

THE HINDU

Date:09/03/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/03/09/stories/2010030954230500.htm>

Mobile soil and water testing laboratory for Tirupur

Project to be implemented at an outlay of
Rs. 25 lakh
A fee of Rs. 10 will be collected from the farmer

Tirupur: To increase the productivity of agriculture crops manifold, the Department of Agriculture plans to introduce a mobile soil and water testing laboratory in the district shortly.

Joint Director of Agriculture L. Sankararaaj told 'The Hindu' that the project, to be implemented at an outlay of Rs. 25 lakh, was aimed at helping the farmers analyse the soil health in their plots and act accordingly to improve the crop yield.

"We will test an average of about 1,500 soil and water samples every month," he said.

Modern gadgets

The mobile laboratory, mounted on a van, would be equipped with modern gadgets to test soil and water for various parameters like salinity, alkalinity, micro nutrient contents and electric conductivity, among others, at the farmers' doorstep.

According to the Joint Director, the introduction of mobile laboratory will also help ascertain the organic carbon levels in the soil at a faster pace.

"Diminishing organic carbon level in the soil in the district over the last three decades is of great concern to us, as it has gone below 0.2 per cent in many areas against the ideal levels of 0.5 to 0.7 per cent," he pointed out.

Another major feature of the laboratory would be the facilities to investigate whether the lime content in the soil had crossed the permissible levels of less than one percent. In the case of water, parameters like sodium absorption ratio would be evaluated.

Measures

"Testing of soil and water samples will help us advice farmers on specific fertilizer recommendations based on the native soil fertility besides suggesting reclamation measures for problem soils," the Joint Director pointed out.

A nominal fee of Rs. 10 would be levied on the farmer for every sample of water or soil tested.

The van, according to Mr. Sankararaaj, will visit the 13 blocks in the district on rotational basis on dates notified in advance.

Farmers could get more details on the project from Mr. Sankararaaj (Tel: 92453-43064)

Date:09/03/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/03/09/stories/2010030954680700.htm>

Kerala seeks inclusion of paddy lands in Central food scheme

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Kerala government has appealed to the Centre to relax the norms for inclusion of paddy lands in the Central food security scheme so that the Kuttanad region and the kole lands in Thrissur district could be brought under its ambit, Agriculture Minister Mullakkara Rathnakaran told the Assembly on Monday.

Responding to a calling attention motion moved by Murali Perunelli (CPI-M), the Agriculture Minister said the State wanted the Centre to waive the norm that only paddy holdings having a contiguous extent of 50,000 hectares could be included in the Central scheme. In Kerala, paddy fields were fragmentary in nature, but the different regions of paddy cultivation such as the Kuttanad region and the kole lands in Thrissur district were quite distinctive and should be considered as one contiguous region. The Centre had not so far responded favourably to the State's plea, he said.

The Minister said the State had also been trying to get the Centre to agree to reclassifying paddy produced in Kerala as 'A' class. The Centre had classified paddy produced in Kerala as 'B' class resulting in substantial loss in Central assistance. The Opposition should join the government in getting the State's demands accepted by the Centre, the Agriculture Minister said.

Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan said in response to a calling attention motion moved by Therambil Ramakrishnan (Congress) that he was ready to convene an all-party meeting to resolve the dispute over solid waste disposal in the Thrisur Corporation area. He had actually convened a meeting on March 10, but had called it off on being informed that Local Administration Minister Paloli Mohammed Kutty was holding talks with the parties concerned on the issue, the Chief Minister said.

He informed the House that as many as 25 urban local bodies had commissioned solid waste processing plants and another 11 were in the process of doing so. The government's effort was to treat solid wastes at source in a decentralised manner, Mr. Achuthanandan added.

Date:09/03/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/03/09/stories/2010030961760800.htm>

SHGs a people's movement: Stalin

Says their performance in State the best in the country

Photo: V. Ganesan



Deputy Chief Minister M.K. Stalin handing over a cheque to a member of a self- help group at a function in Chennai on Monday.

CHENNAI: Self Help Groups (SHGs) have become a people's movement in Tamil Nadu and the performance of Women SHGs in the State is the best in the country, Deputy Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has said.

Addressing a loan distribution function organised by Indian Overseas Bank (IOB), Mr. Stalin said their performance was exemplified by the fact that SHGs in Tamil Nadu had bagged a considerable amount of financial assistance from various banks in the form of loans.

The total amount released by various banks at the national level was Rs.10,527.37 crore of which Tamil Nadu's share was Rs.2,174.57 lakh.

"It goes to show the faith reposed by the banks on the SHGs. They are promptly repaying the loans," Mr. Stalin said. IOB alone had released Rs.1230.77 crore for SHGs in Tamil Nadu.

"This is 48 per cent of the total loan amount released by the bank across the country."

Stressing that SHGs were started to provide economic independence to women, Mr. Stalin said the DMK

government never intended to utilise them for political purposes.

Chairman and managing director of IOB S.A. Bhat said the bank was always been in the forefront to serve the cause of the priority sector. He had a word of praise for the SHGs in Tamil Nadu, saying their repayment record was good.

General manager of the bank T. Thenappan and chief general managers T. Veerappan, T.V. Nagarajan and A. Narayanan participated.

Date:09/03/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/03/09/stories/2010030952550300.htm>

Untreated garbage piles up; pollutes groundwater



Untreated waste dumped in Gobichettipalayam in Erode district.

ERODE: The gross failure of Gobichettipalayam Municipal administration in the implementation of a proper solid waste management system has led to the contamination of ground water in the areas close to the dump yard of the local body.

The town generates over 25 tonnes of garbage every day and it is dumped in the yard located in Naickankadu without proper treatment. The continuous dumping of the waste polluted the ground water in the area, posing serious threat to people's health.

Initially, a few wells got affected and people had reported the problem to authorities concerned. As the municipal administration did not pay any attention to it, the number of affected wells had gone up sharply in the recent past. "The water in our wells turned yellowish in colour and a foul smell is emanating from it. We have stopped using the ground water," people in the area say.

People in a number of residential colonies including TRR Nagar, Muthu Nagar, Karatur and Paravathi Nagar, which are located near the yard, are forced to buy water for drinking and other purposes. "We spend more than

Rs. 1,000 a month to buy water alone,” residents in Parvathi Nagar lament.

But people belonging to the poor families continue to use the contaminated water for cleaning utensils and various other purposes, risking their health. “We have no other go. The supply of drinking water by the municipality is inadequate. We fetch fetch potable water from long distance and we depend on the ground water for cleaning and other purposes,” residents say.

Though the municipal officials are aware of the graveness of the situation, no concrete efforts have been made so far to sort out the problem. “The solid waste management programme is yet to take off. If we ask, officials claim that they are waiting for the acquisition of additional land. We do not know when this wait will be over,” a senior citizens says.

Apart from water contamination, people also suffer due frequent burning of garbage. “Sanitary workers and rag pickers set afire to the garbage very often and thick smoke from the yard enters the colonies and making over lives miserable,” residents complain. The fly menace has also increased to alarming proportions.

Municipal Commissioner K. Kuppamuthu said that the municipality required additional land for setting up a new compost yard in order to implement the solid waste management programme. The land acquisition process was going on.

© Copyright 2000 - 2009 The Hindu



Food inflation to ease in 2 months: Montek

Reuters Posted online: Monday , Mar 08, 2010 at 1358 hrs

New Delhi : India's food and aggregate inflation would trend down over the next two months, a top economic adviser said on Monday.

"I would not hazard a guess on end-March inflation projections, but I would expect food and aggregate inflation to trend down over the next two months," Montek Singh Ahluwalia, the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, said.

No immediate plans to import rice: Scindia

Reuters Posted online: Monday , Mar 08, 2010 at 1211 hrs

New Delhi : India has no immediate plans to import rice, but the government may consider overseas purchases if it fails to buy adequate quantity from local farmers, the trade minister told parliament on Monday.

The federal government buys wheat and rice from domestic farmers to run various welfare programmes.

Jyotiraditya Scindia also said there was no proposal to lift a ban on non-basmati rice exports, clamped down since October 2007.

The country exported basmati rice worth Rs 62.01 billion (\$1.36 billion) between April and September 2009, Scindia said.

DECCAN
Chronicle *On The Web*

Published on Deccan Chronicle (<http://www.deccanchronicle.com>)

Change cooking oil often, says NIN

By DC Correspondent

Mar 09 2010

March 8: Home makers; do not stick to one oil in your kitchens. Using the same cooking oil for too long would cause thinning/ clotting of blood, says a study done by the National Institute of Nutrition. The NIN has found out that many housewives have been using only sunflower or groundnut oil for cooking.

“Sunflower, palm, rice bran and groundnut oils have linoleic acid, which is an important fatty acid, needed for the growth and development of the body. It also helps to maintain the health of cell membranes and control blood pressure. But the prolonged intake of linoleic acid will result in the clotting of blood,” said Dr Raghunatha Rao, assistant director, NIN.

Dr Rao said that mustard and soya bean oil contain alpha-linoleic acid, which would prevent chronic diseases, including cardiac ailments and arthritis. “Alpha-linoleic acid has the capacity to thin the blood but continuous use of these oils will lead to complications related to blood-thinning. Combination of various oils or using oils in rotation is

the best way to keep healthy,” said Dr Rao, adding, “If you use sunflower oil this month, opt for soya bean next month.”

Admitting she’s not aware that repeated use of the same oil is bad for health, Ms R. Chandra, a mother of two in Chennai, said, “I have been using sunflower oil for the last 5 years but from now on, I will pick up a different oil every month.”

Source URL:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/chennai/change-cooking-oil-often-says-nin-384>

Dhal prices fall in city markets

By DC Correspondent

Mar 09 2010

March 8: The common man may get some respite after reeling under price rise for long. The prices of dhal varieties in the open market have started to decline, according to a press statement from the Tamil Nadu civil supplies and consumer protection department.

The price of first quality thoor dhal has been reduced to Rs 60, second quality thoor dhal to Rs 55, lentil Rs 47, urad dhal to Rs 55 and Rs 53, for the two varieties.

Considering the demand and the continuing rise in retail prices, the civil supplies department has been selling three varieties of thoor dhal and two varieties of urad dhal through the 200 cooperative stores, 21 Amudham departmental stores and 295 kerosene shops run by the Tamil Nadu civil supplies corporation from January 27.

“Over 277 tonnes of thoor dhal and 50 tonnes of urad dhal have been sold through these cooperative societies and PDS shops in the last two months.

As the rates have come down in the open market following the price reduction at the PDS and cooperative societies, the prices have been reduced

further,” said K.Rajaraman, commissioner, civil supplies department.

He said the consumers can purchase dhal from the cooperative societies without producing ration cards. Consumers can also

call 044-28592828 or

044-28351514 for complaints related to sale of thoor dhal in the cooperative societies.

Source URL:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/chennai/dhal-prices-fall-city-markets-385>

Indo-Asian News Service

Kolkata, March 07, 2010

First Published: 22:28 IST(7/3/2010)

Last Updated: 22:30 IST(7/3/2010)

GDP to be Rs.61 lakh crore this fiscal, says Mukherjee

Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee expects the country's gross domestic product (GDP) to be Rs.61 lakh crore in the current fiscal (2009-10).

"In the current fiscal the country's GDP is likely to be around Rs.61 lakh crore," he said in Kolkata on Sunday.

He said this while addressing people at a programme for laying the foundation stone for a company's housing complex in the city.

Last fiscal (2008-09) GDP growth was to the tune of 6.7 percent.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/516307.aspx>

© Copyright 2009 Hindustan Times