

## **Agro technology festival in August**

As part of the silver jubilee celebrations of Periyar Maniammai University, an agro technology festival will be organised by the university in August, said N. Ramachandran, Vice Chancellor, here on Tuesday.

He held a discussion with farmers, scientists and farm experts regarding the preparations of the festival at Bamboo groves at the PMU.

With agriculture being the mainstay of the country, and agro technology festival will be organised by three days.

An exhibition depicting seed technology, agriculture equipment, irrigation methods, farm models of progressive farmers and models of research centres in the country will be held as part of the festival.

Farmers will be given advice on integrated farming and techniques for producing more foodgrains using less water.

New agriculture technologies, marketing strategies, organic farming and alternate cultivation strategies for farmers will be discussed at the festival. Farmers will also be encouraged to go for joint farming.

S. Ranganathan, secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association, Senguttuvan, Head of the Soil and Water Management Research Institute, H. Parveen, secretary, Periyar Organisation for Women Education and Research (POWER), Aruna, executive officer of the Periyar Technology Business Incubator, participated in the meeting.

**1,183 ha. crop damage in Kadapa**

Agricultural crops were damaged in 1,183 hectares due to the recent heavy rain in 12 mandals in Kadapa district, district Collector K. Sasidhar said on Tuesday.

The agricultural crop damage was sunflower in 581 hectares, sesamum in 495 ha, paddy in 50 ha, jowar in 40 ha, groundnut in 10 ha and maize in two hectares, he told a press conference here. Muskmelon crop damage in 199 hectares was the only horticultural crop damaged, he said. Twelve mandals – Rajampet, Nandalur, Penagalur, Vontimitta, Railway Kodur, Galiveedu, Chakrayapet, Kamalapuram, Brahmamgari Matham, Rajupalem and Chapadu – received an average rainfall of 28.6 mm., he said. Village and mandal teams would assess the agricultural crop damaged more than 50 per cent and relief proposals would be sent to the government within a week, Mr. Sasidhar said.

Proposals to sanction input subsidy of Rs. 53.73 crore was sent to the government to 61,713 farmers for over 50 per cent crop damage in 54,320 hectares due to drought in kharif season last year. A report was sent on paddy crop damage in 9,192 hectares and maize in 1,072 hectares affecting 24 farmers and seeking sanction of relief of Rs. 1 lakh, he said.

The Agriculture Insurance Company, Hyderabad, has accepted the insurance DDs of 80,245 farmers for Rs. 8.72 crore, towards loss of groundnut, paddy, sunflower, onion. Jowar and Bengal gram crops in 1.30 lakh hectares in Kadapa district, for a sum assured of Rs. 456 crore, the Collector said. The government declared drought in 43 mandals in the district. A summer action plan was being formulated to supply drinking water and fodder and generate employment, he said. Sanction of Rs. 6 crore under Calamity Relief Fund and Rs. 5 crore under non-CRF were sought. In addition, sanction of Rs. 16 crore was sought for fodder supply. One thousand cattle ponds would be dug up near the water sources in the vicinity of 1,000 habitations.

Drinking water scarcity in Proddatur would ease within a week as one tmc. Water released from Pothireddipadu head regulator reached Owk reservoir and would reach Mylavaram reservoir in three to four days and about 0.2 tmc. would be sent to cater to Proddatur and 19 adjoining villages, Mr. Sasidhar said. A dedicated feeder was being set up at Yerraguntla with a cost of Rs. 16 lakh to mitigate water problem in Yerraguntla town. Pumps would be installed to Chakrayapet CPW scheme to release water within a fortnight, he said.

Kadapa DRO P.H. Hemasagar and Joint Director of Agriculture G. Jonathan participated.

## State presents farmer-friendly budget

Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana to be launched to protect farmers



Finance Minister Prasanna Acharya flanked by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Health Minister Damodar Rout is presenting the budget in the Assembly on Tuesday. —Photo: Ashoke Chakrabarty

Apparently with an eye on the impending Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, the Naveen Patnaik Government on Tuesday for the first time shifted its focus from industry to agriculture by announcing a special package through a separate budget for the development of agriculture and allied sectors as well as welfare of the of mobile phones costing about Rs. 1,000 per phone to 20,000 farmers under farming community.

Presenting the agriculture budget in the State Assembly, Finance Minister Prasanna Acharya said the government had decided to launch a new health insurance scheme titled Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana to protect the farmer and their families from health shock and also provide them relief in the event of accident and disability. This scheme will benefit all medium, small and marginal farmers of the State.

Mr. Acharya also announced a number of welfare schemes for farmers, including lowering of interest rates and provision the Digital Mandi Scheme, and distribution of IKSL Green SIM Card to about one lakh fishermen with facility of receiving free voice messages on the areas of immediate importance to them.

That the government wanted to keep the farming community happy ahead of the polls became clear hours after Mr. Acharya presented the budget proposals in the State Assembly.

“For the first time in the history of Odisha agriculture budget has been presented with increased fund outlay and new schemes for the welfare of the farmers. This shows the commitment of our government towards farmers,” Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said in a statement.

“I am happy that farmers can avail loan at 2 per cent interest and their health issues can be addressed through the newly launched Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana,” Mr. Patnaik said giving his reaction on the budget.

Earlier, explaining the reasons for formulation of a separate agriculture budget, Mr. Acharya told the House that the farm sector in the State was facing several challenges such as low investment, low productivity, fluctuating growth, and recurrence of natural calamities like drought, flood, and cyclone.

The other challenges that the farmers were facing include lack of adequate inputs like quality seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, availability of credit at affordable rates, effective insurance cover against crop loss and access to new technology for productivity gain, post-harvest needs like warehousing, storage and marketing facilities, he added.

“We have to increase agricultural productivity at the same rate at which our Gross State Domestic Product is rising so that the incidence of poverty among the people dependent on agriculture will decline.

This is the way by which one can reduce poverty in an agrarian economy like Odisha,” Mr. Acharya said.

The Chief Minister had personally directed him to prepare a budget dedicated to the growth of agriculture and allied sectors such as horticulture, fisheries, animal husbandry, irrigation, and cooperative credit, Mr. Acharya informed.

With these objectives in view the government had decided to substantially enhance public investment in agriculture and allied sectors in this budget from Rs. 5,627.87 crore in 2012-13 to Rs. 7,161.84 crore in 2013-14, he said.

## **Farmers' convention on February 24**

The Udupi Zilla Krishika Sangha will be organising a one-day Raitha Samavesha (farmers' convention) at Sharada Mantapa here on February 24.

Sangha president Bantakal Ramakrishna Sharma told presspersons here on Tuesday that seminars on various topics related to agriculture and horticulture, and an exhibition of agricultural equipment would be held as part of the convention.

The topics which would be discussed at the seminar include "Requirements for crop change", "Environment-friendly organic farming", "paddy farming on decline", "decline of dairy farming in the coastal belt", "balanced dairy farming", "simple techniques for cost-effective dairy farming", "post-harvest agricultural equipment and technology", and "modern technology in horticulture".

Officials from agricultural, horticultural, and cooperative departments would explain programmes for farmers in their departments. Experts and scientists would guide farmers on conducting profitable agricultural operations. Modern agricultural equipment and literature on agriculture would be displayed at the exhibition.

Somnath Nayak, president of Nagarika Seva Trust, would deliver the keynote address at the inaugural function of the convention.

## **'Conservation of tree species will help farmers'**

Preservation of various tree species will help farmers and an Act on protection of plant species and farmers rights came into force on November 11, 2005, R.C. Agarwal, Registrar General of Protection of Plant Varieties (PPV) and Forest Rights Act (FRA), Union Government, New Delhi, has said.

He was speaking at a national-level consultative workshop and training on "Tree varietal protection and benefit sharing: opportunities and challenges" at the College of Forestry here on Sunday.

He said the Act included directives on rights of genetic experts, rights of farmers, and rights of research scholars. Under the rights of genetic experts, there were matters such as development of various tree species, marketing, and import and export. The farmers' rights stated that a

farmer was a genetic expert as well as protector of plant species, and the rights of research scholar included experiments and research on plant species.

He said there was a National Gene Bank in New Delhi, and original native plant species were being conserved at Dapoli, Ranchi, Solan and Jodhpur. The government would give awards to farmers who conserved native plant species, he added.

R.R. Hanchinal, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, presided over the function.

Western Ghats Task Force Chairman Anant Ashisara and Canara Circle Chief Conservator of Forests N.L. Shantakumar were present.

### **Release water into canals, demand farmers**



Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and Hasiru Sene members staging a protest in Mandya on Tuesday.

Farmers took out a rally here on Tuesday to urge the State government to waive all farm loans and immediately release water into canals to meet drinking water needs.

Several farmers and members of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) and Hasiru Sene participated in a protest later. They requested the district administration to protect the interests of farmers in the Cauvery basin.

The authorities should release water into canals dependent on the Cauvery from the Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS), they said. The farmers also urged the government to supply uninterrupted power to irrigation pump sets in the district.

The Irrigation Department has stopped releasing water into the canals in view of the poor storage in the KRS.

KRRS leader K.S. Puttannaiah submitted a memorandum to Mandya Deputy Commissioner B.N. Krishnaiah and Mandya Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer P.C. Jayanna seeking fulfilment of their demands.

### **Rs.18.39 crore relief for farmers**

Relief to the tune of Rs.18.39 crore will be given to farmers who suffered more than 50 per cent crop loss in this samba season in Thanjavur district, said K.Baskaran, District Collector, here on Monday.

He discussed preparations for disbursing the relief to farmers . A sum of Rs.15,000 per acre is to be paid to farmers who suffered more than 50 per cent crop loss in the district. The Collector said that crops on 12,249 acres have suffered more than 50 per cent damage .

Relief will be paid through Thanjavur and Kumbakonam central co-operative banks and nationalised and commercial banks. Amount will be deposited in the account of farmers. The Collector asked tahsildhars to prepare the list of farmers identified to get the benefit with their names, address, bank account number, and 'chita adangal.' An GO to provide 150 days of work under Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee scheme (MGNREGS). Thirty thousand people who have been provided 132 days of work should be provided additional days of work by the Block Development Officers. Government has ordered to dig 786 farm ponds in the district under MGNREGS. S.Suresh Kumar, District Revenue officer, K.Varadarajan, Project Officer, District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Mohammed Yahiya, Joint Director of Agriculture, participated.

### **Farmers stage demonstration in protest against laying of gas pipeline**

The project will affect the livelihood of farming community'



Venting ire: Farmers protesting against the GAIL's gas pipeline project at Periyakattupalayam village near Chennimalai on Tuesday.— PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

More than 200 farmers and women staged a demonstration at a village in Chennimalai block of Erode district on Tuesday protesting against the Gas Authority of India Limited's (GAIL) move to lay the gas pipeline through farm lands.

Farmers and women gathered at a field in Periyakattupalayam near Chennimalai, one of the villages enroute the pipeline, and raised slogans against the GAIL authorities stating that the project would affect the livelihood of the farming community.

### **Farm lands**

Protesting under the banner of Farmer's Livelihood Protection Movement, farmers said that the public sector major had laid the pipeline along the National Highways in Kerala and Karnataka. But it had been taking the pipeline through the farm lands.

The State government should intervene in the issue immediately and stop the public sector company from laying the pipeline and protect the interests of the farmers. The government should organise a tripartite meeting with the participation of farmers and GAIL authorities. The farming community should be allowed to voice its concerns in the meeting, they demanded.

### **Dues not paid for land acquisition: farmers**

Farmers of Kancheepuram said they had not received dues of over Rs. 2.80 crore—Photo: B. Jothi Ramalingam



Farmers in Kancheepuram staged a demonstration on Tuesday demanding compensation for land they gave to the government for the Kancheepuram Bypass.

According to G. Mani, one of the protesters, around 85 farmers from the villages of Keezh Ambi, Thiruparuthi Kundram, Sevilimedu, Keezh Kathirpur and Putheri had to give up over 800 acres of land to make way for the two-lane ring road.

The Rs. 34-crore stretch takes off from NH4 near Vella gate in Kancheepuram and goes up to Sevilimedu. The road offers connectivity to SIPCOT estate in Cheyyar. Land required to make the stretch a four-lane facility has been acquired.

The farmers said they had not receive dues of over Rs. 2.80 crore. They also demanded interest on the amount and sought compensation for the loss of their livelihood.

The highways department said Rs. 2.80 crore had been deposited with the revenue department towards compensation for the farmers.

Another protester S. Mani said the government had turned down their suggestion for an alternate route via Vedavalli river and Keezh Ambi lake.

“Government officials told us the road had to be completed within the stipulated time and so we handed over our land before the compensation came through. Now they are making us run from pillar to post for our rightful dues. If they do not want to give cash, why don't they give land as compensation?” he said.

The bypass cuts across the lands of several farmers.

### **Heavy rain in Erode**

Heavy rain wrecked havoc at Gobichettipalayam, Punjai Puliampatti and a few other parts in the district on Monday night with several areas reporting water logging, crop damage and disruption of power supply.

The Gobichettipalayam and Anthiyur blocks bore the brunt as at least 15,000 banana trees were completely destroyed in the strong wind that accompanied the showers.

Farmers said they had suffered heavy losses in the strong wind.

### **550 farm offices in State to get two-wheelers**

The State department of agriculture has sanctioned the distribution of 550 two-wheelers to agricultural offices across Kerala, a move that has been widely welcomed.

Directorate of Agriculture plans to cover the more than 1,000 Krishi Offices across Kerala in two phases.

The first phase will see allocation of 550 two-wheelers, exhaustively covering Kollam, Palakkad, Wayanad and Kannur districts where Leads (Lead Farmer-centred Extension Advisory and Delivery Services) programme is being implemented on a pilot basis.

The aim of the move is to strengthen the extension services in Krishi Bhavan; to ensure effective utilisation of time and activities of extension staff; to see that timely attention is paid to field problems and that remedial measures are taken through improved mobility, effective implementation and supervision of plan schemes, said the office order.

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### **Ensure water to farm fields in tail-end areas, officials told**

Water release schedule should be announced in advance: Collector



REACHING OUT:Collector Neetu Prasad visiting farm fields at Aratlakatta village in East Godavari district on Tuesday.— PHOTO: S. RAMBABU

District Collector Neetu Prasad on Tuesday asked the officials of the Irrigation Department to ensure water supply to the farm fields located in the tail-end areas, as the water levels in the Godavari were low.

Along with the officials, the Collector visited Peddarappadu and Aratlakatta villages of Karapa mandal and interacted with farmers there. The Collector said that the standing crop was in good condition and it was up to the irrigation officials to ensure good returns to farmers.

She said that canal water management was the need of the hour and the officials must adopt turn system to ensure water to all the fields in the tail-ends.

Ms. Neetu pointed out that it was important to announce in advance about the release of the water, so that the farmers concerned could make necessary arrangements to water their fields.

The Collector cautioned the officials against leakages to the canals and diversion of water. Maintenance of logbooks on diverting of water from the canals to the fields through engines and periodical review of water levels were the other issues highlighted by the Collector.

Executive engineer of the eastern delta M.V. Rama Rao said that paddy had been transplanted in 2.23 lakh acres in the eastern delta, in which over 23,000 acres of fields were in the tail-ends. Kakinada revenue divisional officer G. Jawaharlal Nehru and other officials were present.

### **Farmers say they're ready to give land at Rs. 1 cr. per acre**



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Farmers of Jakkasandra and surrounding villages in Malur taluk have said that they will part with their land to set up an industrial area there if only they were paid Rs. 1 crore per acre of land to be acquired for the purpose.

A meeting was convened on Thursday to discuss the issue and ascertain the opinion of the public in connection with the rate to be fixed for the land near Jakkasandra where it is proposed to set up the third phase of the industrial area.

The farmers argued that they would be losing fertile irrigated land and hence, they should be given more compensation. "We will not give land if the rate fixed is at even Rs. 80 lakh per acre," the farmers insisted.

Deputy Commissioner D.S. Vishwanath clarified that he had the authority to fix a maximum of Rs. 40 lakh per acre of acquired land. While Rs. 30 lakh was given for land at Vemgal, the amount could be raised to Rs. 40 lakh for land in Jakkasandra, he said.

“If the farmers insisted on more, that will be conveyed to the government,” Mr. Vishwanath, who is also the chairman of the price fixation committee, said.

According to the sub-registrar the rate of irrigated land in the area was in the range of Rs. 10 lakh to 12 lakh per acre. However, since Rs. 30 lakh was given to Vemgal farmers, the committee could fix it at Rs. 40 lakh using its discretionary power, Mr. Vishwanath said.

The government will not force the farmers to give their land for the industrial area, he said. A former MLA A. Nagaraj and farmer leader A. Ashwath Reddy spoke.

Joint Director of the Department of Industries V. Venkatesh, Land Acquisition Officer Ambarish and Assistant Commissioner Ayesha Parveen were present.

### **For sugar industry, Budget might bring news of decontrol**

The Union Budget will be presented at a time when the UPA government is in election mode and has put a blanket cap on spending by Ministries unless a project is part of its “flagship programme”, particularly the cash transfers scheme. In the food, agriculture and food processing sector, this signals a support to the National Food Security Bill, despite all its inherent weaknesses and limitations, and a big push to farm mechanisation and small farmers collectives to facilitate contract and lease farming for the mega hyperlinks that will arrive with the opening up of multibrand retail markets.

There is no visibility yet on push to the backward-forward linkages between farmers and markets or on rural infrastructure/cold chain units or on the issue of farm credit in the informal sector or on land reforms. It is as if these burning issues will on their own disappear once the international hyperlinks appear on the scene, to cater for Indians but really to use India — with its poorly paid farmers and cheap and abundant labour — as a marketing hub and for lining their deep pockets.

It is expected that the Budget will ease duties and taxes on agro machinery and farm equipment, machinery for food and seeds processing, labs for testing seeds etc., for cold chains, refrigerated storages and warehouses and processing of agriculture produce, including horticulture, dairy, poultry, marine and meat products.

For the sugar industry, the Budget might bring news of decontrol, which will most likely make the sweetener expensive under the public distribution system for below the poverty line (BPL) consumers. Either this or the Centre will pass on the subsidy for discounted PDS sugar to the States.

A formula is being worked out under which industry will be freed of its 10 per cent levy obligation and the government (either the Centre or the States or both) will bear the cost of subsidy.

On average, the agriculture and allied sectors grew by 3.3 per cent in the 11th Plan period (against a target of 4 per cent), compared to 2.4 per cent average GDP in the sector during the previous Plan. Much of the growth, however, is attributed to the livestock and dairy sector.

If anything, the fisheries sector has fallen short of the 6 per cent growth target and on average, there has been a perceptible fall in the production of pulses, coarse cereals and oilseeds. But for maize, which is largely required for poultry feed etc., the government's attention is dwindling from policy intervention to encourage growth of coarse cereals, particularly the rain-fed nutritious jowar, bajra and small millets.

Combined with depleting forests, this has had a huge impact on availability of fodder and feed for livestock and has hit hard the supplementary incomes of small and marginal farmers. A reason for farmers' suicides is lack of supplementary income at times of crisis such as failed crop with the additional cost of maintaining livestock. This is an area of neglect that needs attention, along with a shift from the unabashed push for genetically modified crops.

### **Record foodgrains production**

Foodgrains production last year was a record, nearly 260 million tonnes, and though it is expected to be lower at 250 million tonnes this year largely due to kharif drought, it is at the same time an achievement and a concern for lack of storage spaces.

The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna, which provides flexibility to the States to plan out their projects in agriculture and allied sector has paid rich dividends, although the spending on livestock and fisheries sector is not much.

Likewise, there was a shift two years ago in focus from the Indo-Gangetic belt to north-eastern States be it in horticulture or floriculture or other potentials. But in the last year, the allocation to this region has dwindled perhaps due to lack of adequate marketing infrastructure and connectivity.

Despite the highest-ever grains production, the prices of essentials have largely remained high during the year. Food inflation now stood at 11 per cent. The prices of pulses, sugar, milk, edible oils, atta and tea have been consistently rising, not to speak of other commodities.

Normally this is attributed to supply-side problems but clearly there are several issues that need to be addressed, including need to bring more area under irrigation, evolving newer technology and invigorating the extension services to prepare farmers for the erratic monsoon which is now becoming a pattern.

There was a loss of about 10 million tonnes of production last kharif owing to drought in just five States, the worst being Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, which also suffered drinking water problem. Yet, the Centre has put a blanket ban on expenditure on irrigation projects.

This will not only impact the agriculture and food sectors in the immediate term but red tape will put back the momentum and continuity in crucial development projects by a couple of years

### **Vijayamma wants farm loans waived**

YSR Congress Party leader Y.S. Vijayamma on Tuesday urged the Centre to come up immediately with a loan waiver scheme for farmers and rural artisans.

In a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, she referred to the 25 per cent increase in MSP for common grade paddy from Rs.1,000 to Rs.1,250 per quintal in the last three years. During the same period all input prices like those of the seed, fuel, fertilizer, labour and general inflation have gone up making agriculture completely unviable. -Special Correspondent .

## Minister bats for micro-irrigation



Water Resources Minister Basavaraj Bommai speaking after dedicating the Bhima Lift Irrigation Project to the nation at Sonna village in Afzalpur taluk in Gulbarga district on Tuesday.

The State government wants to bring 50 per cent of arable area under the irrigation network, by introducing new water management practices and micro-irrigation, Minister for Water Resources Basavaraj Bommai has said.

He was speaking after dedicating the Bhima Lift Irrigation Project to the nation at Sonna village in Afzalpur taluk of Gulbarga district on Tuesday.

### Pioneer

Mr. Bommai said that Karnataka was a pioneer in taking micro-irrigation to the project level, introducing sprinkler and drip irrigation systems over large areas.

### Demands

Effective implementation of the technique would be further beneficial, he said, especially as the State has limited resources to meet farmers' demands for more irrigation facilities. "We can save 50 per cent water by changing over to the micro-irrigation and use the same for increasing the irrigation network," he said. The government had already cleared projects to bring 7 lakh ha acres under micro irrigation in Koppal, Raichur and Gulbarga districts.

### Projects completed



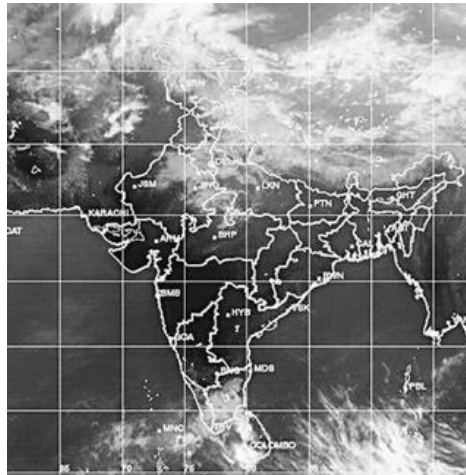
According to the Minister, more than 25 irrigation projects had been completed in the past five years, bringing more than 7.5 lakh hectares under the irrigation network.

At present, more than 28 per cent of the area in the State was irrigated.

He said his department would take up a survey on construction of three barrages across the Bhima, as requested by Malikayya Guttedar, Afzalpur MLA.

The former Chief Minister N. Dharam Singh spoke.

## weather



New Delhi (Plm)	21	11	0	98
New Delhi (Sfd)	21	11	0	127
Chandigarh	21	11	0	108
Hissar	21	9	0	53
Bhuntar	20	3	0	248
Shimla	12	4	0	263
Jammu	21	10	0	96
Srinagar	16	1	0	89
Amritsar	21	7	0	64
Patiala	21	11	0	85
Jaipur	23	12	0	24
Udaipur	24	11	0	4
Allahabad	25	11	0	58

Lucknow	23	10	0	141
Varanasi	25	12	0	85
Dehradun	21	9	0	288
Agartala	24	13	0	9
Ahmedabad	29	15	0	tr
Bangalore	32	21	0	3
Bhubaneshwar	30	16	0	3
Bhopal	24	10	0	21
Chennai	31	24	0	20
Guwahati	25	13	0	11
Hyderabad	31	16	0	17
Kolkata	25	15	0	22
Mumbai	32	20	0	0
Nagpur	28	11	0	13
Patna	23	13	0	49
Pune	31	10	0	0
Thiruvananthapuram	33	22	16	47
Imphal	25	7	0	1
Shillong	15	5	0	26

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:** Weather was mainly dry over the region.

**MINIMUM TEMPERATURES :** The minimum temperatures rose appreciably in west Rajasthan, rose in east Rajasthan and Uttarakhand and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably above normal in west Rajasthan and normal in the rest of the region.

The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 07.4°C recorded at Amritsar (Punjab).

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 21st FEBRUARY 2013:** Rain/snow may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 48 hours and increase thereafter. Rain/snow may occur at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on 21st. Rain/thundershowers may also occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana, north Rajasthan on 21st.

## weather

Chennai

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Feb 20

Max Min

29° | 25°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 62

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:29

Sunset: 06:15

Barometer: 1014

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Thursday, Feb 21

Max Min

30° | 25°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Friday  
Feb 22



31° | 25°  
Partly Cloudy

Saturday  
Feb 23



30° | 25°  
Cloudy

Sunday  
Feb 24



30° | 25°  
Cloudy

Monday  
Feb 25



31° | 24°  
Sunny

Tuesday  
Feb 26



30° | 24°  
Sunny

#### Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:55

Sunset: 06:14

Barometer: 1019



# THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

20.02.2013 A.M

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19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013

## Sugar gains on move to levy more excise duty



Sugar prices shot up by Rs 20-25 a quintal at all level on Tuesday as producers sold at higher price on demand and possibilities of increase in excise duty on sugar in the Budget.

The Government's willingness to decontrol the sugar sector has improved the overall sentiment in the market. After a long time Maharashtra's mills sold sugar in rail rakes to eastern buyers. This is seen as a sign of demand recovery, said an observer.

Harakhchand Vora of Kavita trading co said: "The Vashi terminal market was closed for Shivaji Jayanti, hence, there were no arrivals and dispatches.

Mills are getting good buying support even at higher price. After a long time, Maharashtra mills sold about two rail rakes (approximately 54,000 bags) to buyers from West Bengal.

Producers also sold more than 1.25 lakh bags to State-level stockists at Rs 20-25 higher, he said.

Profit booking by long position holders pulled down the futures market by Rs 18. With rise in temperature, demand for sugar will increase, he said. On Monday evening, about 11-12 mills sold 1.25 lakh-1.50 lakh bags (each of 100 kg) to the local buyers in the range of Rs 3,100-3,130 (Rs 3,070-3,100) for S-grade and Rs 3,200-3,270 (Rs 3,150-3,260) for M-grade.

More than that millers sold two rail rakes to the eastern side buyers.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, prices for March were down by Rs 19 to Rs 3,152 (Rs 3,171); April dropped by Rs 10 to Rs 3,208 (Rs 3,218) and May was Rs 3,255 (Rs 3,263).

**Nominal rates at the Vashi wholesale sugar market were (Rs/quintal):** S-grade Rs 3,210-3,290 (Rs 3,196-3,272) and M-grade Rs 3,280-3,460 (Rs 3,262- 3,431). **Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,200-3,230 (Rs 3,170 -3,200) and M-grade Rs 3,260-3,370 (Rs 3,240-3,360).

### Flour demand keeps dara wheat firm



Dara wheat prices remained unchanged after the weekend's rally, while there was a marginal uptrend in flour on domestic buying on Tuesday.

Following demand for flour, interest in dara wheat was firm, said Sewa Ram, a trader.

Wheat prices have been ruling firm since the last weekend and may continue to rule around current levels this week, he said.

Market is getting support from a strong consumer interest, said Sewa Ram.

In the physical market, dara wheat quoted at Rs 1,530-1,535 a quintal.

Around 60 tonnes of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh the stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,530 while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,535.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, after witnessing a good rally earlier on Monday, February contracts firmed up, while March contracts witnessed some correction on Tuesday.

Wheat for February contracts improved by Rs 7 and traded at Rs 1,630. While March contracts eased by Rs 3 to Rs 1,514. Wheat, spot prices on the exchange improved by Rs 10 and traded at Rs 1,520.

### **Flour Prices**

An increase in demand pushed flour prices marginally up by Rs 5 and quoted at Rs 1,755. On the other hand, Chokar continued to rule flat and sold at Rs 1,360-1,400.

Recently, Global commodities trading companies, Glencore International PLC and Concordia Agritrading Ltd have bought one lakh tonnes each from STC at \$310.21 a tonne.

### **Bearish futures hit spot turmeric trade**



Turmeric sales decreased due to the fall in futures prices.

“All the traders are waiting for fresh orders from North India from March first week”, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said futures prices decreased by Rs 60 a quintal, as traders quoting lower price purchased a few bags.

Hybrid turmeric increased by Rs 200 a quintal and the other varieties by Rs 100. Of 3,398 bags, only 50 per cent stocks were sold.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety (new crop) sold at Rs 4,611-6,484; the root variety Rs 4,777-5,699.

The finger variety (old crop) sold at Rs 5,159-6,565; the root variety Rs 4,974-5,792.

**Salem hybrid crop:** The finger variety fetched Rs 5,811-6,969; the root variety Rs 5,406-6,115. Out of 582 bags, 129 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,490-6,831; the root variety Rs 5,417-5,959.

All the 468 bags including the 15 new crop bags were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,211-6,570.

The root variety was sold at Rs 4,386-5,899. All the 262 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,069-6,514; the root variety Rs 4,769-5,891.

All the 35 bags were sold.

### **Panic sales by stockists pound chana**

Our Correspondent

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Chana ruled flat at Rs 3,450 a quintal amid slack demand even as arrival of new chana in the local mandis has declined in the past few days due to continuing labourers strike.

Chana (desi) also ruled stable at Rs 3,200. Among other varieties, chana (Vishal) on Tuesday ruled at Rs 2,900-3,200; chana (Annagiri) at Rs 3,200-3,300; chana (Russian) at Rs 3,500; chana (Mausmi) Rs 4,000-4,500, while Kabuli Bitki ruled at Rs 3,500.

Chana prices have declined by Rs 75-100 a quintal in the last two sessions with stockists, anticipating bumper crop output, indulging in panic selling.

Chana prices have been declining on better crop prospects in major chana growing States of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

Added to this, arrival of large quantity of imported chana from Australia and Tanzania has forced stockists release carryover stocks, leading to a decline in prices.

With Madhya Pradesh already having about 10 lakh tonnes of carryover stocks, prices may decline by Rs 200, said a trader.



According to experts, output in Madhya Pradesh this year is expected around 16 lakh tonnes against 82-83 lakh tonnes at the national-level.

As the weather gets drier in the next few days, arrival of new chana will pick up, subject to discontinuation of labourers' strike.

Chana dal also ruled stable amid slack demand. However, compared with last week, its is ruling Rs 50-75 higher.

On Tuesday, chana dal (average) ruled at Rs 4,150-75; chana dal (medium) Rs 4,250-75; chana dal (bold) Rs 4,375-4,400.

Dollar chana also ruled steady at Rs 4,000-4,800 amid subdued demand, even as arrival declined to 700-800 bags on account of continuing labourers' strike. In container, dollar chana new (42/44 count) ruled at Rs 5,750-75; 44/46 count Rs 5,625-50 while 58/60 count ruled at Rs 4,200.

### **83% of offerings sold at Coonor tea auctions**

About 83 per cent of the 14.92 lakh kg offered for Sale No: 7 of Coonor [Tea](#) Trade Association (CTTA) auctions were sold.

For the second consecutive week, the oldest bought-leaf tea factory in Kotagiri region, Cross Hill Tea Factory, topped the CTC market with Broken Pekoe leaf grade fetched Rs 181 a kg – the highest among all leaf and dust grades of all CTC teas. Homedale Tea Factory tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, also fetched the highest price of Rs 181 a kg in the CTC leaf auction. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 166. In all, 67 marks got Rs 125 and more a kg.

Among orthodox teas, Chamraj got Rs 271 a kg, Highfield Estate Rs 231, Havukal Rs 181, Glendale Rs 175, Kairbetta and Corsley Rs 172 each, Prammas Rs 171 and Kodanad Rs 170. In all, 33 marks got Rs 100 and more.

### **Rubber prices rule flat in Kochi**

Physical [rubber](#) prices finished unchanged on Tuesday. The sentiments were under pressure tracking the sharp declines in Tocom rubber futures and another weak closing on NMCE. But

the market ended flat lacking quantity sellers and genuine buyers to set a definite trend in the commodity.

Sheet rubber closed steady at Rs 157 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

In futures, the March series weakened to Rs 157.50 (158.36), April to Rs 161.01 (162.11), May to Rs 164.50 (165.68) and June to Rs 167 (168.69) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 declined at its February futures to ₹297.10 (Rs 172.35) from ₹307 a kg during the day session and then to ₹290 (Rs 168.25) a kg in the night session on Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg):** RSS-4: 157 (157); RSS-5: 152 (152); Ungraded: 147 (147); ISNR 20: 152 (152) and Latex 60 per cent: 100 (100).

### **'Transgenic crops needed, but strict testing procedure is a must'**

Transgenic (genetically modified) crops may become necessary in future, as the population is exploding, but there should be strict screening and testing facilities for GM food crops, according to Lalji Singh, Vice-Chancellor of the Hindu Benaras University and the former director of the Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB).

Lalji Singh, who was here to receive the Nayudamma memorial award, said in an interview that, "we should not be phobic about genetically modified food crops, they may be quite necessary in future, as the population is exploding. How can we meet our food needs if we do not accept the genetically modified crops? We have to double or treble our food production. But as in the US or elsewhere in the west, we must have strict protocols and procedures for testing and screening such crops. There may be no danger. But we have to take all precautions. At the same time, we should not have unfounded apprehensions and fears."

### **Quality seeds**

Even without genetic modification, he felt, a lot could be done by providing quality seeds to farmers in the country.

“We should have in mind the small farmers and the size of holdings in our country and our farm research should be given that orientation. We in the BHU are also doing our bit. We have an agricultural lab in the university and we have provided quality seeds to farmers in the neighbourhood and the response to the initiative was tremendous. But our resources are limited and we can help farmers to the extent possible,” he said.

### Trading in cashew market listless

The cashew market stayed quiet last week but some stray business with the US and Europe was done at the lower end. Volumes traded were small as most processors in India were not willing to sell at lower levels and Vietnam was closed.

The domestic market was quiet with slow offtake and lower buying ideas. Price range during the week was W240 from \$3.85-4.05, W320 \$3.35-3.50, W450 \$3.05-3.15, SW320 at around \$3.10, SW360 at around \$2.90, splits \$2-2.20 and pieces \$1.45-1.55 f.o.b.

There was not much activity in raw cashew nut (RCN) market but the undertone was steady. Business was done for Tanzanian nuts at around \$1,325 a tonne and for Mozambique \$950. It seems that 2012 crop in both the origins will be smaller than the previous year's.

There were reports of some trades for West Africa new crop RCN for March shipment in the range of \$1,050-1,075 a tonne for Benin at around \$1,000 for Ghana and at around \$950 for Ivory Coast . Until movements start, all prices should be considered only as indications, Pankaj N. Sapat a Mumbai-based dealer told *Business Line*. With latest reports of Brazil crop being a third of normal, the pace of activity by Brazil will have an important effect on prices in West Africa.

Domestic RCN prices have opened at very high levels despite expectation of a good crop. In the next two weeks, “we should get an idea of price trend for Vietnam domestic RCN and also whether the reported financing problems are having any impact on intensity of buying by various categories of processors,” he said.

In March, all attention will be on West Africa, he said. If movements start early as expected and RCN prices soften, “we could see more processors reducing prices. But if there are any delays or supply disruptions, it would drive up prices.

Delays and disruptions could also mean some periods of lower shelling and kernel shipment.”

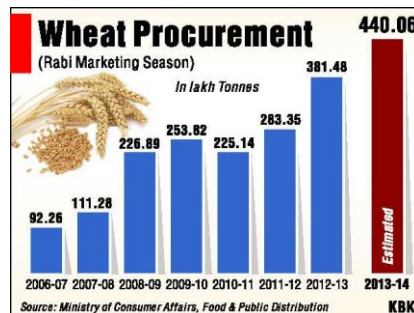
On the kernel side, the trend of short term buying continues and this means periodic bursts of activity with resultant dips and spikes in price within a narrow range. In a way, this is good as it reduces the chances of getting caught on the wrong foot.

But it increases the chances of temporary “stock out” situations. Slow movement and wide price differential for the scorched and broken continues to be a “bug bear” for the shellers.

If consumption does not improve in the coming months, it will impact their operations in terms of costs and cash flow. With normal to good crops expected in all origins in the next 3-4 months, it is reasonable to expect steady market if everything remains on track.

Situation needs to be watched closely till Apr/May for any developments on weather and logistics, he added.

### India may buy record 44 million tonnes of wheat this year



The Government expects to procure a record 44 million tonnes (mt) of wheat in the current rabi marketing season starting April. This is about 6 mt or 15 per cent more than last year’s 38.14 mt.

The wheat procurement estimates were finalised at a meeting of State Food Secretaries on Monday. The country is expected to produce 92.3 mt of wheat this year against last year’s record output of 94.88 mt.

For the current year, the Centre has declared a minimum support price of Rs 1,350 a quintal, up from last year’s Rs 1,285. Sudhir Kumar, Secretary, Food and Public Administration, requested

the Food Corporation of India and State procurement agencies to proactively open adequate purchase centres with sufficient manpower. The meeting also reviewed storage plans and discussed other issues such as the availability of credit to State agencies involved in procurement, setting of purchase centres and availability of adequate packaging material. The Food Corporation was directed to computerise information about the number and locations of its agencies. All States have been asked to set up a control room to update daily information on the progress of procurement on a Web portal.

### **Food rights organisations flay Sharad Pawar's pitch for GM crops**

Food rights organisations, under the aegis of the Right to Food Campaign (RFC), have written to Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar urging him to tackle food security in more 'fundamental ways' rather than link it with genetically modified (GM) crops.

At a press conference here on Tuesday, RFC released the letter signed by hundreds of organisations, including National Advisory Council member Aruna Roy criticising the Agriculture Ministry's stance in an affidavit to the Supreme Court calling it a "trivialisation and mockery of the grave situation of hunger and malnutrition that exists in India".

"In this affidavit, your Ministry argued that GM crops and their field trials were needed for India's food security, in addition to wilfully choosing to misinterpret the sound recommendations of the Technical Expert Committee set up by the Supreme Court," says the letter.

Maintaining that food security was not "a simplistic supply-related matter, as our paradox of overflowing godowns, record buffer stocks and the hungry millions showcases", the letter said it was unfortunate that while the discourse around food security and hunger had become more nuanced the world over, the Indian Government chooses to be "unscientific" in its outlook.

It urged the Agriculture Ministry not to "come in the way of much-needed improvements in the transgenics scene in India," reminding it of the recommendations made by the Technical Expert Committee.

The letter said it did not make sense that the Ministry, instead of focusing on strengthening local food production and distribution, was diverting valuable investments towards "controversial, unproven techno-fixes."

Pushing for the GM crops to boost farm output, Pawar on Monday had said scientists should not be denied the right to conduct field trials of such crops. In August last year, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture had recommended discontinuation of that all field trials in GM crops. Three years earlier, the Government had placed a moratorium on the commercial release of Bt brinjal.

### Seed makers plan high-density Bt cotton planting to boost yield



Faced with stagnating yields from [Bt cotton](#) hybrids, seed makers are now advocating high-density planting or putting more plants an acre by reducing the spacing to boost the output.

Nuziveedu Seeds, the largest Bt cotton seed vendor, has experimented the concept of high-density planting in about 10,000 acres in Vidarbha covering some 3,500 farmers last kharif in a public-private partnership (PPP) project to improve [cotton](#) production.

“We are looking to scale up this project to about one lakh hectares during the kharif season this year and are in talks with the Maharashtra Government,” said M. Prabhakara Rao, Chairman, NSL Group.

Traditionally, farmers have planted some 5,000-6,000 hybrid plants an acre. “In the first year of the project, we had doubled the plant density to 10,000-12,000 plants,” Rao said, adding that the results were encouraging as cotton yields went up by 25 per cent to 75 per cent.

### Cultivation costs rise

High-density planting increases the cultivation cost for farmers as they have to use more seeds an acre. Besides, they also have to use a plant regulator – mepiquat chloride – to reduce the vegetative growth at regular intervals and advance the maturation of the cotton bolls and some micronutrients.

“The increase in cultivation costs is estimated at around Rs 3,000 an acre, which is offset by higher yields for the farmer,” said S.V.R. Rao, Senior Vice-President – Strategic Planning, Nuziveedu Seeds.

### **Public private project**

Under the PPP project, Nuziveedu gave a subsidy of Rs 100 for a packet of Bt cotton seeds (of 450 grams), costing Rs 930.

S.K. Goel, Principal Secretary –Agriculture, Maharashtra, said that the cotton improvement project was one of the 12 projects taken up under the PPP for Integrated Agriculture Development (PPP-IAD) under the World Economic Forum’s New Agriculture Initiative.

“We expect the private players to invest in the front-end to connect farmers to the market,” Goel said. Nuziveedu had set up a ginning mill in the Vidarbha region and is planning seven more as it plans to expand the acreage under the project.

Goel said the average increase in yield reported by farmers stood at 49 per cent. “We are looking to expand the acreage under the project and expect to finalise the area soon,” he said.

K.R. Kranthi, Director of Nagpur-based Central Institute of Cotton Research, said that the concept of high-density planting works even in the State-owned hybrids. However, it is the additional cost of seeds that the farmers have to bear, which increases their cultivation costs.

Mahyco Monsanto Biotech India has also conducted trials in the North central and southern zones last year using some 60 different hybrids and the results have been encouraging, a spokesperson said. Monsanto has reported a 13-65 per cent rise in yields in Gujarat, while the yields were up 44 per cent in Maharashtra. In Andhra, the yields were up by about 48 per cent, the spokesperson said.

### **Tackle food security in 'fundamental ways', activists tell Pawar**

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### **Govt aims to procure record 44 mt wheat**

The Government expects to procure a record high 44 million tonnes of wheat in the rabi marketing season 2013-14 starting April. Last year, the Government had procured 38.14 mt.



The wheat procurement estimates were finalised in a meeting of state food secretaries on Monday. According to early projections, the country is expected to produce 92.3 mt against last year's 94.88 mt.

Sudhir Kumar, Union Secretary for Food and Public Administration, requested Food Corporation of India and State procurement agencies to take advance action to open adequate purchase centers with sufficient manpower. The meeting also reviewed storage plans and discussed other issues such as the availability of credit to state agencies involved in procurement, setting of purchase centre and availability of adequate packaging material.

FCI was directed to computerise information about number and locations of centres of agencies. All States have been asked to setup a control room to update daily information on the progress of procurement on a Web Portal.

### **Coconut oil prices dip on continued copra sales**

The coconut oil market in Kerala and Tamil Nadu is still in a bearish mode due to the liquidation of copra by stockists.

Prakash B. Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants' Association (COMA), said this has resulted in a decline in prices in both the markets this week.

The market, he said, is witnessing a selling trend and trading at Rs 65 per kg in Kerala (Rs 67) and Rs 63 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 64). While copra prices remained at the same level of Rs 4,700 per quintal in Kerala and Rs 4,600 in Tamil Nadu, up by Rs 100 quoted last week.

The rates are expected to come down further in the coming weeks in anticipation of the commencement of the new season in North Kerala, especially in Kannur and Kasargod districts, he said.

New arrivals of copra have been reported from these two districts, which would continue to keep prices low, he added.

Other edible oils such as palm oil and palm kernel oil remained at last week's level of Rs 52 and Rs 53 for a kg respectively.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA said the market is passive and witnessing a selling trend. The prices are likely to decline further due to additional arrivals of copra following the start of the season. Besides, the two-day all-India strike by trade unions would affect market operations, more so in Kerala than in Tamil Nadu.

He reiterated that the Government should take effective measures to ensure a proper copra procurement drive to stabilise the market.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, expected the decline in prices to continue in the coming weeks due to absence of corporate demand and low prices of other edible oils. The market may face some difficulties next month on account of the financial year ending, which leads to stock taking and payment of various taxes.

# Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

20.02.2013 A.M

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## Unseasonal rain damages potato crop



Unseasonal rainfall in major potato-growing states has damaged the crop, resulting in a rise in its prices. Though the actual loss is yet to be ascertained, experts say the sustained, untimely rainfall would have a long-term impact. When temperatures start rising in March, the tubers would start rotting, they add.

The winter season was followed by unseasonal, intermittent rain for about 20 days in major growing states such as Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, West Bengal and Bihar. This took a toll on the harvest.

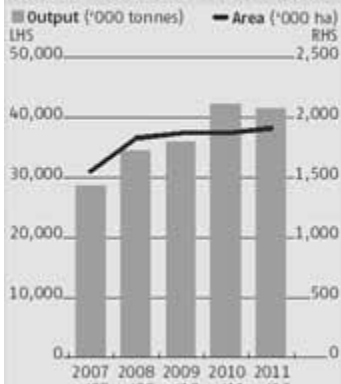
“The 15-20 days of continuous unseasonal rainfall have already delayed new crop arrivals for about a month, owing to excessive mud in the field. This may cause the new crop to rot, resulting in a loss in output. And, the situation may aggravate with the onset of summer heat in March,” said a senior scientist with a leading research firm.

Earlier, the National Council of Applied Economic Research had estimated the output would rise five to seven per cent from 44.6- 5.6 million tonnes (mt) in 2011-12.

Another spell of rainfall has been forecast for February 23, after which the Central Potato Research Institute would send a team to major potato-growing belts to assess the damage to the crop.

## POOR SHOW

### Area under potato & its output



Source : Ministry of Agriculture

“The actual production loss would be known only towards the end of February. But the crop has surely been damaged, and it would develop rots later. This would not only reduce overall availability of the premium variety of potato, but also hit its quality,” said the scientist. The new crop, usually sown in early-February, would now be sown in March, he added.

Meanwhile, prices have started responding to the low supply. In Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh), between February 13 and February 18, potato rose by Rs 90/quintal to Rs 610 a quintal. In Delhi, prices rose from Rs 636 a quintal to Rs 683/quintal. In the Hubli (Karnataka) market, prices jumped from Rs 1,000 a quintal to Rs 1,400 a quintal, in Kolkata from Rs 610/quintal to Rs 700/quintal and in Nasik from Rs 800/quintal to Rs 875/quintal. on Tuesday, prices in Pune rose by Rs 50 to Rs 1,100/quintal.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium estimated four to five per cent loss in output due to snowfall.

In West Bengal, the sowing area increased six to seven per cent, and this is expected to compensate for the loss in output. Against the usual output of 9.5-10 mt, potato production in the state stood at 8.5 mt.

### Onion prices fall on high arrivals, low demand



After touching peak levels in recent weeks, onion prices at wholesale markets are showing signs of cooling. At Lasalgaon in Maharashtra, the average price quoted yesterday was Rs 1,175 a quintal as against Rs 2,150 a quintal on January 30.

The prices have almost touched the approximate levels of Rs 1,100 a quintal seen in the beginning of January. Prices went up last month on delay in arrival of new crop and report of some crop damage. Prices had touched Rs 2,331 a quintal in the wholesale market on January 31, creating turmoil among consumers.

Things seem to be getting normalised and the higher prices have also dampened demand. “Prices have fallen in the past week due to lower offtake of onion both domestic and exporters. Also, there is increased arrival at most markets in Maharashtra and Gujarat,” said a trader at the Nashik onion market.

According to market participants, with a rise in arrivals and less demand, prices have shown a downward trend. At the Mahuva market in Gujarat, prices were quoted at Rs 1,050 a quintal, down Rs 700-800 a quintal from a peak of Rs 1,800 a quintal at the end of January.

According to sources in Maharashtra, there is likely to be a 10-15 per cent decline in onion sowing this rabi season. “Last year was exceptional for production. This year, due to lesser sowing, we believe Maharashtra’s production will be around 4.5 million tonnes, close to the average of the past three years,” said an official from the Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board at Nashik. In 2011-12, output was 5.63 mt.

In its initial crop projection, the National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF) estimated production at 16.6 mt for 2012-13 against 17.5 mt last year. Most of the production is consumed domestically; eight to 10 per cent is exported.

**COOLING DOWN**  
Onion prices in Lasalgaon market  
(₹/qtl)

Jan 30, '13	2,150	
Jan 31, '13	2,150	
Feb 1, '13	1,850	
Feb 14, '13	1,200	
Feb 15, '13	1,175	
Feb 18, '13	1,490	

Source: National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation

“Initial estimates show a dip in onion production this year. The rabi onion crop will be less because of drought-like condition in some parts. We believe onion production to be around 16.6 mt. However, sowing is still on in some parts, so, these cannot be final figures,” said R P Gupta, director, NHRDF.

Gujarat government data showed a drop in onion sowing of 71 per cent. The rabi crop was sown on 17,500 hectares this year, down from 61,300 hectares last year. In Maharashtra and

Karnataka, sowing is estimated to be lower this year from last year's 382,000 hectares (ha) and 177,200 ha, respectively.

Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat, which constitute around 60 per cent of the country's total production, were under the threat of a fall in production due to water shortage in key growig regions. However, industry estimates that the fall may not be that significant as feared due to improved sowing in other regions including Rajasthan and the eastern parts of the country.

### **Separate agriculture budget for Odisha**

A separate booklet on outlay for the agriculture sector marked the highlight of the Odisha budget for 2012-13 which, otherwise, was replete with slew of proposals for various target groups keeping an eye on the ensuing elections in the state.

The assembly elections are due in early 2014 and this may be the last budget in the current third term of the Naveen Patnaik government in the state. Chief minister Naveen Patnaik later told newsmen, "In the history of Odisha Budget, it is for the first time that we have placed a separate agriculture budget. In this budget, we have given emphasis on agriculture & allied sectors."

Besides agriculture, the budget stressed on infrastructure development, social security, healthcare and education.

Some of the people-centric schemes of the government which received significant allocations included Mo Kudia scheme (Rs 100 crore), Gopabandhu Gramin Yojana (Rs 225 crore), Biju KBK Yojana (Rs 120 crore), Social security pension schemes for senior citizens (Rs 1149.78 crore), concrete roads for panchayats (Rs 498.88 crore) and the flagship Rs one per kg rice scheme (Rs 1312.05 crore).

Though the budget does not burden the common man with any new tax, it seeks to raise additional revenue from mineral sector by revising stamp duty on instruments of mining lease and renewal of mining leases through amendment in the Indian Stamp Act-1899. The amendment will be introduced in the current session of the assembly.

The revenue surplus budget for 2013-14 contains total outlay of Rs 60303.09 crore, nearly 20 per cent higher than the budget size of Rs 52030.70 crore for 2011-12. The budget has projected a revenue surplus of Rs 1904.61 crore which is 0.65 per cent of gross state domestic product (GSDP).



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

20.02.2013 A.M

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## **Big push to roads, bridges, sops for farmers, minorities in UP budget**

LUCKNOW: Akhilesh Yadav presented a Rs 2-lakh-crore-plus budget aimed at boosting capital expenditure and pleasing his voter base, but also sneaked in a cheeky proposal for a Rs 40-crore flyover that would pass by Mayawati's sprawling Mall Avenue house with its 20-foot boundary walls, exposing the heavily guarded fortress to prying by curious onlookers.

If this flyover was a message to BSP ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, Akhilesh did not stop at symbolism alone, going all out to woo minorities with schemes worth Rs 2,150-crore in the 2013-14 budget, which includes Rs 777 crore for scholarships and fee reimbursements.

Farmers, the other big voter base for SP, get the red-carpet treatment, too, with a Rs 17,000-crore bounty of which Rs 1,650 crore has been set aside for loan waiver alone.

With polls in mind, Akhilesh also shied away from imposing any new taxes, but has managed to contain fiscal deficit at an acceptable 2.94%. The budget size for 2013-14 has ballooned to Rs 2,21,201.19 crore, 10.5% more than that of the previous year.

Reading out from his 52-page budget speech, Akhilesh underlined his concern for the youth, farmers, poor and the overall development of the state and said the budget was meant to transform UP into 'Uttam Pradesh' by achieving an 8.5% growth rate.

Akhilesh perhaps hopes to achieve this by a renewed thrust on capital expenditure with a 21.5% increase in budgetary allocation at Rs 53,308 crore. This is the highest jump in allocation for this sector ever in UP. A major part of this expenditure is earmarked for 219 new schemes, besides



building roads, bridges and other infrastructure facilities.

While all district headquarters are proposed to be connected to Lucknow by four-lane roads, the existing road networks within villages are also proposed to be strengthened.

The budget, though, is largely silent on industry and IT. However, infrastructure building could act as a magnet for business at a later date.

### **Crops destroyed in Palamu hailstorm**

DALTONGANJ: A massive [hailstorm](#) wreaked havoc at Piprahi Tola in Nawadeeh panchayat under Chainpur block on Sunday destroying the standing [crops](#) like mustard, arahar pulse, barley, wheat, etc spread across 40 acres. Roofs of more than a dozen huts were damaged.

Hailstones weighing 300 to 500 gms fell on the fields, said sources. The Daltonganj Congress MLA, K N Tripathy, said he brought a bagful of hailstones from Piprahi Tola and showed it to the DC [Palamu](#), Pooja Singhal, on Monday urging her to take immediate relief measures to bail out the farmers of the calamity triggered crisis. The residents of Piprahi Tola are mostly members of the tribal community, those belonging to scheduled castes and other backward castes.

"The scene that day was rare. Acres of [farmland](#) at Piprahi tola were covered with ice," said Tripathy. Crops worth thousands of rupees were destroyed, he said citing cases where huts too were badly damaged. He demanded that those houses be repaired at the earliest and Rs 20,000 be allotted for each of the victims.

The affected farmers would be adequately compensated under the disaster relief management scheme, said Singhal. Around 150 farmers are reported to be hit by this natural calamity. Sadar SDO B Tatma, was sent to the village on Monday to take stock of the situation.

Tatma informed the hailstorm had caused extensive damages to the crops and houses were

destroyed. The revenue official and ameen have been asked to assess and evaluate the extent of destruction within two days beginning from Tuesday and to file a report so that compensation process could be initiated.

The affected farmers will be required to produce land ownership documents with latest 'malguzari' receipt of the current financial year. Singhal assured that there would be no problem in paying the compensation.

### **Govt plans agriculture marketing strategy**

PATNA: The state government has embarked on an [agriculture marketing strategy](#) and developed 54 market yards with the help of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development ( [Nabard](#)). It has a target to develop 95 market yards across the state.

The government has planned to revamp the [Bihar Agriculture Marketing Board](#) and its infrastructure to provide facilities to the farmers to take their produce directly to the retailers by eliminating middlemen in the process. The objective is to create a self-sufficient village economy based on cooperative farming and efficient market linkage, said director, Bihar Agriculture Management and Extension Training Institute (BAMETI), R N Singh.

The [State Agriculture Marketing Board](#) is being rejuvenated for creating market infrastructure link in a manner so as to source the agriculture market produce from the farmers directly to market. A decision in this regard was taken after a workshop at which national and international marketing experts had given their suggestions to CM's agriculture adviser Mangla Rai and principal secretary, agriculture, Alok Kumar Sinha.

Bihar contributes 13% to national vegetable production, 6% to quality fruits production, and 4.7% contribution to foodgrains production. It has more of agriculture output than the storage facility.

The government has 1,324 acres of land for creating marketing facilities, 1,500 rural haats, dry storage capacity of 1.4 lakh metric tonne (MT) and cold storage capacity of 15.5 lakh MTs, the BAMEI director said, adding that a value chain has to be created for safe delivery of vegetables and fruits and their processed products at respective destinations. A surveillance system will be developed so that the farmers get the highest price of their produce, he added.

A special crop development programme is on the anvil to identify one crop from each district for production on cluster basis. Production of organic fruits and vegetables would be promoted, farmers would be organized as promoter groups and the food processing industries, including the indigenous industries, would be invited to arrange contract farming.

Under the Agribusiness Infrastructure Development Investment Programme (AIDIP), an ADB project, private markets would be developed in 11 districts. The investors engaged in developing these markets would be given 35% grant through competitive bid process. These private markets would deal in fruits, vegetables, foodgrains and also meat, fish and egg, Singh said.