

THE HINDU

Farmers attempt to block trains

'Restrain Karnataka move to pump water from South Pennar'



Members of Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam led by S.A. Chinnasamy proceeding to Hosur Railway Station to block trains on Monday.

Eighty farmers including 10 women from Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, led by S.A. Chinnasamy, were arrested when they attempted to block trains in Hosur on Monday demanding that the State government restrain the Karnataka government's initiative to pump water from South Pennar River to Kolar region for irrigation.

Addressing at the agitation in front of the Hosur Railway Station, Mr. Chinnasamy said that the Karnataka government had violated the two agreements signed between the States during 1892 and 1933 which stated that without the consent of Tamil Nadu no new water scheme would be implemented.

Mr. Chinnasamy alleged that the Karnataka government had launched a mega scheme to pump water from the South Pennar with a view to filling up 130 lakes in Kolar district.

If the project took off in full swing, the five districts of Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Tiruvannamalai, Cuddalore and Villupuram would be

affected badly, as these districts were depending on South Pennar River for irrigation and drinking water purposes.

The groundwater table would go down drastically in these districts, Mr. Chinnasamy added.

He urged the State government to intervene in the issue and protect the interest of the farmers over South Pennar River.

The arrested persons were released in the evening.

Crop loan waiver: farmers turn to CM as last resort

Discussion on demands for agriculture department on Friday

Lakhs of farmers, who have raised crops other than paddy, are hoping that Chief Minister Jayalalithaa would bail them out from the crop loan burden when the demands for agriculture department are taken up in the Assembly on Friday.

While P. Ayyakkannu, State vice president, Bharathiya Kisan Sangham, and Puliur A. Nagarajan, State vice president, agriculturists' wing of the State Congress, are demanding a total write off of the crop loans, Rajachidambaram, State general secretary, Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangham, wants her to at least write off the interest for crop loans.

While the Chief Minister has been focussing on delta farmers, there are at least 50 lakh farmers in the State, who have raised various other crops, who are yet to know the compensation in store for them. As per the 2010-11 figures of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Tamil Nadu has a paddy area of 19 lakh hectares while pulses, groundnut, horticulture

crops, and plantations account for 23 lakh hectares. Of the total 81 lakh farmers in the State, at least 60 per cent are cultivating crops other than paddy.

Now that the State government has announced that all the 31 districts are drought-affected, banks are ready to reschedule\restructure the crop loans even without the *annevari* certificates from the Collectors. Besides, they are ready to extend fresh loans too.

“We are deeply thankful to the Chief Minister for her announcement. But she should clarify whether we will have to pay interest for the loans obtained which will be a serious burden,” Mr. Rajachidambaram pleads.

He is worried about the possibility of banks pressuring farmers to pay interest for the existing loans for granting fresh loans.

The RBI, in its “master circular-guidelines for relief measures by banks in areas affected by natural calamities” dated July 2, 2012, says: the principal amount of the short-term loan as well as the interest due for repayment in the year of occurrence of the natural calamity may be converted into term loan. Generally, the restructured period for repayment may be three to five years The restructured portion of the short term loans and term loans which have been converted into fresh loans may be treated as current dues and not be classified as NPA.”

The NABARD sources said that restructuring means that the short-term loan would be converted into medium-term loan so that the repayment could be made after three years.

“But the borrowers have to pay the entire interest. Besides, the interest subvention (four per cent from the State government and three per cent from the Central government) that they have been enjoying for prompt repayment would be lost (once they seek restructuring). Above all, when they seek fresh loan, it will be a new

account and will carry an interest of nine per cent as against the normal seven per cent,” they explained.

Even for this restructuring by the cooperative sector, additional refinance could be provided by the NABARD only on government guarantee, they added.

The sources said “writing off of all the crop loans and waiving the entire interest for all the crop loans are major policy decisions and both would entail huge outgo from the exchequer.”

Mahadhanapuram V. Rajaram, working president of Cauvery Delta Farmers’ Welfare Association, says that the Chief Minister has promised a delegation of farmers that called on her recently that she will come out with a number of concessions in the budget. “Hence we are all keeping our fingers crossed,” he adds.

‘Set up farm ponds to tackle water scarcity’

The local bodies should concentrate on setting up farm ponds to tackle drinking water scarcity in the rural areas, said Collector S. Natarajan on Tuesday. The local body heads should take advantage of MNREGS for digging more ponds. They should also enlist the services of the local people in this project, Mr. Natarajan said at the inauguration of the special camp for issuing different certificates to the people on the spot under the AMMA scheme at Rayanallur village in Tiruthuraipoondi block on Tuesday.

All petitions seeking community certificate, birth and death certificate, patta transfer, income certificate, and nativity certificate received at the camp would be scrutinised instantly and the certificates would be issued the same day.

Farmers urged to insure crops



President of the District Central Cooperative Bank Shivananda Patil (right) addressing presspersons in Bijapur on Tuesday.— photo: Rajendra singh hajeri

The Bijapur District Central Cooperative (DCC) Bank has given Rs. 41.79 crore as crop insurance to farmers, which is nearly half of the total insurance amount paid by all other DCC banks put together in the State.

President of the DCC Bank Shivananda Patil told presspersons here on Tuesday that while the State got Rs. 98 crore as insurance amount for farmers, Bijapur district alone received Rs. 41.79 crore.

He said the bank had collected Rs. 5.97 crore in premiums paid by 2.45 lakh farmers towards crop insurance in 2011–12, covering 467.49 lakh hectares.

Mr. Patil said farmers were reluctant to apply for crop insurance as they felt they would not get any insurance after paying the premium. “The bank wants to convince farmers that crop insurance will help them recover the loss they incur due to monsoon failure. After intense campaigning, many farmers have come forward and applied for insurance,” he said.

Quoting an example of a farmer who got the highest insurance claim, he said that Shankargouda Biradar, a farmer from Kalakeri

village in Sindagi taluk, had paid only Rs. 2,200 as premium for Bengal gram, for which he got Rs. 65,000 as compensation.

While Bengal gram got the highest insurance amount of Rs. 19.66 crore, jowar received Rs. 12.37 crore, he said.

Mr. Patil urged farmers to get crops insured to recover losses they incur because of the vagaries of nature.

Farmers asked not to let fruits in farms near forests ripen

Farmers should not allow jackfruit and mangoes in their garden to ripen, as the strong smell of ripe fruits may pull wild animals into human habitats, the Forest Department officials have said. The rate of intrusion of elephants into human settlements was increasing, and the department was finding it tough to contain the intrusions, they said. The officials said the farmers should pluck the jackfruits and mango before they ripened, as elephants could catch the smell of the ripe fruits from far away. Drought in the forest, which made availability of green fodder and water difficult, had heightened chances of the animals entering farms and house compounds near the forests. The Forest Department also asked the farmers not to cultivate crops like banana, sugarcane, coconut etc., near the forests. Such crops would also attract wild elephants.

Agriculture beckons Madurai's entrepreneurs

Graduates moving away from secure government jobs



NEW AVENUE: An agri-business centre in Madurai.— Photos: R. Ashok

V. Rajesh Kannan, now 39, was at a crossroads when he completed his bachelor's degree in agriculture in 1994. Today, he is a successful agripreneur and a net-worth individual with a growing business.

His is among the success stories of agriculture graduates who break out of the pattern of looking for the security of a government job and, instead, dare to venture into agribusiness that includes sale of seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, cattle feed, bio and organic inputs, among other things.

“Success did not come overnight. I first worked as an executive in a private company for 10 years, rose to the level of manager, learnt the nuances of agribusiness and then started my own venture. There is a lot of scope in this field but not many dare to enter it,” he says.

Mr. Kannan was part of the second batch of trainees who underwent a two-month training programme in 2004 on ‘Establishment of Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres’ (ACABC) conducted by Voluntary Association for People Service (VAPS) here, a training institute approved by the Union Ministry of Agriculture.

The programme is being implemented jointly by the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, Hyderabad and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

VAPS, one of the 55 training institutes across the country, has trained over 1,600 students since 2002.

P. Subramanian, a former professor at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and now a technical consultant for VAPS training centre, points out that the Centre had revised the ACABC scheme in 2010. As per the revised scheme, each successful trainee is eligible for a bank loan of Rs. 20 lakh for establishing agri clinics and business centres. "If five of them join together for a group project, they can get Rs.1 crore. The Centre provides a subsidy of 44 per cent of the project cost to women and those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and 36 per cent for others. Banks do not charge interest for the subsidy portion," he adds.

There is no age bar for enrolling in the training programme. Utilising the opportunity, P. Sankar, a 59-year-old retired staff of Agricultural College and Research Institute here, joined the training programme recently. "I decided to undergo the training because during my career span I saw how reluctant farmers were to try out new ideas. They hesitate to take risks. I want to be a role model to them. I am going to venture into agribusiness by utilising the eight acres I own near T. Kallupatti," he says with confidence.

S. Ramakrishnan, a veterinarian who retired from government service, is among those who want to take to farming as a profession post-retirement. He proposes to set up a cattle farm at Palamedu along with an agri-farm, adjacent to it, to raise fodder. "Fodder constitutes 60 per cent of cost in maintaining a cattle farm. Once we learn to control the cost of fodder, we can make big profits in this field. Being a veterinarian is an advantage for me. Others must maintain a liaison with a local veterinarian," he suggests.

Not only the seniors, but also youngsters like 22-year-old P. Kothainayagi of Thiruvannamalai are showing interest in becoming agripreneurs. She travelled to Madurai and signed up for the training. "I completed my bachelor's degree in horticulture in 2011. Ever since, I have been helping my father, an agriculturist, and also

other farmers in my village by providing tips on increasing their produce. Now, I plan to establish an agri-clinic as well as an agri-business centre in my hometown,” she says.

L. Ashokan (38) who completed his bachelor’s degree in rural development science and then a master’s degree in social work from Loyola College, Chennai, has an innovative idea. He wants to create bio compost using coir dust. “The idea is novel but I don’t know whether banks would support it,” he doubts.

P.R. Vijayakumar, Deputy Regional Manager, Central Bank of India, says that banks are ready to extend loans for raising crops, irrigation, animal husbandry, harvesting, agricultural processing, storage of agri-produce, buying farm implements and tractors and even for purchasing shares of sugar mills. “There is no limit for the loan amount. Everything depends on the project cost and the security would be the project itself but for certain instances when collateral would be required. Young agricultural graduates and even those who are in the profession must utilise the opportunity,” he urges.

Stressing the importance of repaying bank loans promptly, he adds that an agripreneur cannot fail to make profits if he or she gave importance to involvement, innovation, planning, and disaster management. “Agripreneurs must anticipate disasters and be ready with measures to tackle them as they happen,” he advises.

Agriculture budget next year: Kanna

The government will present a full-fledged budget for agriculture next year as per its commitment, says Minister Kanna Lakshminarayana.

‘Will introduce agriculture budget next year’

The government will present a full-fledged budget for agriculture next year as per its commitment to exclusively focus on this important sector of the economy.

The budget would have been introduced in the just concluded Assembly session but the government had to pass it off as an ‘action plan’ in the eleventh hour due to certain procedural lapses.

This was because of lack of awareness on the part of officials who concentrated on budget preparation and its content ignoring procedural aspects in the process. The budget has to be first approved by the Assembly Estimates Committee and then cleared by the House but the procedure was apparently not followed. The government will ensure that such lapses do not recur at the time of introducing the Agriculture Budget for 2014-15, Mr. Lakshminarayana said here on Tuesday.

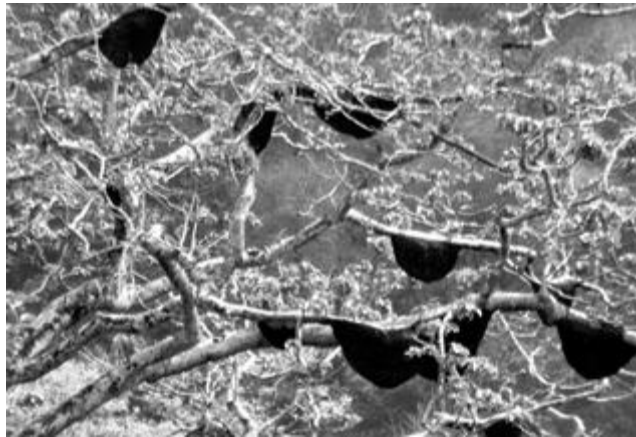
Rotten fruits, vegetables pile up on roadsides

An unbearable foul smell greets people visiting Nethaji market

Take a walk down one of the streets connecting the Nethaji market and many other vegetable markets in the town and you’re likely to find yourself looking at heaps of rotting fruit and vegetables dumped on the sides and the drainage channels.

Rock bees taste the bitter fruits of man's greed

The wild species is leaving the forests of Idukki



Rock bee colonies.— Photo: Giji K. Raman

Indian rock bees, *Apis dorsata*, are slowly disappearing from the forests in Idukki in the face of human interference, tribal people say.

As their name suggests, rock bees create colonies below rock cliffs and trunks of huge trees, usually inaccessible to people. They are a dependable source of honey, which is in good demand.

Unlike other honeybees, Indian rock bees never settle down in an area polluted by air or sound. Studies say they are a wild species, similar to *Apis laboriosa*, and live in places away from human interference. They help in pollinating flowers on tall trees. When their natural habitat is disturbed, they move to tall trees or vacant buildings in human habitations.

Tribal medicines

The Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary and the Cardamom Hill Reserve areas had many honeycombs of these bees till recently. Skilled tribal youths used to collect honey without disturbing the bees or honeycombs. The honey is used in tribal medicines.

Kunhachan, a tribal honey-collector from Kozhimala in the sanctuary, says the number of bee colonies and the quantity of honey have dwindled. From holding nearly 40 colonies to below 15 now, a cliff at Thenpara in the Idukki forests shows the change. Each colony yields one-third of the honey they used to earlier.

Since they form colonies after keen scrutiny, rock bees rarely leave an area even after honey is collected. A tree can have a dozen honeycombs. The number of honeycombs is a scale to judge the level of human interference and pollution in a forest area, D.K. Raju, honeybee expert, says.

When encroachments become high, they move deep into the forest and finally give themselves up to man's greed. At times, rock bees are seen settling for short periods below the ceiling of uninhabited or abandoned tall buildings in towns.

Hundreds of bees swarm in within hours and honeycombs grow in size, offering an enchanting sight. Since rock bees keep themselves away from people, their behaviour pattern is little understood and needs further studies.

It is a flurry of activities in the colonies from March to June, during the wild flowering season after the summer rain, Mr. Raju says.

Indian rock bees have a unique place among various varieties of honeybees. They are the only wild variety among the four species of bees found in the country. *Apis cerana*, *Apis lorea* and *Melipona irridipennis* (dammer bee) are the other three.

Rock bees provide honey from April to July and it can be harvested twice or thrice a year. It is not known if rock bees can be reared successfully, though efforts in this direction have been made, Mr. Raju says. Since rock bees are environmentally sensitive, their disappearance should worry forest-lovers.

An unbearable foul smell will greet you.

Though the Erode Corporation urged the vendors to put a stop to the illegal dumping, the practice continues in most parts of the town. Tonnes of vegetable and fruit waste end up on the roadsides, and sometime in the drains, as the civic body is not able to ensure regular collection. The wholesale markets and farmers markets (uzhavar santhai) are among the major generators of biodegradable waste.

“The civic body is not ensuring a regular collection at the markets. Sometimes, the waste remains uncollected for two to three days. Hundreds of tonnes of vegetables and fruits are handled in Nethaji market and other markets in the town every day,” R. Sivakumar, a trader points out.

“Even the vendors, who are selling the fruits and vegetables in push carts, dump the unsold vegetables on the streets and drains. The neighbourhood retail stores also often resort to the dumping of unsold, rotting vegetables on the streets.

As the civic body is not collecting waste properly, heaps of waste remain uncollected for days together, posing serious threat to the public health,” points out S.A. Chandran, a resident Surampatty.

Civic officials agree that the practice of dumping fruit and vegetable waste is a problem of long standing in the town.

Truck and van operators, who transport the vegetables and fruits to the markets, are the main culprits.

They dump the goods on the roadsides that are not accepted by the traders in the market.

Corporation Commissioner M. Vijayalakshmi promised that steps would be taken to collect waste multiple times in a day at the markets and selected places in the town.

Milma's turn to take a vegetable route

Project to promote vegetable farming among dairy farmers



The 'Milma Green' outlet opened at Kottuli in the city sells over 70 varieties of vegetables.— Photo: K. Ragesh

Milma is synonymous with milk and dairy products but Malayalis will soon identify the brand with fresh fruits and vegetables as well.

The Kerala Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Milma), through a Trust constituted under it called the Malabar Rural Development Foundation, opened its first vegetable and fruit outlet 'Milma Green' at Kottuli in the city on Monday. The outlet will sell over 70 varieties of vegetables.

This is part of a project being undertaken by the Trust to give a boost to domestic vegetable production in the State by promoting fruits and vegetable farming among dairy farmers, already under the Milma fold.

The Rs.5-crore pilot project, being undertaken by the Trust for the Agriculture Department envisages the procurement, value addition, and marketing of vegetables and fruits in the State.

The Trust is utilising the services of a group of dairy farmers in Wayanad initially for the project.

They are already growing a variety of vegetables in their fields.

The Trust will procure the produce of these farmers at Panamaram, Varadoor, and Vakeri and take it to the Milma Green outlet.

“We have already started procuring vegetables from select farmers to be marketed through our outlet,” said Milma General Manager K. Damodaran Nair, who is also the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Trust.

The farmers will get a relatively better rate for their produce than from local wholesale dealers.

As domestic farmers will not be able to provide all vegetables initially, the Trust will also purchase it from markets in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. “Once the volume and variety increases domestically we will stop external purchase,” Mr. Nair said.

“Nadan (rustic) vegetable varieties produced by farmers will also be procured by the Trust. The Milma Green outlet was evoking a good response,” he said.

The Trust was planning to open more Milma Green outlets in the city. ‘Organic corners’ were also being planned, he said.

“This will provide a steady market for the produce of organic farmers the Malabar region,” Mr. Nair said.

Distribution of essential commodities from April 19

The district administration here is making all necessary arrangements to provide nine varieties of essential commodities from April 16.

The varieties that would be distributed include red gram, oil, chilly powder, salt and aatta and others. All these commodities would be provided in a pack, Collector A. Dinakarbabu said here on Tuesday.

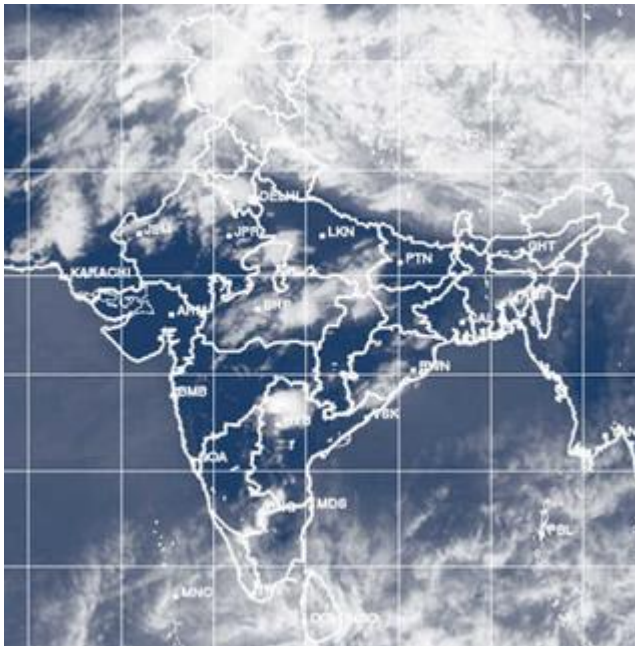
Food as a right

In its latest form, the National Food Security Bill, 2013 promises to address the extreme irony of an ambitious nation holding mountains of food in storage, while masses of its people are undernourished or even starving. The right to food is finally on the threshold of being legislated. Every step taken to widen the coverage of food security schemes is an advance. Yet, the empirical truth is that incremental measures at targeting the needy are a poor substitute for a cohesive, rights-based universal system of food entitlements. There are, no doubt, many positives to the new legislation, such as coverage of up to 75 per cent of eligible priority households in rural areas, the importance given to women as the head of the household for issue of ration cards, inclusion of pregnant and lactating women for free meals (some in government wanted to take away this entitlement from women who bear more than two children but the idea was sensibly dropped), and setting up of State Food Commissions to investigate violations of entitlements. Under the proposed law, it will be up to the States to frame criteria and choose the priority households for food entitlements, an exercise that will inevitably be accompanied by the well-documented troubles associated with targeting any welfare scheme. Exclusion of any deserving household is unfair and

divisive. It poses a challenge to States that wish to provide universal access, an issue that is bound to be felt acutely in urban areas attracting tens of thousands of migrant labourers.

The Centre is unwilling to countenance a Universal Public Distribution System on the ground that too much money is involved. Even under the latest Bill, it is argued, the exchequer would have to bear a heavy expenditure of Rs.1.24 lakh crore. Yet, the government has not hesitated to build up expensive food stocks over the years, some of which is left to rot, mainly to pay the high support prices demanded by influential sections of the farm lobby. Moreover, the policy orientation is disproportionately favourable towards some sectors such as infrastructure, compared to food and health care. Evidently, the Food Bill can and should do a lot more, to become near-universal and win over sceptics such as Tamil Nadu, which has opposed it on the ground that it is inferior to the universal PDS in the State. Also noteworthy is the fact that the Chhattisgarh Food Security Act has done better than the Centre's proposed law in some respects — by supplying subsidised pulses and covering 90 per cent of households, for example. The cause of equity would be better served if the Centre expands the ambit of its law to cover all classes of vulnerable people, including senior citizens and the disabled, for supply of essentials under the PDS. It must then embark on the road to universality in providing access to food as an entitlement.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on April 2nd.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	35	20	0	8
New Delhi (Sfd)	34	18	0	5
Chandigarh	31	17	0	25
Hissar	35	16	0	39
Bhantar	28	8	0	102
Shimla	21	11	0	99
Jammu	30	19	0	32
Srinagar	21	7	11	81
Amritsar	32	17	0	4
Patiala	33	18	0	23
Jaipur	36	23	0	3
Udaipur	35	18	0	0
Allahabad	38	19	0	9
Lucknow	35	15	0	1
Varanasi	37	19	0	6
Dehradun	31	16	0	17
Agartala	34	23	tr	25
Ahmedabad	39	23	0	0
Bangalore	35	23	0	13
Bhubaneshwar	39	25	0	0
Bhopal	37	26	0	21
Chennai	35	26	0	32
Guwahati	34	18	0	20
Hyderabad	38	25	0	0
Kolkata	36	26	0	1
Mumbai	33	23	0	0
Nagpur	40	22	0	15

Patna	36	19	0	1
Pune	38	18	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	35	26	0	80
Imphal	31	15	0	29
Shillong	25	14	0	22

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st March.

RAIN AT MANY PLACES

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over Jammu and Kashmir and isolated places over Himachal Pradesh. Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cms are: Quazigund 3, Gulmarg 2 and Kupwara and Srinagar 1 each.

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES : The maximum temperatures rose in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, west Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably above normal in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, above normal in Punjab and west Rajasthan and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 39.2°C recorded at Banswara (Rajasthan).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 04th April 2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 48 hours and decrease thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during next 24 hours and at a few places during next subsequent 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and north Rajasthan during next 48 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter.

WARNING : Thundersquall accompanied with hails could occur at one or two places over Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during next 48 hours and over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and north Rajasthan during next 24 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 04th April 2013: Mainly clear sky becoming partly cloudy sky. Light rain/thunderstorm may occur intermittently from afternoon onwards in some areas.

Water level

Water level in Periyar dam was 113 feet with an inflow of 100 cusecs and discharge of 100 cusecs. The water level in Vaigai dam was 45.93 feet with an inflow of 121 cusecs and discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit was at 2,159 mcft. There was no rain in the region, according to PWD authorities on Tuesday.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Tuesday stood at 77.25 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 174.33 cusecs and 472.25 cusecs is discharged from the dam.

The level in Manimuthar dam stood at 88.34 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 24 cusecs and no water was discharged.

Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 9.80 feet. It was 28.60 feet in Perunchani, 4.30 feet in Chittar I, 4.39 feet in Chittar II and 3 feet in Poigai dam.

Weather Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Rain: 0

Humidity: 84

Wind: normal

Wednesday, Apr 3

Max Min

31° | 27°

Sunrise: 06:04

Sunset: 06:20

Barometer: 1010

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Apr 4

Max Min

34° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Apr 5	Saturday Apr 6	Sunday Apr 7	Monday Apr 8	Tuesday Apr 9
35° 26° Partly Cloudy	36° 26° Overcast	35° 27° Overcast	35° 27° Overcast	35° 27° Overcast

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Chhattisgarh gets record assistance of Rs 4,388 cr from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

RAIPUR: In a significant indicator of Chhattisgarh's growth, the state has received a record financial assistance of Rs 4,388 crore from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), for agriculture and rural development sectors during the last fiscal, leading to improvement in livelihood, asset creation by farmers and creating rural infrastructure.

"Our financial assistance to the state touched an all-time high of Rs 4,388 crore, showing an increase of 256% over the last fiscal's Rs 1,231 crore," NABARD chief general manager [Sunil Kumar Bansal](#) told media persons.

Talking about NABARD's initiatives in various sectors, he said the bank extended Rs 982.77 crore to the state under [Rural Infrastructure Development Fund](#) (RIDF), which is 237% more than previous fiscal, for implementation of various projects for ensuring better connectivity for 3,426 villages covering nearly 40 lakh people. Besides, this support is also for bringing 863 hectares of land under assured irrigation.

Bansal said NABARD provided a credit facility of Rs 2,000 crore to [Chhattisgarh](#) MARKFED for paddy procurement pertaining to kharif marketing season. It also funded state power transmission company limited for establishment of a sub-station and power transmission systems for providing electricity in rural areas.

"With NABARD support for institutional development, Chhattisgarh became the first state in the country which completed cooperative banking services going live with introduction of core banking solutions in 171 branches, therefore facilitating better financial services to rural customers," he said. The bank disbursed grants to Chhattisgarh State Cooperative Bank and district Central Cooperative Banks for setting up computer labs in their head offices so as to train all staff on a phased basis. Bansal said 11 projects were sanctioned under Tribal Development Fund (TDF) for wadi development, covering 7,334 tribal families. As of now, 56 projects sanctioned under the programme are under implementation in 17 districts, aiming at providing sustainable livelihood to tribals.

For the Naxalite affected areas, NABARD supported women self-help group (SHG) programme, launched during last fiscal, promoting and nurturing these groups in 14 left wing extremism affected districts. Bank has sanctioned this project to 27 NGOs for promotion and nurturing of women self-help groups.

Business Standard ^{beta}

Maize remains down on selling pressure

Prices slipped due to off-loading of positions by participants



Maize futures for April plunged Rs.31 or 2.39 % to Rs.1,264 per quintal in 23,980 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract fell by Rs.12, or 1.01% to Rs.1,180 per quintal in 18,460 lots.

Prices slipped due to off-loading of positions by participants largely in tandem with weakening trend overseas.

Besides, slackness in demand in spot markets also put pressure on maize prices at futures trade.

Sugar production falls by 2% in H1 2012-13

Drop in output in Maharashtra, Karnataka affects overall figure



Country's sugar production fell by 2% to 230.5 lakh tonne in the first six months of the 2012-13 marketing year that started in October last year due to drop in output in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Sugar production of India, the world's second largest producer after Brazil, stood at 234.5 lakh tonne in the year ago period.

Sugar marketing year runs from October to September.

"Till end of March 2013, country has produced 230.5 lakh tonne of sugar by crushing about 2,285 lakh tonne of sugarcane with 10.09% recovery. Till date, sugar production is about 2% less than last year," Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said in a statement.

Maharashtra has produced 77 lakh tonne of sugar during the period, which is about 4% less than last year. Karnataka has produced 32.9 lakh tonnes of sugar, which is 7% less compared to last year.

The fall in production in Maharashtra and Karnataka is due to drought-like situation in many parts of these two states on account of poor rainfall during 2012 monsoon season.

Sugar production in Uttar Pradesh stood at 67.5 lakh tonne during October-March period of 2012-13 marketing year against 66.7 lakh tonne in the year-ago period.

ISMA has estimated 246 lakh tonne of sugar production in the full 2012-13 marketing year as against 263 lakh tonne in the previous year.

ISMA, however said, that production would be about 16 lakh tonne more than the expected sugar quota to be released by the government at 230 lakh tonne for 2012-13.

Castorseed up more than 1% on brisk demand



Castorseed futures for July spurted by Rs 46, or 1.20%, to Rs 3,865 per quintal in 10,610 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract surged by Rs 33, or 0.91%, to Rs 3,679 per quintal in 1,14,880 lots.

Prices advanced as traders enlarged holdings on the back of firm spot markets sentiment.

Brisk demand from consuming industries and restricted supply in physical markets mainly influenced trading sentiments.

The April contract rose by Rs 31, or 0.88%, at Rs 3,566 per quintal in 73,470 lots.

Barley dips on weak spot markets sentiment

Prices slid due to increased selling by traders



Barley futures for July plunged by Rs.20, or 1.41%, at Rs 1,396 per quintal in 240 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the April contract eased by Rs 4, or 0.30%, to Rs 1,320.50 per quintal in 3,700 lots.

Prices slid due to increased selling by traders, driven by weak physical markets sentiment.

Accelerating in supply against mainly weighed on futures price.

Fall in demand from beer and cereal making industries was another reason behind the downtrend.

Soybean up 1.5% on global cues

Prices firmed up as speculators enlarged their positions



Soybean futures for May at Indore advanced by Rs.54.50, or 1.51%, to Rs 3,657 per quintal in 99,160 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the April contract climbed up by Rs 50, or 1.38%, to Rs 3,683 per quintal in 45,950 lots.

Prices firmed up as speculators enlarged their positions amid higher overseas trend and pick-up in domestic demand.

Cardamom rises 1% on fresh spot demand

Restricted arrivals from producing regions supported the trade



Cardamom futures for April surged by Rs 8.70, or 1%, to Rs 881.30 per kg in 813 lots.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the May contract gained by Rs 6.90, or 0.76%, to Rs 903.90 per kg in 153 lots.

Prices rose as speculators created fresh positions largely on the back of pick-up in spot markets demand.

Restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the rise in prices.

Chana rises 0.6% on strong buying activity

Restricted arrivals in physical market supported the trade



Chana futures for April rose by Rs 21, or 0.62%, to Rs 3,412 per quintal in 32,240 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract gained Rs 18, or 0.52%, to Rs 3,458 per quintal in 80,410 lots.

Prices rose as traders enlarged their holdings on account of firm spot markets demand.

Restricted arrivals in physical market due to lower estimated output also influenced the chana prices.

Potato up 1.54% on fresh buying

Sentiment improved further on restricted arrivals



Potato futures for April rose by Rs 15.50, or 1.54%, to Rs 1,018.50 per quintal in 28 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the May contract traded higher by Rs 9.60, or 0.94%, to Rs 1,029 per quintal in 98 lots.

Prices rose as traders created fresh positions on the back of rising demand in the domestic market.

Sentiment improved further on restricted arrivals from Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and West Bengal.

THE HINDU Business Line

Illegal areca import to be curbed

New Delhi, April 2: Illegal shipment of arecanut into India through Bangladesh route is a concern and steps will be taken to tighten border vigilance, Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma said today. Steps would be taken to tighten the border vigilance at India-Bangladesh border to curb illegal shipments of arecanut, he said. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) will also take up the issue with customs authorities, he said. Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar held a meeting on the issue with delegation of Karnataka MPs, led by All India Congress Committee (AICC) General Secretary Oscar Fernandes. Besides Sharma, Minister for State for Micro, Medium and Small Enterprise (MSME) K.H. Muniyappa was also present at the meeting. The delegation in a memorandum to Pawar and Sharma said since November 2011, India has allowed duty free import of arecanut from least-developed nations of SAARC.

Vigneshwar Estate bags golden tea leaf awards

Coonoor, April 2: Vigneshwar Estate Tea Factory, situated in Aravenu, Coonoor has bagged the Golden Leaf award for the fourth consecutive year in all applicable categories. The Golden Leaf award is a joint initiative of the Tea Board and United Planters Association of South India (Upasi). The factory has won the award in all the three categories – CTC leaf, dust and fanning – for the entire Nilgiri region.

“Tea connoisseurs round-the-world have been seeking our award-winning teas. At Golden Jubilee auction of Coonoor Tea Trade Association (CTTA), our tea fetched Rs 485 a kg. Our award winning teas will be available at Upasi’s Golden Leaf Tea Auction on April 15 and CTTA weekly auctions in April,” Vigneshwar Managing Partner B. Ramesh told *Business Line*.

Festival demand warms up copra, coconut oil



Kochi, April 2:

Local demand ahead of *Vishu* has pushed up coconut oil prices a tad in Kerala and Tamil Nadu this week.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), said that the market may witness an upward trend on account of festival demand.

Moreover, the interest shown by corporate and upcountry buyers will signal a further movement in prices, he said.

Prices in Kerala stood at Rs 62/kg, while it was Rs 61.75 in Tamil Nadu.

Copra prices also moved upwards touching Rs 4,500 a quintal in Kerala and Rs 4,200 in Tamil Nadu. There has been a good demand for fresh copra stocks at the terminal markets, he said.

However, the absence of a proper procurement drive by the agencies concerned is affecting the market especially in Kerala as the season has already started in the State.

Tamil Nadu season will start from May and it requires a good procurement initiative to fetch better price for farmers, he added.

The other edible oils such as palm oil and palm kernel oil stood at Rs 51 a kg and Rs 55 a kg respectively. Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that the market is showing a steady line due to the local demand and is expected to continue for the time being.

However, the availability of edible oils at cheaper rates is a concern for the coconut oil market and upcountry buyers and corporates are adopting a wait-and-watch approach.

Govt hikes support price for jute

Decision deferred on sugar sector decontrol



New Delhi, April 2: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved a Rs 100/quintal hike in minimum support price for raw jute on Tuesday. However, it deferred key decisions relating to sugar decontrol and reduction of subsidies for non-urea fertilisers. The decisions were deferred by the Cabinet panel since Finance Minister P. Chidambaram is away in Tokyo to attract foreign investments.

The support price for jute for the 2013-14 season for TD-5 grade or the main grade is approved at Rs 2,300 a quintal across the country. This represents an increase of Rs 100 a quintal over the MSP announced by the Government for the last season, an official statement said.

The increase in the support price for raw jute is expected to encourage farmers to step up jute cultivation and thereby production and productivity of the fibre in the country. The Jute Corporation of India (JCI) will continue to act as the nodal agency to undertake price support operations for jute.

non-Urea subsidy

The issue of decontrolling the sugar sector and reduction of fertiliser subsidies may be taken up at the next meeting of CCEA.

The Fertiliser Ministry has proposed a cut in subsidy of the non-urea complexes such as di-ammonium phosphate and muriate of potash for the 2013-14 season in line with the decline in global prices of these nutrients. Under the nutrient based subsidy scheme, the Ministry has proposed subsidy of Rs 20.88 a kg of nitrogen for 2013-14 against last year's Rs 24 a kg.

Similarly, for phosphorous, the proposed subsidy is Rs 18.68 a kg against last year's Rs 21.80. For potassium, the subsidy is proposed at Rs 19.5 a kg against Rs 24. However, for sulphur, the subsidy component is likely to be unchanged at Rs 1.68 a kg.

For complexes like di-ammonium phosphate, the proposed subsidy cut is of Rs 2,000 a tonne and Rs 2,700 for muriate of potash for the 2013-14. The subsidy on di-ammonium phosphate is likely to be pegged at Rs 12,350 for 2013-14, down 14 per cent against last year's Rs 14,350. Similarly, the subsidy for muriate of potash is likely to be pegged at Rs 11,740 a tonne in 2013-14, down 19 per cent against last year's Rs 14,440 a tonne.

Base import price cut for vegetable oils

New Delhi, April 2: The Government has reduced the tariff value or base import price on RBD palmolein and crude palmolein by \$11 a tonne in line with the softening trend in global prices. For gold, the base import price has been hiked by \$5 to \$521 for 10 gram against \$516 a fortnight ago.

However, for silver it has been lowered to \$920 a kg from the earlier \$930, according to a notification by the Central Board for Excise and Customs.

The base import price for refined, bleached and deodorised (RBD) palmolein has now been fixed at \$863 a tonne against \$874 a fortnight earlier. Similarly, the base import price for crude palmolein stands reduced at \$860 a tonne against \$871.

Also, the base import price on crude soyabean oil has decreased to \$1,093 a tonne from \$1,147 a fortnight ago.

The Government recently de-froze the tariff values of all edible oils, palm oil – crude and refined, and soyabean oil – crude, and has decided to notify their tariff values fortnightly on the basis of their prevailing international prices.

An alignment of notified tariff values with international prices will have a positive impact on the duty collected from import of edible oils and will provide an even-field to the domestic refining industry. The Government had recently imposed a 2.5 per cent duty on crude edible oils.

The latest base import price for crude palm oil stands at \$829 a tonne (\$838 a fortnight earlier), RBD Palm oil at \$855 a tonne (\$870) and other palm oil at \$842 (\$854).

Sugar output down 2% to 23.05 million tonnes

New Delhi, April 2: Sugar production in the current year 2012-13 till March-end is down 2 per cent at 23.05 million tonnes (mt) on lower output in Maharashtra and Karnataka. In the corresponding last year, the output stood at 23.45 mt.

The Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA), in a statement, said the average recovery or the amount of sugar produced from the cane crushed stood at 10.09 per cent in the first six months of the 2012-13 season, about 0.2 per cent lower than the previous year.

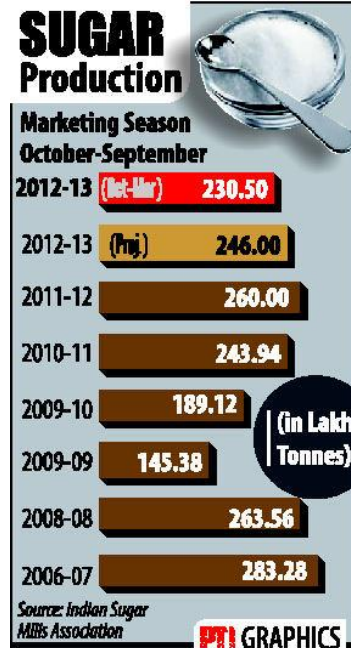
As the crushing season in most parts of the country entered the last phase, more than half of the 520 mills that were operational during the season have closed. Cane crushing will soon end in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh.

Despite drought impacting sugarcane production in Maharashtra, the State has produced 7.7 mt of sugar, about 4 per cent lower than last year. The sugar recovery in Maharashtra is marginally lower at 11.33 per cent (11.53 per cent). About 116 mills have closed their operations in the State so far.

In Uttar Pradesh, the output stood at 6.75 mt, marginally higher than corresponding last year's 6.67 mt. About 102 mills are still operational in UP, where crushing is likely to go on till end-April.

Karnataka has produced 3.29 mt of the sweetener till March-end, about 7 per cent lower than last year. Similarly, Tamil Nadu's sugar output is down 3 per cent at 1.35 mt.

ISMA has estimated the 2012-13 sugar output at 24.6 mt, a tad lower than 26 mt produced in the previous year.



Chana may rise on purchases to build stocks



Indore, April 2: Weak arrival, rise in futures and strong buying support lifted chana prices in Indore mandis on Tuesday by Rs 100 a quintal to Rs 3,450. Similarly, chana (desi) also rose to Rs 3,200. Among the other varieties, chana (Mausmi) ruled at Rs 3,300-3,500, chana (vishal) at Rs 3,000-3,200, chana (annagiri) at Rs 3,200, Kabuli Bitki at Rs 3,200-3,300, while chana (kaak 2) ruled at Rs 3,300-3,400 .

Notwithstanding bumper crop output this year, chana may see a further gain of Rs 100-200 a quintal in the coming days with stockists building inventories, said a trader Sanjay Agrawal.

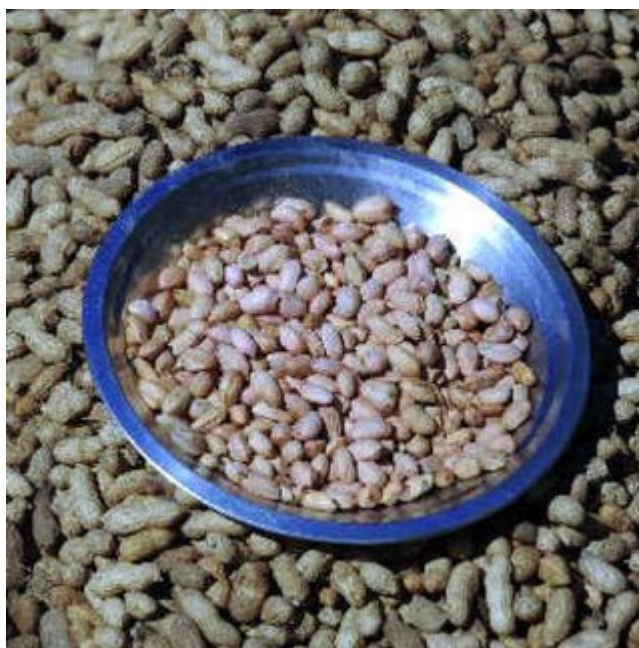
Chana dal also gained Rs 75 on rise in spot chana prices in local mandis with chana dal (average) being quoted at Rs 4,050-75, chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,150-75, while chana dal (bold) rose to Rs 4,300-25 a quintal. Sluggish trend also in dollar chana also ended on improved buying support.

On Tuesday, dollar chana gained Rs 150-200 with its prices being quoted at Rs 4,500-5,200 a quintal amid an arrival of 25,000-28,000 bags in Madhya Pradesh.

Uptrend was witnessed in dollar chana in the container on improved export demand. On Tuesday, dollar chana (42/44 count) ruled at Rs 6,500, 44/46 count at Rs 6,250, 46/48 count at Rs 6,050, while dollar chana (58/60 count) ruled at Rs 4,100 and 60/62 count at Rs 4,000 a quintal.

Arrival of dollar chana in Indore was recorded at 7,000-8,000 bags, Dewas 3,000-3,500, Ujjain 2,000-2,500 bags, while Dhar recorded an arrival of 2,000-2,200 bags and Ratlam 1,500-1,800 bags.

Brands' offtake warms up groundnut, cotton oil



Rajkot, April 2: Groundnut oil and cotton oil increased on Tuesday on the back of rising demand. Moreover, retail demand is also going up which supported the price movement. Groundnut oil loose gained Rs 30 to Rs 1,215-1,220 for 10 kg, *telia* tin by Rs 38 to Rs 1,865-1,866 for 15 kg while groundnut oil new tin for 15 kg gained Rs 20 to Rs 2,065-2,070. About 8-10 tankers of groundnut oil were traded in Saurashtra.

Groundnut arrivals stood at 1,500 bags in Rajkot which was sold in range of Rs 900-1,080 for 20 kg. Arrivals were reported at 2,500 bags in Gondal and 180 in Jamnagar.

HPS Saurashtra origin bold 50-60 count was offered at Rs 72,000 a tonne while Rajasthan origin 50-60 count offered at Rs 69,000 (ex mill). Tamil Nadu origin 80-90 counts HPS was at Rs 69,000 (Chennai and Mumbai port delivery).

A Rajkot-based edible oil broker said that groundnut oil price was almost stable during last month. Now at the lower level brands or re-packers demand has emerged . Buying in retail market is also improving. Groundnut oil price may gain in coming days.

Higher demand pulled up cotton oil prices also. Cotton oil wash was up by Rs 10 to Rs 575-578 for 10 kg and cotton oil new tin rose Rs 15 to Rs 1,040-1,050 for 15 kg. About 30-35 tankers were traded here.
