

# THE HINDU

TODAY FARM NEWS

18.02.2013 A.M

---

## **Farmers told not to sell paddy at less than MSP**

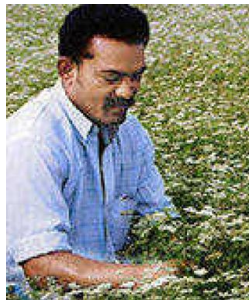
The Civil Supplies Corporation has asked farmers not to dispose off paddy of average quality at less than the Minimum Support Price.

Civil Supplies Commissioner, in a release, said that all arrangements had been made to procure paddy from farmers at MSP by government agencies.

The State agencies had procured 8.9 lakh tonne of paddy till February 15 directly from the farmers. Millers also purchased 66.69 lakh tonne of paddy from the farmers at the MSP and above.

The farmers can contact the Joint Collector and the District Manager concerned and the Civil Supplies Corporation Vice-Chairman and Managing Director at 040 23310973 and the Commissioner at 040 23310617 if they face any problem.

## **Panacea for farmers of water-starved areas**



---

Many villages in Tirunelveli are successfully using Panchagavya, an organic manure and reaping good yields

**Disbursal of compensation to Delta farmers likely to begin this week**

The total cost of package is Rs. 2,143.6 crore; detailed instructions given to Collectors



The high-level committee of eight Ministers led by Finance Minister O.Paneerselvam inspecting fields in Nagapattinam to ascertain the crop damage in delta districts. —File Photo

The disbursement of compensation to 1.75 lakh farmers in the Cauvery delta for crop loss is likely to commence this week.

An indication to this effect emerged after a two-hour-long meeting here on Saturday which was attended by a host of senior government officers and eight District Collectors from the delta region.

In the meeting, the government made it clear to the Collectors of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Tiruchi, Pudukottai, Karur, Ariyalur and Cuddalore districts to expedite the disbursement.

Each farmer who had suffered over 50 per cent yield loss would get Rs. 15,000 per acre. A total of 3.61 lakh acres would be covered under the relief package, announced by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa in the Assembly on February 8.

This component alone would cost Rs. 541.5 crore to the government and along with others, the total cost of the package was Rs. 2,143.6 crore.

Detailed instructions were given at the meeting to the Collectors to translate the decision into action. The Collectors would ensure the completion of the disbursement, hopefully, in a few weeks, says an official. They would, through District Central Cooperative Banks, transfer the amounts

to Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies and nodal bank branches of commercial banks for eventual disbursement to the farmers.

According to an order issued by the Revenue Department, the compensation amount would be credited to bank accounts of the farmers.

As loanee-farmers have bank accounts, the disbursement could begin in their case straightaway. In respect of those who had not taken crop loans and did not have bank accounts, a drive had been carried out to get bank accounts opened for them.

An undertaking would be obtained from the farmers that in the event of getting compensation from the farm insurance company for yield loss, they would adjust it towards the relief amount being given by the State government.

The order was clear that the State government's compensation should not be adjusted towards the outstandings of the agriculturists' crop loans.

As regards those suffering less than 50 per cent yield loss, the compensation would be provided by the insurance company to them. The State Agriculture Department had been directed to get the State government's component sanctioned and provide it to the insurance company.

Besides, for the purpose of ensuring speedy disbursement of relief to these farmers, the Agriculture Department would arrange for conducting crop cutting experiments soon. The Additional Chief Secretary/Commissioner of Revenue Administration had been appointed nodal officer to implement the entire drought programme, the order adds.

Through another order of the Revenue Department, a committee, headed by Finance Minister O. Panneerselvam and consisting of Ministers for Electricity, Municipal Administration and Water Supply, Housing, Agriculture and Revenue, would go around non-delta districts [excluding Chennai] to assess the drought situation. The committee would also co-opt Ministers and officers concerning with the districts.

On completion of this exercise, the department would prepare a comprehensive drought memorandum and send it to the Union government.

## A panacea for farmers of water-starved Tirunelveli

Panchagavya, organic manure, helps to achieve good yield



Wonder Manure: A panchagavya-treated field.

Farmers of Tamil Nadu's Tirunelveli district have turned away from using chemical fertilizers to get good yields despite acute water shortage, monsoon failure and power cuts prevailing in the State.

Though Tirunelveli is known for its temples and halwa, about 45 km south of this bustling town is a clutch of villages, predominantly agriculture-based depending on monsoon, quietly carrying on farming activities, growing chillies, paddy, small onions and vegetables.

There are no government bus services, schools or health centres in many of these villages. For any medical emergencies the villagers need to travel nearly 20 km to the neighbouring Thisayanvilai town.

Until a few years ago, many farmers in this drought-prone region sold off their lands or left them barren. Today, however, many villages here are successfully using their own inputs — Panchagavya, an organic manure — and reaping good yields.

“This year many areas in the State dependant on reservoirs for irrigation could not grow crops due to acute water shortage. Areas irrigated by wells face two problems. Many of these wells depend on the rains for re-charging and several of them have dried up due to poor rainfall. Adding to this woe is the power cut. Due to power shortage even if there is water in the wells farmers cannot pump the water out. Despite these problems our farmers have been able to raise good crops of groundnut, vegetables and paddy even now,” says J.H.S. Ponnaya, the 80-

year-old head of the NGO Sands (Suvishapuram and Neighbouring Development Organisation) at Suvashapuram in Tirunelveli.

“The reason is all of them are consistently using Panchagavya for their crops. Panchagavya can be easily prepared by the farmer. Cow dung and urine are the main inputs required for this. We have trained hundreds of farmers in this area over the last several years in making it for their own use,” he said.

Mariapitchai, a small farmer in Vijayaachambadu village, says that he has been able to harvest his paddy crop 10-15 days ahead of the usual time of 5 months. The paddy is healthy and there are no symptoms of drying or scotched appearance due to high heat. He harvested nearly 3,000 kg from his 2.5 acres.

Those growing groundnut and vegetables in Kazhuvor, Eranthai, Vijayanarayanam, Nanguneri, Perunkannankulam and Vadivammanpatti villages also profess their faith in Panchagavya.

They spray Panchagavya once in 15-22 days and also on empty fields to prevent it from cracking or becoming hard.

“Our country’s agriculture is going through a critical phase today owing to monsoon failure in different parts. The government should realise the efficiency of Panchagavya and start encouraging farmers in the State to use it and reap the benefit,” he says.

### **Poultry farmers to get help to improve exports**

Call to opt for value addition to various products



For development: Commerce Secretary S.R. Rao (left) and Animal Husbandry Department Secretary Gokul Chandra Pati in a discussion with poultry farmers and exporters in Namakkal on Saturday. -PHOTO: M.K.ANANTH

The Commerce Ministry will extend its support to educate young exporters and entrepreneurs in the poultry sector here to help them expand their exports to countries with which India has bilateral trade ties, Commerce Secretary of the Government of India S.R. Rao said in a consultative meeting with a closed group of representatives from poultry associations, poultry farmers and exporters here on Saturday evening.

“The Ministry will be ready to send experts to Namakkal and make a presentation on treaties with various Asian countries and the soon-to-be-signed treaties with countries in the European Union in a bid to facilitate trade with them, in the near future.

This will throw light into what the farmers and exporters should do for the betterment of the poultry industry by improving exports,” he added.

Mr. Rao said that such details are also available in the website of the Commerce Department.

### **Transport subsidy**

Responding to a query from exporters on providing transport subsidy for the poultry products that are transported to neighbouring countries — Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal — on road, he said that the issue will be taken up for consideration.

The Commerce Secretary said that the Ministry will consider establishing a facility to store poultry produce. Efforts to give it value addition will be considered.

“Funds from the Commerce Ministry for setting up such common facilities to boost exports are available with the State Government and could be availed of by the poultry industry,” he told the representatives.

Animal Husbandry Department (AHD) Secretary, Government of India, Gokul Chandra Pati noted that value addition to the raw poultry products like egg and chicken meat could boost India’s share in the export market and help the industry at times of crisis.

He noted that 95 per cent of the egg and 99 per cent of the chicken produced in the country is sold in the raw form — as it was produced on the farm.

“The annual egg and chicken export market across the continents is about Rs. 50,000 crore annually of which the share of India is only about Rs. 500 crore (one per cent). AHD will be jointly working on a road map for providing value addition to the raw poultry products to boost export,” he added.

Mr. Pati also suggested taking up cultivation of soya locally to reduce the procurement cost of this important chicken feed.

AHD Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu, Gagandeep Singh Bedi and Director of the Department R. Palanisamy also interacted with the farmers and gave them suggestions for taking the export industry forward.

Earlier District Collector D. Jagannathan briefed the officials on how the industry started in a very small way in this small district way back in 1967 and has grown by leaps and bounds.

### **“Announce relief to farmers who committed suicide”**

It alleges 19 farmers have committed suicide following failure of crop in delta region and other parts of State

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has urged the State government to announce compensation to the families of farmers who had committed suicide after crop failure and provide assistance to farm workers in the drought-hit districts.

Alleging that 19 farmers have committed suicide following failure of crops in the delta region and other parts of the State, state unit secretary G. Ramakrishnan said the government had announced compensation only in respect of nine families and should extend the relief to other families as well. Talking to reporters on Sunday, the Left party leader welcomed the drought relief package announced by the Chief Minister for farmers in the delta region and also appealed to the government to provide relief to farm workers, who had lost employment following drought.

The State government should send teams to the districts and assess the extent of crop loss, he said and urged the Centre to sanction drought relief to the affected farmers under the Disastrous Management Act, 2005.

On the two-day All India strike announced by the blue colour workers and white colour employees on February 21 and 22 to protest against the economic policies of the UPA government at the Centre, he said that his party would support it. The strike call, given by 11 central trade union organisations and national federations of various professionals was to protest against the Centre's failure to contain the spiralling prices of essentials, disinvestment in public sector undertakings and demand regularisation of casual and contract workers in PSUs, he said.

The Kanyakumari-Delhi Jatha, part of the four jathas (processions) being taken out by the party from February 25 to highlight its alternative policies to the UPA's anti-people economic policies would be flagged off by Prakash Karat and led by S. Ramachandra Pillai. Sub-jathas would leave from various districts in the State on February 24 and he would take part in the processions in Madurai and Dindigul. The processions would converge in Delhi on March 10, he added.

### **Farmers press their demands at 'Raithotsav'**

The three-day 'Raithotsav' organised at Amruthabhoomi here to mark the 77th birth anniversary of farmers' leader M.D. Nanjundaswamy came to an end Saturday, with farmers highlighting five demands.

Farmers have sought a special session in the parliament to discuss farmer suicides; a farmer income guarantee act to improve the income of farmers, tenants and sharecroppers; nod for Parliamentary Standing Committee's recommendations on the Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill; promotion of agro-ecology and creation of a progressive climate policy, and forming a people-oriented development paradigm.

Farmer leaders said a rally will be held on March 18 to urge the Union government to fulfil their demands.



## Success story of a livestock farmer



R.G. ArunDev is a one-man army at his Nandini livestock farm unit in Thalayil. Stroking two majestic Gir breed of cows brought from Gujarat recently, he says they are his most prized possessions.

When this former security officer at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) decided to start a cattle farming unit with just two cows after his retirement in 1996, little did he think that he would make it this big.

Winner of various awards, including the State Farmer's award in 2008, he single-handedly runs the unit and is a model farmer to the rest of the villagers.

"Bantura , the goat from Andhra Pradesh purchased for Rs.8,000, is a beauty", Mr. Dev added showing his next favourite, holding it by its horns.

Then there are the ducks, the goose, swans, turkeys, ornamental fishes... his farm unit is like a mini zoo. Boothapandi, a pony he purchased from Tamil Nadu, remains a favourite among the villagers. Bootapandi is a star attraction for major school functions and festivals. Not to forget the five dogs, including breeds such as Labrador and Pomeranian, that guard the farm. From feeding the cattle and milking them to taking care of his beloved pets, he is a busy man even after retirement.

Things are made a little easier and less hectic with a self-designed automatic drinking water system and a milking unit for the cattle.

Given that the farm is huge, searching for a waste dump yard nearby would be futile, as the whole farm is spick and span. "Let me tell you that we use no LPG in our house. There are three bio-gas plants that process all the waste and provides us enough fuel," said Mr. Dev.

If one thought, there is nothing more that this man could handle, he would proudly show the sprawling six acres of fodder farming area. According to him, all the fodder for the cattle is completely organic and cultivated at the farm itself. However, he pointed out that farmers like him could reap better benefit if they were included in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MGNREG) scheme.

"Instead of giving money, let the government give us subsidy for the fodder. The price rise in fodder has affected many farmers. This scheme will not only help us immensely," he said

Meedhu Miriyam Joseph

### **Summer rain dampens farmers' hopes**

Roads remain waterlogged; farmers seek compensation for losses



: Kasaragod district on Sunday continued to receive copious rain that gave a respite from the sweltering heat. Some roads remained waterlogged.

The summer showers lashed most parts of the district for the last two days.

The rain also helped bring down power consumption as farmers switched off the water pumps after the hilly areas received abundant rain during the past three days.

However, areca growers, were put to difficulty as the ripe areca kept in the open for drying was drenched. This is certain to affect the price when the processed produce is sent to the market.

The Kerala Congress district unit at a meeting held here asked the government to take steps to compensate the losses suffered by areca growers owing to the summer showers.

Gusty winds that accompanied the showers also destroyed standing crops such as plantains and pepper. The meeting assessed an estimated Rs. 65 crore loss to farmers in the district.

The government should be prepared to offset the losses suffered by the farmers by making suitable amendments to the criteria used for deciding on the compensation during such calamities, the party's district committee meeting, chaired by its president P. M. Michael, said.

### **Financial aid for farmers' welfare**

Finance Minister K.M. Mani said here on Sunday that a sum of Rs.1.33 crore had been sanctioned for welfare of farmers who had suffered losses caused by bund breaches in the Kuttanad region. The order had already been issued on February 13 and the amount, Rs.1,33,41,00, would be distributed shortly, Mr. Mani said in an official release here. — Staff Reporter

### **Cabbage farmers in Agency reap it rich**

A 'kavidi' load, numbering 55 and weighing 110 kg, fetching Rs. 1,000 at rytu bazaars



Showing the way:Pangi Ramachandra Rao (left) with his cousin Killo Kondala Rao and their wives at the cabbage farm near Kusumguda village in Dumbriguda mandal of Visakhapatnam district.—Photo: C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

First cousins Pangi Ramachandra Rao and Killo Kondala Rao are among the happy farmers in the Agency area who are reaping a good crop, thanks to the Nilam cyclone.

They are busy at their cabbage farm at Kusumguda, just 200 yards away from the road to this famous tourist centre, getting a fresh lorry load of stock ready for dispatch to rytu bazaars in Visakhapatnam.

A “kavidi” load of cabbage, around 55 in number and weighing nearly 110 kg, would fetch Rs. 1,000 at the rytu bazaar, and just half of it if sold in the Agency shandies.

#### **'Auction not beneficial'**

Selling cabbage at Poorna Market in Visakhapatnam is not a pleasant experience for them as the produce is sold in auction and also for less.

Farmers spend Rs. 6,000 on transport for each lorry to the city and, after recovering all expenses, they are left with a good profit, says Ramachandra Rao. Cabbage is being grown on a 25 cent plot.

Normally the crop would not have extended to February. But thanks to Nilam, the earth retained moist even more than three-and-a-half months after the cyclone hit the coast. The bunds laid and trenches dug up under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS has allowed percolation of rain water flowing from the hills instead of flooding the area, they say.

Incidentally, the cyclone that caused extensive damage in the plain areas benefited the Visakha Agency a lot. Ramachandra Rao and Kondala Rao, along with their wives Rambha and Domini, do most of the work on the field.

“Though paddy was damaged to some extent, all vegetables, cabbage, cauliflower, pepper, etc in the Agency are very good,” the cousins say.

Earlier, they raised *saamalu*, a variety of pulse that fetched a good price in the market.

The money was invested on cabbage and they were happy with the returns from the crop.

Once they dispatch the last load of cabbage, they will wait for a few months before the monsoon sets in.

They are planning to go for paddy. Raising chilli is not possible since moisture will go soon. Usually, he cultivates onion, brinjal, and carrot on this farm which draws water from a nearby stream. At another field, he is planning to raise sugarcane.

Last time, the Bangaruteegalu variety brought good returns, with each sugarcane stick fetching Rs. 20 to Rs. 50 at the rythu bazaar.

The healthy looking cabbages are the result of organic method of farming Ramachandra Rao and Kondala Rao adopt like the other girijan farmers.

### **Organic manure**

Ramachandra Rao prepares organic manure on his own. A spray is prepared with cow urine and dung, *ganneru pikka* (oleander), and *ganuga pindi* (Indian beech). The mixture sprayed over the plant would keep all pests away.

Manure is made by allowing leaves and green parts of the plants to rot in a heap. Wetting the heap every week helps in quick decomposition. This manure is ready once in every six months and spread around the stem of the plant.

Ramachandra Rao also sells the spray and manure to local farmers.

---

### **We will assist farmers, says Geeta Reddy**

Minister for Major Industries J. Geeta Reddy has assured the farming community that the Government would come to the rescue of farmers who lost their crops due to natural calamities. However, she refrained from making any statement owing to the Model Code of Conduct in force.

Ms. Reddy along with District Collector Mr. Dinakarbabu visited Toopran and Ravelli on Sunday and interacted with farmers who had lost their crops following severe rainfall.

Maintaining that nearly 18 districts, including eight in the Telangana region, had experienced unexpected rainfall and crop loss in about 30,000 hectares, the Minister said that Toopran had received 50 mm rainfall, and that the crops such as sunflower, maize and mango were lost.

In Medak district, the crop loss was estimated in 613 hectares.

The District Collector said that the crop loss was estimated at nearly Rs. 3.39 crore.

### **Gehlot announces relief package for farmers**

Crop damage due to rain and frost



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot

Acting swiftly on reports of crop damage across the State due to winter rain, hailstorm and frost, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday announced a relief package for affected farmers.

According to the Chief Minister's relief package, small, marginal and other farmers who have suffered 50 per cent crop damage will be provided agricultural input-grant for farmland not exceeding two hectares.

For non-irrigated areas, the relief amount has been kept at Rs. 3000 per hectare.

For irrigated areas, Rs. 6000 per hectare would be provided for lands irrigated by wells and canals, while land irrigated with the help of diesel pump sets would receive Rs. 8000 per hectare.

Such farmers (suffering over 50 per cent crop damage) would also be exempted from the 'Abiyana' or irrigation water charges.

Meanwhile, the government has sought detailed reports from district collectors regarding villages where over 50 per cent of crops have been damaged in order to declare them scarcity-hit.

The land revenue recovery in such scarcity hit villages would be postponed and short term loans would be converted to medium term loans, government sources said.

Families affected by the hail will be provided relief under the norms of State Disaster Response Fund.

The district collectors concerned have been asked to calculate the relief and compensation amount as per the declared package, present an online budget demand and distribute relief immediately once the budget is allotted.

The CM's relief package also exempts all small and marginal farmers, suffering more than 50 per cent crop damages, from paying their electricity bills for four months.

It also covers those farmers whose names don't figure in revenue records and who farm on a sharing and contract basis.

Problems arising for this category of farmers would be dealt with by a three member committee comprising the Tehsildar, the Patwari and the Gram sevak.

Earlier, Mr. Gehlot had directed the Disaster Management and Assistance department to immediately seek detailed reports from district collectors regarding crop damage.

According to primary reports, substantial crop damage, chiefly to standing crops of mustard, gram, coriander and wheat, had been confirmed in four districts of the State—Bikaner, Nagaur, Baran and Jhalawar. While mild hailstorm conditions occurred in Rajsamand district, no crop damage was reported from there.

## **Poultry farmers, exporters express disappointment**

Their major demands were turned down for various reasons

Poultry farmers, exporters and representatives of various poultry associations who participated in the meeting with Secretaries of the Government of India's Commerce and Animal Husbandry Departments were disappointed as their major demands were turned down due to various reasons.

The first blow was when Animal Husbandry Department (AHD) Secretary Gokul Chandra Pati initially turned down their main demand of forming a separate poultry export zone with Namakkal and nearby districts to avoid ban on egg and chicken export from this region when there was an outbreak in the North or North Eastern parts of the country.

"It would be impossible to form an egg or chicken export zone as poultry farms are scattered in this region. Zoning can be done only if all the farms were located in a smaller geography," the Secretary explained.

It took a strong representation from the Chairman of the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal Zone, Dr. P. Selvaraj to make Mr. Pati reconsider the zoning process.

The NECC Chairman argued that it was not necessary for the Government to make so much noise over bird flu.

"It is just another flu. There have been about 30 to 40 outbreaks in India in the last six years but they have not claimed any human lives. There is lack of clarity about the flu," he added and wondered why the Government imposed a ban on export when birds are affected by the flu.

### **Ban on chicken**

Responding to the query, Mr. Pati said that the Government imposes a ban on chicken and eggs when there is bird flu outbreak owing to public concern due to which the government responds.



“Awareness among people that they will not be affected when they consume egg or chicken when there is an outbreak will increase. The government will then ensure that the poultry industry is not affected by such bans,” the Secretary added.

### **Trade policy**

Another important demand was a national level trade policy to ensure that trade of poultry products with other States is not interrupted — by incidents such as ban on poultry products from Tamil Nadu that was imposed by the Government of Kerala in November 2012.

The Secretary said that such policy cannot be implemented.

However, the Ministry would interact with those State governments and ensure that such bans are lifted.

Other demands that were turned down were: considering poultry on par with agriculture and extend benefits such as free electricity and loans with lower interest rates that are enjoyed by agricultural farmers; and employing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme workers in poultry farms to make up for the labour shortage.

Collector D. Jagannathan told *The Hindu* that it would not be possible for the high level team to take a decision on the requests of the farmers across the table.

“National level policies are taken after several rounds of discussion and this discussion is only a preliminary one,” he added.

### **Disbursal of compensation to Delta farmers likely to begin this week**

The total cost of package is Rs. 2,143.6 crore; detailed instructions given to Collectors



The high-level committee of eight Ministers led by Finance Minister O.Paneerselvam inspecting fields in Nagapattinam to ascertain the crop damage in delta districts. —File Photo

The disbursement of compensation to 1.75 lakh farmers in the Cauvery delta for crop loss is likely to commence this week.

An indication to this effect emerged after a two-hour-long meeting here on Saturday which was attended by a host of senior government officers and eight District Collectors from the delta region.

In the meeting, the government made it clear to the Collectors of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Tiruchi, Pudukottai, Karur, Ariyalur and Cuddalore districts to expedite the disbursement.

Each farmer who had suffered over 50 per cent yield loss would get Rs. 15,000 per acre. A total of 3.61 lakh acres would be covered under the relief package, announced by Chief Minister Jayalithaa in the Assembly on February 8.

This component alone would cost Rs. 541.5 crore to the government and along with others, the total cost of the package was Rs. 2,143.6 crore.

Detailed instructions were given at the meeting to the Collectors to translate the decision into action. The Collectors would ensure the completion of the disbursement, hopefully, in a few weeks, says an official. They would, through District Central Cooperative Banks, transfer the amounts to Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies and nodal bank branches of commercial banks for eventual disbursement to the farmers.

According to an order issued by the Revenue Department, the compensation amount would be credited to bank accounts of the farmers.

As loanee-farmers have bank accounts, the disbursement could begin in their case straightaway. In respect of those who had not taken crop loans and did not have bank accounts, a drive had been carried out to get bank accounts opened for them.

An undertaking would be obtained from the farmers that in the event of getting compensation from the farm insurance company for yield loss, they would adjust it towards the relief amount being given by the State government.

The order was clear that the State government's compensation should not be adjusted towards the outstandings of the agriculturists' crop loans.

As regards those suffering less than 50 per cent yield loss, the compensation would be provided by the insurance company to them. The State Agriculture Department had been directed to get the State government's component sanctioned and provide it to the insurance company. Besides, for the purpose of ensuring speedy disbursal of relief to these farmers, the Agriculture Department would arrange for conducting crop cutting experiments soon. The Additional Chief Secretary/Commissioner of Revenue Administration had been appointed nodal officer to implement the entire drought programme, the order adds.

Through another order of the Revenue Department, a committee, headed by Finance Minister O. Panneerselvam and consisting of Ministers for Electricity, Municipal Administration and Water Supply, Housing, Agriculture and Revenue, would go around non-delta districts [excluding Chennai] to assess the drought situation. The committee would also co-opt Ministers and officers concerning with the districts.

On completion of this exercise, the department would prepare a comprehensive drought memorandum and send it to the Union government.

#### **4,800 acres of paddy crop damaged**

In the untimely rains that lashed particularly the eastern mandals of Chittoor district on Saturday and Sunday, as many as 4800 acres of paddy crop was completely damaged much to the grief of the farmers of this backward district. -Special Correspondent

#### **Mango growers hopeful of better crop**

Crop protection from pests accounts for much of the expenses, says a farmer



In full bloom: A farmer showing his mango tree full of flowers in Ulavapadu in Prakasam district.— Photo: Kommuri Srinivas

Growers of the popular Banganapalli variety of Mango in this mandal which hits niche markets every year in summer, are hopeful of a good yield this year thanks to favourable climatic conditions.

Traders from upcountry make a beeline to this 'Mango town' in advance to strike deals with farmers as the mangoes grown here are the most sought-after in upcountry markets as also abroad.

The first quality Mangoes produced in Ulavapadu and its surroundings are marketed by traders in Dubai and other West Asian countries. Much of the mangoes produced here find their way to Chennai.

"The flowering is very good. We expect to get at least three to four tonnes per acre as against 1.50 to 2.00 tonnes last year, said a farmer O. Narayana while talking to The Hindu.

The conversion of flowers into fruits was expected to be 40 per cent this year as against 20 per cent last year.

### **Unseasonal rain**

"There should be no unseasonal rains now. The next two weeks are very critical for us", he adds overseeing spraying pesticides by farm workers in his 45-acre orchard taken by him on lease after paying a rent of Rs.12.50 lakhs.

“I have taken up spraying for the fourth time, spending Rs. 2.25 lakhs”, he says, adding that crop protection from pests accounts for much of the expenses, says another farmer Singa Reddy with a 16-acre orchard.

### **Encouraging farmers**

“On our part, we are encouraging farmers to ripen mangoes without the use of calcium carbide for them to fetch a better price for their produce” says Horticulture Assistant Director II P. Jennamma told *The Hindu* .

“This year, we plan to hold Mango melas in Hyderabad as also other towns in the State to promote farm fresh naturally-ripened mangoes”, she says.

Mangoes ripened in a natural way had fetched Rs. 60,000 per tonne as against Rs. 35,000 per tonne during the mela held last year, she points out.

“The weight of a fruit this season is likely to be in the range of 500 grams to 750 grams on an average, adds yet another farmer G. Krishna Reddy who has grown the King of fruits in 10 acres.

While Banganapalli variety accounts for 90 per cent of the Mangoes grown in 6,966 Ha in the district, Rasalu and Thotapuri accounts for the rest, Ms. Jennamma said.

The department provides Rs. 6,000 per hectare as subsidy for canopy management and Rs.15,000 per hectare for rejuvenation, the officer adds.

### **Heavy downpour results in crop loss**

The sudden heavy down pour on Saturday and in the early hours of Sunday has resulted in substantial crop loss in the district. The vegetables, mango, chilli, turmeric and pulses are some of the crops that have suffered.

Agriculture Department officials said that the farmers cultivated pulses in 27,365 hectare in the district. Of this, 25,500 hectare is black gram. The farmers cultivated maize in 300 hectare, green gram cultivated in 1,000 hectare and Bengal gram in 180 hectare. The actual loss is yet to be ascertained.

The horticulture crops like cauliflower, cabbage also suffered damages. Many farmers have already harvested the crop, the standing crops however were inundated. These vegetables are cultivated in about 20 hectare.

The chilli farmers, who cultivated in 9,725 hectare, are likely to incur quality loss due to inundation of the harvested crop.

The chilli marooned in flood waters will lose its quality. Likewise, the turmeric is cultivated in 2035 hectare in the district. The turmeric farmers are also likely to incur losses due to deterioration in the quality.

Horticulture Joint Director Subhani said that the mango orchards spread over 76,115 hectare in the district also might have suffered losses. The dropping of flower and fruit take place when there are heavy winds and gales. The farmers growing mango will have to face fungal problems in their orchards.

### **Major crop loss in Warangal**

Standing crops, particularly maize, in nearly 4,000 hectares in the district were damaged due to unexpected rain on Friday and Saturday night, said district collector Mr Rahul Bojja.

In a statement here on Sunday, the District Collector said as many as 975 farmers were affected as crops in 790 hectares were damaged due to rain on Friday, while 4,734 farmers suffered loss on account of crop damage in 3,105 hectares across the district on Saturday night.

Maize crop in Regonda, Parkal, Atmakur, Shayampet, Nekkonda, Chityal, Mogullapalli, Hanamkonda, Geesukonda and Sangem mandals were damaged due to gales, hailstorm and rain.

The highest rainfall of 4.82 cm was recorded in Maripeda mandal followed by 2.84 cm in Kuravi and 2.56 cm in Thorrur. "On an average, the district received 1.48 cm rain," the Collector said.

Meanwhile, a farmer named R Rajender (25) reportedly committed suicide in Vangapahad village in Hasanparthy after his maize crop got completely damaged. He had raised the crop in 1.3 acres, and a total of 300 acres of crop were damaged in the Hasanparthy mandal alone, local farmers told the newsmen.

The Collector sent a report to the State Government on the crop damage seeking suitable compensation to farmers who suffered severe loss on account of the sudden rainfall.

### **Foodgrains load dips owing to crop failure in delta**

Railway division moves more coal, records rise in freight earnings



cause and effect: Coal, cement and foodgrains constitute the major commodities loaded in Tiruchi railway division. File Photo

Failure of paddy crop in the delta has hit the foodgrains freight volume in Tiruchi Railway Division during the current fiscal even as the division achieved more in coal loading.

The Tiruchi Division could achieve only 0.431 million tonnes in foodgrains loading in the current financial year up to January, though the target set by the Railway Board for the Division in the 2012-13 is 1.73 million metric tonnes.

Railway officials here attribute the sharp decline in foodgrains loading to partial failure of paddy crop during the 'kuruvai' and the 'samba' seasons especially in the three delta districts, which fall under the jurisdiction of the division.

Paddy loading is essentially done by the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation from various places across the division, including Thanjavur, Mayiladuthurai, Kumbakonam, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Sirkazhi and Cuddalore.

Foodgrains loading during the corresponding period (from April to January) in 2011-12 was comparatively better when the achievement was 0.746 million tonnes, he added.

Coal, cement and foodgrains constitute the major commodities loaded in the division, which bagged the General Manager's Inter Divisional Overall Efficiency Shield after a gap of seven years last fiscal primarily owing to its excellent performance in the freight front.

Encompassing 13 districts, the division achieved 9.60 million tonnes in overall freight loading a month before the end of 2011-12 financial year, against the target of 8.5 million tonnes.

Officials say cement loading too dipped in the current year as compared to the previous fiscal. Loading till January was 1.30 million tonnes as against 1.52 million tonnes during the corresponding period last year.

Labour and storage problems in Kerala are attributed to be the factors behind the drop in cement loading . Bulk of cement loaded in Ariyalur district, where many cement companies operate, are dispatched to Kerala, say railway officials.

### **Freight earning**

Despite the downward trend in foodgrains and cement, divisional railway officials say that the overall freight earning has gone up.

The division has done well in coal loading attaining eight per cent more in the current fiscal up to January. Against the total target of 5.50 million tonnes in coal loading, the division attained 4.852 million tonnes till January.

Coal loading is done from Karaikal Port from where iron ore is also being moved through rail from this financial year. Iron ore moved through rail from the Karaikal Port was 0.26 million tonnes up to January.

The Railway Board has set 10.49 million tonnes as the overall freight loading target for the division during 2012 -13, the official said adding that the achievement up to January was 7.42 million tonnes.

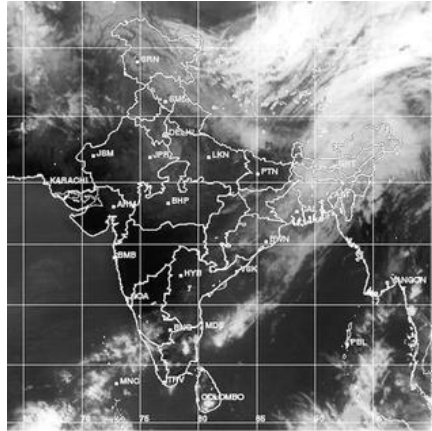
### **Agri-food processing meet**

Union Minister K.V. Thomas called for the formation of a department for food processing sector in the State. Inaugurating an agri-food processing industry meet at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium



on Sunday, Prof. Thomas said Kerala could produce value-added products from its cash crops and spices through food processing techniques. The meet will conclude on February 21.

## weather



New Delhi (Plm)	18	13	4	98
New Delhi (Sfd)	16	12	6	124
Chandigarh	17	11	7	108
Hissar	18	12	2	53
Bhuntar	11	7	5	248
Shimla	6	2	13	263
Jammu	14	10	9	96
Srinagar	9	3	0	89
Amritsar	14	10	21	64
Patiala	16	11	14	85
Jaipur	19	11	9	24
Udaipur	22	9	0	4
Allahabad	17	14	32	58
Lucknow	17	12	21	141
Varanasi	19	14	44	85

Dehradun	14	9	18	288
Agartala	30	20	0	0
Ahmedabad	25	10	0	tr
Bangalore	31	20	2	3
Bhubaneshwar	32	18	2	3
Bhopal	26	9	0	21
Chennai	33	24	8	19
Guwahati	28	18	0	0
Hyderabad	30	20	12	17
Kolkata	25	19	0	12
Mumbai	30	20	0	0
Nagpur	29	15	0	13
Patna	19	16	17	49
Pune	28	10	0	0
Thiruvananthapuram	33	24	0	31
Imphal	31	14	0	tr
Shillong	20	11	1	10

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

### Rainfall

**RAINFALL:** Rain/snow has occurred at most places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and at many places over Jammu and Kashmir. Rain/thundershowers have occurred at most places over Uttar Pradesh, at many places over Haryana and Punjab, at a few places over east Rajasthan and at isolated places over west Rajasthan. The chief amounts of precipitations (2 cm. and above) are: HARYANA: Naraingarh, Ferozpur Jhirka, Palwal, Bilaspur and Jagdhari 2 each, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Kalpa 3 and Saloni, Dhramsala, Manali, Rohru, Una and Paonta 2 each, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Batote and Udhampur 3 each and Bhaderwah 2, PUNJAB:

Ludhiana and Gurdaspur 3 each and Amritsar, Malakpur and Adampur 2 each, EAST RAJASTHAN: Pilani 5, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Churk 5, Bahraich and Varanasi Airport 4 each, Sultanpur, Gorakhpur, Ballia, Hardoi, Allahabad and Kanpur airport 3 each and Lucknow and Kanpur city 2 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Muzaffarnagar 5, Agra, Bareilly, Moradabad, Nazibabad Meerut, Hamirpur, Kayamganj, Jalesar, Etah, Kasganj and Gautambudhnagar 3 each and Aligarh, Anoopsahar, Khair, Hathras, Sikohabad and Sarsawa 2 each, UTARAKHAND: Nainital 11, Champawat 10, Mukteshwar, Pithoragarh, Almora and Bageshwar 7 each, Bambasa 6, Pantnagar, Ranikhet, Roorkee and Kashipur 5 each, Tehri, Pauri, Barkot and Purola 4 each, Kotdwara, Haridwar and Uttarkashi 3 each and Dehradun and Mussoorie 2 each.

**MINIMUM TEMPERATURES :** The minimum temperatures fell appreciably in west Uttar Pradesh, fell in east Rajasthan and Uttarakhand and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably above normal in Punjab, above normal in Haryana and normal in rest of the region. The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 05.5°C recorded at Ballia (Uttar Pradesh).

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 19th FEBRUARY 2013:** Rain/snow may occur at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 19th FEBRUARY 2013:** Generally cloudy sky likely to become partly cloudy sky. Light Rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas. Mist/shallow fog in the morning.

## weather

Chennai

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Cloudy

**Monday, Feb 18**

**Max Min**

30° | 25°

**Rain:** 0

**Humidity:** 79

**Wind:** normal

**Sunrise:** 06:30

**Sunset:** 06:15

**Barometer:** 1011

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

**Tuesday, Feb 19**

**Max Min**

31° | 22°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Feb 20	Thursday Feb 21	Friday Feb 22	Saturday Feb 23	Sunday Feb 24
31°   21° Partly Cloudy	29°   20° Overcast	30°   20° Overcast	32°   20° Sunny	32°   20° Sunny

#### Airport Weather

Delhi  **Delhi**

**Rain:** 2.1

**Sunrise:** 06:57

**Humidity:** 83

**Sunset:** 06:13

**Wind:** normal

**Barometer:** 1017



17<sup>th</sup> jan 2013

**Sugar output up 2.7% at 166 lakh t till Feb 15**



Sugar production has increased by 2.7 per cent to 165.9 lakh tonnes till February 15 during the current marketing year that started in October last year.

“The country has produced 165.9 lakh tonnes of sugar up to February 15, 2013. This is about 2.7 per cent more than the same period last year,” Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said in a statement today.

ISMA attributed the increase in sugar output to higher sugarcane crushing and better recovery. The production is up even though there are 24 less number of mills operating now compared to last year.

“Till date, almost 1,680 lakh tonnes of sugarcane have been crushed with an average recovery of 9.8 per cent from October 2012. The country has crushed about 1.7 per cent more sugarcane than last year along with better recoveries,” ISMA said.

ISMA has projected 243 lakh tonnes production for the 2012-13 marketing year (October-September), which is 20 lakh tonnes less than last year.

According to ISMA, Maharashtra has produced 57.8 lakh tonnes, which is about 3 per cent more than last year. Uttar Pradesh has produced 43.6 lakh tonnes, which is about 4 per cent less than the year-ago period.

Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh are the two leading sugar producing States in the country.

Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have produced 7.8 lakh tonnes and 7.3 lakh tonnes, respectively, which is about 3 per cent and 1 per cent more than last year. Karnataka has produced about 28.3 lakh tonnes of sugar.

“Maharashtra and Karnataka have already started showing signs of lower sugarcane availability for the current season, 2012-13,” ISMA said.

### **Agri Ministry favours hike in excise duty on sugar**



The Agriculture Ministry is in favour of increasing the excise duty on sugar by Rs 1.50 per kg, Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said on Monday.

The current excise duty on sugar stands at Rs 98 per quintal.

“We support the Food Ministry’s proposal in this regard,” Pawar told reporters on the sidelines the annual general meeting of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

### **Levy burden**

The Food Ministry is in favour of increasing the excise duty on sugar to offset the levy burden even as the Government gears up to remove the controls on sugar sector, including doing away with the levy obligation.

Such a move is expected to help the Government reduce its financial burden on selling the sweetener to poor families at subsidised rate under the public distribution system.

### **Levy system**

Under the levy system, the sugar factories currently have to sell 10 per cent of their total produce to the Government at Rs 19.04 a kg against the ex-factory price of around Rs 31 per kg.

This levy sugar is sold by the Government at Rs 13.50 per kg to the poor families under PDS, incurring a subsidy burden of around Rs 2,500 crore a year.

### **Restricted arrivals, rising domestic demand push rice, wheat, poultry items up**

Restricted arrivals in the market coupled with rising domestic demand, pushed rice, wheat and poultry prices upwards last week.

### **Wheat**

After ruling flat for almost two weeks, wheat prices improved by Rs 10 to 1,530-1,535 a quintal on account of frantic buying by the small aata chakki owners.

Sewa Ram, a wheat trader, told *Business Line* that small aata chakki owners have been depending on open market to meet their demand as they were not able to get stocks from Food Corporation of India. Traders expect that any major alteration in market is unlikely in the next week, he added.

Similarly, wheat futures extended a firm trend on export and strong physical demands.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat contracts from February to June ended up with a positive note.

Similarly, spot market remained supportive and went up by Rs 30 last week.

According to the reports, wheat exports are expected to remain competitive at least till July.

### **Rice**

Prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice varieties went up by Rs 50-400 on account of low availability of good quality stocks.

Rising domestic demand and fresh trade enquires also supported the market throughout this week.

Pusa-1121 (steam) and Pusa-1121 (sela) were quoted at Rs 7,600 and Rs 6,600, respectively, which were the highest level of the season.

Traders expect that market may rule range-bound for the next few days.

### **Poultry Items**

After witnessing some correction earlier on Wednesday, broiler and chick witnessed a good rally on fall in supply and good demand on Saturday. Arrivals have dropped drastically over the last couple of days, and if supplies don't improve, prices may go further up marginally said trade experts.

### **Campco voices concern over rise in arecanut imports from Bangladesh**





Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco) Ltd has expressed concern over the increase in arecanut imports from Bangladesh.

Addressing presspersons here, K. Padmanabha, President of Campco, said that there has been an increase in the import of arecanut from Bangladesh in the last nine months. The contribution of Bangladesh, which was 15-20 per cent to the total imports a few years ago, has gone up to 63 per cent in the last nine months.

Stating that Bangladesh is not a major producer of arecanuts, he said those from Indonesia and other countries are routed through Bangladesh to India.

“Some people are importing arecanut claiming it to be the origin of Bangladesh using fake ‘country of origin’ certificate,” he said.

On the reasons for this rapid increase, Padmanabha said the arecanut import from Bangladesh is exempt from customs duty as it comes under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).

Stating that some importers are taking advantage of the Customs duty exemption for import from Bangladesh, he said they route arecanut from the other countries through Bangladesh as they do not have to pay customs duty of 108 per cent.

Direct import from Indonesia and other countries would cost them more, as they have to pay a customs duty of 108 per cent in addition to the import price. (In a notification dated August 14, 2012, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade had fixed the minimum price for import of arecanut at Rs 75 a kg. Added to this, the importers have to pay a customs duty of 108 per cent over the import price.)

Padmanabha demanded that the Centre take steps to stop import of arecanut under SAFTA.

The minimum price for import of arecanut should be increased to Rs 115 a kg from Rs 75 now.

The customs duty on arecanut import should be enhanced from 108 per cent to 150 per cent, he added.

*vinayak.aj@thehindu.co.in*

## Unseasonal rains in Karnataka coffee belt may hit output, quality



Unseasonal rains twice in the last 10 days in the coffee growing districts of Karnataka have affected harvest and post-harvest activities. The early rains may affect coffee quality and output as well.

Districts of Kodagu, Hassan and Chikmagalur received 4-5 cm rains and cloudy weather for a week in the region has affected coffee drying.

Coffee wetting has been reported at many places due to water logging and lack of sunlight. The worst hit is the robusta crop, while arabica harvest has been completed.

Bose Mandana, a senior coffee planter from Suntikoppa in Kodagu, told *Business Line* "The entire crop is on the drying yard and with lack of sunlight it is taking more than 25 days for drying one lot of coffee as against the normal 15 days.

"In this scenario, managing moisture level is crucial for us. Normally, it should be between 10-12 per cent when we send it to curing works; at present, it is high at 18-20 per cent level," he explained.

Nishant Gurjer, Chairman, Karnataka Planters' Association and a grower from Chikmagalur, said "Robusta is right in the middle of harvest; due to rains, there could be impact on the current crop as well as the next year's crop. Due to early rains, coffee will dry on the plant and there could be some dropping as well."

Also due to early rains, stressed period for arabica and robusta has been reduced and it is likely to trigger early flowering. This may again need back-up showers to sustain; otherwise, there could be crop failure.

“This year, rains are early. It is too early especially for Arabica, for the reproductive buds (spikes) is not yet ready,” said Bose Mandana.

“If spikes are not mature, then small blossom may occur. This again may need back-up showers in the first week of March. If it fails then, we may have bad crop next year,” he added.

Damages to robusta crop are likely to impact prices when the crop enters the market later this year. Currently, traders are assessing the damages.

According to Karnataka Planters’ Association’s estimate, coffee production in the current crop year is 2.85 lakh tonnes. Arabica production is estimated at 85,000 tonnes and robusta crop at around 2 lakh tonnes.

“At present, we are sticking to the KPA estimate on arabica. For robusta, we will take a call later,” said Nishant Gurjer.

The Coffee Board estimate is 3.25 lakh tonnes during 2012-13 crop year (October- September), which includes 1.04 lakh tonnes of arabica and 2.21 lakh tonnes of robusta.

### **Thunderstorms string North, Central India**

The weather-driving western disturbing now located over Jammu and Kashmir has expectedly spun off a welter of thunderstorms.

North-West, Central and adjoining peninsular India and lately East India have been facing the brunt over the past day or two.

An India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned of thunder squall or hailstorm for East India for another day. Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh are likely to be affected in this manner on Monday.

### **MOISTURE INCURSION**

Meanwhile, a fresh western disturbance is seen entering the western Himalayan region and adjoining plains of North-West India by Wednesday. It may not be as big as the predecessor but may bring rain to Northwest India and parts of East India, US agency forecasts said. Meanwhile on Sunday, the western disturbance over Jammu and Kashmir was combining with a cyclonic circulation over Haryana.

The 24 hours ending in the morning saw widespread rain/snowfall over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir. Towards the east, Odisha, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh and the North-East recorded showers.

In the South, Coastal Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu saw occasional showers.

Significant amounts of rain (in cm) were reported from Gannavaram -15; Mukteshwar, Machilipatnam and Bapatla -7 each; Mangalore and Nandigama-6 each; Tirupathi, Churk, Pilani, Umari and Pantnagar-5 each, Darjeeling, Bahraich, Varanasi, Tehri, Ongole and Ambikapur- 4 each.

### **Demand perks up prices at Kochi tea sale**



A good demand perked up prices of almost all varieties of tea at the Kochi tea auction.

In Kochi Sale No.7 in the dust category, the quantity on offer in the CTC grades was 9,40,000 kg.

The market was firm to dearer by Rs 1-2 and sometimes more following quality.

However, bolder grades were irregular and sometimes lower, the auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgis said.

The quantity on offer in orthodox was 12,000 kg and the market barely remained steady for primary and secondary grades. Bulk of the offerings were absorbed by exporters.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted the best prices of Rs 101-112; RD grades Rs 106-140; SRD Rs 108-146 and SFD at Rs 108-143.

In leaf category, the quantity on offer in the orthodox was 1,50,000 kg. Good liquoring Nilgiri brokens, whole leaf and fannings were firm to dearer. Others were irregular and lower.

Medium bolder brokens, tippy grades and whole leaf barely remained steady and tended to ease. Others were lower and witnessed some withdrawals.

Of 55,500 kg on offer in CTC, the market for good liquoring well made varieties were dearer by Rs 1-3 and sometimes more. Others were irregular and sometimes lower.

In the dust category, both Injipara (Prm) SRD and Jayshree Tea (Prm) SRD quoted the best prices of Rs 146 followed by Injipara (Prm) SFD at Rs 143. In the leaf grades, Chamraj OP fetched the best prices of Rs 401 followed by Chamraj FOP at Rs 361.

### **Low availability of good quality stocks push tomato prices up**

Low availability of good quality stocks pushed tomato prices up by Rs 100-200 a quintal on Sunday.

Around 12-13 tonnes of different tomato varieties arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and quoted between Rs 500-1,000. While around 5,000-6,000 crates of different varieties, such as 592, Abhilash, Himsona, 525 and 524 arrived at the various markets of Karnal district.

Vikas Sachdeva, proprietor of Aashirwad traders, told *Business Line*, that inconsistent rainfall since Friday has definitely damaged the tomato crop.

It is a big loss for the farmers as they might not be able to get fair prices for their produce. Quality of the crop is expected to be lower, he added.

Unlike other products, tomatoes are extremely perishable and a sudden change in temperature affects tomato crop very quickly.

Size of tomatoes is likely to be smaller and the quality will also be lower after the rainfall, said Vikas.

Prices of superior quality increased by Rs 200 a quintal and quoted at Rs 1,000 a quintal, medium quality prices went up by Rs 150 and quoted at 750 a quintal while low quality was at Rs 500 a quintal, Rs 100 up from previous levels.

Despite good demand, higher supplies were the reason that tomato prices were ruling on the lower side this season, he further said. Tomato prices have increased by 20-30 per cent in the last couple of days and it may increase further within next two weeks.

With good domestic demand, traders are getting good regular demand from Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and a few other markets, too.

### **Indian tea exports register decline: ITA chairman**

Indian tea exports have registered a decline of about 23 million kg last year in view of slowdown in the global market, India Tea Association Chairman A K Bhargava said on Monday.

North India's production had gone down by about 7.5 millions kg, while south India had recorded a significant decline of almost 15 million kg, Bhargava said at the 123rd Annual General Meeting of Assam Branch of Indian Tea Association (ABITA) at Jorhat Gymkhana Club here.

There was, however, a positive note for Assam tea industry as it produced four million kg higher than the previous year recording an output of 533 million kg of tea with a turnover of approximately Rs 5,650 crores, he said.

Bhargava attributed the decline to difficult trading conditions in almost every area - Russian Federation, UK, USA, Iran among others.

Europe continues to reflect worrisome economic slowdown, which several experts have recently characterised as having bottomed out but there are expectations that the situation would improve only slowly.

Markets such as the CIS, UAE, Iran and Pakistan hold the promise for a turnaround in exports but it must, however, be kept in view that the trading environment continues to pose significant challenges.

“It is up to the exporting community to show aggressiveness towards recovering ground in these markets,” he added.

### **Tomato turns dearer as rainfall damages crop**



Low availability of good quality stocks pushed up tomato prices by Rs 100-200 a quintal on Sunday.

Around 12-13 tonnes of different varieties of tomato have arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and were quoted between Rs 500-1,000 a quintal. Around 6,000 crates of varieties such as 592, Abhilash, Himsona, 525 and 524 were received in the markets of Karnal district.

Vikas Sachdeva, proprietor of Aashirwad traders, told *Business Line*, that inconsistent rainfall since Friday has damaged the tomato crop. It was a big loss for farmers as they might not be able to get a fair price for their produce. The quality of the crop is expected to be lower, he added.

Unlike other products, tomatoes are extremely perishable and a sudden change in temperature affects the crop quickly.

The size of tomatoes is likely to be smaller and the quality lower after the rainfall, said Vikas.

The prices of the superior quality increased by Rs 200 a quintal and quoted at Rs 1,000 a quintal. The price of medium quality produce went up by Rs 150 and quoted at 750 a quintal, while the low quality produce was quoted at Rs 500 a quintal, up by Rs 100 from previous levels.

Despite good demand, higher supplies were behind tomato prices ruling on the lower side this season, he further said. Tomato prices, which have increased by 20-30 per cent in the last couple of days, may increase further in the next two weeks.

Traders are getting good regular demand from Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and a few other markets.



# Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

18.02.2013 A.M

---

## Budget boost likely to small and marginal farmers

To boost small and marginal farmers, the Budget is likely to announce a credit guarantee fund for Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), with equity participation by government in such organisations.

An FPO is typically a company comprising only farmers and producers but formed under the Companies Act. It is different from a cooperative society, though in most places these are called co-ops. In an FPO, only a producer can become a member; in a co-op society, others can, too. The latter are registered under states' cooperative acts. According to a senior official from the department of agriculture, there are close to 300 FPOs, covering a little over 500,000 farmers. These numbers could go up significantly with Budget support.

“By June, our target is to have 500 FPOs, with a combined membership of almost 10 lakh farmers. For that, we would need some support, as there are almost 60 crore farmers in the country who can be brought under the FPO umbrella,” the official said.

The role of FPOs in alleviating the plight of small and marginal farmers has also been recognised by the government's National Advisory Council (NAC), chaired by Sonia Gandhi, president of the ruling party. A working group of the NAC has recently said FPOs were a necessity in the Indian environment, if one has to effectively address issues such as shrinking land, difficulty in accessing critical inputs like fertiliser and credit, a fragmented value chain, weak bargaining with market agents and low return on investments.

An official said the Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC), promoted by the department of agriculture, is to act as a nodal agency to provide support for creation of FPOs. “Typical FPOs start with a equity base of Rs 5-10 lakh, which can expand if the business expands. In this, the member-contribution is Rs 500-1,000. The members also contribute a minimum amount of their produce and ensure a fixed quantity of input is purchased, so that the

organisation does not fail,” the official explained. He said farmers who grow diverse crops can also form an FPO because there would be some common produce between them.

FPOs are being mobilised through a network of about 25 grassroots non-governmental organisations. It takes six to nine months for an FPO to get registered. The biggest problem they face since inception in the past decade has been access to funds. This is more acute for new FPOs, officials explained.

According to a background note on the financing of FPOs, discussed in an official meeting some months earlier, these organisations suffer from inadequate funding because formal financial institutions such as commercial banks are wary of lending to these bodies, largely due to their inability to provide adequate collateral to cover risk.

Specified agencies like the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development do have a dedicated corpus to provide loans to producer organisations but it entertains proposals from only mature FPOs, with a credit history of at least three years. SFAC’s own venture capital fund remains, in principle, open to financing of FPOs. However, the condition of clubbing venture capital with a bank loan has resulted in zero disbursement to producer organisations in the past five years.

It is these difficulties that Budget allocation might help surmount. The NAC’s working group’s report said the biggest catalyst to bringing small farmers together in an FPO would require committing funds to develop capacity for at least three years, the minimum time required for these organisations to grow.

### **Crop loss drives farmer to end life**

WARANGAL: Unable to cope with the damage to his crops, a [young farmer](#) committed suicide here on Sunday. RudrarapuRajender, 27, resident of Vangapahad village of Hasanparthymandal consumed pesticide at his fields.

According to villagers, Rajender went to his field early on Sunday and seeing the maize crop in his 2-acre field completely destroyed due to the unseasonal rains that lashed the state on Saturday, the [distraught farmer](#) consumed pesticide, Monocrotophos. Neighbours found him lying unconscious in the field and rushed him to [MGM hospital](#) in Warangal where the doctors declared him brought dead. He is survived by his wife and two children.

The unseasonal rains on Friday and Saturday damaged crops at Parakala, Regonda and Hasanparthy mandals of the district. Crops in 1750 hectares were damage across the district, said sources. Union minister for social justice Balram Naik went visited the affected district and assessed the crop loss.

### **Rajasthan announces relief package for crop loss**

JAIPUR: The state government on Sunday announced a [relief package](#) for farmers whose crops were destroyed due to hailstorm and unseasonal rain over the past four days. It includes a four-month waiver of electricity bill and an amount of Rs 3,000-8,000 per hectare (upto two hectares only) for those who incurred more than 50% loss of crops.

Chief secretary C K Mathew met chief minister [Ashok Gehlot](#) in New Delhi on Sunday to discuss the relief package. Hailstorm and showers since Thursday resulted in serious damage to crops

in several districts, particularly in Bikaner, Baran and Jhalawar. Following directives from the chief minister, the state's disaster management and relief department had asked the district collectors to immediately send a preliminary report on crop losses.

As per the announcement, the farmers who lost more than 50% crops in the hailstorm and rain will be given relief under the [State Disaster Relief Fund](#) norms. The relief will be for up to two hectares of land. While Rs 3,000 per hectare will be given to each of the farmers who own non-irrigated land, Rs 6000 will be given to those who use electricity to draw water from wells and canals. Besides, Rs 8,000 per hectare will be give to those who use diesel pumps for irrigation.

The electricity bills will also be waived for small and marginal farmers who incurred more than 50% losses. The farmers who are not listed in revenue records, but are engaged in farming on contractual and partnership basis will also be able to get these benefits. However, such farmers will have to get a five-rupees stamp signed by the land owner. To sort out the problems which may arise out of this situation, the state government has decided to constitute a committee at gram panchayat level.

The state government has also directed the district collectors to prepare a detailed report on villages which incurred over 50% loss of crops. Also, revenue recovery will be postponed in villages which are declared scarcity-hit; the recovery of the short term loan will be postponed and it will be converted into medium term loans.

The respective district collectors will calculate the amount according to declared package, will present online demand of budget and distribute relief immediately after the allotment of the budget.

According to preliminary reports, coriander cultivation in Baran and Jhalawar is the worst affected. "Reports from these districts suggest over 50% damage to coriander crops. Along with this, the crops of chickpea (chana), mustard and wheat are also damaged upto 15% in several

places in Bikaner, Nagaur and Sriganganagar," said an official.

### **Clear sky in coming days: Met**

Jaipur: After a four-day long spell of rain and hailstorm, people can heave a sigh of relief as the meteorology department has predicted clear weather in the coming days. Jaipur witnessed a cloudy sky on Sunday and a drop in night temperature on Saturday night. The high level of humidity in the air led to continued spell of chilly winds.

Attributing the abnormal weather conditions to western disturbances, the Met department said that the city witnessed partly cloudy sky till Sunday afternoon.

### **Purulia elephants destroy crops, houses**

BOKARO: A herd of six elephants, which have strayed from the jungles of [Purulia](#) district of West Bengal, have wreaked havoc in Murhul Sudi panchayat of Kasmar block.

They destroyed the farms of several villagers, eating and trampling upon the crops and vegetables like potato, mustard, tomato, etc. The forest official has sounded alert in the area.

A forest officer said, "We had received information about tuskers entering the Murhul village at around 3 to 4am. There is a baby elephant as well in the herd. We have asked the villagers to take necessary precautions."

These villages in the bordering areas of West Bengal are prone to such tuskers, which are usually found coming from Purulia district.

"Compared to the past few years, the loss of life and property has seen a considerable decrease. We are trying to create awareness among the villagers about not disturbing the elephants, as it could land them in a precarious situation," said the forest officer.

## **Rains kill 17, destroy crops across Andhra Pradesh**

HYDERABAD: At least 17 people died and lakhs of hectares of standing crops destroyed across Andhra Pradesh after unseasonal rains lashed the state over the past two days and forced the government to press immediate relief and rescue operations in the affected districts.

Some areas experienced heavy hailstorm as strong winds accompanied by thundershowers uprooted trees, flattened nearly 900 homes and killed livestock in at least 10 districts, officials said.

The meteorological department said rains were caused by strong southwesterly winds and warned fishermen not to venture into the sea for a while, as 22.1 mm [rain](#) poured on Sunday itself, while people were asked to be ready for more thundershowers in the next 24 hours.

A farmer, already reeling under rising prices, killed himself in Warangal, after his crops were completely destroyed in two days of rain. Overall, 13 people were hit by lightning across seven districts, including Warangal, Prakasam, Nizamabad and Guntur among others.

Chief minister N [Kiran Kumar Reddy](#), who cut short his New Delhi visit and chaired a high-level meeting with chief medical officers at the camp office on Sunday, has asked ministers J Geetha Reddy and Sridhar Babu to visit Medak and Karimnagar districts immediately.

"The chief minister will review the situation extensively at a high level meeting at the secretariat on Monday," a late night press communique from his office said.

Sudden rains caught many people unawares, as television pictures showed people running for safety, especially in far flung districts as chilli and paddy stocks kept mostly under open skies were damaged.

Some farmers were seen standing haplessly beside damaged crops, either holding their heads

or with hands on hips.

The state disaster management department said 11 domestic animals, mostly hit by lightning perished, and 147986 hectares of paddy, maize and Bengal gram were destroyed. Officials said stocks of [mango](#), chilli, vegetables in over 104558 hectares of land were completely damaged by the blinding rain.

The districts of Prakasam, Krishna, Guntur, Nellore, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Kadapa, Medak, were among more than a dozen districts, which were worst hit.

Farmers of Krishna and Guntur district suffered a lot as standing crops in one lakh acres and chilli stocks of nearly one lakh bags were damaged. Kankipadu mandal of Krishna district received highest rainfall in the state with 28 mm rains recorded in the last 24 hours. The hopes of cotton farmers, who were recovering from losses due to Nilam cyclone last November, were dashed with the latest rains.

Chilli farmers, who had kept most of their stocks under open skies for drying, were taken totally by surprise, witnesses said. The farmers were expecting good prices for chilli stocks during the current season, some said.

Although, paddy crop could survive rain for a day or two, the chances of other crops surviving were remote as stocks were damaged or had lost its quality, officials said.

Similarly, Guntur district, which has received nearly 13% surplus rainfall for the entire crop season beginning from last June, received 67% excess rainfall in the last 24 hours.

### **Crop loss drives farmer to end life**

WARANGAL: Unable to cope with the damage to his crops, a [young farmer](#) committed suicide here on Sunday. RudrarapuRajender, 27, resident of Vangapahad village of

Hasanparthymandal consumed pesticide at his fields.

According to villagers, Rajender went to his field early on Sunday and seeing the maize crop in his 2-acre field completely destroyed due to the unseasonal rains that lashed the state on Saturday, the [distraught farmer](#) consumed pesticide, Monocrotophos. Neighbours found him lying unconscious in the field and rushed him to [MGM hospital](#) in Warangal where the doctors declared him brought dead. He is survived by his wife and two children.

The unseasonal rains on Friday and Saturday damaged crops at Parakala, Regonda and Hasanparthy mandals of the district. Crops in 1750 hectares were damage across the district, said sources. Union minister for social justice Balram Naik went visited the affected district and assessed the crop loss.

### **Have a smooth ride till Punjab Agricultural University gate No. 2**

LUDHIANA: The drive from [Arti Cinema Chowk](#) to [Punjab Agricultural University](#) gate number 2 will be a smooth one, thanks to the joint operation conducted by the traffic police and the municipal corporation to clear encroachments in the area. Encroachments on this road had been constructed by high-end business establishments.

"There was a major problem on the service lane from Arti Cinema Chowk to PAU gate number 2. It was a service lane only on paper. The encroachments and wrong parking had made it a source of constant inconvenience for commuters," said Dhruvan Nimbale, assistant commissioner, traffic police.

He said they issued 221 challans on Sunday. Of these, 81 were issued on Ferozepur Road while the flying squad issued around 140 challans in an operation that began in the morning and continued till the evening.

"Its good that finally something is being done to make the service lane functional. There is a lot



of rush on Ferozepur Road because it is a national highway. When residents have to visit a showroom or mall, there is a lot of rush and traffic jam, which leaves no space for parking," said Gagneetpal Gill, a lecturer from Punjab Agricultural University.

According to Hitesh Arora, a businessman from Sarabha Nagar, "There is a need to implement rules stringently, in a way that violations are not repeated again. There should be parking space in all commercial buildings, including hotels, restaurants and showrooms."

# DECCAN Chronicle

TODAY FARM NEWS

18.02.2013 A.M

---

## Heavy losses as calamity strikes



Unseasonal rains coupled with hailstorms since Friday evening caused heavy loss to farmers in 12 districts across the state besides claiming 17 lives so far. The state received 22.1 mm of rainfall on Sunday.

The natural calamity has damaged standing agriculture crops in vast stretch of nearly 1.48 lakh hectares and another 1.04 lakh hectares of horticulture crops in many parts of the state in the past 48 hours leaving the farmers with nothing to hope for.

Telangana districts remain the worst affected on account of rains and hailstorms since Friday.

The Chief Minister, N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, on Sunday reviewed the situation and losses with the CMO officials at his camp office in Begumpet. He asked ministers Geetha Reddy and D. Sridhar Babu to visit Medak and Karimnagar respectively to assess the damage.

He asked other ministers to tour the affected districts immediately to supervise relief and rescue operations. He directed the officials to obtain preliminary reports from the respective district collectors on the extent of damage caused by rains. A high-level meeting will be conducted at the Secretariat on Monday.

Disaster management department revealed, 17 deaths were reported from nine districts; loss of cattle at 11; agriculture crops damaged in 1,47,987 hectares; horticulture crops damaged in 1,04,558 acres. Of the 857 houses damaged, 769 houses were damaged in Adilabad alone, 42 houses in Kari-mnagar, 33 in Kurnool and 13 in Nalgonda were also damaged.