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Storage level up by one foot in Periyar dam

Staff Reporter

Thanks to torrential showers in its catchment in Kerala

THENI: Storage level in Periyar dam has gone by up one foot here on Monday evening, thanks to torrential showers in its catchments in Kerala. Water level in the dam touched 109 feet. Inflow into the dam was 185 cusecs. Discharge was nil. Storage was 755 mcft.

The district too has been receiving moderate to heavy showers for the past two days.

Water level in Vaigai dam stood at 30.71 cusecs. With no inflow, discharge was 41 cusecs only. Storage was 398 mcft.

The Public Works engineers heaved a sigh of relief with the increase in dam level. If the intermittent showers continued till April end, drinking water crisis in the district could be solved to a larger extent, they opined.

Strong wind coupled with showers had not only brought the mercury level down in both urban and rural areas but also uprooted standing crops at several villages. Drumstick and banana trees were uprooted at Iyyampatti, Erasakkanaickanur and nearby villages in Chinnamanur block.

Despite damage in certain pockets, early onset of summer rain kicked off agriculture activities in several areas. Farmers in rain-fed areas have started preparing the field. Ploughing work also commenced in certain pockets. Cool breeze cheered residents within town limits. Several banners on roadsides were shattered.

Arrival of farm labourers for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme work was also increasing at villages as the summer rain made their task easy.

Acute water crisis

Already, several parts of the district had been reeling under acute water crisis and the district administration snapped power supply to irrigation pump sets along the Mullaperiyar in Cumbum valley to prevent illegal tapping of water meant for drinking water purpose.

Water supply has been made once in 12 days in Theni town. Condition was worst in rural habitations.

Rainfall was moderate in Shanmuga River dam and Uthamapalayam and Veerapandi. Rainfall recorded at various places at 8 a.m. on Monday in mm: Periyar 1, Thekkadi 31, Shanmuga Nadhi dam 14, Goodalur 5, Uthamapalayam 24 and Veerapandi 20.

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“Centre's measures have led to fall in cotton price”

CHENNAI: A host of measures taken by the Union government has resulted in the reduction of cotton price by Rs.1,000 [per candy], Handlooms, Textiles and Backward Classes Minister K.K.S.S.R. Ramachandran told the Assembly on Tuesday.

The Centre had decided to levy a tax of Rs.2,500 per tonne on export of cotton and three per cent on cotton waste export. It was proposed to withdraw the 7.5 per cent duty drawback on yarn exports. The system of compulsory registration had been introduced with a validity period of 45 days. The Minister was briefing the House about decisions taken at a meeting of a high-level committee under the chairmanship of Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee on April 6.

Replying to a debate on a special call attention notice, Mr. Ramachandran said Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi had been frequently expressing concerns of the State to the Centre through letters and Union Textiles Minister Dayanidhi Maran.

Mr. Ramachandran pointed out that Tamil Nadu was the only State to implement a scheme of free power supply for handloom and powerloom weavers. The Chief Minister was for a ban on online trading of cotton.

S.M. Velusamy (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam), G.K. Mani (Pattali Makkal Katchi), C. Gnanasekaran (Congress), C. Govindasamy (Communist Party of India-Marxist), T. Ramasamy (CPI) and R. Gnanadoss (Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) highlighted the problem of power crisis being experienced by the weaving community.

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“Development plans must aim at sustainable interventions”

CHENNAI: The Mid Term Appraisal (MTA) of the Eleventh Plan has attempted correctives in the practice of imposing top-down, simplistic solutions to development problems by addressing a gamut of issues involved in eco-system resilience and stability, Mihir Shah, Member, Planning Commission, said on Tuesday.

Delivering the Founder's Day lecture at the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS) in honour of its founder Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, Mr. Shah said one of the central messages of the MTA in an area such as water resource management had been a repudiation of a “silo-based” approach in favour of a holistic viewpoint.

In a situation where the Drinking Water Supply division of the Rural Development Ministry and the Irrigation wing of the Ministry of Water Resources tapped the same aquifer without any coordination, “we are close to entering a vicious infinite regress scenario where the proposed solution (drilling of tubewells) only ends up aggravating the problem it seeks to resolve.”

In the lecture titled 'The Power of Uncertainty: Reflections on the Nature of Transformational Initiatives,' Mr. Shah pointed out that development programmes had often been preoccupied with single variables, such as aggregate income, and unmindful of the balance that must be retained for interventions to be sustainable.

The best positive examples of a fresh imagining of the future were watershed development and organic farming, while the most significant negative illustration was the interlinking of rivers project, a plan that could threaten the very integrity of the monsoon system, he said.

“Once we recognise the contours defined by the balances in nature, our entire approach needs to shift from an attempt to control nature towards a creative weaving of our interventions into the flows and dynamics of natural processes,” Mr. Shah said.

According to Mr. Shah, the MTA had also set out a roadmap for the social mobilisation of the weak and the voiceless — an essential part of developmental intervention — in the context of initiatives such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, drinking water supply and sanitation, Mr. Shah said. “One has to resist the rush to universalise without adequate preparation so that quality outcomes with genuine inclusiveness can be attained.”

Pointing out that an initiative such as the MGNREGA was still a “work-in-progress,” Mr. Shah said the ultimate potential of the MGNREGA lay in a renewed focus on improving the productivity of agriculture and convergence to engender allied sustainable livelihoods.

Mr. Shah spelt out his role in the Planning Commission as one that involved persuading key players in Central and State administration, as also in civil society and academia, to forge partnerships that would help roll out a wide range of best practices that are already in place in isolation, but need to be mainstreamed at scale without loss of quality.

Earlier, while setting the framework for his lecture, Mr. Shah expounded on the opposing concepts of “certainty” and “uncertainty” and their implications for macro-level and micro-level transformational initiatives. He contended that certainty implied the notion of a single truth, a top-down solution and a unilateral vision of change while uncertainty enabled multiple perspectives, multi-dimensional approaches and multi-stakeholder dialogues.

MIDS chairperson R. Radhakrishna and R. Maria Saleth Director participated.

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'Sell sunflower as soon as it is harvested'

This season the yield obtained is 650-700 kg.

COIMBATORE: Reduction in area and decline in productivity of sunflower has led to its short supply in the March season. The Vellakovil regulated market received only 497 tonnes compared to the 2,825 tonnes in March 2009. But, the short supply of sunflower seeds may not cause the price to rise.

Hence, farmers are recommended by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) to sell sunflower as soon as it is harvested. They are also advised to sell the same through regulated markets.

Sunflower farmers normally get 1,000-1,200 kg of sunflower seed an acre in irrigated area. But, this season, the yield obtained was only 650-700 kg. This was due to non-availability of quality seeds, pest attacks, irregular power supply, and labour shortage.

It is also expected that the edible oil import may touch 8.6 million tonnes in 2009-10.

Hence, sunflower farmers in the State had doubts as to whether the increased import of edible oil will reduce the sunflower price in the forthcoming months. They also wanted to know whether to sell or store the seed harvested.

The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence (DEMIC) of TNAU analysed the Vellakovil market price of sunflower that was in place for the last 10 years and revealed that the price of sunflower for the next three months will be in the range of Rs. 20-22 a kg.

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TNAU trains Orissa farmers

Stress on role played by fertigation in raising yield

TIRUCHI: A group of about 40 farmers from Ganjam district of Orissa underwent a training programme in fertigation methods at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University's Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute here recently. The farmers were exposed to various fertigation equipment and techniques and scheduling for various crops such as banana, sugarcane, brinjal, bhendi, cabbage, cauliflower, groundnut, snake gourd and cotton.

G.Kathiresan, Dean of the institute, emphasised the important role played by fertigation, which involves application of fertilizers along with irrigation water through drip and micro sprinkler irrigation systems, in increasing yield and quality in different crops.

He explained the various types of fertigation.

Adoption of proper fertigation techniques could contribute to an improvement in yield by up to 100 per cent in crops such as banana, sugarcane and tomato.

Farmers were also trained by S.Somasundaram, Assistant Professor (agronomy), on preparation of stock solution and trouble shooting in fertigation technology.

Fertilizers

They were briefed on the use of different water soluble fertilizers such as potassium nitrate and mono ammonium phosphate.

T.Irao Patno, coordinator of the farmers from Orrisa, observed that the farmers had picked up useful techniques for being replicated in their farms back home.

S.Avudaittai, Associate Professor (Agronomy) and other faculty members were also involved in the training.

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Govt may fix MSP of sugarcane at over Rs 139/qtl

The government is likely to fix nearly Rs 140 a quintal, Rs 10 more than what is prescribed now, as the minimum price for sugarcane for the next season starting October.

This marks an increase of about eight per cent in the fair and remunerative price (FRP) of sugarcane, which is Rs 129.84 a quintal now.

"The matter (fixing of FRP for 2010-11 season) will soon go to the Cabinet," a senior government official said. Sugar season runs from October to September.

The official said that the proposal has been made based on the recommendation of Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP), which advises the government on price policy of major agricultural commodities.

From the current season, the Centre has decided to fix FRP for sugarcane to be paid by the sugar mills instead of the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) fixed earlier.

FRP is the minimum price that sugarcane farmers are legally guaranteed. However, the sugar mills are free to offer any price above the FRP as deemed fit by them.

In the current season, sugarcane farmers have received about Rs 250 a quintal encashing the shortage of the crop.

FRP is linked to a basic recovery rate of 9.5 per cent subject to a premium of Rs 1.37 for every 0.1 percentage point increase in recovery above 9.5 per cent. Recovery rate is the sugar produced from the crushed cane.

The new price was fixed after giving due consideration for margins to the sugarcane farmers on account of risk as well as profit on the cost of production of sugarcane including the cost of transportation.

It includes a margin of nearly 45 per cent on account of profit and risk to the farmers on the all India adjusted average cost of production of sugarcane including the cost of transportation to the mill gate.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/533647.aspx>

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Apr 21

Max Min

38.0° | 28.7°

Rain: 00mm in24hrs Sunrise: 05:54

Humidity: 34% Sunset: 18:22

Wind: Normal Barometer: 1008.1mb

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Apr 22

Max Min

38° | 29°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Apr 23	Apr 24	Apr 25	Apr 26	Apr 27
38° 29°	38° 28°	37° 28°	36° 29°	36° 29°
Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Partly Cloudy

20 Apr 2010 05:52:50 PM IST

Over 51 lakh MT wheat lifted in Haryana

CHANDIGARH: Over 51 lakh MT of wheat has been lifted from the mandis in Haryana so far this season, as compared to about 46.28 lakh MT in the corresponding period last year.

Of the total arrival of 51.27 lakh metric tonnes (MT), over 51.26 lakh MT wheat has been purchased by the various procuring agencies on minimum support price and rest 1,186 MT have been bought by traders, a spokesman of the Food and Supplies Department said here today.

Giving details of the wheat purchased by various government agencies, he said that Hafed purchased over 17.06 lakh MT wheat, Food and Supplies Department 13.19 lakh MT, Food Corporation of India over 8.26 lakh MT, Haryana Warehousing Corporation over 4.71 lakh MT, Agro Industries over 4.20 lakh MT and Confed purchased over 3.82 lakh MT.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Veggies turn dearer as supply dwindles

TNN, Apr 21, 2010, 04.28am IST

CHENNAI: The price of cucumber, the perfect summer vegetable for the summer months, has gone up by 100 % . Other common vegetables such as lady's finger, yam,

beans and chow chow have also risen by a considerable margin in the last few days.

"For most of last year, serving the family enough vegetables was a struggle, and it is only from January that they were affordable. But they have become costly once again," said V Malini, a resident of Ashok Nagar.

Chow chow', another common vegetable widely used during summer, has trebled, from Rs 8 to Rs 25, while snake gourd has doubled, at Rs 16. Lady's finger, children's favourite vegetable, has also doubled and is priced at Rs 20 at the Koyambedu wholesale market. Retail prices are higher by Rs 5 and Rs 7 in most parts of the city. "With summer vacation kicking off, and house guests a tradition, the price rise is making us sweat," said R Venthan, an accounts executive.

Vendors blame the hike on insufficient supply and a severe summer. "Chennai is dependent on Hosur, Bangalore and Andhra Pradesh for its vegetable supply," said V R Soundarajan, member, Koyambedu Market Merchants Association. "With summer affecting the yield in all states, and lack of summer rains in Tamil Nadu has impacted on both the quality and the cost ," he added.

With wedding season scheduled to begin in May the price of vegetables is unlikely to fall.

Bumper crop, but watermelons scarce

TNN, Apr 21, 2010, 04.30am IST

CHENNAI: It has been a year of bountiful yield of watermelons, but the fruits are both fewer in number, and more expensive now. At a time when mercury levels are rising, and the demand for the fruit, which is everybody's thirst-quencher, has climbed, the fruit is fast going out of reach for most people. Farmers say lack of proper guidance from the

agriculture department on when to sow and ineffective advice on fumigating the plants when beset with a virus are the reasons for the melon becoming expensive.

"There are fewer fruits in the market and prices have more than doubled in the last two months," said N Kanthimathi, a home maker in Royapettah. From selling at Rs 5 a kg in February, watermelon climbed to Rs 7 in March, before touching Rs 15 in April. Farmers blame the situation on improper planning. Most farmers started their operations by middle of December and completed harvest by last week of February. Some started in the first week of January and harvested in March. What is seen in the market now is mostly spillovers. If a section of farmers had started their operations towards the end of January or first half of February, the fruit would have been available in plenty even now, noted S Balakrishnan, a farmer based in Acharapakkam.

There were also problems of pest attack. "Despite sowing at the right time, in January , on 28 acres of leased land, a leaf-virus attack on the plants ruined my crop entirely," said C Ramesh, a resident of Nadukuppam, a few kilometres beyond Gummudipoondi. "People from the agriculture department advised me to spray fungicide, and although I spent close to Rs 80,000, I could not save much of the crop," he added.

Several other farmers too said the leaf virus beset many of the watermelon farmers in the Gummudipoondi belt, affecting the quality and quantity. "Until last year, our fruits used to travel upto Punjab, but this year has been a bad harvest," said S Sudarsanam, a farmer at Arambakkam (near TADA after Gummudipoondi). As against the 700 tonnes that he used to harvest from his 70 acre land, this year he netted a little less than 200 tonnes.

However, officials denied that there was any leaf-virus attack. "We did not get any complaint," said R Subbaian, additional director, horticulture department. "Compared to last year, the yield and extent of cultivation has gone up by 10 %. As against 1,692 hectares, watermelon was sowed on 1,844 hectares and while the tonnage price was Rs 3000 last year, this year farmers got up to Rs 6000," he said.