

Date:21/05/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/21/stories/2010052152780600.htm>

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## MoU inked to commercialise solar crop drier



**P. Murugesha Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (second right), exchanging an MoU with Gerald Irudayaraj, Managing Partner, Reny Marketing (second left), in Coimbatore.**

COIMBATORE: Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has inked a Memorandum of Understanding with Reny Marketing to commercialise the “Solar Crop Drier (tunnel type)” developed by the bio-energy scientists of the university.

It was signed by Director, Agri-Business Development, R. Ganesan, and Managing Partner of the company Gerald Irudayaraj, according to a release from the university.

Speaking on the occasion Vice-Chancellor P. Murugesha Boopathi said the

university was involved in developing solar technologies which could be of great use to the farming community. The use of solar energy for producing electricity should increase for facing the power crisis.

“The solar crop drier is of low cost and can be established even in small firms. Entrepreneurs can set up these units in rural areas and lease out the equipment to farmers,” Mr. Boopathi said.

Dean (Agricultural Engineering) S. Santhana Bosu, explaining the utility of the drier, said it could be used for drying a wide range of crops such as rosemary, coconut, chillies, etc.

He said a maximum temperature of 57 degree Celsius to 60 degree Celsius could be obtained in the drier. Registrar P. Subbian, HoD of Bio-energy, was present.

**Date:21/05/2010 URL:**

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/21/stories/2010052155112000.htm>

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## **Food inflation creeps up**

### *Normal monsoon to ease prices*

NEW DELHI: Food inflation inched up a tad to 16.49 per cent for the week ended May 8 from 16.44 per cent in the previous week to display a near flat movement, a trend that is expected to persist until there are clear indications of the advent of a normal monsoon.

According to economic analysts, a definite downtrend in annual WPI (Wholesale Price Index) based food inflation will come about only later during the fiscal year when a normal monsoon precipitation is seen as having a positive impact on standing kharif crops. However, a major concern in the coming weeks would be the added inflationary pressure on account of the hike in prices of non-food articles

following the Cabinet decision to increase prices of natural gas. With the government more than doubling the price of natural gas to \$4.20 per million British thermal unit, gas-based power as well as public transportation is expected to cost more and thereby add to overall inflation.

On the food front, the scorching summer appears to be adding to the cost of management of perishables. As a result, on a week-on-week basis, vegetables turned dearer by 2.41 per cent, with onion prices going up by 5.73 per cent, potatoes by 0.95 per cent and fruits by 0.41 per cent.

**Date:**21/05/2010 **URL:**

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/21/stories/2010052160000300.htm>

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## **Rain pleases Karur farmers**

*Banana crop felled by gale over the past three days*

KARUR: Sky over Karur district continued to remain cloudy and dark threatening to burst any moment on Thursday even as rain continued its play in Karur district on Wednesday as K. Paramathi recorded 54 mm rainfall over 24 hours. However, the rain has come as a boon to those farmers who take up summer ploughing and raise rainfed crops.

Administration sources said that banana crop in some areas in Poyyamani, Inungur and Nangavaram areas near Kulithalai have been felled by the gale over the past three days while officials from the Revenue and Horticulture departments have been assessing the damage to the crops. Similarly banana crops at Nanjaikalikurichi have been affected.

If rain continues for a couple of more days, then farmers would be happy, especially those who are taking up summer ploughing and rainfed crops such as

cow pea, red gram and cholam spread over the district. Pulses including black gram and green gram would also benefit. In irrigated areas too the crops would benefit from the sudden rainfall.

Since the samba harvest has been completed in the district there would not be any loss in paddy crop.

Betel vine crop farmers in Lalapet, Krishnarayapuram and Velayuthampalayam areas have not reported any damage to the gardens so far but if rain holds for more days and if any water logging occurs then that could spell trouble for the betel vine crops. As of now no problem existed.

The summer showers brought about by the depression would be of great help in recharging the open wells and garden wells. Equally benefited would be the farm ponds. Farmers say that rain was no problem at all but only the gale was a source of trouble.

The chief amounts of rainfall (in mm) recorded in the major centres across the district in the 24 hours ending 8.30 a.m. on Thursday are as follows: K. Paramathi 54, Karur 36.8, Anaipalayam 24.2, Panjapatti 10.8, Aravakurichi 10, Palaviduthi 7.1, Mylampatti 6, Mayanur 4.6, Krishnarayapuram 2.4 and Kulithalai 1.2 mm.

**Date:21/05/2010 URL:**

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/21/stories/2010052159960300.htm>

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## **Israeli scientists to train Krishnagiri farmers**

*Climate in the district suitable for mango cultivation, says Collector*



**Sharing views:Israeli diplomat Avribarzur (left), Counselor - MASHAV (Science & Agriculture) at its embassy in New Delhi, holding discussion with Collector V.K. Shanmugam in Krishnagiri recently. —**

KRISHNAGIRI: Israeli scientists will give training to farmers of Krishnagiri on latest technologies available in agriculture sector, Collector V.K. Shanmugam said here recently.

Israeli diplomat Avribarzur, Counselor - MASHAV (Science & Agriculture) at its embassy office in New Delhi, visited the district two days last week. During his stay here, he went round the poly green-houses and studied cultivation of vegetables and flowers under horticulture in Krishnagiri, Hosur and Kelamangalam areas.

He inspected the poly green-houses set up with government subsidy in Chinna Vellatharapalli, Pennapalli and Achettipalli areas in Hosur.

He enquired about the cultivation of capsicum and rose on small land holdings by the farmers with the help of the Agriculture Department.

#### Methods

With regard to methods of cultivation and fertilization, Mr. Avribarzur advised the farmers to reduce the application of fertilizers and liquefied fertilizers.

He also visited the agriculture fields where cabbage and beans are being cultivated

using the precision farming method.

Later, he visited the mango orchards at Veppalampatti, Mahadevagollahalli and Jagadevi near Krishnagiri.

Later, he interacted with Mr. Shanmugam and officials from Agriculture, Horticulture and Agriculture Engineering Departments at the Collectorate.

Mr. Shanmugam said that the salubrious climate in the district was suitable for mango cultivation.

Hence, he requested Mr. Avribarzur to give training to the farmers on latest technologies to reap maximum benefits and extend technical know-how available in Israel.

Mr. Avribarzur said that he would send a team of agriculture experts in July this year to give training to the farmers in Krishnagiri district.

During the inspection, R Subbaian, Additional Director of Horticulture, accompanied Mr. Avribarzur.

**Date:21/05/2010 URL:**

**<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/21/stories/2010052150730200.htm>**

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## **Farmers advised to sell black gram soon after harvest**

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*TNAU cell conducted study at various markets*

*The peak period of arrivals is during April-May*

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COIMBATORE: The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has asked black gram farmers to sell the produce immediately soon after harvest.

High variability in farm harvest price of black gram during the past two months has been a point of contention among farmers. They were in dilemma whether the crop will fetch a higher price or not; or whether they will have to sell the produce immediately or store it after harvest.

In order to facilitate the farmers to take a better decision, DEMIC made a study in Virudhunagar and Villupuram markets and predicted that the farm gate price during May-July will be in the range of Rs. 4,600-Rs. 5,200 a quintal, a release says. In Tamil Nadu, black gram is grown during Adipattam (June-August), Puratasipattam (September- November), Thaipattam (January-February), and summer season (February-March). It occupied 3.41 lakh hectares with a production of 1.2 lakh tonnes during 2007-08.

The peak period of black gram arrivals was during April-May. This year, due to insufficient rainfall during growing season, the arrivals started only from April first week.

**Date:**21/05/2010 **URL:**

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/21/stories/2010052160570300.htm>

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## **Signs of rain at Siruvani Dam**

*The dam recorded 3 mm rainfall till 8.30 a.m. on Thursday*



**REASSURING:**With more water than last year and a thick cloud cover, officials claim that things are looking up at Siruvani Dam.

**COIMBATORE:** On Thursday, cautious optimism ran through the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board and the Coimbatore Corporation as a thick cloud cover formed over the Siruvani Dam and the catchment.

The dam recorded 3 mm rain till 8.30 a.m. on Thursday and 5 mm on Wednesday.

This was attributed to the cyclone in the Bay of Bengal. But, the authorities said it was not time yet to conclude that the hot and dry spell was over.

The cyclone impact would be over any moment and the Siruvani scheme would have to count only on the South West Monsoon.

Water supply officials said what lent hope now was the news of the monsoon moving towards Kerala. Heavy rain in some parts of Palakkad District in Kerala (where the dam and catchment are located) indicated that things would improve in terms of water supply. The hope now was that the monsoon would set in over the catchment in the last week of May or in the first week of June.

Both the water board and the civic body were into hectic arrangements for smooth water supply during the World Classical Tamil Conference to be held here from June 23 to 27.



In this context, the setting in of the monsoon even in the first week of June would be a timely rescue act.

“The good news now is that Siruvani Dam has more water as on May 20, than in the last 10 years,” Executive Engineer of the water board P. Gopalakrishnan said.

The level on Thursday stood at nearly 19 ft, as against the full reservoir level of nearly 60 ft. It was only 11.28 ft last year.

Between 2000 and 2004, the level hit dead storage twice. Good summer showers, a low pressure in the Bay of Bengal and early setting in of the South West Monsoon turned things around in April-May 2004.

A string of austerity measures ensured judicious use of drinking water and prevented the level from plummeting to dead storage.

Readings available with the Corporation pointed out that in 2006 and 2008, the water level was beyond the 18 ft mark, though not to the level this year.

The water level in the dam now was enough for a comfortable supply, official sources said.

**Date:21/05/2010 URL:**

**<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/21/stories/2010052151190300.htm>**

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## **Farmers can air their grievances at jamabandhi meetings**

SALEM: As jamabandhi works have begun in the district from Thursday, the Salem district administration has cancelled the monthly farmers' grievances day meeting scheduled to be held here on May 21. Instead of that meeting, the press release adds, farmers could participate at jamabandhi meetings in their respective blocks and air their grievances regarding Revenue department.

Meanwhile, Collector J Chandrakumar inaugurated the jamabandhi works in the district by inspecting survey equipment and records. He also disbursed welfare assistance to the tune of Rs. 50,000 to 5 beneficiaries. It will be over on June 3 in Salem district.

**Date:**21/05/2010 **URL:**

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/21/stories/2010052160670300.htm>

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## **Banana crop in 133 hectares damaged**

TIRUCHI: Banana crop in an area of about 133 hectares has been damaged across the district in the gale winds over the past few days.

Banana trees, at the harvest stage in some places, were uprooted completely in the squally weather that the district experienced over the past couple of days under the influence of cyclonic storm 'Laila.'

A preliminary estimates after a survey conducted by the Horticulture Department identified that crops in an area of about 133 hectares in the four blocks of Andhanallur, Thottiyam, Uppilliyapuram and Thathaiyengarpet have been damaged in the gale winds, S. Robert Vincent, Deputy Director, Horticulture, told The Hindu here on Thursday. The worst affected block was Andhanallur, he said.

A section of farmers has already demanded that the government sanction compensation to the affected banana growers. Mr.Vincent, when queried on this, said the survey report would be forwarded to the department headquarters and the district administration as well. The government would take a decision on the sanction of compensation.

A. Nagarajan, president, Horticulture Crop Growers Association, claimed that over one lakh banana trees have been damaged.

Date:21/05/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/21/stories/2010052151050300.htm>

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## Giant pineapple at fruit show



**Visual treat: The Sim's Park in Coonoor getting ready for the Fruit Show.**

Udhagamandalam: A giant pineapple would be the main attraction at the 2010 edition of the Annual Fruit Show at the Sim's Park in Coonoor on May 22 and 23.

The organisers told The Hindu that it would be made with about 1,000 pineapples and would be 12 feet tall. A 5 feet high mosambi made with about 1,200 mosambis will be another attraction. There is also a proposal to create a mango tree. An arch made of a variety of fruits will welcome visitors. There would be about seven stalls, including that of the Department of Horticulture. There would be no food stalls but visitors will not be prevented from bringing food items.

They said that development of the Sim's Park is expected to cost about Rs. 5 crores. There is a move to introduce a rope car service in the park. Referring to the congestion caused by the increasing inflow of vehicles, they said that steps have been taken to create a parking lot near the park.

## Laila predicted 3 days ahead

May 21 2010

May 20: Scientists at the Indian National Centre For Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad, helped the state prepare for the onslaught of cyclone Laila by making an accurate forecast of the storm system three days before it hit the Tamil Nadu coast.

“We may not have the know-how to counter cyclones, storms or even strong gales, but our scientists have the capability to forecast cyclones or tornadoes well in advance,” said Shylesh Nayak, eminent scientist with the ministry of earth sciences, in a conversation with DC about INCOIS’s weather-predicting capabilities.

The forecast underlines the capability of the Ocean State Forecasting system developed by Indian scientists under the guidance of Mr Nayak.

“From early Sunday itself, our team was following the abnormal behaviour of certain weather patterns in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean,” said T.M. Balakrishnan Nair, the head of INCOIS’s Ocean Science and Information Services Group, noting that scientists at the centre monitor all sea-weather parameters round-the-clock and infer patterns that can lead to cyclones and tornadoes.

Dr Nair said that the high wave alert associated with cyclone Laila has been disseminated to all agencies concerned in real time. “We have been updating details associated with Laila on a minute by minute basis on our website and in Tamil on

electronic display boards installed along the coast. This helped in minimise the fallout of the cyclone,” he said.

INCOIS pinpointed details like wind speed, height of waves, the force with which the waves would strike the shore and the exact location of the cyclone and relayed the data to all government agencies concerned as well as fishermen. “Putting out real-time forecasts helps people when a storm strikes,” said Mr Nair.

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Source URL:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/chennai/laila-predicted-3-days-ahead-461>

**express**<sup>™</sup>  
buzz

*By Reuters*

*20 May 2010 12:26:38 PM IST*

Food price inflation inches up in early May



NEW DELH: India's food price inflation picked up for the second consecutive week in early May, but with headline inflation seen cooling and uncertainty over the impact of euro zone sovereign debt crisis, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is unlikely to raise

rates ahead of its July policy review.

The food price index rose to 16.49 percent in the year to May 8, government data on Thursday showed, a touch higher than the prior week's annual reading of 16.44 percent as fruit and vegetables prices climbed on the back of a heat wave.

The fuel price index was steady at 12.33 percent, while the primary articles index was up 16.19 percent versus 16.76 percent.

The benchmark 10-year federal bond yield was barely moved at 7.45 percent after the data release.

In an indication the RBI would not lower its guard on inflation, the Reserve Bank of India Governor Duvvuri Subbarao said on Wednesday that demand-side pressures are picking up and asset prices are rising rapidly.

While food and fuel inflation remain in double digits, manufacturing inflation, which the RBI has said would determine its policy response, fell in April to 6.70 percent from 7.13 percent in March.

The markets expect the RBI to raise rates by 25 basis points in the policy review on July 27.

Analysts say the government's decision on Wednesday to more than double the price of regulated gas may stoke headline inflation, which had hit an annual 9.59 percent in April.

"This will have an inflationary impact because it will lead to a permanent rise in input costs for the user industries," said N. Bhanumurthy, an economist with New Delhi think-tank National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.

The government expects food prices to ease with the arrival of more winter harvest and normal monsoon rains that begin in June.



## Food inflation surges to 16.49 pct

**Agencies** Posted online: Thu May 20 2010, 10:53 hrs

**Tags :** Posted: Thu May 20 2010, 10:53 hrs New Delhi:



Inflation rose by 0.05 per cent from 16

**New Delhi :** Food Inflation rose to 16.49 per cent for the week ended May 8, mainly due to high prices of vegetables and fruits.

Inflation rose by 0.05 per cent from 16.44 per cent in the previous week.

On a weekly basis, Onions turned expensive by 5.73 per cent, potatoes by 0.95 per cent, fruits by 0.41 per cent and vegetables by 2.41 per cent while prices of urad and moong rose by two per cent each.

On an annual basis, pulses turned costlier by 33.65 per cent and fruits by 17 per cent.

Food Inflation had breached the 20 per cent-mark in December. During the week, prices of non-food articles declined by 0.35 per cent, as raw rubber prices sank 7 per cent and linseed fell 2 per cent.

Fuel prices remained steady over the week, but rose 12.33 per cent on an annual basis.

## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Cloudy

**Friday, May 21**

Max Min

25.7° | 22.6°

Rain: 75mm in 24hrs    Sunrise: 05:48

Humidity: 70%        Sunset: 18:28

Wind: Normal         Barometer: 1008.1mb

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

**Saturday, May 22**

Max Min

37° | 29°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday

**May 23**



37° | 29°

Cloudy

Monday

**May 24**



37° | 29°

Cloudy

Tuesday

**May 25**



37° | 29°

Cloudy

Wednesday

**May 26**



38° | 30°

Cloudy

Thursday

**May 27**



38° | 30°

Cloudy