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CM orders relief packages

Rs. 10,000 for those who lost huts; Rs. 5,000 for the flood-hit people



Chief Minister Jayalalithaa on Monday ordered compensation packages for flood-affected victims.

After a high-level meeting at the Secretariat, Ms. Jayalalithaa ordered that Rs 10,000 be awarded for those who lost huts and Rs 5,000 for the flood-hit living in permanent houses. She also ordered officials to speedily complete the survey of damaged crops. As part of the package, Rs. 13,500 per hectare would be given for paddy and other irrigated crops with damage of 33 per cent and above. The compensation will be Rs. 7,410 per hectare for rain-fed crops and Rs. 18,000 per hectare for long-term crops.

The amount will be deposited directly in to the accounts of the farmers in primary agriculture co-operative banks. She asked the officials not to adjust this amount against loans obtained the farmers.

Similarly, she announced a relief amount of Rs. 30,000 for those who had lost cows and buffaloes, Rs. 3,000 for sheep and pigs and Rs. 100 for loss of poultry like hen.

People contributing towards flood relief should send the money to the Chief Minister's Flood Relief Fund, she said.

Till date, 13,80,461 persons were rescued, evacuated and accommodated in 5,554 relief centres. A total of 80,120 persons were being involved in relief and rescue work, including 45,000 government staff and 30,000 police personnel.

Blankets, sanitary napkins for women and diapers for children were among the relief material being provided to inmates of camps for the flood affected.

Books, uniforms

As many as 37,707 school students, who lost their belongings in the floods, have been given new textbooks, 26,865 notebooks and 9,306 uniforms. So far 453 tonnes of milk powder has been distributed.

The monsoon has wreaked havoc in the coastal districts in the north following unprecedented rainfall on November 15, 16 and Dec 1.

Flood alert issued in Palani and Oddanchatram

Level in Parappalar and Kudiraiyar dams increased suddenly

Flood alert has been issued along downstream of Parappalar and Kudiraiyar dams in Oddanchatram and Palani taluks as the entire inflow into the dams was discharged into rivers on Monday. Storage level increased suddenly in the dams, thanks to the heavy rain in the catchments and on Kodaikanal hill. People living in over 10 villages between Parappalar and Nanganjiar dams were advised to move to high ridges.

A ground-level bridge near Balasamudram was submerged in the flood in the river, snapping road connectivity to several villages. Agricultural fields at Puliyampatti and Karikarnpudhur were flooded. Palar, Varadhamanadhi and Kudiraiyar dams in Palani block surplussed. While 2,438 cusecs were discharged from Palar dam, 1,810 cusecs were released from Varadhamanadhi and 462 cusecs from Kudiraiyar dams on Monday morning.

The entire inflow – 500 cusecs – was discharged from Athoor Kamarajar dam, and 149 cusecs were released from Manjalar dam. Total rainfall recorded in the district was 380.34 mm and the average rainfall 38.03 mm.

Intermittent showers since the morning paralysed routine life in Dindigul. Low-lying areas were flooded. Rain also lashed Chinnalapatti, Batlagundu and nearby areas. The rainfall recorded at various places in the last 24 hours was (in mm): Kudiraiyar 105, Parappalar 78, Palar dam 74, Varadhamanadhi dam 65, Palani 53, Vedasandur 49, Dindigul 47.74, Kudaganar 46, Kamatchipuram 43.1, Nanganjiar 43, Nilakottai 10 and Natham 9.

Breach in tank

Water gushing out of Sengkulam tank flooded agriculture fields inundating standing crops at three villages on Monday, thanks to a man-made breach in the tank.

Villagers complained that an unidentified gang damaged the southern bund of the tank, sprawling over 60 acres in Chettinaickanpatti panchayat.

Crops on 50 acres at Saralaipatti, Azhagarsingampatti and Chettinaickenpatti were destroyed.

The entire rainwater received in Dindigul will reach Senkulam tank after passing through Chettinaickenpatti. It was the main groundwater recharging source in Saralapatti, Senkulathupatti, Chennamanaickenpatti, Azhagarsingampatti and nearby villages.

After 2007, the villagers could see water in the tank only this year. Excess water in the tank, which is filled to the brim, will be released through sluice on the northern bank to fill Kaunkulam tank and finally reach Kudaganar river.

India to have 8 new observatories to study climate change

The new facilities under ILTEO will assess the health of eight different biomes.

India on Monday announced a programme to open eight more long-term ecological observatories to study the effects of climate change.

The new facilities under the Indian Long Term Ecological Observatories (I-LTEO) would assess the health of eight different biomes (types of habitat) and come up with long-term research findings on the changes there that were happening due to climate change.

It will cover the Western Himalayas to Western Ghats, Eastern Himalayas to Andaman and Nicobar islands, central India to the Sundarbans, and from Jammu and Kashmir to Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Monitoring for 30 years

Launching the programme at the climate conference CoP21, Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar said the research facility of the Indian Institute of Science at Mudumalai in the Western Ghats had been monitoring a 50-hectare plot for 30 years and mapping observations to climate change.

Flora and fauna

The I-LTEO would scientifically monitor flora and fauna to assess how climate change is affecting “natural and closely associated human systems in agriculture and pastoralism,” a Ministry publication released on the occasion said.

Commodity prices

Tomato prices in Mumbai have risen sharply over the last few weeks. They sell for ₹30/kg which is double the price at the same time last year. Market players say that this is following lower supplies in the market. Supplies from key markets in Bangalore and Maharashtra which usually come to Mumbai have been diverted to southern states where the rain has hit crops.

Here are the prices of various commodities in Chennai.

Price scale is given as Rs./kg

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Rice	1 kg	30	30
Wheat	1 kg	29	27

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Atta	1 kg	26	31
Gram Dal	1 kg	70	50
Tur Dal	1 kg	160	78
Urad Dal	1 kg	164	81
Moong Dal	1 kg	116	95
Masoor Dal	1 kg	96	79
Sugar	1 kg	30	38
Milk	1 ltr	41	41
Ground Nut Oil	1 ltr	124	127
Sun flower Oil	1 ltr	81	80
Gur (Jaggery)	1 kg	45	49
Tea	1 kg	250	250
Salt	1 kg	18	17
Lime	1 kg	30	40

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Apple	1 kg	80	80
Papaya	1 kg	30	30
Pineapple	1 kg	40	30
Pomegranate	1 kg	120	80
Sapota	1 kg	50	30
Banana	1 kg	30	40
Bitter Gourd	1 kg	50	40
Brinjal	1 kg	30	40
Cabbage	1 kg	20	24
Cauli Flower	1 kg	30	30
Garlic	1 kg	140	80
Ginger	1 kg	60	50
Chilly	1 kg	40	40
Onion	1 kg	30	30

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Potato	1 kg	20	30
Tomato	1 kg	30	15

‘Indians eat less meat, do yoga, are eco-friendly’

A brochure formally released by Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar at the India pavilion at the Paris climate change conference on Monday says Indians have an intrinsically climate-friendly lifestyle as the country has 42 per cent vegetarian households, and individuals consume a tenth of the meat compared with the global average. People also practise yoga as part of culture.

The vegetarian households in the country do not eat fish, meat or eggs, the publication says, citing data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation. This stands in contrast to the global rise in meat consumption. Higher meat consumption, it is explained, leads to stress on land and water leading to more greenhouse gas emissions. The per capita meat consumption in India for 2011-13 was 3.3 kg, which is one tenth the global average, the brochure says.

Yoga, it says, “is not just about exercise, but to discover the sense of oneness with ourselves, the world and nature,” the publication says, pointing out that the U.N. had proclaimed June 21 as International Day of Yoga.

After it was released, a journalist asked the Minister how yoga had a link to climate change, but elicited no explanation.

Other aspects of the Indian “conception of life embodied in a coherent world view,” as the brochure describes it, includes need-based consumption, respect for food, preference for locally grown food and natural food preservation techniques, and solar passive traditional building construction using mud and chequered windows.

Iranian team checks out Indian tea practices at farm and factory



Between January and September 2015, around 12.77 million kg of Indian teas were exported to Iran against 13 million kg a year ago.

India is hopeful of boosting exports to the high-value Iranian tea market following the just-concluded visit of an Iranian team, which included officials from ISIRI, and health ministry officials.

ISIRI is Iran's official standards body under the Ministry of Trade. It is described on its website as the 'sole organisation in the country for developing and designing official standards'.

While it is usual for trading countries to interact through trade, industry and official delegations, this visit was unique in that it was an interaction solely on quality and safety issues. "During the February visit by an Indian delegation, Iran raised pesticide residue in tea issue and it was then decided to invite them to check out the Indian tea industry's good agricultural and manufacturing practices", a commerce ministry official told *The Hindu*.

The three-day visit to a tea estate and a factory in Assam and the Tocklai Tea Research Station in Jorhat (also in Assam) took place last week. The Indian side was represented by industry, the Tea Board of India, a tea research scientist as well as officials of the Indian Food Safety Authorities and also officials from the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee, a central government body which advises, regulates and manages the uses of pesticides in India.

It may be mentioned that Iran with an estimated per capita tea consumption of 1.2 kg (against India's 700 grams) is considered an important market as much for its potential for importing large volumes of teas as its preference for high-value orthodox tea. The unit price of teas that are exported (mostly from Assam) average at around Rs.250 a kg. Orthodox teas are made in the same way as crush tear and curl CTC teas, but with most of the leaf remaining in tact, they are subtly flavourful and are the beverage of choice of discerning tea-drinkers the world over. They also fetch better prices.

India has been vying with Sri Lanka for a larger share of the market. Between January and September 2015, around 12.77 million kg of Indian teas were exported to Iran against 13 million kg a year ago. Exports stood at 18 million kg in 2014 and the aim is to increase it to 20 million kg this year.

Badal government offers sweet deal to cane growers

The agriculture department has been directed to allow farmersto sow CJ-238, an early sugarcane variety.

: After facing the wrath of farmers during the past few months, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)-BJP government in Punjab has started taking steps to win over ahead of the Assembly polls that are little over a year away.

Giving in to the long-pending demand of cane growers, Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal on Monday directed the Agriculture Department to immediately allow them to sow CJ-238 as an early sugarcane variety instead of mid-variety.

Sugarcane growers had been asking the government to allow them to sow CJ-238 as early variety for a year till the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, finalised its trials to arrive at a concrete conclusion in this regard.

The Chief Minister gave this direction after senior Akali leader and former Cabinet Minister Sewa Singh Sekhwan met him seeking early resolution of various issues related to the farmers in general and cane growers in particular.

Mr. Badal said the State government had also taken special initiatives to clear the sugarcane arrears due towards the sugar mills expeditiously besides ensuring their smooth functioning.

“Nine sugar mills in the government sector have already made payment to the cane growers worth Rs. 540 crore. Likewise, seven private sugar mills have already released Rs. 988 crore,” he said.

The Chief Minister said the State government would ensure payment of sugarcane price at Rs. 295 per quintal by mills under all circumstances, while reviewing the hardships being faced by the sugarcane growers. “Mills will pay Rs. 245 per quintal, and the government will pay a subsidy of Rs. 50 per quintal for the current crushing season of 2015-16,” said Mr. Badal.

The State government had recently, also decided to waive guarantee fee of Rs. 4 crore on soft loan to be arranged for private sugar mills to enable them to clear cane dues of farmers. The interest on soft loan for three and a half years would also be borne by the government to ensure that private sugar mills pay sugarcane arrears to the farmers.

Tamirabharani in spate once again



A swelling Tamirabharani flows past Murugan Temple at Kurrukkuthurai in Tirunelveli on Monday.— Photo: M. Laxmi Arun

The Tamirabharani is in spate once again since Sunday night as a huge quantum of surplus water from Papanasam and Servalar dams is being discharged following downpour in the catchment areas of these prime reservoirs of the district.

After heavy rain lashed catchment areas of Papanasam and Servalar dams on Sunday, the entire influx of over 10,000 cusecs of water from the already brimming reservoirs was discharged, triggering flood in the Tamirabharani. As the huge discharge from the dam submerged the Mundanthurai steel bridge, bus service to Papanasam dam was stopped on Sunday evening. However, the services were restored on Monday morning while tourists were not allowed to enter Kalakkad – Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve where the dam is located.

Though the discharge from the dams was reduced to 6,000 cusecs on Monday, sudden rain in the Western Ghats after 4 p.m. forced the officials to release more water from the dam depending upon the influx. The flood inundated the low-level bridges at Cheranmahadevi and Karuppanthurai and affected vehicular traffic for a while.

While appealing to the public living close to the Tamirabharani to move to safety, the Tirunelveli Corporation has opened relief centres at 10 places in Thatchanallur and Melapalayam zones. Mayor E. Bhuvaneshwari and Corporation Commissioner S. Sivasubramanian visited vulnerable areas near the river on Monday and asked the people to be on the alert.

Since decades-old encroachments at Kailaasapuram in Tirunelveli were removed three years ago, protests usually staged by flood-affected people and distribution of relief materials at a school or community hall has become a thing of the past. Meanwhile, water level in Manimuthar dam has risen to 103.85 feet following a heavy inflow of 6,480 cusecs.

Rainfall recorded in the district was (in mm): Papanasam dam 129, Servalar dam 69, Manimuthar dam 39, Ambasamudram 35.40, Gadana dam 25, Shencottai 23, Ramanadhi 22, Gundar dam 21, Karuppanadhi dam 16, Aayikudi 15, Sankarankoil 11.50, Cheranmahadevi 11, Alangulam 10.60, Nanguneri 9, Tenkasi 7.80, Kodumudiyar dam 7, Palayamkottai 6, Adavinaiar dam 4, Tirunelveli 3 and Nambiyar dam 2.

Water level in dams (Maximum capacity in feet in brackets): Papanasam 142.10 (143); Servalar 148.03 (156); Manimuthar 103.85 (118); Gadana 83.75 (85); Ramanadhi 82.75 (84); Karuppanadhi 70.65 (72); Gundar 36.10 (36.10); Adavinainar 131.45 (132); Vadakku Pachchaiyar 46 (67); Kodumudiyar 56.35 (57) and Nambiyar 23.45 (25).

Sudden rain in the Western Ghats after 4 p.m. forced the officials to release more water from the dam

Flood alert along the course of Amaravathi, Cauvery, Coleroon



Collector S. Jayandhi inspecting the Amaravathi in Karur.

A flood alert has been sounded for people living along the course of the Amaravathi, the Cauvery and the Coleroon rivers in Karur, Tiruchi and Ariyalur districts as the Amaravathi Dam has reached full level.

The Amaravathi at Karur realised 24,500 cusecs on Monday. The water level at the reservoir had crossed 88 feet as against the full level of 90 feet. The entire inflow is being discharged. Though the discharge from the dam came down to around 4,500 cusecs on Monday, steady increase of flow into Shanmuga Nathi, Palaru and Kudaganaru was said to be the reason for heavy inflow into the Amaravathi river. Since catchment areas of the reservoir and the Kudaganaru are getting heavy rain, the inflow is likely to increase further.

A senior official of the Public Works Department of the Amaravathi river division told *The Hindu* that the situation was being closely monitored. As a precaution, people living along the river had been asked to go to safer places. There was no report of inundation of fields or residential colonies along the river so far.

The river has seen heavy flow of flood water for the second consecutive year. It had recorded a maximum of 35,000 cusecs last year.

Collector S. Jayandhi, who inspected the arrangements made at Pasupathipalayam riverbed and Chettipalayam check dam, said officials had been asked to take all possible steps to prevent breach of bunds. Vulnerable areas that caused flooding in some parts of the Karur last year were being closely monitored. Three teams were formed to monitor the situation. Besides, municipal, rural development, police, fire service and revenue department officials had been alerted.

She said there was no need for worry as the Amaravathi had capacity to discharge 3.5 lakh cusecs of water. The current inflow has been discharged into the Cauvery. Consequently, the flow in the Cauvery has increased considerably on Monday though only 500 cusecs was being released into the river from the Mettur Dam forcing the authorities to issue a flood warning.

Tiruchi Collector K.S. Palanisamy said the surplus water from the Amaravathi had been discharged into the Cauvery and the Coleroon. Hence, the people living along the river course and low lying areas should move to safer areas.

Similarly, Ariyalur Collector E. Saravanelraj issued a flood warning to the people living along the Coleroon river in the district.

Sharp showers in Pudukottai

Several parts of the district experienced moderate to sharp showers on Monday, intermittently disrupting normal life. For the past 24 hours ended at 8-30 a.m. on Monday, Manamelkudi registered 41 mm of rain followed by Kattumavadi 38, Pudukottai 36, Viralimalai 34, Iluppur 32, Ayinkudi 30.6, Nagudi 30, Perungalur 29, Alangudi 28, Tirumayam 26.2, Karambakudi 27, Karaiyur 25.4, Keeranur 24.8, Ponnamaravathy 23, Annavasal 22, Arimalam 21.3, Gandarvakottai 20, Kudumiyanmalai 17, Avudaiyarkovil 13.4 and Mazhaiyur 12 mm.

819 mm of rainfall in three days

Intermittent rains in this rain-starved district in the last three days brought cheers to the farmers, who have raised paddy crops on 1.17 lakh hectares in rain-fed areas. The farmers are doubly happy as the district administration has assured that the district would get its near-full credit of water from Vaigai dam.

“With the timely intermittent rains and sufficient water from Vaigai dam, the farmers could save the crops this year,” said Joint Director of Agriculture N.V. Krishnamoorthy.

He said that 23 more days were left in the northeast monsoon season and even if the district received a couple of spells, it would be more than enough to save the crops, he said.

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur Dam rose to 95.17 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet.

The storage stood at 58.760 tmc against its full capacity of 93.470 tmc. The dam was receiving an inflow of 5,816 cusecs. About 700 cusecs is discharged from the dam for farm activities in delta region and also under the dam’s East-West canal system in Salem, Namakkal and Erode districts.

Moderate showers in Tiruchi district

Farmers demand compensation for affected crops



Several parts of the district and the city received spells of moderate showers on Monday.

Chilly weather conditions prevailed right through the day as the sky remained heavily overcast. Farmers are keeping their fingers crossed as the continuing inclement weather could affect the health of the standing samba paddy crops in the district.

Ponnaniyar Dam in the district recorded the maximum rainfall of 70.60 mm during the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 a.m. on Monday. The following is the chief amount of rainfall recorded in other parts of the district during the same period (in mm): Manapparai 46.80, Thuvakudi 29, Tiruchi Airport 24.10, Lalgudi and Navalurkuttapattu 17.40 each, Golden Rock 17.20, Kallakudi 16.20, Pullampadi 15.60, Nandhiyar Head and Tiruchi Junction 14.60 each, Sirukudi 12, Thenparanadu 11, Tiruchi Town and Pulivalam 10 each. The district received an average of 14.59 mm during the period.

Meanwhile, a group of farmers from Thuraiyur taluk, on Monday, submitted a petition to the District Collector K.S. Palanisamy demanding adequate compensation for the damage caused to small onion and cotton crops in the district. They said that the continuous rain for the past fortnight had caused severe damage to these standing crops.

They brought samples of crops which were nearing harvest. While the cotton was to be harvested by the middle of December, small onion was scheduled for harvest by the end of December. Led by P. Viswanathan, founder of the Tamizhaga Eri Matrum Attru Paasana Vivasayigal Sangam, the farmers demanded a compensation of Rs. 25,000 an acre for both the crops, Selvaraj, one of the farmers, said that cotton and small onion grown on about 1,000 acres had been totally damaged. The farmers of Sellipalayam, Narasingapalayam, Maruvathur, Sengattupatti, Keerambur and Sengalapuram were the worst-hit. None of the farmers had insured the crop. A foul smell was pervading the fields as the plants had started decaying, they said and added that the crop could not be salvaged.

Rain favours snake-gourd cultivation



The bountiful monsoon this year has favoured farmers growing vegetables particularly snake-gourd cultivators in the district. They say that the moderate showers has been timely. Apart from the improved yield, the size and quality of the snake-gourd was quite appreciable.

Farmers of Ponnaniyar Dam area say that they have been harvesting a good yield for the past one month particularly after the onset of the monsoon.

M. Arul Rajendran, one of the farmers, says that he had raised the crop on two acres and was harvesting about 100 kg every alternate day. They say that the price was not quite adequate. The wholesale price per kg stood at Rs.10.

Horticulture Department officials say that the duration of the snake gourd was three months during which it could be harvested on alternate days. Application of bio-manure particularly cow-dung would enhance its size and growth.

The district has been registering high yield in snake-gourd in the recent months, the sources told *The Hindu*.

Discharge of water begins from Thirumoorthy dam into PMC

Public Works Department has opened the shutters to discharge water from Thirumoorthy Dam into Parambikulam Main Canal (PMC) on Monday following good inflow of water into the reservoir area of the dam.



“Water is released into PMC to irrigate 94,213 acres of agriculture land spread over Tirupur and Coimbatore districts and also to feed water into the Uppar Dam situated on the downstream”, PWD (Water Resources Organisation) officials told *The Hindu* .

According to the officials, the inflow into the dam has been at the rate of 2,300 cusecs at 3 p.m. on Monday. Water level at the dam during the same period stood at 56.5 feet against the total height of 60 feet. The water was discharged at 1,009 cusecs into PMC of which 300 cusecs were diverted into Uppar Dam. The release of water would continue for 17 to 20 days depending on the inflow, the officials said.

The rainfall was recorded at 63 mm at the Thirumoorthy Dam area for a 24 hour period ended at 6 a.m. on Monday.

Meanwhile, the inflow of water into the reservoir area of Amaravathi Dam had reduced and stood at 5,508 cusecs at 6 p.m. on Monday.

Rainfall

The district received a total rainfall of 163.6 mm, with an average of 23.3 mm, during the 24 hour period ended at 8 a.m. on Monday.

Following is the rainfall recorded at various places during the same period: Avinashi- 9 mm; Tirupur- 20 mm; Udumalpet- 44 mm; Palladam- 9 mm; Dharapuram- 43 mm; Kangayam- 22 mm; Mulanur- 16 mm.

Tuticorin braces for heavy rain

In the wake of India Meteorological Department forecasting heavy rain in many areas of Tuticorin district for three days from December 9, the district administration has started preparatory measures to tackle flood.

Collector M. Ravikumar told media persons here on Monday that 62 reception centres had been kept ready, besides five tsunami rehabilitation centres along the coast. Temporary relief camps would be opened at 17 coastal villages. Ninety-four relief camps had been kept ready to accommodate 1,000 in each. More than 2.31 lakh food packets had been given to flood victims since November 13. Food packets were also distributed to 3,090 victims who lost their utensils in their houses.

Besides, 28,362 milk sachets and 19,013 loaves of bread were given to the victims. Heavy rains in November caused damage to 1,823 houses in the district and compensation was given to victims of 1,590 houses. Among the damaged houses, 425 houses were fully damaged and 1,398 partly-damaged, the Collector said.

The 'Uppar Odai' was being strengthened and roads would be laid on either side of it. Encroachments identified on 17.7 hectares at Meelavittan and some areas at Mullakadu were removed. Check-dams would be built at Kombadi and Umarikottai.

With 675.91 mm of rainfall recorded so far, the district received a surplus rainfall of 17.71 against the annual average of 662 mm. All fifty-three Tamirabarani system irrigation tanks reached their full capacity, and water in 41 of the 54 tanks of Korampallam basin irrigation system and eight tanks of 29 tanks in Vaippar basin were up to the brim. Water storage in 17 other tanks had touched the 75 percent mark. Among 408 panchayat tanks, storage was full in 213 tanks, he said.

On waterlogging situation in the town, he said that stagnant water in Kurinji Nagar, Adiparasakthi Nagar, Rahmath Nagar other low-lying areas were being drained by motor pumps. Stagnant waters at State Bank Colony, Ambedkar Nagar and Sathya Nagar were gradually draining, Mr. Ravikumar added

Hard work of areca nut farmers pays off



A farmer shows his bountiful harvest of areca nut at Shobanapuram on the foot of Pachamalai hills in Tiruchi district.

A handful of farmers on the foot of Pachamalai in the district has been showing the way for harvesting areca nut, though they have been toiling hard and investing a huge sum of money for crop protection.

The farmers, though far and few, have raised the crop at Shobanapuram and Venkatachalapuram villages on the foot of the hills and the red laterite soil is ideally suited for raising the crop.

The farmers have to take extra care for irrigating the fields periodically as areca nut trees should be irrigated once a week.

One of the farmers, R. Ezhumalai (45), says that he has been harvesting the crop raised by his father about a couple of decades ago. He had added additional trees and expanded the grove of three acres.

Out of 2,500 trees presently available in the grove, 1,500 trees have started yielding the nuts. The other trees will start yielding nuts from the next couple of years.

The trees develop flowers (paalai) in the month of May and the strength and colour of 'paalai' is the indication for fixing the price. "Traders from Athur visit the fields in May and, after having a glimpse of the 'paalai', ascertain the quality of the nuts which is usually harvested in the month of December and January," he says.

Traders fix a price for each grove and even offer an advance, confirming the price for the commodities seven months ahead of the harvest. He had got Rs. 2 lakh for his grove. Yield per tree, he anticipates, would be 100 kg got in two phases – first 50 kg in December and the balance during next month.

Investment on the crop protection techniques involves a huge expenditure, he adds. He points out that neem cake and groundnut cake should be applied shortly after the harvest is completed. The expenditure on manure itself would be around Rs. One lakh, he added.

Areca nut farmers say that the state government should announce special scheme for them and come out with some special subsidy-based scheme. They said that special agricultural inputs, in the form of neem cake and ground nut cake should be provided to them. "Having been classified as big farmers, we are not eligible for any concession," they say.

Towards reviving paddy cultivation



Farming enthusiasts watch the operation of a paddy transplanting machine at the Balla paddy field in Kanhangadon Monday.

A workshop demonstrating the latest technologies in paddy cultivation was organised at a paddy field in Kanhangad on Monday, giving a ray of hope to cash-strapped farmers to overcome the acute shortage of traditional labourers and extend cultivation to barren stretches of land.

At the Balla paddy field in Kanhangad on Monday, a large number of farming enthusiasts watched in awe a machine transplanting paddy seedling to the marshy bed.

“The programme was sponsored jointly by the Agriculture Department, Neeleshwaram Agri Service Centre, district panchayat and the Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA),” said K. Sureshan, a former agriculture officer associated with the programme.

The organisers also planned to introduce cono weeder, a gadget to clear the paddy field of weeds, intensive pest management and combined harvester machine in due course of time, he added.

‘Start paddy procurement centres at APMC yards’

R. Vishal, Deputy Commissioner, on Monday directed the Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation (KFCSC) to start paddy procurement centres at the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Yards in Udupi, Kundapur and Karkala.

Chairing a meeting of the district task force here, Dr. Vishal said that the corporation should open these centres in the interest of paddy farmers in Udupi district. The minimum support price (MSP) would be provided to the farmers without any hassles. Farmers should be told to bring in paddy in 50 kg bags.

The harvesting of paddy had taken place early in the district. It was essential to help the farmers when there was demand for paddy in the markets. The Union government had fixed an MSP of Rs. 1,410 a quintal for common paddy, while grade paddy would fetch Rs. 1,450 a quintal. The State government would give an additional amount of Rs. 100 a quintal.

Dr. Vishal directed the KFCSC manager to appoint the required staff for the paddy procurement centres, give adequate publicity and ensure that the MSP was paid to the farmers in time. Only the paddy, which had been passed by genuine graders, should be purchased, he said.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the secretaries of the APMC to provide their godowns to the KFCSC to store paddy. He directed the Joint Director of Agriculture Anthony Maria Immanuel to appoint graders.

He directed the Udipi APMC secretary to utilise the grants provided to it for the development of link road or APMC and submit a report to him. Yogeshwar, Deputy Director of Food and Civil Supplies, and Siddaramaiah, Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences, were present.

DECCAN Chronicle

Chennai floods: Jayalalithaa announces relief package, 10,000 houses, aid to farmers



Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa on Monday announced a comprehensive relief package for the flood-hit, including 10,000 houses, a dole out between Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 as well as compensation for loss of crops and poultry for farmers.

A financial assistance of Rs 10,000 for those who lost their huts, allocation of 10,000 tenements besides an aid of Rs 5,000 will be provided to families hit by the deluge, she said.

"For families who lost their huts, a flood relief of Rs 10,000, ten kilo rice, a dhoti and saree will be given," she said in an official release here. Also, for such families, permanent houses will be provided, it said.

"Immediately, 10,000 tenements will be allotted in Chennai," she said. For other families hit by the floods, cash assistance of Rs 5,000, ten kilo rice, a dhoti and a saree will be provided, she said.

On December 5, DMK chief Karunanidhi had said Puducherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy visited flood victims and offered comprehensive relief measures including Rs 4,000 each for ration card holders.

"Has an announcement like that been made so far in Tamil Nadu?" he had asked.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister said that the relief assistance will be deposited in bank accounts of beneficiaries and aid-in-kind like rice, dhoti and saree will be distributed through Public Distribution System outlets, she said.

Jayalalithaa stated that she has ordered an enumeration of affected families immediately, and that the aid will be disbursed in a few days after completing the listing.

"I have ordered building necessary houses for those who have lost their huts. For all those who have lost their huts, safe (pucca) houses will be provided," she said. For those living along the banks of Adyar, Cooum Rivers and Buckingham Canal, who lost their houses, the Chief Minister said, "I have ordered immediate allocation of 10,000 tenements built by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board in Okkiyam Thuraipakkam and Perumbakkam."

Sun shines, Chennai limps back to normalcy

Chennai: As the sun shone bright, flood-battered Chennai and its suburbs were Monday fast on course to normalcy with train and air services resuming after days of disruption due to unprecedented rains. Waters have receded from most areas of the city ravaged by floods and the authorities have scrambled nearly 25,000 sanitary workers to clear the stinking garbage accumulated over the past several days to prevent outbreak of diseases.

Meanwhile, days after DMK chief M. Karunanidhi criticised her over flood assistance, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa Monday announced a comprehensive relief package for the flood-hit, including 10,000 houses, a dole between Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 as well as compensation for loss of crops and poultry for farmers. A financial assistance of Rs 10,000 for those who lost their huts, allocation of 10,000 tenements besides an aid of `5,000 will be provided to families hit by the deluge, she said.

In Karaikal, Chief Minister N. Rengasamy said the Puducherry government would seek Rs 200 crore Central assistance for relief and rehabilitation as the Union territory has suffered extensive damage in the incessant rains and floods in the past three weeks. Relief work was being undertaken on a war footing and officials were preparing a flood damage assessment report which would soon be submitted to the Central government, he said. Earlier, the CM visited several relief camps and interacted with the affected people.



Farm Insurance: For speedy crop-loss settlement, IRDA mulls use of satellite technology

The country's insurance regulator — IRDA — is actively considering the use of satellite remote sensing technology as a mapping tool for agricultural yield estimation and crop losses in a bad monsoon year. The move, aimed at ensuring faster settlement of crop insurance losses, comes at a time when the country has experienced back-to-back monsoon failures — the first since 1986-87.



IRDA has concluded a series of discussions with stakeholders in this regard, officials indicated. A number of research studies and experiments are also being undertaken by institutions associated with agriculture and rural development throughout the country, they said, adding that the use of this technology should mark a move towards speedy assessment and settlement of crop losses.

The just-ended south-west monsoon season had registered an overall rainfall deficit of 14.3 per cent relative to the 'normal' long period average for June-September, making it a deficient monsoon. The monsoon was also deficient by 11.9 per cent in 2014 as well.

At present, about 50 crop insurance products are being marketed by the Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd (AICIL) and other general Insurance Companies. One of the main reasons for low levels of insurance penetration in crop insurance is the lack of awareness about the insurance products and the benefits of various policies. AICIL, at present, transacts only in crop insurance business while other policies covering various risks pertaining to farmers such as agriculture implements, personal accident and livestock are extended by other general insurance companies.

There are underlying problems of wholly inadequate crop insurance system, though, that do not adequately cover the risks of farmers. The existing weather and yield-based systems taken into account only the area and not the individual as a unit. As a result, this approach did not seem to represent and address the manner in which crop damage actually occurs. If crop insurance products were to be tailored to cover for a range of risks at the individual farmer level, insurance premium

would inevitably increase and might need some amount of subsidy, but it could make crop insurance a more viable proposition and improve its penetration.

In a bid to ensure a balanced penetration of insurance coverage in the country, the insurance regulator had come out with a regulatory framework in the form of IRDA (Obligations of Insurers to Rural or Social Sectors, 2002). Recently, it had also formulated a draft regulation — IRDAI (Obligations of Insurers to Rural and Social Sectors) Regulations, 2015—in the wake of the amendments brought about to the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Act 2015, which imposed obligations on insurers towards providing insurance cover to the rural and economically weaker section of the population. The regulation mandated that the insurers had to necessarily sell a specified percentage of policies and underwrite specified percentage of gross premium underwritten with respect to life and non-life insurance companies respectively. Stringent penalties were also prescribed under the Act for non-compliance of the above provision.

Food security: India to do some tough talking at WTO's Nairobi meet next week

In a firm stand against pressure tactics of some developed nations, India will seek concrete work plans on a permanent solution to food security, a mechanism to safeguard the interests of domestic farmers from sudden spurts in imports and the conclusion of the Doha round at the upcoming meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) at Nairobi next week.

Rejecting arguments that the Doha round negotiations are dated in today's reality, commerce minister Nirmala Sitharaman said: "We are not raising the Doha issue because it was raised in 2001, but we are raising it because even today we don't see a work plan on such issues. We don't see a work plan on even many of the things agreed upon in the last ministerial in Bali in 2013. So if the argument against raising the Doha round is built on the premise that the issues are more than a decade old, we want to point at the declaration of the Bali ministerial meetings, which ought to be worked upon."

Late last month, a panel of facilitators at the WTO was reported to have set aside a demand from India and a majority of developing countries to reaffirm the commitment to continue negotiations on all outstanding issues of the Doha Development Agenda in the declaration to be adopted at Nairobi.

The Doha negotiations encompass safeguard mechanism for countries like India to protect farmers against a sudden spike in farm imports from developed nations that offer massive subsidies for agriculture.

Revealing India's strategy before the Nairobi ministerial from December 15 to 18, Sitharaman said: "Our efforts are to ensure that unfulfilled elements of the Doha round find a place in the final declaration, work plans on each of them are given and differential treatment to India vis-a-vis other developing countries is not meted out and that we have enough tools in our hands to protect ourselves from the sudden surge in imports." The US is reportedly pressing ahead with differential treatment to India compared with other developing nations.

On developed countries' insistence that the mandate of the Nairobi ministerial be expanded to include new issues to reflect today's reality in trade, the minister said India is fine with discussions initiated on some of the issues such as e-commerce, but there won't be any "binding commitment on them..".

Subsequent to the Bali ministerial, India managed to get a permanent peace clause against its stock holding of commodities for the public distribution system. A peace clause means no WTO member can drag India to the dispute panel for offering more product-specific support to farmers via procurement of grains than stipulated under the WTO until a permanent solution is found. *FE*



Banks open on Sunday to help residents of flood-hit Chennai

Banks worked on Sunday to aid residents left without food, power and access to money in the flood-hit southern city of Chennai and surrounding areas, as cash dispensers have been emptied or lost power due to electricity outages.

India's fourth largest city was swamped by torrential rains - the heaviest in a century - during the past five days, and the government has asked banks to restore basic services and supply cash machines as swiftly as possible, replenishing cash by boat or providing mobile ATMs if necessary.

In a statement late on Saturday, the Reserve Bank of India, the country's central bank, said it would remain open to support bank transactions and help supply cash to local lenders.

About 280 people have died across Tamil Nadu state since it was hit by torrential rains on Dec. 1 that left large sections of capital Chennai under up to eight feet (2.5 metres) of water, and trapped people on rooftops with no communication.

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Isolated rain forecast for coastal Tamil Nadu as 'low' dissipates

The low-pressure area over south-east Arabian Sea has weakened on Monday after having presided over some of the wettest sessions on record during its slow grind from the Tamil Nadu coast.

But it leaves behind the parent trough in the sea, as it did while leaving the south-west Bay of Bengal earlier, which is capable of pulling in the North-East monsoon flows across the peninsula.

Isolated rain

Isolated heavy rain has been forecast for coastal Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Kerala on Wednesday.

The rain belt will move to the South over Tuticorin, Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli and adjoining south Kerala on Thursday and Friday.

While Chennai and neighbourhood can hope to breath free from sustained wet spells, global weather models point to the possibility of on-and-off showers until December 19.

Earlier, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology had said that the South-East coast (Tamil Nadu and Puducherry) are likely to witness above normal rainfall until this weekend.

What seems to lend credence to this view is the continued presence of the trough in the Bay of Bengal anchored to the South-West Bay of Bengal.

Interactive rain

The Met has also alluded to the possibility of non-seasonal thundershowers and even hailstorm creeping up over south Madhya Maharashtra and Marathwada during the weekend.

This would happen as part of the interaction between the easterly winds over Tamil Nadu and opposing winds from a western disturbance digging low to the South on its way across Northwest India.

On Monday, the western disturbance was traced to the far West-North-West over the central parts of Iran. It will transit Afghanistan and Pakistan before making its presence felt over North-West India.

It is forecast to trigger heavy snowfall over Jammu and Kashmir from Wednesday.

Vigorous monsoon

As for outlook for the next few days, the Met said that isolated heavy rain would occur variously over coastal Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

Cotton blooms on export demand

Cotton prices moved up on the back of good export demand as well as increased domestic buying. Arrival of the fibre improved but farmers are not selling their commodity in a big way which lifted raw cotton or *kapas* price.

Traders said that export demand from Pakistan, Myanmar and Bangladesh is good which supported the price rise. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton gained ₹200 to ₹33,200-300 per candy of 356 kg.

About 50,000-60,000 bales (of 170 kg each) arrived in Gujarat and 1.50 lakh bales arrived in India. *Kapas* was up ₹10 to ₹860-880 per 20 kg and gin delivery *kapas* moved up to ₹880-905. Cottonseed increased by ₹10 to ₹410-420.

Heavy arrivals rob aroma off cardamom

Total supply last week was at around 965 tonnes against 868 tonnes the previous week. Prices fell by ₹25-30 a kg.

“The weather this year has been very good and, as a result, the crop is also better. It is reflected on the arrivals at each auction,” PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *BusinessLine*.

He said the export buying has helped in arresting the fall in prices to a great extent last week. He said good buying support from the upcountry markets has also

supported the market at this time of heavy arrivals, trade sources in Bodinayakannur said.

Exporters were active last week and they have bought an estimated 100-120 tonnes.

The individual auction average last week moved up and was vacillating between ₹580 and ₹630 a kg.

At the Cardamom Planters' Association (CPA) auction in Bodi today, arrivals stood at 45.3 tonnes against 56.4 tonnes the previous Monday and of this 43.9 tonnes were sold. The auction average fell to ₹570 from ₹588.02 a kg.

Total arrivals during the season up to December 5 were at around 13,432 tonnes and sales were at 13,060 tonnes. The individual auction average as on December 5 was at ₹630.

Prices of graded varieties (₹/kg): 8mm bold good green colour 850-900; 7-8 mm 690-720; 6-7 mm 590-620; below 6 mm: 530-560.

WTO meet: Farmers urge Govt not to yield to pressure for 'unjust' caps on subsidies

Ahead of the World Trade Organisation's 10th Ministerial in Nairobi from December 15-18, hundreds of big farmer organisations across the country have urged the government not to give in to pressure by rich nations to cap subsidies.

Farmers' interest

In a resolution, Bharatiya Kisan Union, Fruit-Vegetable & Flower Growers Association, Bharatiya Krishak Samaj, All India Turmeric Farmers Association, Sugarcane Farmers Associations of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, among others, who claim to represent 400 million farmers, demanded that farmer's interests should at no instance and circumstances be compromised in the WTO negotiations.

Fixing MSP

"We understand that our government and many governments of the developing and least developed countries are being put under intense pressure by the developed countries to have ceilings on farm input subsidies, and to give away the safety nets such as the Special Safeguard Measures. We also understand that India, and hence its farmers, are being forced to give away their right to a fair compensation for their agricultural produce, by putting totally unjust caps on the Minimum Support Price (MSP), which for the Indian farmer has been a lifeline for decades," said the resolution.

They said while the Indian farmer gets an average subsidy of only about ₹1,000/month, the average subsidy of a US farmer was at least ₹250,000/month. Decrying the “high-handedness” of developed nations, led by the US and the European Union, the farmers urged India to ensure that farm subsidies of the rich countries were also brought back on the negotiating table at Nairobi.

US, EU subsidies

“Till the subsidies being doled out in US under the US Farm Bill and in the EU under the Common Agricultural Policy are removed, any abrupt conclusion of the Doha Round at Nairobi would be a betrayal of the developing country farmers,” they said, adding that they were “worried” about the way in which the MSP matter was being discussed in the WTO.

“We wish to state that the right to fix MSPs according to rural development needs in India, the cost of production, ensuring food security and the need to support farm livelihoods should remain with us, and this is a non-negotiable position,” they said.

The matters of ‘Peace Clause’ and a permanent resolution to ‘food security’ concerns should also be resolved with full appreciation of our rural development needs, they added.

The resolution called for a shift in priority to “agricultural livelihoods” rather than simply looking at “agricultural trade”, and warned the government that “any move by our government or the WTO to compromise the lives and livelihood of farmers” will be “vehemently opposed.”

Rs. 90 crore released to FCI, Nafed to procure pulses

With pulses supplies improving but prices still ruling comparatively high, the Centre has released over Rs. 90 crore to various agencies for procurement to create a buffer stock.

“Nafed, SFAC (Small Farmers Agriculture Business Consortium) and FCI (Food Corporation of India) will procure pulses (tur and urad) in the Kharif 2015 season at prevailing market rates from farm gate/mandis for creation of buffer stocks,” Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha last week.

He said Rs. 50 crore and Rs. 40 crore were released to FCI and Nafed, respectively, to start procurement of pulses in Kharif Marketing Season 2015-16. In reply to another question, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Mohanbhai Kalyanjibhai Kundaria said the quantity of pulses imported in April-September was 22.54 lakh tonnes.

Business Standard

Leaders aspire to cap global warming at 1.5°C



The single most important parameter to decide the success of the UN climate change conference in Paris would be if the world leaders can put together a mechanism to hold global warming at 1.5°C. Every single point above that would be a compromise with two degrees being the so-called outer limit.

Traction has grown among the countries to find a way to cap the rise of global temperature at 1.5°C by the turn of this century, instead of the earlier target of 2°C. The EU has supported this best-possible scenario along with the key proponents, Association of Small Island States, saying it does not want to close the door to 1.5°C goal.

The US has also said the Paris pact not only needs to keep climate change below 2°C but also as low as possible. However, it has refrained from a point blank reference to 1.5°C.

While India and China have accepted the 1.5°C goal in concept, they want it to be seen in the context of how countries would achieve it — the need of differentiation (developed countries own the historical responsibility) and a carbon budget.

India has said it is ready for the ambitious target as long as the Paris pact provides equitable distribution of carbon budget. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had referred to this requirement as ‘climate justice’. India’s environment minister Prakash Javadekar also said carbon space of the developing countries must be protected if the 1.5°C target is to be imposed.

In 2009, the world had agreed that global temperature rise should be kept below 2°C. It was a political decision based on the UN scientific panel reports. The temperature goal can be translated into quantifying how much carbon dioxide emissions the atmosphere can accumulate before the temperature reaches the tipping point – referred to as the total carbon budget. Science allows the world to know which country has cornered how much of this total carbon budget. Thus, lowering the temperature goal reduces the total carbon budget of the planet.

India has long argued that the total carbon budget should be apportioned to countries on the principle of equity and developed countries should vacate the excess they occupy by drastically slashing future emissions. This space should be given to the developing countries to grow economically.

The application of a carbon budget and differentiation between developed countries (with historical responsibilities) and developing countries (whose emissions will rise) becomes all the more important from India’s perspective when the total carbon budget shrinks as a consequence of lowering the temperature cap limit.

But the US and the EU continue to loath the idea of a carbon budget as it would necessarily have to account for historical emissions for which they will have to bear the cost.

“A 1.5C target today is close to being unfeasible; or even if technically feasible; is likely to be very expensive,” said Anand Patwardhan a senior scientist and lead author of UN scientific panel reports that many countries quote to demand the goal.

“Because a 1.5C target reduces the remaining carbon budget further, it essentially means that if we continue at current emission levels; we will simply have to turn-off all our fossil fuel emissions in a few years. The carbon budget makes crystal clear the significance of common but differentiated responsibilities and historical responsibility,” he added.

But most developed countries, including the US and the EU, continue to oppose carbon budget and common but differentiated responsibilities.

Barley up 2.3% on firm trends in spot market



Barley prices firmed up by 2.30 per cent to Rs 1,510 per quintal in future trading today on the back of emerging physical markets.

Marketmen attributed spurt in barley prices at futures trade to a firming trend at the physical [markets](#) on pick-up in demand against tight supplies.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, barley delivery for this month contracts surged by Rs 34, or 2.30 per cent, to Rs 1,510 per quintal, with an open interest of 5,240 lots.

The January contract was trading higher by Rs 12, or 0.82 per cent, to Rs 1,470 per quintal in an open interest of 4,390 lots.