

# THE HINDU

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## **Fix sugarcane price at Rs. 2,500 a tonne: farmers**

ERODE: Sugarcane growers in the State have urged the Central and State governments to fix the purchase price of sugarcane with 8.5 per cent recovery rate at Rs. 2,500 a tonne.

A resolution to this effect was adopted at a conference organised by the Tamil Nadu Vivasyigal Sangam for the sugarcane growers here on Tuesday. Farmers said that the input and cultivation cost for sugarcane had increased manifold in the recent past and the price offered by the government was not remunerative.

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## **Mettur level**

The level in the Mettur dam stood at 74.65 feet on Tuesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,540 cusecs and the discharge, 1,900 cusecs.

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## **Vegetable prices tumble**

CHENNAI: The cost of staple vegetables has dropped significantly over the past few days at the Koyambedu wholesale market. This is bound to come as a big relief to households as the prices have come down to this level after nearly eight months.

Vendors at the market said many of the vegetables that were sold for Rs.20 a kg last month now cost half that price. The cost of tomatoes has fallen by more than half in the wholesale market and on Tuesday were being sold for Rs.3-4 a kg.

The market receives 450 lorry loads of fresh produce as against its daily demand of 350-400 loads. Of this, 60-70 trucks bring in tomatoes, whereas the demand is only 50 loads.

S. Chandran, a member of Koyambedu Periyar Market Licensed Merchants' Association, said more produce are coming to the market owing to a good yield in the neighbouring States of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

#### Seasonal

Usually, the prices of vegetables come down in March in view of increased production following the monsoon rains. However, this year the decline has been relatively steep. Over the past one week, though the sales have gone up by 30 per cent the vendors have made less profit, he said.

Onions that were priced above Rs.25 per kg last month now cost Rs.10-12. Brinjals are sold for Rs.6-10 a kg according to the variety. Similarly, potatoes cost Rs.6 a kg in the wholesale market. Some of the other vegetables priced within Rs.10 a kg are beetroot, cabbage, snake gourd, cauliflower and ladies finger.

V.R. Soundararajan, member of Koyambedu Market Management Committee, said the cost of a bunch of greens that was Rs.8 has come down to Rs.3. Similarly, a bunch of coriander is priced at Rs.2.

#### To go up

A few vegetables such as beans (Rs.16/kg) and yam (Rs.20) were relatively expensive. The prices would go up during peak summer months when the arrivals would decrease, he said.

The drop in wholesale prices had its impact on the retail market. There was not much price difference between the produce sold at most of the neighbourhood grocery stores and super markets. For instance, tomatoes that were sold for Rs.6-Rs.10 per kg according to its variety in grocery stores were priced between Rs.8 to Rs.10 per kg in super markets.

N. Sreelatha was one among the many customers filling their bags with vegetables at a Kilpauk vegetable market. "I used to think twice to buy an adequate amount of vegetables until a few days ago. As they are pocket-friendly now, I am purchasing more to stock for a week," she said.

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**"Scientific quests will provide solutions to tide over catastrophes"**

CUDDALORE: Only science could offer solution to save the world from the dangers of global warming, ozone depletion, extinction of rare species and rising sea level, said C.Ramalingam, Joint Secretary, National Council for Science and Technology Communication Network.

He was delivering a speech at the National Science Day-2010 celebrations organised under the aegis of the Tamil Nadu Science Forum at the Lignite Hall on the Neyveli Lignite Corporation campus.

Mr. Ramalingam said that considering the enthusiasm of the students and the skill availability Neyveli had all the potential to become a scientific centre. NLC Chairman-cum-Managing Director A.R.Ansari said that every action in the universe was guided by scientific principles. Every child had innate talents and therefore the onus was on the parents to find out the skills and nurture them.

R.Dhamodaran, Forum secretary, said that his organisation was deeply involved in promoting science among students. During the annual Safety Week celebrations, organised by the NLC, the Forum used to showcase the innovations of school students to let the public know about the abundant skills available locally.

#### Debate

In the evening session, M.Rathina Sabapathy, Chief Manager, Thermal Power Station-I, moderated the debate on "Science—Wonders or Wrecks? Mr Ansari gave away awards named after Sir C.V.Raman, Subash Chandra Bose and A.P.J.Abdul Kalam to the winners of various competitions held on the occasion.

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## Water level

MADURAI: The level in the Periyar dam on Tuesday stood at 109.50 feet (full level 136 feet) with no inflow and a discharge of 175 cusecs. The level in the Vaigai dam was 37.40 feet (71 feet) with no inflow of 60 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit stood at 503 mcft.

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## Permanent ban on GM crops sought



***Move opposed:* K. Sivaraman, Siddha practitioner, addressing a seminar in Tirunelveli on Tuesday.**

TIRUNELVELI: Speakers at a seminar organised here on Tuesday on 'GM Crops with special reference to Bt Brinjal' urged the State and Central Governments not to allow these 'designer crops' that could cause serious and irreparable damage to the human beings owing to their genetically modified characters.

Sustained attempts being made by the multinational companies to introduce genetically modified crops were nothing but efforts to scientifically destroy the Indian farm industry, now having hundreds of highly tolerant varieties in every vegetable.

Siddha practitioner K. Sivaraman of 'Poovulagin Nanbargal' said the Indian soil texture, which had been seriously damaged owing the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of inorganic chemical fertilizers and highly harmful pesticides applied in the guise of 'green revolution', could have been rectified by the farmers switching over to organic farming practices. However, the genetically modified crops like Bt brinjal, Bt cotton etc. would permanently poison the soil, crops and the animals and human beings consuming them.

Innovative natural farmer N. Ganesh Raja appealed to the agriculturists to join hands against the GM crops and ferociously raise a banner of revolt demanding the permanent ban on these "poisonous crops". Leading organic farmers Gomathinayagam and Antony Samy from Puliyangudi in the district shared their experiences in the natural farming. A documentary film 'Bt Katthirikkaai', directed by J. Deepa, narrated the threats to be posed by the 'alien' vegetable.

Leading builder and founder of 'Kal Panpaattu Iyakkam' T.T. Ramesh Raja, director of Tirunelveli Social Service Society Rev. Fr. Kennedy and others spoke. © Copyright 2000 - 2009 The Hindu

## **Budget session from March 19**

By DC Correspondent

Mar 03 2010

March 2: The budget session of the Tamil Nadu Assembly for the year 2010 - 11 will be held from March 19 at the new Assembly complex, scheduled for inauguration next week. It is likely to last till April end, according to sources. State finance minister K. Anbazhagan will present the budget and after this the business advisory committee would meet and finalise the schedule for the presentation of demands for grants for various departments. According to Assembly secretary M. Selvaraj, Governor Surjit Singh Barnala has summoned the state legislative Assembly to meet on March 19 and the budget would be presented that day at 9.30 am.

Several new announcements including sops for industries, a conference hall and new hostel for the Madras Medical College and a slew of welfare schemes would figure in the budget.

A brief session of the Assembly was held from January 6 to 11 this year at the present Assembly housed in the historic Fort St George premises and it began with the Governor's customary address.

Prime Minister will inaugurate the new Secretariat complex.

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### **Hike Budget allocation: Ministers**

The state Cabinet sub-committee on planning failed to reach a consensus on the annual plan size and allocation on Tuesday.

The annual plan of a state is to the total development budget for a year and has to be approved by the Planning Commission.

Barely a week away from the meeting with the Planning Commission on March 11, the state Cabinet sub-committee pulled up the Finance department over the plan size and allocation. The state is likely to present its annual budget on March 25.

Sources in the Planning department said it was decided that this year's plan size would be modest.

However, most ministers, including Tatkare's Nationalist Congress Party colleagues such as Public Works Minister Chhagan Bhujbal, Rural Development Minister Jayant Patil and Water Resources Minister Ajit Pawar, wanted higher allocations.

"We have told the planning department that the size has to be increased for some development. We discussed how to curtail non-development spending on salaries instead of development funds," said a Cabinet minister present at the meeting.

Last year, the state had announced a plan of Rs 36,000 crore, but it spent only Rs 23,000 crore. This year the plan size is expected to be Rs 25,000 crore.

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