerators or buckets of ice-cold water or pureed to create refreshing drinks that cut through the scorching heat.

The Alphonso, with its golden yellow flesh and distinct aroma, is a favorite and is especially prized because the best varieties are either exported or very expensive.

This year, however, the stores in the crowded lanes of Mumbai's Crawford market are piled high with crates and baskets of perfectly ripe Alphonso.

Deepak Kanulkar and his family are now gorging on the delicious fruit. "There is difference in the size and texture. The moment you touch it, you feel the difference. When you cut it, you get this aroma which fills the room. The taste is definitely superior," he said. "I have had these mangoes while abroad and now I am seeing the same quality here."

But the EU ban is likely to disappoint legions of Indian mango fans in Britain, an EU member nation where the fruit has become popular not only in the substantial Indian community but also among foodies who look forward to the 10-week Alphonso mango season, said Jenny Linford, known for her London Food Chronicles blog.

She said the Alphonso mango has a unique texture, aroma and flavor unmatched by other varieties. "They are valued and celebrated," she said. She said mangoes found in British supermarkets are often dreadful, rock hard and with little flavor, while mangoes sold in smaller Indian markets are extremely tasty and less expensive.

### **Farmers demand timely start to pokkali season**

Pokkali farmers in Ernakulam and Alappuzha districts have appealed to their respective district administrations to ensure that paddy sowing in coastal fields began on time despite a recent notification extending time for shrimp farming till April 30.

An extraordinary Gazette notification earlier this year fixed the period for shrimp farming in pokkali fields between November 15 and April 30 and has widely been questioned by those working to protect the traditional paddy cultivation in semi-saline waters in the coastal districts of Alappuzha, Ernakulam and Thrissur.

A meeting of Kerala State Karshaka Thozhilali Union here on Tuesday alleged that there was a move to continue with shrimp farming in pokkali fields despite the activity time having lapsed.

### **Agriculture students told to take forward their innovation**

Agriculture graduates should take their innovative ideas to the finishing line so as to bring about a positive transformation in the society, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Vice Chancellor K. Ramasamy has said.

The students of today should be independent and not conventional in their thinking. They should not only come up with new ideas but also convert those ideas into business opportunities. This entrepreneurship was welcome and there was plenty of government support to incubate their ideas into products, he said at the NAIP – Agribusiness Idol Camp, organised by the Directorate of Agribusiness Development on Wednesday. Entrepreneurship was part of academic programme.

So, students must pay as much interest in developing their entrepreneurial spirit as in academics. Unleashing their entrepreneurship spirit would create employment opportunities for people in rural areas and lead to economic growth.

### **Subsidy**

Women graduates were eligible for 30 per cent subsidy from the State Government and 50 per cent subsidy from the Central Government to start agribusiness enterprise, he said and added that around Rs. 10 crore was available for starting new ventures.

Speaking on the poor utilisation of resources at seed production centres, Mr. Ramasamy said that students should form teams to start seed production activities under the public-private partnership mode.

R. Murugesan, Director, Directorate of Agribusiness Development, said that the Agribusiness Idol Camp was only the first in the series of programmes the Directorate had planned.

It had also planned to conduct Kisan Parivarthan Yatra, Agri Innovation Conclave and a few more programmes at the national-level. This camp, though, was targeted at students with entrepreneurial talent.

The University adopted various strategies to support start-up companies and one was transfer of technology in biotechnology, microbiology, entomology, pathology, food processing and mechanisation. At present, the TNAU incubation centre had 70 budding entrepreneurs and thus far 15 technologies had been commercialised.

K. Alagu Sundaram, Director, Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology, spoke about innovation strategies. A.V. Gnanasambandham, Business Manager, Technology Business Incubator, proposed the vote of thanks.

### **Fishermen set to reap maiden cage harvest of cobia fish**



*They swung into action and mobilised a capital of Rs.49 lakh to launch fish farming by setting up 10 cages along shoreline*

As the fisherfolk kept their fingers crossed on finding a solution to the dispute over fishing in the Palk Bay, a small group of Rameswaram fishermen quietly weaned away from trawl fishing to take up sea cage farming of ‘cobia’ fish and set to reap the maiden harvest on Thursday.

As a majority of their colleagues suffered at the hands of Sri Lankan navy when they crossed the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the Palk Bay, a group of fishermen formed Cobia Aquaculture Fishermen Welfare Association to take up sea cage farming with the support of Mandapam Regional Centre of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

After forming the association in August last year, the 21 members swung into action and mobilised a capital of Rs.49 lakh to launch cobia farming by setting up 10 cages in the CMFRI shoreline to grow cobia, which has good meat quality and is in good demand in domestic and foreign markets.

“We started growing 700 cobia fingerlings in each of the 10 cages, and after five months and 20 days, we are now ready for the first partial harvest of cobia fish, each weighing from 1.5 to 2.5 kilograms,” N.D. Mughesh Kumar, secretary of the association, said.

They proposed to harvest about one tonne of fish on Thursday and sell them for Rs.2.5 lakh (Rs.250 per kg). “We have already tied up with buyers from Kerala and Bangalore,” he said.

Cobia weighing four kg and above fetched better price and commanded a good demand in the export market. “We are confident of breaking even and making profits in the next couple of harvests,” Mr. Kumar told *The Hindu* .

As fishing in Palk Bay had become increasingly risky, some fishermen went to the CMFRI campus to enquire about ornamental fish farming, when they stumbled upon sea cage fishing and found cobia farming lucrative, A. Leonald, treasurer of the association, said.

“If we have come out successful, the credit should go to the CMFRI and its Principal Scientist G. Gopakumar,” he said. While the association provided the capital for cages, labour and feed, the CMFRI offered about 6,500 fingerlings of cobia and all technical guidance free of cost, he added.

Mr. Gopakumar said he was sceptical when the fishermen approached him to take up sea cage farming, but later he was convinced that the fishermen were committed to and interested in alternative livelihood.

The association proposed to double the number of cages in the next phase and draw more fishermen into sea cage farming. “After seeing our success story, many fishermen are willing to join us,” Mr. Kumar said.

### **Joy of bumper paddy yield remains short-lived**



The delight of getting a good paddy yield during the season was short-lived as the farmers had much difficulty in selling their produce and the unprepared and short-staffed district administration failed to stop millers from exploiting farmers in the district.



Farmers cultivated paddy in more than 2 lakh hectares, highest in the recent past and second only to Karimnagar in Telangana. Following heavy rains in October, the Agriculture Department estimated that the farmers would take up paddy cultivation in more than 2 lakh hectares six months ago. There is ample time to make arrangements for paddy procurement, but officials say that they could not make arrangements properly as they had been caught up in election work.

### **Root of problem**

Of the over 10 lakh tonnes of yield expected, the millers procured 3.80 lakh tonnes, while 331 government procurement centres procured just over 1.50 lakh tonnes.

Government agencies like IKP, Civil Supplies Corporation, District Cooperative Marketing Societies had to sell the paddy being procured by them to millers, who were chosen by the district administration. Here lies the whole problem.

### **Faulty machines?**

The millers delay the unloading of paddy sent by government agencies showing various reasons like lack of porters, poor quality of paddy and others due to which the farmers are caught for 15 to 20 days in government agencies set up markets.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Chileveru Chandraiah, a tenant farmer from Lakshmipuram village of Thipparthi mandal, said that he had brought the paddy to the market 20 days ago, but is yet to sell his produce.

Saying that many like him were spending days in the market, he said that this had encouraged his peers to approach the millers directly where the paddy is purchased immediately and the purchase price is about Rs 100 less than MSP Rs 1,345 a quintal.

The moisture content in the paddy is allowed up to 17 per cent, but the moisture checking devices used by the millers are erratic which shows more than 17 per cent for even properly dried up paddy.

### **case filed against miller**

A farmer filed a case against a miller at Vemulapally police station during last kharif season as he caught the miller using the faulty moisture checking machine.

Most millers are accepting paddy having up to only 16 per cent moisture, against the government stipulated 17 per cent and they cut the price of 1 kg at each point increase in moisture in a 70-kg bag.

### **Rain damage**

The short-staffed Legal Meteorology Department, with only five members on the staff, is not in a state to check these machines as the district has just 270 rice mills.

Meanwhile, all the government procurement agencies set up markets in open lands in the neighbourhoods of villages due to which the paddy was swept away following rain.

These procurement centres do not have paddy tarpaulins to protect the harvested grain from rain. Adding to the woes of the farmers, the millers and government agencies are refusing to purchase wet paddy.

A farmer leader from Valigonda, Kandala Bal Reddy, said that the loot of farmers is going on unabated due to a nexus between millers, politicians and officials which has left the innocent farmers to suffer losses.

### **SC allows TN to increase Mullaperiyar water level**

In a major victory for Tamil Nadu, the Supreme Court on Wednesday declared as unconstitutional the law passed by Kerala in 2006, constituting the Dam Safety Authority

to prevent the State from raising the water level in the Mullaperiyar dam from 136 ft to 142 ft.

A five-judge Constitution Bench allowing the suit filed by TN permanently restrained Kerala from interfering with the rights of Tamil Nadu from raising the water level in the dam from 136 ft to 142 ft. By enacting the law and fixing the storage height of the dam at 136 ft, Kerala had nullified the 2006 judgment and usurped judicial power and thus interfered with the judicial functioning. The Bench said the Constitution envisaged separation of powers among the Executive, Judiciary and Legislature and one should not encroach into the domain of the other. Independence of the judiciary and courts alone would ensure rule of law, the Bench said.

### Water level at Mettur

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 32.33 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,187 cusecs and the discharge 500 cusecs.



Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Cloudy

**Thursday, May 8**

Max Min

32° | 26°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:45

Humidity: 79

Sunset: 06:25

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1008

#### Tomorrow's Forecast








Cloudy

**Friday, May 9**

Max Min

32° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday May 10	Sunday May 11	Monday May 12	Tuesday May 13	Wednesday May 14
				
32°   26°	34°   28°	34°   28°	34°   29°	34°   29°
Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy

Airport Weather

Chennai

Rain: 0      Sunrise: 05:45  
Humidity: 79      Sunset: 06:25  
Wind: normal      Barometer: 1008



## Business Standard

Wheat procurement may fall to six-year low



Food Corporation of India ([FCI](#)) is likely to miss its [wheat procurement](#) target of 31 million tonnes (mt) by about 15 per cent and end up with about 25 mt, a six-year low. As

of May 4, wheat procurement by FCI and other government agencies stood at 22.6 mt, against 22.5 in the year-ago period. FCI has already extended the deadline for procurement from April 30 to May 15.

With procurement in the major procuring states of Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan at its fag end, it has been estimated total wheat procurement this year will be 24-25 mt. Earlier, it was projected the procurement would stand at 38.1 mt; this was scaled down to 31 mt at a meeting of food secretaries on March 17. Last year, wheat procurement stood at 25.04 mt.

#### India exports wheat worth Rs 2,590 cr

Government has exported 1.5 million tonnes [wheat](#) for an estimated Rs 2,590 crore out of 2 MT stocks allowed for overseas shipments from surplus stocks of Food Corporation of India ([FCI](#)).

"The government has so far awarded tenders of 1.5 MT of wheat, against the allowed quantity of 2 MT, and it is unlikely to float any new tenders for export of wheat," a source said.

The average price realised from export of wheat is at \$283 per tonne and government is estimated to earn Rs 2,590 crore, the source added.

In 2012-13, the government earned \$1.4 billion from export of 4.2 million tonnes of wheat by PSUs. Indian wheat fetched an average price of \$311.38 per tonne in the previous financial year.

Majority of the wheat has been shipped to neighbouring Bangladesh, while some quantities has also been exported to Ethiopia, Yemen, South Korea and Sri Lanka.

In August 2013, the Centre had allowed FCI to export 2 MT wheat from its surplus stocks via public trading firms STC,[MMTC](#) and PEC at a base price of \$300 per tonne.

Later, the floor price was cut to \$260 per tonne to make shipments viable. As other major international players US and Canada were offering their wheat at lower prices in the international market.

Indian wheat in the international market mainly competes with 'US SRW wheat gulf' and 'Black sea milling wheat'.

The government has set a target to procure 31 MT wheat in the ongoing season.

Cardamom gains second day in a row as demand picks up



[Cardamom](#) prices gained for the second day by adding 0.48 per cent to Rs 986.50 per kg in futures trade today as enlarged positions, amid pick up in domestic and export demand.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in May added Rs 4.70, or 0.48 per cent to Rs 986.50 per kg in business turnover of 53 lots.

Analysts said besides pick up in domestic and export demand in the spot market, restricted arrivals from producing regions influenced cardamom prices in futures trade.

**Global body to launch campaign to promote pulses**

**Cape Town (South Africa), May 7:**

The International Pulses Trade and Industry Confederation will launch a campaign to promote pulses across the globe. This is to capitalise on the UN's declaration of 2016 as the Year of Pulses, Hakan Bahceci, President of CICILS-IPTIC, told delegates at the World Pulses Convention.

Stating that this provided an opportunity to promote pulses in different ways including production, processing, consumption and trade to take the industry to the next higher level, Bahceci asked various national associations to come up with promotional plans to increase consumption and enhance stakeholder value.

The plans will revolve around food security, health, nutrition and innovation, productivity and environmental sustainability, market access and stability, and creating awareness.

Cindy Brown from the US-based firm Chippa Valley Bean will head the campaign.

As the world's largest producer, importer and consumer India will play a significant role in promoting pulses in the coming years.

**Volume drops at Coonoor tea sale**

A volume of 11.38 lakh kg is being offered for Sale No: 19 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction to be held on Thursday and Friday. This is as much as 1.79 lakh kg less than last week.

Of this, a volume of 7.48 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.90 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 10.48 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 90,000 kg,

orthodox variety. A volume of 55,000 kg of teas unsold in previous weeks is being re-offered this week.

Vigneshwar Estate topped CTC market at Rs. 190 a kg. Among orthodox teas, Chamraj topped at Rs. 252/kg. Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs. 54-58 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs. 100-145 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs. 63-67 for plain dusts and Rs. 120-180 for brighter liquoring dusts. Some teas were bought for Pakistan at Rs. 54-115 a kg.

### **Imported white pepper sells at over Rs. 1,000 a kg**

Imported white pepper, reportedly from Vietnam, is being traded in Mumbai at Rs. 1,025-1,100 a kg. For the first time after several weeks, four tonnes of pepper were traded on Wednesday in May contract on the national exchange platform at Rs. 71,700 a quintal. Prices on the IPSTA platform also went up by Rs. 1,000 a quintal each for May and June to Rs. 69,292 and Rs. 68,292 respectively.

On the spot, only three tonnes of pepper were traded at Rs. 710 a kg for pepper from the plains, Rs. 725 for High Ranges and Rs. 740 for Rajkumari pepper. Spot prices were at a new high of Rs. 71,500 (ungarbled) and Rs. 73,500 (garbled) a quintal. Export prices were \$13,000 (c&f) for Europe and \$13,250 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

### **Tyre sector pitches for a national rubber policy**

The Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) has reiterated its demand for a comprehensive national rubber policy on the lines of auto sector policy in the country.

This was raised at the meeting the tyre industry leaders had with Amitabh Kant, the new Secretary of Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion.



The issue has been raised just before the stakeholders' consultations at the Rubber Board's headquarters in Kottayam on May 9.

The committee stressed the need for framing a comprehensive national Policy outlining medium and long term objectives, roadmap and recommendations, sectoral competitiveness etc.

The policy is already under consideration by the Commerce Ministry.

According to Raghupati Singhanian of JK Tyre, the country needs a rubber policy as it touches the lives of over 10 lakh growers and has a rich and diverse value chain encompassing tyres, conveyer belts, auto components, footwear, medical supplies, sports equipment, etc.

Each segment of the rubber sector has its own set of complexities which need to be addressed in a policy document with defined growth parameters, he said.

For the last several years, the domestic consumption has outstripped availability.

### **Output data**

According to Rubber Board figures, the gap between domestic production and consumption widened to 1,33,400 tonnes last fiscal.

The industry estimates that during the current fiscal, too, production will lag behind consumption by about 1,00,000 tonnes.

According to ATMA, rubber imports are therefore imperative to plug the demand supply mismatch.

## **Oilmeal exports up 20% in April**

A surge in demand for rapemeal from South Korea and Thailand boosted oilmeal exports in April compared with the corresponding period a year ago.

Total shipments increased 20 per cent to 2.36 lakh tonnes, according to the Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA).

Rapemeal shipments more than doubled to 1,25,872 tonnes in April , against 54,077 tonnes in the year-ago period. Of this, 35,185 tonnes of rapemeal were exported to South Korea and 41,800 tonnes to Thailand.

However, shipments of soyameal declined by about a tenth to 89,883 tonnes (99,451 tonnes) on high prices.

“The export of soyameal drastically reduced in April due to high price of soyabean leading to disparity in crushing and exports,” SEA said in a statement.

Also, exports of rice bran extract and castor meal registered a sharp decline during the period. Castor meal exports fell 37 per cent to 20,378 tonnes (32,640 tonnes).

Shipments of rice bran extract slumped 95 per cent to 600 tonnes.

Overall exports to Thailand, Taiwan and Europe registered an increase during the period, while shipments to Iran, Vietnam, Indonesia and South Korea declined. Iran continued to be the largest importer at 57,780 tonnes, followed by South Korea at 52,151 tonnes, Thailand at 42,550 tonnes and Europe at 32,197 tonnes.

## **Despite late harvest, Govt agencies to buy more wheat**

Despite a month-long delayed start to wheat harvest, progressive procurement of the cereal by Government agencies has picked up in the last few days, exceeding last year's levels.

As on Tuesday, State agencies led by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) have procured 23.10 million tonnes (mt) of wheat, up 1.3 per cent over 22.80 mt purchase during the same period a year ago.

“Wheat procurement, which was trailing till now, has gained momentum. Going by the current trend, total purchases could exceed last year's 25 mt,” FCI sources said. The Government had set a procurement target of 31 mt for wheat this year.

### **Better crop**

Arrivals and procurement trend also indicate that the size of the crop could be better than last year. Also, damage to the crop on account of multiple spells of unseasonal rains over the past few months could be lower than what has been feared. According to the second advanced estimates, wheat production is expected to touch a record 95.6 mt this year.

### **Latest update**

The Food Ministry's latest update shows that wheat procurement, so far, has exceeded last year's levels in Haryana, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, whereas in Punjab it is almost on a par with last year's levels.

Rajasthan, which is giving a bonus of Rs. 150 a quintal over the Centre's minimum support price (MSP) of Rs. 1,400 to farmers, has registered a 30 per cent rise in procurement this year, while in Madhya Pradesh, the increase is about one per cent.

In Haryana, the growth in procurement so far is about 7 per cent.

However, in Uttar Pradesh – the largest wheat producing State – procurement by Government agencies has declined by more than half over last year.

Market arrivals, too, are lower. This could be attributed to active buying by private traders, led by exporters, millers and stockists.

As a result of active purchases being made by private trade, wheat prices have been ruling firm and above the MSP levels in almost all markets of UP this year.

Trade sources said exporters have so far contracted for overseas shipments of around 2 million tonnes, with buyers turning to Indian wheat amidst political turmoil in Ukraine.

The Central pool wheat stocks, as on May 1, stood at 34.4 mt, almost five times the buffer and strategic requirement of 7 mt, as on April 1.

### **Lack of buyers saps spot rubber**

Physical rubber prices lost ground on Wednesday. Sharp declines in the global trendsetters and the absence of buyers in the local trading houses continued to put further pressure on prices.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs. 138 ( Rs. 139) a kg, according to traders and the Rubber Board. May futures firmed up to Rs. 136.65 ( Rs. 135.42), June to Rs. 140.25 ( Rs. 138.40) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

The Rubber Mini May futures improved to Rs. 138.50 ( Rs. 137.20) while the June futures dropped to Rs. 139 ( Rs. 139.50) on NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) declined to Rs. 120.68 ( Rs. 123.53) a kg at Bangkok. May futures closed at ¥199 ( Rs. 117.75) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. Spot rubber rates ( Rs. /kg): RSS-4: 138 (139); RSS-5: 135 (136); Ungraded: 131 (131); ISNR 20: 130 (131) and Latex 60%: 112 (114).

### **Mullaperiyar dam dispute: SC rules in favour of TN**

In a victory for Tamil Nadu, the Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed the raising of water level in Kerala's Mullaperiyar dam from 136 feet to 142 feet, and restrained the Kerala government from obstructing the former from doing so.

While declaring the Mullaperiyar dam as “endangered”, a five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice RM Lodha struck down the amendments to the Kerala Irrigation and Water Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2006 that blocked Tamil Nadu's move to increase the amount of water stored in the dam.

“...it is declared that the Kerala Irrigation and Water Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2006 passed by the Kerala legislature is unconstitutional in its application to and effect on the Mullaperiyar dam. The state of Kerala is restrained by a decree of permanent injunction from applying and enforcing the impugned legislation or in any manner interfering with or obstructing the state of Tamil Nadu from increasing the water level to 142 ft. and from carrying out the repair works...”

However, to allay the apprehensions of Kerala about the safety of the Mullaperiyar dam, it also set up a three-member committee headed by a representative from the Central Water Commission to ensure proper repair of the Mullaperiyar dam periodically. The panel also has one representative each from the two states.

There have been differences between the two states over the safety of the dam. While Tamil Nadu had been demanding an increase in the water level in the 116-year-old dam to support its agricultural needs, Kerala has maintained the structure was weak and needed to be replaced. The dam site is in Kerala but the reservoir mainly serves Tamil Nadu. Kerala wants the dam brought down and has offered to fund and build a new one on the Periyar river. But Tamil Nadu feels that if a new dam is built, it will be forced to accept a reduced share of water.

## **Soyameal exports likely to decline 13.5% as farmers hold on to stocks for better returns**

India's soyameal exports are expected to drop 13.5% in the current marketing year through September as farmers hold on to soyabean stocks anticipating better returns. This is leading to lower crushing, senior industry executives said on Wednesday.

Soyameal exports will at best be 3 million tonne in 2013-14, said Rajesh Agrawal, convenor of the Soybean Processors Association of India (SOPA). India — the world's fourth-largest soyameal supplier — had exported 3.47 million tonne in 2012-13.

On a financial year basis, exports dropped 24.2% in 2013-14 to 2.60 million tonne.

However, in value terms, they dropped only 11% year-on-year to R9,083.38 crore in the last fiscal, mainly due to the appreciation in the commodity's prices.

Exports of the commodity already tumbled 24.4% in April from a year before to 75,884 tonne while those between October and April also dropped 24.4% to 2.04 million tonne, showed the latest SOPA data. These data do not include supplies to Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh by rail or road.

Senior trade executives said farmers have held back stocks, driving up soyabean prices and compounding concerns of soyameal exporters facing stiff competition in a market already awash with South American supplies.

"While farmers have held back stocks, prices have already been at elevated levels, and these have affected our export competitiveness. If monsoon fails this year, it will just aggravate our problems further," said Agrawal. Soyabean prices have gone up by nearly 8% in the past two months to around R48,500 per tonne.

Exporters, already feeling the heat due to lower prices overseas following a bumper South American harvest, fear outbound shipments will suffer despite a weak rupee if farmers continue to hold on to soyabean stocks or seek higher prices, trade executives said. The freight-on-board price of India's soyameal is already higher by roughly \$25 than South America's, a trader said.

Domestic farmers feel soyabean prices would move up even further in coming days as the government expects an annual 15% drop in production to 12.45 million tonne in the current crop year through June.

Soyabean is crushed into soyameal for animal feed and into soyaoil for cooking and to be used as an alternative fuel. Soyameal is added to poultry feed as a form of protein to boost the birds' growth.

India competes with Brazil and Argentina for soyameal exports to countries such as Japan, Vietnam, South Korea and China. However, suppliers in India usually have an edge over their South American rivals in



### Sugar Mills-Govt Deadlock Continues

Rejecting the sugar mill owners' offer to release an additional Rs 100 per tonne of sugarcane supplied earlier, the state government on Wednesday directed the district administrations concerned to initiate criminal and civil proceedings against them, if they fail to pay Rs 2,500 per tonne to farmers as decided by the Sugar Control Board.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister T B Jayachandra told reporters that the two day ultimatum given to mills ended on Wednesday evening. He said he has directed the Industry Secretary to speak to all the Deputy Commissioners concerned and take legal measures against guilty sugar mills.

“We are left with no option but to invoke the provisions of the Regulation of Sugarcane Price Act against the sugar mills for not complying with the order of the Sugar Control Board,” he said.

He said the sugar mills have paid sugarcane growers between `1,700 and `1,800, which is far below the price matrix fixed by the Board.

“We may levy interest for the delayed payment to the farmers,” he warned.

He said the government conducted a meeting with sugar mill owners last Monday and directed them to comply with the Board’s order. He said sugar mill representatives on Tuesday evening reportedly came forward to release `100, in addition to what they had paid to the farmers earlier. However, the the government rejected the offer, he said. He said as on April 15, the total dues to sugarcane growers stood at Rs 3,357.56 crore. He said factories in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra were paying Rs 2,500 per tonne of sugarcane to farmers.

### Aspiring Farmers to Get Together

About 20,000 Facebook friends who got inspired to take up farming through discussions in the social media will meet at Elavoor in Angamaly on May 18.

The Facebook friends have been long-conducting regular discussions and classes on farming. The group, with several Non Resident Keralites as members, has already conducted several rounds of meet-ups in Saudi Arabia. The was group founded by NRI Malayalee Hakeem Cherushola. Apart from experts, Agriculture Department officers, experienced farmers like Sudheesh Guruvayoor are active participants in the group.

Various classes related to farming are organised as part of the meet. Chanthan Malanthara will inaugurate the meet at 9 am and Navas Shamsudeen will deliver the keynote address.

V Deepan will lead a class on mushroom farming at 9.30 am. Nirmala Pillai will take class on vermicomposting at 10 am, aquaponics expert V K Narayanan will take a class at 11.30 am, Shoji from Vennala Agricultural Center will conduct a session on onion farming at 2.30 pm.

More details of the event is available at the group’s own website ‘[www.krishigroup.com](http://www.krishigroup.com)’.



## India dines on top quality mangoes after EU ban



Indians are feasting on some of the world's most succulent mangoes after the European Union banned imports of the fruit from India this month, producing a glut and rock-bottom prices for local consumers.

Starting May 1, the EU banned imports of Indian mangoes including the Alphonso, considered the king of all the mango varieties grown in South Asia, because a large number of shipments were contaminated with fruit flies.

The pests are considered a threat to crops grown in Europe.

“Those jittery Europeans have taken fright at some fruit flies in our mango exports, flies which they fear will wreak havoc on their tomatoes and cucumbers,” the Times of India wrote in a gleeful editorial. “Imagine sacrificing the king of fruits for salad!”

For years, the Alphonso mangoes had been out of the reach of most Indians as the best of the fruit was shipped to the supermarkets of Europe and other parts of the world where it commanded a premium price.

In Mumbai, the capital of the main Alphonso growing region, the fruit is now selling for 150-550 rupees (\$2.50-\$9) a kilogram, about \$2-3 below prices last week. And sellers say they expect the prices to fall even further.



Mangoes start arriving in Indian markets in April, providing a juicy, delicious respite from summer temperatures and humidity as they start climbing to oppressive levels.

Piles of mangoes are cooled in refrigerators or buckets of ice-cold water or pureed to create refreshing drinks that cut through the scorching heat.

The Alphonso, with its golden yellow flesh and distinct aroma, is a favorite and is especially prized because the best varieties are either exported or prohibitively expensive. This year, however, the stores in the crowded lanes of Mumbai's Crawford market are piled high with crates and baskets of perfectly ripe Alphonso.



Deepak Kanulkar and his family are now gorging on the delicious fruit.

“There is difference in the size and texture. The moment you touch it, you feel the difference. When you cut it, you get this aroma which fills the room. The taste is definitely superior,” he said.

“I have had these mangoes while living abroad and now I am seeing the same quality here.”

But the EU ban is likely to disappoint legions of Indian mango fans in Britain, an EU member nation where the fruit has become popular not only in the substantial Indian community but also among foodies who look forward to the 10-week Alphonso mango season, said Jenny Linford, known for her London Food Chronicles blog. She said the Alphonso mango has a unique texture, aroma and flavor unmatched by other varieties.

## THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Cardamom futures remain higher as demand picks up



NEW DELHI: Amid pick up in domestic and export demand, cardamom prices gained for the second day by adding 0.48 per cent to Rs 986.50 per kg in futures trade today as enlarged positions.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in May added Rs 4.70, or 0.48 per cent to Rs 986.50 per kg in business turnover of 53 lots.

Analysts said besides pick up in domestic and export demand in the spot market, restricted arrivals from producing regions influenced cardamom prices at futures trade

## Sugar closes steady on small buying



NEW DELHI: Sugar prices remained steady at the wholesale market in national capital today following scattered demand from retailers and bulk consumers amid adequate stocks.

Marketmen said scattered demand from retailers and bulk consumers such as ice-cream makers against adequate stocks position helped sugar prices to remain steady.

## Natural rubber prices have plunged to five-year low

KOCHI: Natural rubber prices have plunged to a five-year low at Rs. 138 per kg on concerns of muted demand , oversupply in the global market and plummeting international prices. Industry analysts have predicted a bearish outlook in the coming weeks and say that a change in the situation can happen only with the fresh policies of the new government at the Centre .

The much-trumpeted procurement programme of the Kerala government to lift the prices has petered out after the initial promise due to lack of funds. No rubber procurement has taken place in the state after April 10, the Lok Sabha election day.

"We had to stop it on instructions from the Election Commission. The state government has taken up the matter and we hope the funds will be released in the coming days," said

S Ratnakumaran, managing director of The Kerala State Co-operative Rubber Marketing Federation (Rubbermark) the main procurement agency.

The rubber prices were around Rs. 148 per kg when the procurement began in early March and it has now fallen by another Rs. 10.

So far Rubbermark has procured around 110 tonne. The industry doubts, whether the programme aimed at buying rubber at Rs. 2 more than the market rates till the prices touch Rs. 171, will remain as unfulfilled election promise. The international prices of RSS-3 variety have dropped 12 per cent to Rs. 123.51 per kg since April 1.

The block prices have fallen by Rs. 13 to Rs. 102 per kg, which is less than \$2 and have triggered more imports. "The demand from China (the largest consumer ) has been weak as the country has sufficient stock and there is an oversupply in the global market. This demand supply mismatch is pulling down the prices and it is reflected on the Indian prices as well," said CP Krishnan, wholetime director of Geojit Comtrade.

According to him, unless the threat of El Nino affecting production cause supply concerns and raise the prices, the downward trend is likely to continue in the international market in the short term. In the present situation, the growers have stopped tapping despite showers in April bringing relief from the hot weather.

"The tappers are asking for Rs. 3 to tap a tree. A person can tap around 300 trees a day which means Rs. 900 wages per day. With the prices at such levels, it would result in loss for the grower," said Biju John, a rubber dealer.

The tyre manufacturers are waiting for the new government to take charge at the centre and formulate fresh policies on infrastructure and mining to rejuvenate the sector.

Meanwhile, good performance in the replacement tyre segment and low international prices have prompted more imports. The year 2013-14 saw record imports of 3,24,467 tonne.

## **THE TIMES OF INDIA**

### Onion prices decline on poor quality of arrival

NASHIK: Onion prices declined on Wednesday as the quality of the arrivals was low, leading to lack of buying interest in markets in the district.

The prices ranged between Rs 1,500 to Rs 900 a quintal in the country's largest wholesale onion market in the country, Lasalgaon, with the average rates declining marginally by 4.21% to Rs 910 a quintal.

According to officials from the Lasalgaon agricultural produce market committee (APMC), the quality of onions has taken a beating due to unseasonal rains and hailstorms that hit the district in February and March. Out of total produce, only 20% of the arrival is of export quality, while the remaining onions are of poor quality. The good quality onions were getting good rates - in the range of Rs 800 - Rs 1,450 a quintal, while the poor quality ones were being sold at Rs 300 - Rs 700 a quintal. This is the reason the average wholesale prices have also declined, since the quantum of the poor quality crop is way more than the good quality onions.

Speaking to TOI, chairman of the Lasalgaon APMC Nanasaheb Patil said, "The recent hailstorm has badly affected the quality of onions in the district. Although the summer crop has a longer shelf life, due to the rains and hailstorms, the shelf life of the current crop has decreased and cannot be stored for long. Hence, the farmers have no option but to sell their produce at prevailing rates. So while the onions will continue to be available

in abundance for the next two months, scarcity might be created post that. But the situation will also depend on how other onion growing states like Gujarat and Rajasthan contribute to the domestic market."

President of the Lasalgaon Merchants' Association and director of the Lasalgaon APMC, Nandakumar Daga ,said, "the traders too are at a risk while transporting poor-quality onions to other parts of the country as they are prone to damage. So poor quality onions are being sold at lower rates - Rs 350 - Rs 700 a quintal. But the good quality onions are getting better prices of up to Rs 1,550 a quintal."

The onion arriving in the market is the summer crop harvested in April and May. The summer onion has a shelf life of around seven months. Hence, farmers prefer storing their produce with the hope of getting better prices later.

In Lasalgaon, the average wholesale onion prices was recorded at Rs 910 a quintal on Wednesday, against Rs 950 a quintal on Tuesday. The minimum and maximum prices were recorded at Rs 200 and Rs 1,450 a quintal, respectively and around 14,000 quintals were auctioned.

The average wholesale onion prices at Pimpalgaon were recorded at Rs 1,051 a quintal, against Rs 1,100 a quintal on Tuesday.

In Yeola, the average wholesale onion prices was recorded at Rs 700 a quintal, the same as on Tuesday. The minimum and maximum prices were recorded at Rs 200 and Rs 1,540 a quintal, respectively and around 4,000 quintals were auctioned.

Punjab Agricultural University students enact a play at Hoshiarpur

LUDHIANA: The students of the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) enacted a scientific play on "Conservation of Natural Resources" at village Fuglana, district

Hoshiarpur, under the aegis of United States India Educational Foundation (USIEF).

Speaking on the occasion, Kulwant Singh Ahluwalia, member, PAU Board of Management and a progressive farmer, said that the play conveys a scientific message to the farmers. He added, "If the natural resources are not conserved, the future generations will never forgive us." Alongwith judicious use of agro-chemicals, farmers should make effort to conserve natural resources, he said.

In his remarks, Kulbir Singh Deol, Chief Agricultural Officer, Hoshiarpur, said that due to indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals, many challenges such as environment degradation and economic loss are being faced in present day agriculture.

Chaman Lal, chief training officer, Hoshiarpur, told the farmers that in future also, such scientific plays will be enacted for the benefit of the farming community. These plays possess immense farm knowledge with focus on issues and solutions, he added.

Anil Sharma, assistant director (TV) and the principal investigator of the USIEF research project, said that the play was enacted at Madali village of Mansa and Dina village of Moga also. He said that the students of the University participated enthusiastically in the play, highlighting the significance of natural resource conservation.

Sanjeev Chauhan, an expert of the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, shared his views on agro-forestry.

Kamal Vatta, Director, Water Management (India), Columbia State University, USA, was also present on this occasion.

A team of PAU students who participated in the play included Manpreet Kaur, Narjit



Singh, Maninder S. Sandhu, Ravinder Sandhu, Jobanjit Khaira, Harjit S. Ladar, Kunal Singla, S. Kaur, Naveen Bhandari, Amritpal Randhawa and Simran Badhan.

[Post a comment](#)

### Agriculture Price Commission to be constituted soon: Secretary

MANGALORE: With government order issued, the decks have been cleared for setting up the much touted Agriculture Price Commission. The process of selecting the suitable persons for this six-member commission to be headed by an agronomist and that includes two farmer representatives, two officials from departments of agriculture and or horticulture, and an ex-officio member secretary will be initiated to constitute the commission.

Stating this in an informal chat with reporters on sidelines of district level meeting to review the drought and natural calamity situation in Dakshina Kannada district, Bharat Lal Meena, principal secretary, department of agriculture and district in-charge secretary said with the GO, process of setting up the commission will receive necessary fillip. Incidentally, the state government had announced setting up the commission in its budget of 2013-14.

The commission, as per the mandate envisioned in the budget will strive to fix suitable prices for agriculture produces based on recommendations worked out by it scientifically. The commission will initiate action to promote crops depending on needs of people and suitability of local conditions for a particular crop. The presence of agronomists, farmer representatives and departmental experts should help the commission in this endeavour, he said.

Observing that areas under cultivation of any particular crop is largely dependent on remuneration that a farmer gets, he said farmers tend to grow more of such crops expecting better price. This leads to a situation of glut in the market resulting in a sharp

fall in prices of commodity. The commission will take care of these demand-supply issues, educate farmers on crop rotation and motivate them to be prudent with their cropping pattern.

[Post a comment](#)

### Mullaperiyar dam: Tamil Nadu politicians elated about SC order

The mood was one of jubilation in Tamil Nadu with chief minister J Jayalalithaa terming the Supreme Court verdict permitting the state to raise water level in the 120-year-old Mullaperiyar dam to 142ft a "historic victory."

The state had waged an eightyyear legal battle to get the contentious dam safety law passed by the Kerala assembly struck down, as it obstructed TN's efforts to increase the storage level. "I dedicate this historic victory to the people of Tamil Nadu," Jayalalithaa said in a statement from her Kodanad retreat. "With this, the livelihood of the people and farmers of southern districts has been protected."

She criticised her arch rival and DMK chief M Karunanidhi and the UPA government for ignoring the state's rights over the dam. Jayalalithaa said the DMK leader had even opposed the SC order in 2010 to nominate a state representative to the high-level empowered committee to check the dam safety, while she as an opposition leader, termed it "' improper" as it would affect the state's prospects. Later, the DMK government obliged and nominated former SC justice A R Lakshmanan. Armed with reports of various investigations and tests, the committee submitted its final report to the court in April last year, its findings suggesting the dam was safe.

On Wednesday, soon after the verdict was out, the mood in the AIADMK headquarters in Royappettah was upbeat, with cadres gathering to celebrate.

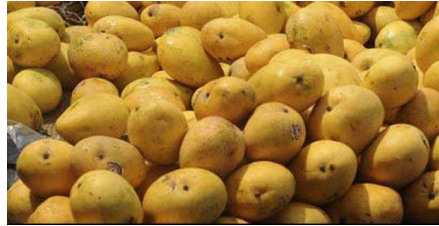
At the DMK headquarters, Karunanidhi told reporters he felt elated by the ruling. While

justice was delayed, the SC ruling upheld Tamil Nadu's rights, said PMK leader S Ramadoss. CPM state secretary G Ramakrishnan welcomed the verdict, while MDMK chief Vaiko said the Centre should dismiss the Kerala government, if it made any attempts to pass a resolution against the ruling.

Post a comment

## DECCAN Chronicle

India feasts on royal mangoes after European Union banned imports of fruit from India



**Mumbai:** Indians are feasting on some of the world's most succulent mangoes after the European Union banned imports of the fruit from India this month, producing a glut and rock-bottom prices for local consumers. Starting May 1, the EU banned imports of Indian mangoes including the Alphonso, considered the king of all the mango varieties grown in South Asia, because a large number of shipments were contaminated with fruit flies. The pests are considered a threat to crops grown locally in Europe.

For years, the Alphonso mangoes had been out of the reach of most Indians as the best of the fruit was shipped to the supermarkets of Europe and other parts of the world where it commanded a premium price. In Mumbai, the capital of the main Alphonso growing region, the fruit is now selling for Rs 150-550 (\$2.50-\$9) a kilogram, about \$2-3 below prices last week. And sellers say they expect the prices to fall even further. Mangoes start arriving in Indian markets in April, providing a juicy, delicious respite from summer temperatures and humidity as they start climbing to oppressive levels.

Piles of mangoes are cooled in refrigerators or buckets of ice-cold water or pureed to create refreshing drinks that cut through the scorching heat. The Alphonso, with its golden yellow flesh and distinct aroma, is a favorite and is especially prized because the best varieties are either exported or prohibitively expensive. This year, however, the stores in Mumbai's Crawford market are piled high with crates and baskets of perfectly ripe Alphonso.

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