

## Onion price touches Rs. 34/kg

(Rs/kg)

### Onion price in retail market



<b>January 1</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>January 15</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>February 5</b>	<b>34</b>

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It's not just the staple Sona Masuri rice that has become costlier. The price of onion, a must-have in most cuisines, has shot up by Rs. 10 a kilo a month, selling in retail at an eye-watering Rs. 34 a kg.

The poor man's condiment, which was being sold at just Rs. 20 to Rs. 22 a kg a month ago in Bangalore, is now hovering at Rs. 32 to Rs. 34, according to Nagaraj, a grocer on Ullal Main Road.

Mr. Nagaraj said last week, when he sourced his stock from the wholesale market, it was Rs.28 a kg, compared to Rs.16 a month ago.

This increase in price has affected individual households and hotel owners as well since onion is an integral part of daily food.

Raghavendra Karanth, who runs a hotel, said he has had to cut back on the use of onions in the dishes to ride the price rise. There is also talk of hotel owners preparing to increase prices.

Shakuntala Shetty, a homemaker in Jayanagar 5th Block, said that her family requires at least five kg onion a month as she uses the aromatic bulb for every other dish. "It's difficult to prepare food without onion and now I am making up using tomato and capsicum."

Onion merchants, however, expect the price should come down in the coming days.

S. Balakrishna, vice-president, Bangalore Potato and Onion Merchants Association, told *The Hindu* the wholesale price of fine quality onion in Bangalore market has dropped by about Rs. 2 over the weekend (from Rs. 24 to Rs. 22). Its effect should be visible in the retail market in about three days since retailers have to sell their existing stock.

He, however, ruled out a repeat of 2008-09 when the price of onion touched a vertiginous Rs. 80 to Rs. 85 a kg. With the new crop in north Karnataka almost ready for harvest and produce from Maharashtra arriving in good quantity, the price is set to decrease, Mr. Balakrishna said.

The demand for a ban on onion export too could exert pressure in price reduction in the local market, he felt.

The Bangalore Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee receives an average of 10,000 quintals of onion every working day. But at least half the produce gets distributed to neighbouring districts and States.

### **Mango farmers expect bumper yield**



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If we think of sweet mangoes, the name 'Nuzvid Rasalu' strikes the mind immediately. This year, the famous 'Chinna Rasalu', 'Banginapalli' and other varieties are ready to delight your taste buds.

"Krishna district, particularly Nuzvid, is known for 'Chinna Rasalu'. Every year, we send thousands of tonnes of this variety of mango to Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai and other places," said farmers of mango orchards.

The flowering was good and there were no pest attacks on the crop so far in the region. There would be good production by March-end if the situation continues to be friendly, they stated. The flowers of the mango trees were seen with full bloom in the orchards at Nuzvid, Agiripally, Nunna, Thotlavallur and other areas in the district. In some areas, the fruit was at the tender stage and the crop would be ready in the next 20 days.

"Compared to the last year, flowering is good and we are expecting good yield this season. Investment is also less this year as the crop is healthy," V. Srinivasa Rao, a mango farmer of Nekkalam Gollagudem village told *The Hindu*.

"I have raised 'Chinna Rasalu', 'Pedda Rasalu' and 'Banginapalli' varieties in five acres. We picked the fruit twice as there was early flowering by November-December. We are happy with the crop condition so far," another farmer S. Venkata Ratnam of Adavi Nekkalam village said.

About 80 per cent of trees were flowering now. Though the recent rains did cause some damage to the trees, the production was expected to be double the last year, S. Veeranjaneeyulu, a mango orchard owner in Nuzvid area said.

"Most of the produce will be used for local consumption in Vijayawada, Khammam, Guntur, East and West Godavari and neighbouring districts. The fine quality of 'Banginapalli' fruits will be exported to other countries," Mr. Venkata Ratnam stated.

### **Farmers can measure water levels**

Farmers can avoid losses by opting for a village-level aquifer mapping, which will enable them to know the source of recharge of ground water and measure water levels, G. Sudarshan, Regional Director of the Central Ground Water Board, Southern Region, Hyderabad, said here on Tuesday.

Winding up the first of the five three-tier training programmes organised by the board on 'Preparation of village-level aquifer mapping and management', at Mahatma Gandhi University, he said it would benefit 120 representatives of water users' associations, progressive farmers, officials working in the water sector, research scholars and students.

Mr. Sudarshan said that the participants were happy with the presentations on assessing quality of groundwater, identification of priority areas and how to recharge ground water levels. They wanted such events to be organised at the village level. He said that another training programme had been proposed in Mothe mandal on February 11 and 12.

### **Water budgeting**

Addressing the gathering on Monday, Collector N. Mukteswara Rao stressed the importance of creating public awareness on utilising every drop of water. He said the falling ground water levels in the district could be checked by going in for water 'budgeting' at village level.

### **Additional incentives for toor, paddy**

Minister for Agriculture Umesh V. Katti told the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday that the State government has provided an additional incentive of Rs. 650 per quintal for toor dal and Rs. 250 per quintal for paddy apart from the minimum support price prescribed by the Centre, with a view to provide adequate relief to the farmers. The former Minister for Agriculture, Bandeppa Kashampur, said since the government had announced the additional incentive only a few days ago, it would not benefit the farming community as the season was coming to an end. If the government had been serious, it should have stepped in at least a month ago. Further, the cost of paddy in the market was around Rs. 2,000 a quintal, while the support price of the government was Rs. 1,500. In the case of toor dal, the market price was over Rs. 5,000 a quintal even for the low-grade variety.

Mr. Katti said the Centre has fixed the MSP for paddy at Rs. 1,250 and Rs. 1,280 and the State will provide for an additional Rs. 250 per quintal. For toor dal, the Centre has fixed the MSP at Rs. 3,850 per quintal to which the State will provide an additional Rs. 650. If the farmers are receiving a higher price in the market, then it is welcome since the aim of a market intervention scheme is also the same

### **'Farm loans will be waived if JD(S) comes to power'**

The former Chief Minister and working president of the Janata Dal (Secular), H.D.Kumaraswamy, said his party would waive all loans availed by farmers within 48 hours if the JD(S) comes to power in the coming elections.

Addressing party workers in Harapanahalli on Tuesday, Mr. Kumaraswamy said the JD(S) had decided to give a subsidy of Rs. 3,000 per tonne of fertilizer and claimed that the JD(S) would launch schemes to help farmers become stronger economically and get a fair price for their produce.

### **Migration**

Farmers were migrating to urban areas owing to the absence of proper facilities and were unable to continue in agriculture because of the ill-conceived schemes of the government, he said, adding that the JD(S) would help farmers settle their debts and become economically stronger by getting a better price for their crops.

### **Youth power**

Similarly the JD(S) has plans to make use of the youth in the State, Mr. Kumaraswamy said and noted that manpower was being wasted owing to limited employment opportunities.

He said the JD(S) planned to provide jobs to all educated unemployed youth and appealed to the people to support the JD(S) in the forthcoming elections to help the party realise its ambitious scheme for the welfare of farmers, youth, the disabled and aged persons.

Mr. Kumaraswamy said the JD(S) had decided to give Rs. 5,000 to all pregnant women from the fifth month of pregnancy till three months after delivery so that they could get proper

nourishment during pregnancy. Pension for the aged would be enhanced to Rs. 1500 per month, he said, and added that the party had evolved over 36 welfare schemes.

### **Industrial promotion**

Mr. Kumaraswamy criticised the Congress-led UPA government and said that the government withdrew the subsidy on fertilizer and LPG domestic cylinders but gave subsidy to giant industries.

Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, former Union Minister; T. Dasakariyappa, president of the district unit of the JD(S); B.M. Sathish, working president of the district unit; and Kallerudresh, Hodigere Ramesh, and Amanulla Khan were present.

### **Poor arrivals hit Supplyco's paddy procurement in Thrissur**



The second phase of paddy procurement by the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco) in the district this financial year is facing rough weather.

Poor rain, low productivity owing to scarcity of water, increased procurement price in the open market and a delayed harvest have affected Supplyco's paddy procurement. A 70 per cent fall has been reported in procurement in the district this year. Only 1,500 tonnes of paddy has been procured this season against 5,000 tonnes last year. The second paddy crop of the year is perhaps harvested first in the State in Thrissur. Harvest begins usually at Thalappilly taluk early January. It got delayed this year. The harvest in Pazhayannur, Wadakkanchery and Chovannur blocks too has been delayed.

Last year, Supplyco had procured 72,000 tonnes of paddy in the district after harvest of the second crop. This year, it expects to procure only 30,000 tonnes.

According to District Paddy Officer C. J. Sunny, the State has pinned its hopes on the harvest that would begin in Palakkad in the first week of February and in kole lands of Thrissur towards the end of the month. Paddy is harvested in Kuttanad fields only from the second week of March. The Supplyco maintains that it usually gets about five loads of paddy from a panchayat in the district. This year, it gets two loads of paddy from three or four panchayats. Officials say that Supplyco could procure huge quantities of paddy last year as it provided Rs. 15 a kg when the price in the open market was Rs. 9 a kg. This year, private mills have reportedly procured paddy from farmers at a higher price.

Supplyco had raised its procurement price to Rs. 17 a kg. But private mills reportedly pay farmers up to Rs. 21 a kg. Supplyco also rues that it does not get to procure much of Jyoti matta rice, a premium brand. Officials say that it is likely to affect the public distribution of matta rice.

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## Muthalamada farmers count their losses

Climate change slashes yield in Mango City to half; poor quality brings down prices



Double whammy: Mango farmers in Muthalamada grama panchayat of Chittur taluk in Palakkad district face the problem of low production and low quality owing to climate change

Mango farmers in the Muthalamada grama panchayat of Chittur taluk in the district, famed for its high-quality mangoes, have been left with a bitter taste in their mouths.

In the current mango harvesting season, which started late by a month, the yield has come down to half. The quality too is not up to mark. The farmers put the blame on climate change.

Due to the low quality, the price of mangoes has come down from Rs.700 to Rs.300 a box (seven kilos). The demand from centres such as Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and Indore has fallen. The mangoes were exported to the Gulf countries in large quantities. However, this year, there are no orders yet.

Mango is cultivated in more than 5,000 acres of land in Muthalamada alone. More than 15,000 acres is under mango cultivation on a commercial basis in the district.

This year, the mango cultivators have suffered huge losses owing to the low production and fall in quality, C.A. Badurdheen, a mango farmer and exporter at Muthalamada, says.

Mr. Badurdheen says mango trees need rain in the months of December and January for good productivity. This season, there was no rain in the two months. As a result, the harvest was delayed, in turn affecting the price of the fruit.

He says that mango trees on an acre of land yield six to seven tonnes of mango. But this time, it was less than three tonnes. Owing to the drought conditions, mangoes fell from the trees in large quantities before they ripened.



The farmers who spent substantial sums of money on fertilizers and pesticides are facing huge losses. The harvesting too is a costly affair, he says.

Muthalamada farmers get a good price for their mangoes because these reach the market early. The harvest starts early in January every year. There are only two other places in the world where mangoes ripen as early as in January — Peru and Bolivia. So, Muthalamada mangoes get good export orders and high price from different parts of the world because they are the first to hit the international market.

Besides the loss of internal and external markets, the farmers have lost the price advantage too.

This is the second consecutive year that the change in climate has upset the calculations of the mango farmers, exporters and consumers.

Last year, the farmers suffered owing to unseasonal rains. The flowering was delayed, pushing back the harvest by two months.

The annual yield at Muthalamada, known as Mango City, is estimated to be over 45,000 tonnes of premium varieties such as Alphonso, Banganapilly, Malgova, Kalapadi, Suvarnarekha, Sindhooram and so on.

There are more than 30 exporters and 26 semi-permanent and temporary pack houses at Muthalamada. And nearly all of them are certain that this year, they will be counting losses.

Mango farmers, they say, do not get any compensation for crop loss from the government as in the case of other crops. There is also no crop insurance scheme for mango though it is cultivated on a commercial scale in large parts of the district.

### **Bellary farmers seek water**

The dharna staged by farmers demanding water to save standing crops in the command area served by the low-level canal (LLC) of the Tungabhadra reservoir, entered the second day here on Tuesday.

M.S. Somalingappa, Siruguppa MLA, who led the protest, told *The Hindu* that he had spoken to Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, drawing his attention to the plight of farmers as water from the

canal was not reaching the fields, and urged him to initiate steps to prevail upon the Andhra Pradesh government to place its indent to draw water from the canal.

The farmers of Bellary district, served by the LLC, are unable to water their fields because the water in the canal is flowing below the distributory point, as the Andhra Pradesh government said it would not draw its share of water now.

Farmers in Karnataka would get water only if Andhra Pradesh's share is also released. As against the normal discharge of 1,100 cusecs, the release has been about 550, as Andhra Pradesh has withdrawn its indent.

Mohan Kumar, a farmer who led the dharna, criticised Andhra Pradesh's action. "It cannot withdraw its indent after the Irrigation Consultative Committee (ICC) decided to release water. With Andhra withdrawing its indent, farmers of Bellary district are deprived of their share of water, even after it is released into the canal," he said.

### **50 rural youth to be trained in using modern farm equipment**

The State government has decided to provide free training to 50 rural youth in Vellore district in operation and maintenance of modern agricultural equipment through the Department of Agricultural Engineering as part of the efforts at mechanisation of agricultural farms.

According to a release, interested candidates who are aged 35 and below and have Standard VIII qualification could approach the Executive Engineer, Agricultural Engineering, Vellore (0416-2266603), Assistant Executive Engineer, Government Tractor Workshop, Vellore (0416-2266684), Sub Divisional Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE), Vellore (0416-2267182), AEE, Walajapet (9443969071) or AEE, Tirupattur (9443209629) and apply before February 10.

The 3-month programme would begin in the second week of February at the Government Tractor Workshop in Vellore.

## Expo on achievements of animal husbandry department



shore up:R. Prabakaran, Vice Chancellor, TANUVAS, and T.Thiagarajan, DRO, looking at the exhibits displayed at the farmers' festival at Naganallur panchayat .

An exhibition highlighting the achievements of the animal husbandry department, and veterinary camp marked the day-long farmers' festival held at the Naganallur village panchayat recently.

The festival was organised jointly by the TANUVAS (Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University), State Department of Animal Husbandry and Rotary Club of Namakkal Transport City. R. Prabakaran, Vice Chancellor, TANUVAS, was the chief guest and T. Thiagarajan, District Revenue Officer, inaugurated the exhibition.

State Department of Animal Husbandry through its stall explained the various government schemes like foot and mouth control programme, fodder development, free distribution of cattle, sheep and goat, insurance scheme etc.

The mobile van of the Animal Disease Intelligence Unit (ADIU), screened dung, blood smear, faeces and urine and milk samples of the cattle and dogs at the camp. Parasitology, Pathology, Microbiology, animal reproduction, surgery, agronomy, livestock production and management, preventive medicine, animal nutrition, communication cell, animal husbandry economics, animal husbandry extension, dairy science, meat science and poultry science, all departments of TANUVAS, had also put up stalls at the exhibition. Experts of the TANUVAS demonstrated the production of silage techniques, azola cultivation, milk and meat by products. The New India Assurance Company also participated in the camp and issued policies for the insured animals at the camp itself.

Dr. Prabakaran at the valediction gave away prizes to the best bullocks, cows, buffaloes and calves. A total of 402 animals were screened at the veterinary camp. S. Palanisamy, Assistant Director, Animal Husbandry, Musiri, Lalitha Sellamuthu, Chairman, Uppiliapuram union, N. Periasamy, veterinary assistant surgeon, Uppiliapuram, and Selvaraj, professor, TANUVAS, participated.

### **8 tmcft water needed to save samba crop, farmers tell Central panel**



Central and State officials interacting with farmers at Kovilpattu in Thanjavur district on Tuesday.— Photo: M. Moorthy

Farmers of the delta region told a committee of experts from Centre on Tuesday that they needed at least eight thousand million cubic feet of water in the Cauvery to provide two to three more wettings to save the standing samba paddy crop.

The committee, formed on the direction of the Supreme Court to assess the position of the standing paddy crop in the delta, made a first-hand assessment of the situation during a day-long tour of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Tiruchi districts on Tuesday.

The committee, comprising P.K. Saha, Deputy Commissioner (Crops), Union Ministry of Agriculture, K.S. Jacob and A. Mahendran, Chief Engineers, and Veerender Sharma, Superintending Engineer, Central Water Commission, inspected paddy fields and interacted with farmers across the delta.

T.S. Sridhar, State Commissioner for Revenue Administration, Sandeep Saxena, Agriculture Secretary, and Shiv Das Meena, Commissioner of Agriculture, accompanied the team. Earlier, the committee was briefed about the situation in the delta by officials in Tiruchi.

At Kovilpattu near Budalur, the team inspected the 136-day ADT 36 variety crop that was 105-days old now. Shajahan, a farmer explained to the committee how he had bought water in tankers paying Rs.1,500 a trip to irrigate his crop. The committee also witnessed a field being irrigated with water brought in by a tanker at Royandur.

At Vadakadu Kovilur in Tiruvarur district, S. Ranganathan, secretary of Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association, met the team and told them that crops on about 612 acres out of the 813 acres that was covered in Kovilur have been affected due to shortage of water. The two tmc of water to be released from Mettur Dam as directed by the Supreme Court may not be sufficient. "We require eight to ten tmc of water," he said and requested the committee to make a recommendation to the effect.

At Meenambanallur in Keezhayur in Nagapattinam district, the team members sought information on the extent of water received so far and the water sources that were engaged during the period. Mr. Meena told the committee that farmers had solely relied on canal water to salvage the crop with the help of diesel pumps enabling the crops to survive so far.

At Meenambanallur, the team inspected a 75-day crop with a maturity period of 105 days.

### **Mettur water level**

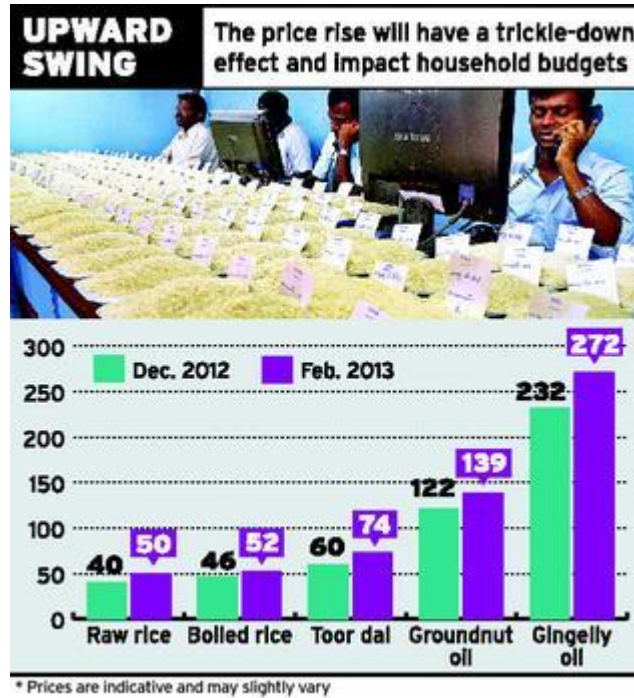
As per the Supreme Court's direction, water was being released from the Mettur Dam from 8 p.m. on Monday. To begin with 9,000 cusecs of water was released as the water level stood at 34.04 feet on Tuesday, as against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 330 cusecs and the discharge, 4,195 cusecs. The court directed the State to release 2 tmcft from the dam to save the standing crop as it would be compensated by water to be released from Karnataka.

### **Water level**

Water level in the Periyar dam on Tuesday stood at 112.90 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) with an inflow and a discharge of 105 cusecs each. The level in the Vaigai dam was 49.11 feet

(71 feet) with no inflow and a discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit stood at 2,499 mcft.

### Homemakers worried by price rise



The sudden increase in prices of essential commodities like rice and cooking oil has worried city homemakers.

In just a week, retail rates of raw and boiled rice has shot up. Ditto for prices of dal varieties and cooking oil.

Homemaker Saraswathi Partheban says she buys a kg of rice at Rs. 42.

“It is not of the best quality but we can’t afford anything else. Now, with the price rise, I don’t know how we will manage even that,” she says.

Senior citizen K. Gopalan says his monthly household budget is likely to go up by Rs. 1,000.

“Rice and oil are essentials. We cannot cut down on them,” he says.

According to Jagan who runs a wholesale rice outlet in Thoraipakkam, the cheapest rice variety is the kuchi arisi, sold at Rs. 27 a kg.

However, prices seem to differ from shop to shop with supermarkets selling them at lesser rates. The price of rice has gone up due to poor harvests, say shopkeepers.

However, president of Federation of Tamil Nadu Rice Mill Owners and Paddy – Rice Dealers Association, D. Thulasingam, insists there was enough stock.

“Diesel and fertilisers have become costlier resulting in the hike in prices of essentials. There is a shortage of labour on the farm too,” he says.

M. Seran, president of Federation of Farmers Associations, says the increase in price of rice is artificial. “Traders must be holding stocks and increasing rates. If farmers sell paddy at Rs. 13 per kg, how can it cost Rs. 52 when it reaches the end user?” he says.

Prices of toor dal and gingelly oil too have increased. “Production of groundnut and sesame seeds was affected resulting in the price rise,” said an employee at Jai M. Aiyasamy Nadar, a wholesale merchant.

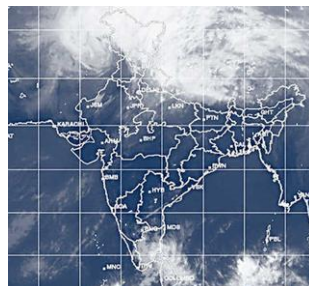
According to Manish Parmar, secretary of Madras Kirana Merchants Association, the price of toor dal has climbed steadily since December.

“There was no carry-forward stock from last year. In December, the wholesale price was Rs. 38.50 per kg. Now it stands at Rs. 45,” he says.

In a trickle-down effect, the rise in prices of essentials may spur restaurants and eateries to up the rates of their dishes.

K.T. Srinivasa Raja, president of Chennai Hotels Association, says some restaurants are considering increasing prices by 5 per cent.

## Weather



<b>ANDHRA PRADESH</b>				
Anantapur	34	20	0	0
Arogyavaram	31	15	0	0
Bapatla	31	19	0	0
Calingapatnam	29	19	0	0
Gannavaram	31	19	0	0
Hanamkonda	33	15	0	0
Hyderabad AP	30	18	0	tr
Kakinada	31	22	0	2
Kavali	30	20	0	0
Kurnool	34	19	0	0
Mahabubnagar	34	19	0	0
Machilipatnam	31	21	0	0
Nandyal	34	20	0	0
Narasapur	31	21	0	0
Nellore	33	21	0	0
Nizamabad	35	18	0	18
Ongole	32	21	0	0
Ramagundam	33	20	0	0
Tirupathi AP	31	19	0	0
Tuni	31	20	0	15
Vizag AP	30	18	0	8
Vizag	30	20	0	3
<b>KARNATAKA</b>				
Agumbe	32	14	0	0
Bangalore AP	29	16	0	0
Bangalore	31	18	0	0



Belgaum AP	32	12	0	0
Bellary	34	19	0	0
Bijapur	32	14	0	4
Chitradurga	32	17	0	0
Chickmagalur	31	15	0	0
Chintamani	29	15	0	—
Gadag	32	17	0	0
Gulbarga	33	18	0	0
Hassan	32	13	0	0
Honavar	32	22	0	0
Karwar	32	20	0	0
Madikeri	27	15	0	0
Mangalore AP	33	23	0	0
Mysore	31	14	0	0
Mandya	32	16	0	0
Panambur	33	23	0	0
Raichur	33	20	0	0
Shirali	33	23	0	0
<b>KERALA</b>				
Alappuzha	33	23	0	8
Kannur	33	23	0	0
Kochi AP	32	22	0	25
Kottayam	34	22	0	21
Kozhikode	34	24	0	0
Punalur	36	21	0	0
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	31	23	0	10

Thiruvanantha				
-puram City	33	23	0	4
Vellanikkara	34	22	0	0
<b>TAMIL NADU</b>				
Adiramapattinam	32	24	tr	52
Coimbatore AP	32	21	0	0
Coonoor	21	10	0	6
Cuddalore	32	23	0	0
Chennai AP	31	22	0	tr
Chennai	30	23	tr	0
Dharmapuri	32	18	0	0
Kanyakumari	34	25	0	9
Karaikal	30	26	0	10
Kodaikanal	20	10	0	1
Madurai AP	34	23	0	4
Nagapattinam	30	26	0	13
Palayamkottai	35	24	0	7
Pamban	30	25	tr	57
Parangipettai	31	21	0	0
Puducherry	32	22	0	0
Salem	34	20	0	0
Thanjavur	33	24	0	5
Tiruchi AP	34	23	0	tr
Tirupattur	32	15	0	0
Tiruttani	33	18	0	—
Tondi	30	24	tr	30
Tuticorin	32	25	0	24

Ooty	22	6	0	0
Valparai	28	10	0	0
Vedaranyam	31	26	0	199
Vellore	31	20	0	0
<b>LAKSHADWEEP</b>				
Amini Divi	33	25	0	tr
Minicoy	32	23	0	105
Kavarathi	30	25	0	tr
<b>OTHER STATIONS</b>				
Kolkata (Alipore)	30	16	0	12
Mumbai	29	22	0	0
New Delhi	19	13	46	80

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since January 01, 2013.

### Dry weather in Andhra Pradesh

**CHENNAI:** Mainly dry weather prevailed over Tamil Nadu and dry weather prevailed over Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

The minimum temperature rose markedly at one or two places over Rayalaseema, rose appreciably at a few places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, at one or two places over north interior and coastal Karnataka, north Tamil Nadu, rose at a few places over rest of coastal Andhra Pradesh, rest of Karnataka, rest of Tamil Nadu and changed a little elsewhere over the region.

They were appreciably above normal at a few places over Tamil Nadu, at one or two places over coastal Karnataka, above normal at a few places over Telangana, at one or two places over rest of Tamil Nadu, rest of coastal Karnataka, appreciably below normal at one or two places over north interior Karnataka, below normal at a few places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, at one or two places over south interior Karnataka and were generally normal over the

rest of the region. Belguam Airport and Davanagere recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 12 degree Celsius in the plains of the region.

**FORECAST (valid till Thursday morning):** Isolated rain may occur over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Lakshadweep. Mainly dry weather will prevail over Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.



## weather

Chennai

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Feb 6

Max Min

29° | 22°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 89

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:34

Sunset: 06:11

Barometer: 1015

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Feb 7

Max Min

31° | 21°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Friday  
Feb 8



31° | 22°

Partly Cloudy

Saturday  
Feb 9



25° | 21°

Overcast

Sunday  
Feb 10



25° | 20°

Overcast

Monday  
Feb 11



23° | 21°

Overcast

Tuesday  
Feb 12



26° | 21°

Overcast

#### Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 100

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 07:06

Sunset: 06:04

Barometer: 1017



# THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

06.02.2013 A.M

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5<sup>th</sup> jan 2013

## Wheat rules steady on moderate purchases

Moderate buying kept wheat and flour prices unaltered on Tuesday. Steady domestic demand and supply are keeping wheat and flour prices stable, said market sources.

Radhey Shyam, a commodity expert, told Business Line that since the demand matched supply, prices were unchanged. In the absence of any major market moving factors in the market, dara and flour prices have been ruling firm since last week and may continue to rule around current levels for the next few days, too, he added.

Inconsistent rainfall since Sunday night has also disturbed the trade.

In the physical market, Dara wheat quoted at Rs 1,520-1,525 a quintal. Around 500 quintals of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh the stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,520 a quintal while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,525 a quintal.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for February contracts improved by Rs 12 and traded at Rs 1,525 a quintal; it had touched a high at Rs 1,527 a quintal earlier in the day. March contracts decreased by Rs 8 to Rs 1,449 a quintal. While, wheat spot prices on the exchange increased by Rs 10 and traded at Rs 1,510 a quintal.

February contracts improved on buying interest. Demand for Indian wheat is strong in South Korea, Thailand and Philippines where Indian wheat is largely used for animal feed.

South Korea's Major Feedmill Group purchased 110,000 tonnes of wheat from India last week.

Flour Prices

Following a steady trend in wheat, flour prices too ruled unaltered and quoted at Rs 1,750 a quintal. Similarly, Chokar ruled flat and sold at Rs 1,370-1400 a quintal.

### **Lack of upcountry buyers trips coconut oil**



Coconut oil market is going through a bearish trend in Kerala and Tamil Nadu markets this week following a decline in demand from upcountry buyers.

Prakash B. Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), pointed out that some of the stockists had started liquidating copra in the market that had resulted in the decline of both copra and coconut oil prices.

It is a normal practice that some of the major traders used to stock copra ahead of season to fetch a better price in the lean period. This trend is now prevailing in the market, he said.

Coconut oil prices have come down to Rs 70 a kg in the Kerala market (Rs 71), whereas it is ruling at Rs 67 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 68.50).

Copra prices also declined to Rs 4,800 a quintal in Kerala (Rs 4,900) while it dropped to Rs 4,600 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 4,800).

Palm oil prices slightly increased to Rs 54 against Rs 53 quoted last week and palm kernel oil prices are ruling at Rs 56 against Rs 55.

Traders are expecting a price recovery in February once the winter season is over in the north Indian markets, he added.

He also suggested increasing the minimum support price of milling copra to Rs 5,500 from the present Rs 5,100 for a better price recovery for coconut oil in the long term. Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA, said that the market is witnessing a declining trend due to various reasons which included procurement delay, staying away of corporates.

This has resulted in low demand both in local and upcountry markets.

He expressed the hope that the market is expected to revive once the copra procurement at new MSP rates commences.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that the market is showing a weak trend due to low pricing of other edible oils.

He was of the view that the sudden upward trend could not withstand for long and this may send wrong signal to upcountry buyers.

### **No takers for 55% of turmeric arrivals**



The farmers are in worry about the very poor sale of turmeric.

“For want of upcountry demand, the exporters and other turmeric

traders quoting decreased price buying negligible number of bags, but



the stockists are buying some stocks. The Erode exporters due to availability of semi-polished turmeric at Nizamabad at lower price of Rs 5200 a quintal have purchased some stocks. But now they also stopped the buying for want of demand from North India and also local demands. Still the semi-polished turmeric is available at Rs 5200 a quintal at Nizamabad”, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said the traders are suffering with very poor sale and the farmers are affected for low price. He said every trader is waiting for orders and by the end of this month they may get reasonable upcountry orders for the yellow spice.

He added that the sale in all the turmeric centres in India like Sangli, Nizamabad and Erode are very poor. Of the arrival of 2989 bags of turmeric on Tuesday, only 45 percent of the stocks were sold. Due to arrival of fine variety hybrid turmeric, the price was increased by Rs 200 a quintal. Similarly due to arrival of quality turmeric in Gobichettipalayam Cooperative Marketing Society the finger variety was increased by Rs 150 a quintal. In the Regulated market the stockists have procured more than 400 bags of turmeric.

The turmeric grower farmers said for their day to day expenses they require money, so selling their turmeric at decreased price.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4299 to Rs 6379 a quintal, root variety Rs 4196 to Rs 5569 a quintal.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5309 to Rs 6700 a quintal, root variety Rs 5130 to Rs 5711 a quintal.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5426 to Rs 6469 a quintal, root variety Rs 5169 to Rs 6006. Of the arrival of 635 bags of turmeric 634 bags sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society finger variety was sold at Rs 5269 to Rs 6386 a quintal, root variety Rs 5169 to Rs 5721 a quintal. All the 207 bags of turmeric arrived for sales were sold.

At Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society finger variety was sold at Rs 5300 to Rs 6491 a quintal, root variety Rs 5018 to Rs 5800 a quintal. Of the arrival of 95 bags of turmeric 84 bags were sold.

**Supply glut keeps sugar on leash**

Sugar prices drop by Rs5-Rs10 at Vashi spot market on Tuesday on ease local demand. Routine lifting by local retailers and continuous supply from mills kept overall liquidity of commodity ample – slightly higher in markets.

In absence of positive cues domestic futures markets also extended loss further by 12 – Rs17 till noon. Naka rates were down by Rs5 for S-grade and up by Rs10 for M-grade. Mill tender rates were almost steady. Some mills sold fine variety new sugar Rs5-Rs10 higher while old sugar were offloaded lower rates. Sentiment was weak said sources.

Observer said, in Vashi markets supplies are surpassing local demand. Everyday supplies are rising, but demand is weak due to the winter and absence of bulk consumers. A stronger rupee makes imports cheaper and exports costlier, which is a concern for the sugar industry. Demand for the sweetener from bulk consumers like soft drinks and ice-cream makers usually drops in India during the winter season.

They said domestic level free sale quota is sufficient rather higher considering slack local demand. India's sugar output rose by 3 per cent to more than 137 lakh tones in the first four months of the season beginning October 2012 and Mills in India are expected to churn out 243 lakh tonnes of sugar in 2012-13 higher than the expected local consumption of about 220 lakh tonnes.

Activities in Vashi market remain calm and routine. The arrivals in the market were higher 61-62 truck loads (Each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were 57-58 truck loads. On Monday 12-14 mills offered tenders and sold hardly 33,000 – 35,000 (Each of 100 kgs) bags in the steady range of Rs3,100 - 3,140 (Rs3,100-3,140) for S-grade and Rs 3,190 - 3,260 (Rs3,190 - 3,260) for M-grade. In World market March-13 futures closed lower by \$4.00 to \$498.50 (\$502.50) and May-13 futures was \$507.60 (\$511.60) a tone on Monday.

On National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange sugar prices for March-13 was lower by Rs12 to Rs3110 (Rs 3122) and April was down by Rs18 to Rs3167 (Rs3185) till noon.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,232– Rs 3,301 (Rs 3,236 –Rs 3,306) and M-grade Rs 3,292 - 3,441 (Rs 3,302- 3,446). Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 3,180-3,220 (Rs 3,185 -3,225) and M-grade Rs 3,240-3,370 (Rs 3,230-3,350).

## Pepper moves up

The pepper market moved up on Tuesday on good domestic demand amid limited supply. All active contracts closed above the previous day's closing.

Exporters who had made commitments earlier were buying from the exchange for fulfilling their commitments in March. But, many are apprehensive of getting delivery as the material is locked up in the warehouses waiting for clearance from the food safety authorities, market sources told *Business Line*.

Some were even covering from the spot market even though spot prices were ruling high. These factors have aided the price rise.

On the spot, 22 tonnes of fresh pepper arrived and that were traded at Rs 390 to 410 a kg, depending upon the quality such as, moisture content, bulk density and area of production, they said.

February contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 495 a quintal to close at Rs 9,310. March and April moved up by Rs 5 and Rs 125 respectively to close at Rs 37,050 and Rs 3,5595 a quintal.

## Turnover

Total turnover increased by 514 tonnes to close at 1,777 tonnes indicating good buying and selling. Total open interest declined by just three tonnes to 3,644 tonnes.

Open interest in February decreased by 224 tonnes to 795 tonnes on liquidation while that of March and April increased by 180 tonnes and 11 tonnes respectively to 2,052 tonnes and 546 tonnes, indicating additional buying.

Spot prices increased by Rs 100 a quintal to close at Rs 40,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 41,500 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market has gone up to around \$8,400 a tonne (c&f) for prompt delivery while February remained at around \$7,400 a tonne (C&f) and Mar at around \$7,350 a tonne (c&f) and remained much above other origins, they said.

## Weak retail offtake may drag groundnut oil



Groundnut oil and cotton oil remained unchanged on Tuesday as the demand was below normal.

Last week, groundnut oil prices declined over Rs 60 a 15-kg tin as millers had ample groundnuts for crushing.

Groundnut oil loose stood at Rs 1,245-1,250 for 10 kg.

Groundnut oil new tin for 15 kg was quoted Rs 2,135-2,140 while *teilya tin* was traded at Rs 1,910-1,911. About 4-5 tankers of groundnut oil were traded in Saurashtra's mills.

A Rajkot-based oil miller said: "In recent times, export demand in groundnut has been almost nil due to new rules of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and as a result, mills are having good supply of groundnut for crushing."

New norms for groundnut export have been formulated by Apeda and they are likely to be on the lines of the process that is in place for grapes and pomegranate. It has also made registration of peanut shelling units mandatory for export of groundnut and its products.

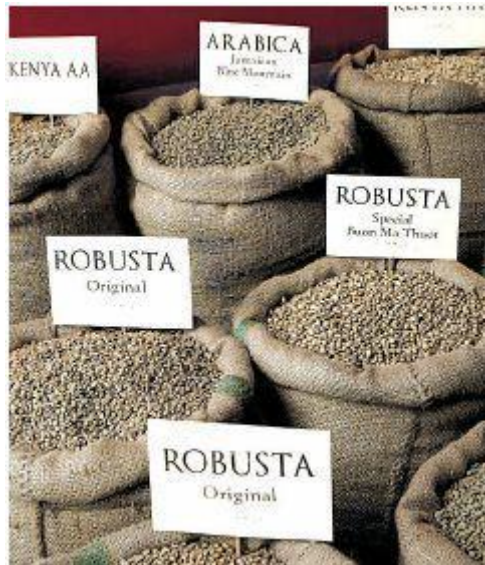
According to the information by the Indian Oilseed and Produce Export Promotion Council, peanut shelling units have to get registered on the APEDA Web site before March 31.

"Retail demand is also weak. Groundnut oil price may decline further in this week," the miller said. Washed cottonseed oil price stood at Rs 585-587 for 10 kg and washed cottonseed oil new tin was traded at Rs 1,050-1,060 for 15 kg.

About 15-20 tankers of cotton oil were traded here.

Meanwhile, the APEDA has made registration mandatory for peanut shelling units in order to export groundnut and groundnut products.

### Coffee exports lose steam on sluggish demand, rising rupee



Sluggish demand and an appreciating rupee are affecting coffee exporters' realisations, even as prices continue to remain bearish on high global supplies.

"The order book is not that good, but we hope it should pick up," said Ramesh Rajah, President of Coffee Exporters Association.

"We expect shipments in calendar 2013 to be same as last year," he said. In calendar year 2012, India exported 3.10 lakh tonnes of coffee worth \$925.7 million.

### Low realisations

Though export volumes were marginally up in January, the realisations were hurt by a declining price and stronger currency.

In volumes, coffee exports grew 6 per cent at 25,594 tonnes in the January-February 4 period against 24,102 tonnes in the corresponding last year. In value terms, exports for the period were

flat at around Rs 402 crore. The rupee has appreciated by 2.8 per cent against the dollar since the beginning of the year.

“The export orders are lower compared with last year,” said another exporter at Chikmagalur. Buyers are interested in Robusta cherry if the Indian exporters are able to sell at a reduced premium of \$200 over Liffe prices, said an official at Mudremane Coffee, a Chikmagalur-based exporter. Presently, the robusta cherry commands a premium of \$250-260 a tonne over London prices.

### Prices decline

Prices of Arabica parchment, the premium variety that ruled at \$3.07 per pound (lb) last year has more than halved and is trading at \$1.44/lb. The prices have declined on higher output in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Honduras. Besides, a global surplus estimated at \$4.8 million bags is keeping the prices under check.

“Growers, who couldn’t offload at Rs 7,500 for a 50-kg bag a few days earlier, are now holding back their produce in anticipation of better prices” an exporter said. The Arabica parchment is currently ruling at Rs 6,800 against Rs 10,000 in the same period last year.

“We are hoping that prices will go up to a reasonable level so that our costs are covered,” said Bose Mandanna, a coffee grower from Kodagu. Input costs such as prices of fertilisers and pesticides, besides labour costs have seen a sharp increase in past year.

“We were hoping for support from the domestic market. Even that’s going down,” Mandanna said.

### Crop size

The decline in Arabica prices is notwithstanding a drop in output due to the flare-up of white stem borer menace this year. Trade sources see a 10-15 per cent decline in Arabica variety from the estimated crop size of one lakh tonnes for 2012-13.

## Trade unruffled by Kerala's poultry hartal



Kerala has declared a poultry hartal from Thursday as traders, dealers, vendors and eateries 'chicken out' blaming a price spiral. The implications are too large to miss. Or consider this.

Kerala consumes 2.4 lakh tonnes of poultry meat every year. This alone makes for a market of Rs 3,360 crore in size. Internal production is just 90,000 tonnes, explaining the dependence on outside sources.

The market for eggs is estimated to be Rs 1,800 crore. Together, they make for a massive annual demand of Rs 5,400 crore. This is too big an opportunity for the private trade monopoly to lose sight of, much less concede.

Or, are suppliers from across the inter-State border leveraging this to engineer hike in prices? V. Sukumaran Nair, marketing manager of public sector Kerala State Poultry Development Corporation (Kepco), suspects this is the case.

### supply cut

But broiler producers in Tamil Nadu say they are increasing prices because of costlier raw material and also to compensate the losses that the industry suffered after the recent avian flu outbreak in Bangalore.

"With that bird flu incident, Kerala – our major market– imposed a temporary ban on the poultry products and export market too witnessed a setback. Hence, most of the farmers went for a supply cut – at least a 25 per cent cut in supply from last year. Kerala imposes service tax on chicken from Tamil Nadu, thus escalating the costs further," said C.R. Selvakumar, DGM- Tamil Nadu, Venkateshwara Hatcheries.



Nair said that KFC and other eateries may now pick fresh birds from Kepco farms, till now open only to individual consumers.

To add to consumers woes, the Kerala Hotels and Restaurants Association (KHRA) has decided to drop chicken from its menu, citing exorbitant price as a reason. Prices of chicken supplied mainly from neighbouring Tamil Nadu has gone up to Rs 170 a kg from the average Rs 105-120 few weeks ago. Live chicken is now priced at Rs 115-120 a kg against Rs 70-80 a month ago, while dressed chicken is in the range of Rs 160-170.

Jose Mohan, General Secretary of KHRA, alleged that the prices were being manipulated by middlemen.

As much as 80 per cent of the chicken brought to the State was consumed by hoteliers and caterers.

### input costs

According to Balram S. Yadav, MD, Godrej Agrovet, chicken prices have gone up marginally to mitigate the loss that was incurred by farmers during July-December due to over production of poultry. Also considering the high cost of production the current prices are justified.

“Currently, the cost of product per bird at the farm level is about Rs 50-60, while the selling price is around Rs 60-70 in Maharashtra. A live bird costs about Rs 80-90 a kg in the market while a dressed bird costs Rs 130-135.

Subba Raju, Zonal Chairman of NECC (National Egg Coordination Committee), said that in Andhra Pradesh to keep the cost of production in control, poultry farmers reduced capacity by 20 per cent. “We reduced it with self-discipline. We are getting a farm gate price of Rs 75-83 a kg (live). The break-even is put at Rs 60,” he said.

Feed costs account for one-third of the total production costs and currently a 75-kg bag of broiler feed is ruling at Rs 2,458 against Rs 1,805 in the same period the previous year, said Selvakumar. The cost of feed has gone up due to increase in prices of soyameal and corn, used in the feed. “Farmers had to sell poultry at a price 30 per cent below production. The hike will

not impact the consumers,” Yadav said adding that the chicken consumption has been doubling every 6-7 years.

In 1999, the per capita chicken consumption was 1.2 kg which has increased to 4.2 kg in 2012. It is set to increase further, Yadav said and added that India is a protein-deficient market and chicken is a cheaper source of protein given the fact that the prices of pulses have soared.

“We are expecting annual price of Rs 110 a kg for consumers. There is no possibility of it coming down, with the cost of production hovering at Rs 90-95,” Raju said.

### **quick foods chain**

An executive of Venky's, the fast food venture of Venkateswara Hatcheries, said that the demand was growing, particularly for the Just-in-a-Minute brand products. The rise in prices will not affect institutional buyers such as McDonalds, KFC or other such quick services restaurants as they usually go for annual contract purchase agreement. Asok Ram, CEO, SFC Plus, the Fried Chicken Restaurant in Kerala, said eatery was not directly affected by the local price hike in poultry. This is because it has a standard rate contract which is higher than existing rates. SFC is directly sourcing from Coimbatore and is adhering to stringent norms to ensure quality of product.

P. Selvaraj, Zonal Chairman of NECC-Namakkal, said that with seasonal uncertainties and austere months coming to an end, consumption will gain momentum in Tamil Nadu and other markets and will stay in the same level as the demand for animal protein is high during summer. This will offset any slack demand from Kerala.

Meanwhile, the Kerala Broiler Coordination Committee has demanded reduction in tax rates imposed by the State Government on poultry products. The 13.5 per cent of tax coupled with rise in poultry feed prices has affected production leading to the price rise.

*(Vinson Kurian with inputs from Sajeev Kumar, Kochi; Gayathri G., Chennai; Priyanka Pani, Mumbai; and K.V. Kurmanath, Hyderabad)*

### **Spot rubber rules steady**

Physical rubber prices finished steady on Tuesday. There were no fresh factors to set a specific trend in the market, while the prices remained neutral amidst scattered transactions.

Meanwhile, the key TOCOM rubber futures retreated marginally after hitting a ten month high on Monday as yen recovered the recent losses partially and stock markets fell on renewed worries over the euro zone. Sheet rubber closed unchanged at Rs 157.50 a kg, according to traders. The grade slipped to Rs 157 (157.50) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board.

In futures, the February series improved to Rs 158.87 (158.48), March to Rs 161.37 (160.97), April to Rs 164.15 (163.94) May to Rs 166.98 (166.20), June to Rs 169.64 (167.84) and July to Rs 176.17 (173.90) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

The February futures for RSS 3 slipped to ¥309.2 (Rs 176.90) from ¥310.2 a kg during the day session but then improved to ¥311 (Rs 177.93) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rates were (Rs/kg):** RSS-4: 157.50 (157.50); RSS-5: 152.50 (152.50); ungraded: 147.50 (147.50); ISNR 20: 153 (153) and latex 60 per cent: 103.50 (103.50).

### Onion rates drop slightly at Nashik; stable in Delhi



Onion prices fell marginally to Rs 17.69/kg in the wholesale market at Nashik, Maharashtra, the major producing region in the country, but rates remained stable in the National Capital.

At Lasalgaon mandi in Nashik, onion prices eased to Rs 17.69/kg from yesterday's Rs 18.21 per kg, according to data maintained by National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF). Prices have dipped by over Rs 4 per kg at Lasalgaon since February 1.

In the National Capital, wholesale prices remained stable at yesterday's level of Rs 21/kg. At organised retail outlets, onion is currently being sold at Rs 28 per kg, but local vendors are charging as high as Rs 40 per kg.

"Prices have declined by Rs 5 per kg from Rs 26 per kg last week. Supply position is normal," the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Azadpur Chairman, Rajinder Kumar Sharma said.

Prices would ease further when supplies from Rajasthan start reaching Delhi market from February 25, he added.

The government is closely monitoring the price movement of onions both in wholesale and retail markets as the commodity is a politically sensitive food item.

Onion production is expected to be close to last year's level of 174 lakh tonnes even as total area under the crop is down by 10 per cent this year.

During April-January period of this fiscal, onion exports stood at 13,78,545 tonnes valued at Rs 1,172.23 crore.

In 2011-12 fiscal, shipments stood at 15,52,904 tonnes worth Rs 2,141.42 crore.

### 2012-13 rabi crop cultivation area higher than normal

Above average					(million hectares)	
Crop	Sowing in normal years	Sowing in 2011-12	Sowing in 2012-13	Percentage change from previous year	Percentage deviation from normal	
Foodgrains	49.3	50.8	50.7	-0.2	2.8	
Wheat	28.2	29.6	29.5	-0.3	4.6	
Rice	1.3	1	0.9	-10	-30.8	
Coarse Cereals	6.3	5.8	6.1	5.2	-3.2	
Cereals	35.8	36.5	36.4	-0.3	1.7	
Pulses	13.5	14.3	14.2	-0.7	5.2	
Oilseeds	8.7	8.4	8.5	1.2	-2.3	
All Crops	58	59.2	59.2	0	2.1	

\*as on January 18  
Source: Ministry of Agriculture

The area under agriculture was 2.1 per cent higher in the 2012-13 rabi (winter) season than the coverage in normal years, according to Agriculture Ministry data.

An area of 59.2 million hectares was brought under coverage of crops such as rice, wheat, cereals, pulses and oilseeds in the 2012-13 rabi season – which starts in October – as of January 18, 2013.

Sowing under major rabi crops so far in the year is comparable with the level in the previous year. This was primarily on account of the recovery in rainfall during August-September, which helped maintain soil moisture. Even though the north-east monsoon continued to be below normal (by 21 per cent as on December 31, 2012) sowing of rabi crops was not affected as the water level in major reservoirs was satisfactory.

Higher sowing in wheat, in particular, is a good sign. But there was also a dip in the area under cultivation with rice, putting a question mark over the nation's food security. Sowing of coarse cereals and oilseeds was also below normal, though the area under cereal and pulses cultivation was higher.

### **Coconut oil, copra prices weaken**

Coconut oil market is witnessing a bearish trend both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu markets this week following the decline of demand from upcountry buyers.

Prakash B. Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), pointed out that some of the stockists had started liquidating copra in the market that had resulted in the decline of both copra and coconut oil prices.

It is normal practice that some of the major traders used to stock copra ahead of season to fetch a better price in the lean period. This trend is now prevailing in the market, he said.

The coconut oil prices have come down to Rs 70/kg in the Kerala market (Rs 71) whereas it is ruling at Rs 67 per kg in Tamil Nadu (Rs 68.50).

Copra prices also declined to Rs 4,800 per quintal in Kerala (Rs 4,900) while it dropped to Rs 4,600 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 4,800).

## **Recovery seen post winter**

Palm oil prices slightly increased to Rs 54 against Rs 53 per kg quoted last week and palm kernel oil prices are ruling at Rs 56 per kg against Rs 55.

Traders are expecting a price recovery in February once the winter season is over in the north Indian markets, he added.

According to Rao, the recent decision of the Government to allow exports of coconut oil through all major ports will not benefit the industry now. Of late, exports are carried out through many south Indian ports and this has not made any major impact in sales.

He also suggested increasing the minimum support price of milling copra to Rs 5,500 per quintal from the present Rs 5,100 for a better price recovery for coconut oil in the long term.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA, said that the market is witnessing a declining trend due to various reasons, which included lower copra stock, procurement delay, staying away of corporates. This has resulted in low demand, both in local and upcountry markets.

He expressed the hope that the market is expected to revive once the copra procurement at new MSP rates commences.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that the market is showing a weak trend due to low pricing of other edible oils. He was of the view that the sudden upward trend could not withstand for long and this may send wrong signal to upcountry buyers.

### **Delta farmers feed PDS rice to cattle**

MADURAI: Farmers in Madurai district are resorting to a cheap practice of feeding free rice distributed through the public distribution system, as the pasture lands are fast drying up and the fodder prices are rocketing high due to the prevailing drought-like conditions. The practice is prevalent mainly in three blocks of the district like Thirumangalam, Peraiyur and Usilampatti where the drought situation is said to be intense.

A Davamani from Kovilankulam near Usilampatti, a dairy farmer, is a worried man who pulls out the cooked rice from fodder tank and displays. Along with his daily chores, he now roams around the markets and restaurants in the region to collect discarded vegetables to feed his three cows. "What else to do when we are not able to afford the fodder prices. The grass is drying out faster and there is no cultivation in the region to get hay or other items for fodder," he charges.

With abundant agriculture activities last year, the price of hay was just Rs 600 per acre, but now it is Rs 4,000 to 5,000 per acre. "Even if we are ready to pay, there is no hay," Davamani rues.

For A Pechi in Pudupatti in the same region her three cows are the only source of livelihood. "I am just wondering how to save my animals in the coming months when the summer gets intense. At present, I cook the rice procured from the PDS and both my family and cows eat the same," she laments.

Along with the regular 20-kg free rice, she gets from the PDS, Pechi shells out Rs 8 per kg to procure the free rice from other card holders in the area. "Last year, it was Rs 5 and recently

they have increased the price to Rs 8. Even then, it becomes difficult to procure rice for the cattle as each consumes 1.25 kg per day," Pechi said.

"Feeding rice is harmful for the animals since it will damage the reproductive system of the animals in the long run, but the fodder is costly and green fodder is not available to dairy farmers in this drought-like situation," says S Muthupandi, district secretary of [Tamil Nadu Milk Producers Association](#).

Even worse, if the farmers attempt to sell of the milch animals, there is no demand for them or they have to sell it off at paltry sums. "Recently, one of our society members sold an animal which he bought for Rs 30,000 for just Rs 11,000. They can neither sell the animals nor feed them with rich fodder, so they adopt to feeding PDS rice," he stated.

The dairy farmers urged the government to consider their plight and take some measures on a war-footing. "We need subsidised fodder and supplements for the animals and the nationalised banks and NABARD should come forward to cancel the cattle loans or at least cancel the interest for this drought period," Muthupandi stated.

The milk production is also coming down. There are approximately 80,000 milch animals and 50,000 cattle owners in the district and the average milk production is above two lakh litres per day. But the milk production is declining as the summer sets in. The milk supply to the state government's agency, Aavin has dipped from its average of two lakh litres per day to 1.77 lakh litres in the district during the last 15 days, according to official sources.

There are 35,000 milch animals registered under Aavin in the district. "The milk production had receded in last few weeks. We are taking measures to provide fodder to the registered dairy farmers and 500 tonnes of mixed oil cake had been procured and being distributed to them," said P Tamilselvi, general manager of Aavin in Madurai.



## **Bonanza for farmers from Western Coalfields Ltd**

NAGPUR: Thousands of farmers from Chandrapur, Yavatmal and Nagpur districts will get windfall gains by way of enhanced compensation for land acquired by the [Western Coalfields Ltd](#), the public sector coal company. Formalities for disbursement of land compensation at the rate ranging between Rs6 lakh and Rs10 lakh per acre have been completed, said Chandrapur MP and BJP leader Hansraj Ahir.

Addressing reporters here on Tuesday, Ahir, who has been in limelight lately for exposing the massive coal mines' allocation scam, said he and his party had been fighting for the last decade for adequate compensation package, including higher per acre rates for land and job for the displaced in WCL for the land acquired by it from farmers. [Coal India Ltd](#) finally conceded to the demand at its 279th board meeting on March 12-13 last year, said Ahir, claiming that the state government has also endorsed the deal.

"The government used to pay less than Rs1 lakh an acre. For the last few years, I have been fighting for justice to farmers by raising the matter in Parliament and holding public agitations and finally blocking work at 38 mine sites till standing committee of the CIL agreed to the enhanced rates," said Ahir. "Our perseverance has yielded results. Now between Rs1,850 crore to Rs2,000 crore would be paid as pending dues to farmers in these three districts. This amount as per earlier rates was in the region of Rs250 crore," he added. Now even a barren land that a farmer owns would yield Rs6 lakh an acre while an irrigated patch will get the maximum Rs10 lakh per acre.

Of the 38 coal mine projects for which compensation rates were disputed, farmers who have lost land in 23 projects would be benefited by the new rates. Negotiations are on with the coal sector officials for clearing the remaining 15 projects, said Ahir. In Wani area of Chandrapur, 2,352 acre acquired for Naygaon, Kolgaon and Painganga projects would get the hiked rates of total Rs189 crore, farmers in Wani north area will get Rs264 crore, in Majri Rs239 crore, in Durgapur area Rs136 crore, in Ballarpur area for 5,345 acres Rs428 crore and in Nagpur

district's Umred area for 6,400 acres, farmers will be paid Rs 512 crore as per the new enhanced rates.

The BJP MP has now asked similar compensation be insisted upon by farmers whose land is being acquired in other areas of Vidarbha for manganese and iron deposits by the government or private agencies.

### **Bhatta farmers still in jail despite government's promise**

LUCKNOW/NOIDA: More than four months after chief minister Akhilesh Yadav promised to withdraw all cases leveled against farmers who took part in [Bhatta Parsaul](#) agitation against forceful acquisition of land, the implicated farmers continue to languish in jail as many cases are still pending against them in court.

In November 2012, the chief minister, in a celebratory order that called it the fruition of one of SP government's foremost poll promises, had ordered the immediate withdrawal of all law suits pending against farmers protesting the forceful acquisition of their farmlands in Batta and Parsaul villages in Gautam Budh Nagar. Cases against farmers in Tappal were also withdrawn.

However, four months after the emphatic assertions and acceptance of protests being peaceful, the process of the farmers' release still remains incomplete. Among prominent beneficiaries of the government's November largesse included Manvir Singh Tewatia, Premvir, Kale Singh, Gaje Singh, [Kiranpal](#), Dhan Singh, Neeraj and Manoj, who, the government said, had been falsely framed. They are all still in jail, with the more stringent Gangster Act and Arms Act still not having been withdrawn.

Speaking to TOI, [Samajawadi Party](#) spokesperson [Rajendra Chaudhary](#), said: "It is a part of the legal process which is taking so much time. The government has made a commitment to the farmers and it has not forgotten. The process of withdrawing cases is on. It will be done soon. Some farmers who participated in the Tappal agitation have also been released."

For affected families, though, "in process" has stretched on for as many as 20 months in some cases. In the case of Manvir Singh Tewatia, for instances, 23 cases were registered under different sections of the IPC in GB Nagar alone. Though Tappal cases and 7 others, including some charges of 'attempt to murder' have been dropped, the final reports have been filed in 2 cases, while bail petitions are pending in four cases. Eleven cases, a legal source said, are "under process" of being dropped.

The same applies to scores of other agitating farmers of Bhatta and Parsaul villages of western UP.

### **Kolhapur farmers to intensify stir**

PUNE: Farmers from Kolhapur, who were recently disqualified from getting the benefits under the 2008 loan waiver scheme, have decided to intensify their agitation against the decision taken by the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (Nabard).

Hundreds of farmers from Kolhapur district gathered outside the regional office of Nabard here on Tuesday and staged a protest. The Nabard said that these farmers have received more loans than what they were eligible for. It has disqualified 45,000 farmers from the district so far and has asked them to repay a loan amount of Rs 193 crore before February 8 this year.

"If the loan was waived off as per the 2008 scheme, why is the Nabard digging up the issue now after four years?", said Sambhaji Chabuk, secretary of the [Association of Credit Cooperative Societies](#). The farmers claimed that they used to avail more crop loans from primary agriculture credit societies because Kolhapur district has higher farm productivity.

Senior socialist leader [Govind Pansare](#) said, "The Nabard is an implementing authority. Hence it cannot disqualify farmers from getting the benefits under a loan waiver scheme announced by the Union government." On the Nabard's justification, Pansare said there was no guideline in

the 2008 loan waiver scheme about checking if every outstanding loan amount was within the limits of eligibility of the farmer. "If Nabard had objections about crossing the loan limit why was it not raised in the last four years," he said.

Chabuk said the farmers in the district have a tendency to avail higher loans than their eligibility because they can repay it owing to good agricultural production in the region.

Till 2008, most of the farmers had availed higher loan than their eligibility. The situation turned worse when sugarcane was affected by the pest wooly aphid (lokari mava) and farmers incurred heavy losses, followed by heavy floods in the subsequent year. These two consecutive financial set backs reduced farmers' income and repayment of loans got delayed. The Union government introduced a Rs 72,000 crore loan waiver scheme and outstanding loan of more than one lakh farmers were waived off. Out of it, 45,000 farmers have been disqualified as they had availed higher loans than their eligibility.

The delegation of farmers held a meeting with Nabard officials, who said that they would look into the issue.

### **Hailstorm damage crops in 80 villages of Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur**

BHOPAL: A 65-year-old farmer was killed and standing crops in about 80 villages in Tikamgarh and Chhatarpur districts of Bundelkhand region were damaged in the [hailstorm](#) that struck the region on Monday night.

The deceased farmer, identified as Dharma Lodhi, was a resident of Taparkheda village, located 40 km from Tikamgarh district headquarters. He died on the spot after a tree uprooted and fell on him during the hailstorm which lasted for almost 20 minutes, said police. The victim's family would be given an interim relief of Rs 1.5 lakhs as per government provision.

"We are currently working with the officials of [agriculture department](#) to assess the damage

caused by the hailstorm," said Rajesh Bamora, the [Chhatarpur collector](#).

He said more than 60 villages were affected. "We have dispatched teams for a field-to-field survey. Adequate measures are being taken to compensate the loss," he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, farmers from 40 villages in Chhatarpur, reached district headquarters with a tractor full of hailstorm demanding compensation for their crops.

Losses to crops and houses were reported from more than 30 villages in Tikamgarh also. District collector Tikamgarh, M R Raghuraj said, "A total of 32 villages are affected and we have ordered a survey of the affected farmers. Relief will be given on the basis of the survey and as per the norms of the revenue book code".

### **Stop onion export to Bangla: Mamata Banerjee**

KOLKATA: With no respite from the rising [onion prices](#), [chief minister Mamata Banerjee](#) on Tuesday instructed the task force on price rise to stop [export of onions](#) to [Bangladesh](#). She presided over the task force meeting on price rise at Writers' Buildings on Tuesday.

General secretary of the forum of traders' organization Rabindranath Koley, who is also the member of the task force, said that the chief minister has expressed concern over the price rise of onions. "Onion prices per kg have increased from Rs 24 to Rs 32 . The chief minister, at a meeting of the task force on Tuesday, has instructed us to see that onions are not exported to Bangladesh. The situation has occurred as supply of onions from Nasik has been hit due to less number of goods train rakes. The traders forum will talk to the railways on this matter," Koley said, adding that the situation has worsened as onion supply from Nadia, Hooghly, Burdwan and North 24-Parganas will take some more time.

Koley also said the task force would see that more supply of Hilsa could be made. tnn"Prices of vegetables are now under control," he said.

According to him, the task force was constantly keeping a check on vegetable and fish prices.

### **23% drop in onion prices**

NASHIK: The average wholesale prices of onions in Lasalgaon Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMCs) declined by 23 per cent to Rs 1,635 a quintal on Tuesday in a week, due to lack of availability of railway transportation facilities.

The average wholesale prices of onion in Lasalgaon APMC, which were at Rs. 2,150 per quintal on Thursday dipped to Rs. 1,635 per quintal on Tuesday. The minimum and maximum prices were recorded at Rs. 1,000 a quintal and Rs. 1759 a quintal, respectively, on Tuesday. Around 21,000 quintals of onions were auctioned on Tuesday.

The railway administration has stopped providing rakes for 10 days for the [Kumbh mela](#) in Allahabad. As a result, traders were unable to send their consignments. The shelf life of Kharif onion is around one month, hence, with the decrease in demand of traders the prices of onions have dropped, senior official from Lasalgaon [APMC](#) told TOI.

### **Farming of flowers grows in Terai belt**

BAHRAICH: The roses and tube rose flowers would now spread their fragrance in [Terai belt](#) of [Indo-Nepal border](#). The horticulture department would disburse donation to the farmers for [farming of flowers](#) and would also make them available in the market for sale. The department has prepared a comprehensive action plan for it. The farming of flowers would produce a profit of one lakh rupees a month to the farmers. The department would also provide training on floriculture to the farmers.

The farming of flowers is turning out to be profitable due to the increase in flower prices in the market in view of regular use of the flower by people on various occasions. The farmers are adopting modern trends of farming instead of the traditional ones and they are also earning big bucks due to the rising demand of flowers. This is the reason why the horticulture department

has given a reward to the farmers in order to encourage the farming of flowers and make the farmers economically strong. The horticulture in-charge RK Verma told that the government has decided to provide donation to the farmers for the farming of rose, tube rose, gladiolus and jasmine flowers. Under the scheme the small scale farmers would be given Rs 35, 000 per hectare for the farming of tube rose and other farmers would receive Rs 23, 100 per hectare while on the farming of gladiolus the small scale farmers would be provided Rs 45, 000 per hectare and other would receive Rs 29,700 per hectare.

40,000 plants of roses would be provided to the farmers for, which the small scale farmers would be given Rs12, 000 and other would receive Rs 7,920 as a donation. Moreover 10,000 plants of jasmine would also be provided to the farmers for, which the department has decided to pay Rs12, 000 per hectare to the small scale farmers and other farmers would receive a donation of Rs 7,920.

Verma told that the amount of donation would be disbursed after the complete verification of the works done and each farmer would receive donation once for a particular crop. The farmers would receive the donation for a maximum of two hectares of land.

### **Meeting to deliberate shortage of funds in agriculture institutes**

KANPUR: The [Indian Council of Agricultural Research](#) (ICAR) and [National Academy of Agricultural Sciences](#) will be holding a three-day long meeting to deliberate on the shortage of funds and faculty in agriculture educational institutions. The meeting is scheduled to be held from February 7 to 9, said chief guest and Vice Chancellor, Career Point University, Dr PL Gautam, in his address during the 14th convocation ceremony of CSA University. PL Gautam was the chief guest for the occasion.

He expressed concern over the issue and said that the need is to roll out a long term solution for the same. While addressing the students, PL Gautam said that education should be such that it can help students get a job. He said that the Indian agriculture is on a crossroad and therefore,

the [Government of India](#) will have to chalk out the direction where it has to be taken.

"Our natural resources are fast depleting. As population is increasing our agriculture land bank is decreasing. The produce goes into waste during storage. All these issues have to be addressed for a bright future of agriculture in the country", said Dr PL Gautam. He also added that climate change is also to be taken care of in regard to the agricultural production.

Addressing the students, the chief guest said that under such challenging situation, the nation looks at the students of agriculture universities.

"The students will have to compete at the national and international level with the support of their teachers. The agriculture universities will have to provide good governance and enter into tie-ups with other universities or research based institutions for the betterment of the agriculture field", said PL Gautam. He concluded by saying that with the help of the alumni association the universities should engage in carrying out developmental works on the varsity campus.

### **Rain mars Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology convocation**

KANPUR: Heavy showers that lashed the city on Monday and Tuesday played a spoilsport in the 14th Convocation ceremony of [Chandra Shekhar](#) Azad University of Agriculture and Technology. [Governor](#) BL Joshi, who was to attend the function, could not arrive. [Vice-chancellor](#), Career Point University, Hamirpur, [Himachal Pradesh](#), PL Gautam was the chief guest. He awarded medals to the meritorious students and gave degrees to others. CSA university V-C PK Sharma, registrar Rajendra Singh, deans and HoDs were present.

The Chancellor's Gold Medal was bagged by Sudhanand Prasad Lal. The girl students outperformed the boys and occupied the remaining positions. Richa Upadhyaya, Neha Parik, Preeti, Rashim Parma, Stuti Solanki, Amisha Kumari and other meritorious girls grabbed the Chancellor's Gold Medals. The University's Silver Medals were bagged by Punit Kumar Pathak, [Ashok Kumar](#), Rakesh Kumar Upadhyay, Satyam Saxena, Abhay Krishan Yadav, Anurag



Gupta, Jai Prakash Tiwari and Ashwini Dixit. Jyoti Singh and Rewati D were among girls to get the silver medal. The University's Bronze Medals were bagged by Naveen Kumar, Gargi Tiwari, Pawas Tiwari, Sheetal Banga, Shikha Awasthi, Rashim Yadav and Shivendra Singh. Raj Kumar, Anuja Mishra and Anupriya who also were conferred the bronze medal.

A total of 20 students were awarded PhDs. As many as 177 MSc agriculture, 20 MSc home science, 30 MBA agriculture business, 98 BSc agriculture honours, 16 BSc forestry, 29 BSc home science and 130 BTech students were given degrees.

As many as 37 medals, including 10 Chancellor Gold Medals, 10 University Silver Medals, 10 Bronze Medals and 7 other gold medals were given to the meritorious students.

A total of 520 students were given degrees, out of which 20 were awarded PhD degrees.

Earlier, the convocation ceremony began with the singing of Vande Mataram. The registrar and faculty members wore ceremonial dresses and donned head gears. The students receiving degrees were also dressed up in the ceremonial convocation dresses.

Later, CSA V-C read the progress report of the university. In his address, Gautam told the students contribute in nation building. He said that their responsibilities would increase after passing out.

### **Wholesale onion price drops slightly at Nashik; stable in Delhi**

Onion prices fell marginally to Rs 17.69/kg in the wholesale market at Nashik, Maharashtra, the major producing region in the country, but rates remained stable in the National Capital.

At Lasalgaon mandi in Nashik, onion prices eased to Rs 17.69/kg from yesterday's Rs 18.21 per kg, according to data maintained by National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF). Prices have dipped by over Rs 4 per kg at Lasalgaon since February 1.

In the National Capital, wholesale prices remained stable at yesterday's level of Rs 21/kg. At organised retail outlets, onion is currently being sold at Rs 28 per kg, but local vendors are charging as high as Rs 40 per kg.

"Prices have declined by Rs 5 per kg from Rs 26 per kg last week. Supply position is normal," Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Azadpur Chairman Rajinder Kumar Sharma said.

Prices would ease further when supplies from Rajasthan start reaching Delhi market from February 25, he added.

The government is closely monitoring the price movement of onions both in wholesale and retail markets as commodity is a politically sensitive food item.

Onion production is expected to be close to last year's level of 174 lakh tonnes even as total area under the crop is down by 10 per cent this year.

During April-January period of this fiscal, onion exports stood at 13,78,545 tonnes valued at Rs 1,172.23 crore. In 2011-12 fiscal, shipments stood at 15,52,904 tonnes worth Rs 2,141.42 crore.

# DECCAN Chronicle

TODAY FARM NEWS

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## Soaring food prices hurt family budget



**Chennai:** Prices of boiled and raw rice have gone through the roof. They have witnessed a steep increase this month with a 25-kg bag of the moderately priced variety of Ponni crossing `1,000.

Homemakers are concerned about the increased prices of staple commodities, as they are forced to shell out more. Retail traders attribute it to illegal hoarding by wholesalers and seek government intervention to streamline the trade.

Though the prices of rice has been going north since the last few months, it has gone up significantly this month, by Rs 4- Rs 6 a kg across all varieties, say retailers.

“For instance, the fast selling boiled Ponni rice, which sold for Rs 900-Rs 950 a bag, is now being sold for Rs 1,100- Rs 1,150. White Ponni’s price has touched Rs 1,250 from Rs 1,050,” informed Mr S.P. Soruban, president, TN Maligai Vyabarigal Sangam.

Apart from the decrease in supply after the poor monsoon and power cut in the southern districts, arrival of lorries from other states has also dwindled from 500 to 10. “The demand is

also because hoarders are taking advantage of the situation. The government has to regularise the rice trade,” said Mr Soruban.

“Low-priced rice has also seen a huge increase in recent times, making it tough for the underprivileged. We suspect hoarding by wholesalers,” said a trader from K.K. Nagar.

Traders hope that the rice prices would fall slightly while new arrivals start to hit the market in the coming months. But till the new arrivals hit the wholesale market, the common man will be hard pressed to balance his household budget as he has to shell out more for the staple diet which is the major food intake for a typical family in Tamil Nadu.

### **Food demand to continue for 2 yrs**

With the state facing drought and agriculture productivity hitting an all-time low, the demand for pulses and foodgrains will continue for the next two years. Except sugarcane and garlic, the prices of all farm products, including cattle and livestock feed, will surge from 10-20 per cent, say farmers.

According to Mr Arupathy Kalyanam, general secretary of the delta districts farmers federation, the monsoon failure has adversely affected paddy and other crops in the region. He opined that it would take at least another three years for farmers to emerge from the crisis.

The existing Central and state government policies have become anti-farmer and there is a need for immediate intervention. Even when there are adequate rains, dealers stock rice to make huge margins.

The present scenario will only help the middlemen, resulting in price rise, he said.

Even though paddy crops appeared green in areas where pumpsets are used, the yield would be just one-third.

A solution to the existing power crisis and comprehensive crop insurance may bring in some respite, he suggested.

The 54-year-old farmer also added that besides affecting paddy, rains and climatic changes have caused considerable damage to sugarcane, banana, groundnut and other horticulture crops across the state.