

## **Access crop damage: farmers**

: Representatives of farmers' associations urged Collector S. Nagarajan to declare Kanyakumari as drought-hit district and to ensure the visit of high-level committee to assess crop damage in the district, at an agriculture grievance day meeting here on Friday.

## **Farmers unhappy with panel visit**

Farmers criticised the recent visit of the high-level committee to assess crop damage in the district at the grievance day meeting held here on Friday.

Blaming officials of the agriculture department, the farmers wanted to know why the panel was not taken to areas that have been acutely drought-hit, such as Nilakottai, Gujiliamparai and Palani.

Joint Director of Agriculture N. D. Sampath Kumar replied that as the committee had to visit three districts in a day, it had no time to visit more places. However, he added that a detailed report on crop damage has been submitted to the committee.

The officials at the meeting admitted that due to monsoon failure, the area under paddy cultivation had shrunk to 9,000 hectares from 22,000 hectares.

Horticulturists, who attended the meeting, were not satisfied with the reply. They said that horticulture crops had suffered losses and the officials had not assessed the damage.

But officers claimed that compensation was given to farmers who suffered more than 50 per cent crop loss but as damages in the district was below 50 per cent they could not recommend any compensation.

Not happy with the response, farmers pointed out that mango, coconut, guava and banana crops suffered a greater degree of damage.

Farmers from Thamaraikulam said that paddy crop withered in Palani union not due to shortage of water but because of the lethargy of PWD engineers. Illegal tapping of irrigation water using motors was the prime reason for the crisis, complained R. Kumar, head of the Thamaraikulam Farmers Association. Repeated complaints were made but no action was taken, he said. PWD Executive Engineer Chandramohan assured them that action would be taken if the PWD Assistant Engineer was found guilty of the charge raised.

Farmers warned that if steps were not taken to remedy the situation, then they would observe a fast at St. George Fort in Chennai to draw the attention of the Chief Minister.

The Collector advised the PWD officials to convene a meeting to settle the issue amicably.

## **Farmers demand transfer of TNCSC manager**

*'Clerks demand Rs.50 a bagat purchase centres'*



*IN GOD WE TRUST: Farmers staging a novel demonstration at the grievances day meeting at the collectorate in Thanjavur on Friday.— Photo: B. Velankanni Raj*

Farmers of Thanjavur district on Friday alleged large-scale corruption in the purchase of paddy at the Direct Purchase Centres (DPCs) of Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) and demanded repayment of the extra amount of Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a bag collected from farmers while purchasing paddy.

Farmers led by Sundara Vimalanathan of Swamimalai complained that the the TNCSC top officials had not taken any step to prevent corruption, Sundara Vimalanathan said farmers had brought Calotropis (Erukku) flowers to present to R. Pichai, Senior Regional Manager of the TNCSC to symbolically condemn the malpractice in the DPCs.

District Collector K. Baskaran, who presided over the meeting, also expressed his dissatisfaction over the functioning of the DPCs and wanted Mr. Pichai to explain to farmers. The Collector wanted to know what steps the official had taken to prevent collection of extra amount from farmers. “This has been going on for years together. Last year, it became a major issue,” the Collector said.

Mr. Pichai said he had suspended seven sales clerks who indulged in malpractice. But farmers were not satisfied and shouted slogans demanding his transfer.

TNCSC had opened 357 DPCs, including eight special mobile DPCs in the district, and is procuring samba and thaladi paddy from farmers. A sum of Rs. 1,350 a quintal is paid for grade A paddy and Rs. 1,300 a quintal for common variety of paddy. TNCSC has procured 1,98,782 tonnes of paddy so far.

Farmers complained that the staff at the DPCs collected Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a bag from farmers for purchasing the paddy.

The Collector said samba harvest had been completed on 1.02 lakh hectares of land while thaladi on 18,950 hectares of land. Samba was raised on 1.02 lakh hectares of land while Thaladi on 19,003 hectares of land.

Relief had been provided to the tune of Rs. 18.37 crore to 10,886 farmers in the district.

The Collector said that more than 50 per cent loss was recorded on 12,249 acres and relief was paid at the rate of Rs. 15,000 per acre to farmers.

However, a few farmers, walked out of the grievances day meeting stating that all farmers who suffered more than 50 per cent have not been paid the relief. They demanded payment of relief to all farmers.

The Collector said that incentive was given to farmers who raise fodder crops. This is to help farmers overcome fodder shortage during drought situation.

Mohammed Yahiya, Joint Director of Agriculture, and S. Suresh Kumar, District Revenue Officer, participated in the meeting.

## **Collector laments farmers' apathy**

*11,000 farmers have not submitted undertaking on insurance: Jayashree Muralidharan*

District Collector Jayashree Muralidharan on Friday expressed her unhappiness over the failure of a large number of farmers failing to insure their crops “despite my persistent advice.”

Speaking at the agriculturists' grievances day, she pointed out that of the total compensation of Rs. 33.7 core sanctioned for the seven delta taluks in the district, Rs. 33.12 crore had been disbursed to 24,974 farmers through

the respective bank accounts. Only 11,676 farmers had chosen to withdraw Rs. 21.82 crore so far, she said.



*STEM THE ROT: Farmers showing their withered banana plants to the Collector at the grievances day meeting in Tiruchi on Friday.—  
PHOTO: R.M. RAJARATHINAM*

Before disbursing the compensation, the administration should get an undertaking from each farmer that he would hand over the insured amount to the government as and when paid by the insurance company. “Though the State government was magnanimous enough to give you in advance Rs. 15,000 which includes the insured amount of about Rs. 8,000, all that many of you are likely to get from the insurance company will be only proportionate to the loss suffered.”

Though the government had come forward to pay the premium for agricultural insurance, 11,000 farmers in the district had failed to submit the undertaking, she said. “Can’t you just sign these papers because all that the government wants you to do is just insure your crops?”



Of the crop loan target of Rs. 175 crore, Rs. 171.15 crore had been achieved so far. “Steps are being taken to reschedule the short-term loans into medium-term loans,” she said.

Farmers, led by Ayilai Sivasurian, District Secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangham (CPI), and Puliur R. Nagarajan, State vice-president of the Agriculturists Wing of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, appealed to the Collector to get at least 1,000 cusecs of water from the Mettur Dam for the 17-channel area where banana on thousands of acres was withering. “We have spent more than Rs. 1.5 lakh an acre and those who have gone in for banana would be ruined if the government failed to heed our plea,” they said. They demanded compensation of Rs. 1 lakh for banana, and Rs. 50,000 for sugarcane and betel vines.

However, C. Masilamani, District Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangham (CPI-M), was categorical that drawing any water from the Mettur dam would backfire. “Already the water level in Mettur reservoir has touched 28 ft. Of this, almost 20 ft is nothing but silt. If you were to draw 1,000 cusecs, the level would slump,” he warned. He wondered whether the 1,000 cusecs would be able to save the standing crops.

When this provoked a number of farmers, Mr. Masilamani chose to explain that instead of giving water, the farmers should be granted compensation for the drought-hit crops.

The Collector said she had taken up the matter with the State government.

## **IMTI orients farmers to optimising water use**



*digging deep: Farmers planting a sapling on occasion of World Water Day celebration at IMTI in Tiruchi on Friday.— Photo: M. Moorthy*

Irrigation Management Training Institute (IMTI) observed World Water Day on Friday by planting saplings on the campus and orienting farmers of Perambalur district on optimising water usage.

One of the 11 institutions in the country, the IMTI at Thuvakudi sensitised over 30 farmers to water budgeting methods, as part of its goal to increase irrigated agricultural production through improved efficiency of irrigation systems and improved productivity of water delivered for irrigation, P.Rajeshwari, Chief Engineer, PWD, and IMTI Director, said.



The institution has been instrumental in making farmers realise the benefits accruing from water conservation techniques during the processes of storage, conveyance, and field-application; latest techniques in water saving for irrigated dry crops; role of pressure irrigation system in saving water; and modern techniques in water saving for irrigated wet crops, senior officials said. IMTI's awareness initiatives are effectively reaching farmers in the delta districts. The new methodologies have not only brought down water requirement for the crops to one-third of the otherwise usual usage, but also increased yield by 40 per cent, they said.

For three days since Wednesday, the farmers were trained by several experts on watershed management, nature farming, water and soil conservation, harvest technologies, irrigational methods, agricultural implements.

## **Applications invited for farm ponds subsidy**

Farmers who wish to avail subsidy for establishing farm ponds for rearing fish could apply for the same before March 31.

The State government has sanctioned Rs.181 crore for establishing about 15,000 farm ponds in the delta districts in view of the monsoon failure. The farm ponds were intended to create water storage facilities, which could come in handy for farmers at times of drought conditions.

Farmers could rear fish in the ponds and the State government has allocated Rs. 12.85 crore for being disbursed as subsidy for purchase of inputs through the Fisheries Department.

## **Bilkundi farmer gets national award**



*Santosh Rangappa Barki receiving the award at a function in Bangalore.*

Santosh Rangappa Barki, a progressive farmer from Bilkundi village in Gokak taluk, has won the national-level 'Innovative farmer in soil and water conservation' Award instituted by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR). He received the award at a function held in Bangalore on March 14.

In 2010, Mr. Barki adopted innovative techniques in soil and water conservation in his village, under the National Initiative Climate-Resilient Agriculture (NICRA), one of ICAR's network projects. He was promoted by the Belgaum Integrated Rural Development Society (BIRDS)

and the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Tukkanatti of Gokak taluk.

The non-governmental organisation BIRDS has been working in and around Gokak taluk since its establishment in 1980. The organisation is responsible for the establishment of ICAR's Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) there in 1995.

The KVK plays an important role in agricultural production programmes in the district, by way of providing expert information and practical training in agronomy, horticulture, plant protection, entrepreneurship development, income generation, animal husbandry, fisheries and home science.

## **Farmers seek toll exemption**

The Kolar district unit of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha demanded that the authorities concerned exempt vehicles transporting vegetables on national highways from toll. The sangha decried the move of the company collecting toll to levy toll on farmers transporting silk, beans, carrot, tomato, potato and other horticulture produces. It demanded that the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) direct the company against collecting toll from farmers. — Staff Correspondent

# Farmers' clash in Kaipuzha

A dispute regarding the use of combined harvesters at a paddy field led to a group of farmers waylaying the machines.

The incident took place at Kaipuzha near here on Friday when farmers of the Cheriyanankari paddy field alleged that the contractor of the harvesters had flouted the terms of an agreement.

According to Cheriyanankari paddy field committee convener Mathew Chandy, an agreement had been reached with the contractor on March 10.

However, the contractor had gone on to carry out harvest works at other fields without fulfilling the contract at the Cheriyanankari paddy field.

As the contractor refused to commence harvest in the field even after completing his work at adjacent fields, a group of farmers led by the committee obstructed the harvesters and prevented their passage on Friday.

## **Relented to demands**

Later, as the contractor relented to the demand of the farmers, the harvester operators complicated the matter further by raising a demand for an increase in their wages. Arguments gave way to a minor altercation between the operators and farmers.

The tension was defused by the intervention of the police of Ettumanoor station who directed the parties to resolve the issue by Saturday.

## Famous five share their farming tips



*green-thumbed:Uthra, Uthraja, Uthrajan, Utthara, and Utthama with the agricultural produce of their school at an exhibition organised as part of Njattuvela-2013 in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday.—Photo: S. Mahinsha*

Uthra, Uthraja, Uthrajan, Utthara and Utthama, the celebrated quintuplets of Thiruvananthapuram town, are boosting the confidence of their fellow students at the Lourde Mount Higher Secondary School, Vattappara in the district, to take up vegetable farming.

The four sisters and brother along with their mother Ramadevi and teachers, were present with the agricultural produce cultivated at their school at an exhibition held in connection with the 'Njattuvela-2013, an agri-media meet, organised in Thiruvananthapuram, by the Department of Agriculture.

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy inaugurated the meet at the Vylloppili Samskriti Bhavan at Nanthancode in the city on Friday.

From vegetable grow bags to samples of cabbage, cauliflower, fresh spinach, beans and raw banana, the team from the school had stocked samples of almost all agricultural produce that is cultivated at the school.

### **Wholehearted support**

The children, also members of the eco-friendly club at the school, utilised the activity period to try their hands at farming.

The school has dedicated around 30 cent land for vegetable cultivation and the school compound houses around 200 grow bags.

“The team from Agri-friends (a community of farming enthusiasts) and officials from the Department of Agriculture taught us various methods of cultivation. Our teachers also gave us the support to utilise the land in our school for farming”, said Uthara. The school also has its own vermi-composting unit and the focus is on encouraging students to take up bio-farming.

Cultivating cabbage and cauliflower involves a lot of techniques and proper caring, the very reason why Uthrajan likes to grow spinach because he says it is “easy to grow.”



According to school headmistress Shoba Kumari, there is a growing interest among students today to do vegetable cultivation and they are curious to understand and learn the traditional way of agriculture. From school to their home, these children also nurture a small house garden at their home.

Their mother Ramadevi is all support for their initiative and said that the children dedicated a good amount of time for gardening activities.

## **Dairy farm workers robbed**

A three-member gang robbed workers of a dairy farm after Thursday midnight on the outskirts of Kistapur village in Medchal, 40 km from here, after attacking them with sticks. As the two dogs reared for security by the dairy farm owner started barking at midnight, a worker Raju stepped out of his single room quarter. On seeing two robbers, he raised an alarm even as another offender joined the duo.

### **Tied up**

The gang overpowered Raju and tied him to a pole with ropes, Medchal Inspector A. Ram Reddy said.

They threatened to kill his wife and children and collected Rs. 2,500 from him and snatched his wife's mangalasutra. Later, the robbers woke up two other workers from Bihar living in adjacent rooms and beat up them with sticks. The scared workers ran away.

“The workers had tied the dogs to a pole fearing that they might attack newly born calves on the dairy premises. Had the dogs not been tied, the robbery would have been prevented,” the police said.

## **Organic farmer suffers for want of support**

*Officials can set an example by purchasing produce, he says*



*Bitter truth: Undavilli Narasimhamurthy, an organic vegetable farmer from Kanthamanenivarigudem in West Godavari district, displaying bitter guards raised in his fields.—Photo A.V.G. Prasad*

For Undavilli Narasimhamurthy, an organic vegetable farmer from Kanthamanenivarigudem under this upland mandal in West Godavari district, it is a saga of trials and tribulations.

He has set an example in organic farming by raising vegetable crops without using pesticides and chemical fertilizers in eight acres. Bitter gourd, ridge gourd, brinjal,

lady's finger, tomato and gherkins are grown with non-pesticide management (NPM) practices.

Vermicomposting is a main source of manure for his fields.

Mr. Narasimhamurthy rears half-a-dozen cows and a similar number of buffalos in his farm. The cow dung, urine and the other organic wastes generated in the fields are used for producing vermicomposting and the organic mixture is made with dung and neem cakes to save the crops from pest attacks as a substitute to pesticides. He invested Rs 1.73 lakh on drip irrigation for vegetable farming in five acres of the leased lands in the neighbouring Desavarigudem while spending Rs 60,000 for erecting pandals per acre to support creeper plants like bitter gourd and ridge gourd.

Mr. Narasimhamurthy faced problems while putting the concept of organic farming to practice. "I will have to invest Rs. 4,000 per acre towards wages for farm hands for removal of weed manually. If I would have gone for weedicides, my expenditure would not have crossed Rs. 200 per acre," he said. The relief from weeds and pests in organic farming is said to be not as instant as in inorganic farming. Besides, the yield in the NPM method is low when compared to conventional farming. "I am able to produce only 3 tonnes of ridge gourd through organic farming when it is crossing nine tonnes in my neighbouring fields grown with inorganic manures and pesticides," he explains while craving for patronage from consumers and liberal government support for inorganic

farming. He said his produce would find fewer takers in the market on the ground that it did not appear to be as good-looking as the items grown with chemical fertilizers because of poor public awareness in favour of organic farming.

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) has provided him a rent-free outlet in the city for sale of his organic vegetables.

“The promotion activity from the officials’ side ended with a high-profile inauguration of the outlet by an official top brass. What I needed from the officials is to set an example for the general public purchasing organic products for self-consumption,” he said.

## **Farmers’ societies need big boost: DCCB chairman**

*IFFCO organises regional cooperative conference*

Speakers at the regional cooperative conference organised by the Indian Farmers Fertilisers’ Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) here on Friday asserted that various programmes and initiatives were being taken up to help the agricultural cooperative societies catering to the needs of farmers in rural areas.

Presidents and secretaries from various cooperative bodies from Nellore, Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool districts took part in the conference. Nellore

District Cooperative Central Bank chairman M. Dhanunjaya Reddy was the chief guest.

IFFCO Kisan SEZ chief executive officer M. Rajasekharaiah, District Cooperative Marketing Society chairman Y. Sumanth Reddy and others were present.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Dhanunjaya Reddy said the cooperative societies should be further strengthened in all respects so as to ensure that the farmers would get better services. He promised all help from the DCCB to pass on the benefits of various programmes to the farmers in the villages.

He said steps would be taken for felicitating model cooperative societies and banks for their achievements.

Mr. Rajasekharaiah said that at the Kisan SEZ in the Nellore district, most modern facilities were being created to give a fillip to the agriculture and related sectors in the region.

An exhibition on various products and services of the IFFCO was held on the occasion. Several farmers' representatives spoke of the need for helping the cooperative sector in the rural areas.

Some of them said that where there was discipline and active participation by local people, the farmers' cooperative societies were doing extremely well.

***‘Steps will be taken to felicitate model cooperative societies and banks for their achievements’***

## **Non-Goa residents can't buy farm land**



*Manohar Parikkar*

Residents of other states will soon no longer be able to purchase agricultural land in Goa, Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar told the assembly on Friday.

Parrikar was speaking in response to a private member's bill tabled by Leader of Opposition Pratapsing Rane, who proposed that the Goa government should promote contract farming in order to cultivate barren tracts of agricultural land.

“This government assures that no outsiders will be allowed to buy agricultural land. And no agricultural land



will be allowed to be taken over by anyone other than for government purposes,” Parrikar said.

“If people leave their fields barren, the fields too will be taken over by the government,” he said.

In face of rising real estate prices and rising labour costs, once lush paddy fields are now lying fallow throughout Goa, causing a steep drop in the state’s agricultural output. IANS

## **Agriculture, allied sectors under one umbrella soon**



*‘Wonder’ cow: The calf of Punganur breed stands out as a special attraction at the Dairy Show-2013 in Hyderabad. The Punganur dwarf cow is the world's shortest humped cattle. —PHOTO: G. RAMAKRISHNA*

Efforts were on to bring agriculture and allied sectors under one umbrella from the mandal to the State level to be of better help to farmers, said Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy.

From Rs.450 crore, the annual budgetary support has been increased to Rs. 1,300 crore, he pointed out after

going around the Dairy Show-2013 here on Friday evening.

The State government was working on synchronising agriculture, dairy, horticulture, sericulture, poultry and fisheries sectors with power and irrigation to ensure maximum benefit to the farming community, he said, addressing the gathering after spending about half an-hour interacting with dairy farmers at the various stalls at the Dairy Show.

He recalled that the government had also introduced the agriculture action plan in the Assembly recently.

### **Initiatives**

Mr. Reddy said his government was well aware of the potential and recalled the various initiatives taken up by the government to help improve the lot of dairy farmers and see that they got a regular monthly income. Some of the initiatives were the Rs. 40-crore 'Foot and Mouth Disease Control Programme' and setting up of Veterinary University, two veterinary colleges and A.P. Sheep & Goat Cooperative Federation, he stated.

### **Various breeds**

Various breeds of cows and buffaloes including 'Kapila', 'Ongole Gitta', 'Garwal', 'Gir' and 'Punganur' were on display at the exhibition that had various companies in the sector putting up stalls to display their products and services.

Others present were Ministers P. Viswaroop (Animal Husbandry) and G. Prasad Kumar (Handlooms & Textiles), while the officialdom was represented by Principal Secretary (Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development & Fisheries), Manmohan Singh, Managing Director, A.P. Dairy Development Corporation, Rafat Ali Rizvi and Director-Animal Husbandry, D. Venkateshwarlu.

## Goodness of MILK

*Nourishment Remember your mother telling you to 'drink milk'? Turns out it is a wonder drink*



White nectar Milk is nutrient rich and a source many nutrients Milk is always referred to as a complete and natural food. Being the most nourishing of all foods, milk is a favourite drink of people throughout the world. Milk is an excellent source of all nutrients which are in proper proportions and work as a team to keep the body healthy and strong.

### **Vitamin rich**

Milk provides high quality protein, vitamins like A, B12, D, Riboflavin, and minerals like calcium, phosphorus, zinc and magnesium. Casein is an important protein that is found only in milk.

Whole milk cream and yogurt contain saturated fat and are good for health. Milk can be consumed in different forms – yogurt, cheese, buttermilk, ice-creams, etc.

Milk is available in different forms such as regular whole milk, low fat, skimmed milk, cultured buttermilk, cream, sour cream etc.

The main drawback of milk is that it can cause indigestion in people with lactose intolerance. Milk protein casein may trigger allergic reactions like nasal and sinus congestion especially in children.

Low fat milk and milk products are low in cholesterol and high in protein. Those who are health conscious can drink low fat yogurt or skimmed milk for a powerful nutritional punch.

## CHOCOLATE MILK SHAKE

### **Ingredients**

Milk – 1 glass

(cooled)

Dark chocolate – 25 gm

Oreo biscuits – 3

Nuts – 3

Ice cubes – 3

Chocolate for garnish

## **Method**

Put all the ingredients into a blender. Blend for 2 minutes and transfer it into a long glass. Serve with some chocolate shavings on top.

## **BAKED CUSTARD PUDDING WITH FRUITS**

### **Ingredients**

Milk – 600 ml

Butter – 25 gm

Lemon rind – 1 tbsp

Whole eggs – 2

Egg yolks – 2

Nutmeg powder –

2 pinches

Sugar – 3 tbsp

### **Method**

Butter a pie dish.

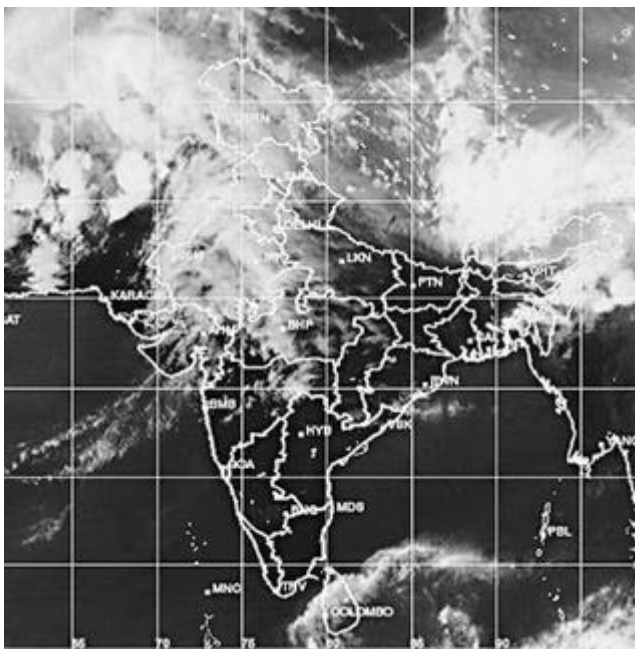
In a sauce pan, bring the milk and lemon rind to just below boiling point, then remove from fire.

Beat eggs and yolks in a bowl using a fork for 2 to 3 minutes. Beat in the sugar. Pour the milk, add nutmeg powder and stir well. Strain the custard into the pie dish.

Sprinkle butter over the custard.

Set the pie dish in a shallow baking tin with about 1” of cold water. Bake the custard in a pre-heated oven at 180°C for about 35 minutes until the custard is set and the top is golden brown. Serve with fresh fruits in sugar syrup.

## Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on March 22nd.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	34	18	0	5
New Delhi (Sfd)	33	19	1	1
Chandigarh	29	15	0	12
Hissar	33	16	0	36
Bhantar	27	8	0	51
Shimla	19	11	0	44
Jammu	29	13	0	8
Srinagar	19	6	0	16
Amritsar	30	13	0	2
Patiala	31	17	0	14
Jaipur	35	19	0	0
Udaipur	35	17	0	0
Allahabad	38	17	0	3
Lucknow	35	17	0	0
Varanasi	36	19	0	2
Dehradun	29	15	0	15



Agartala	34	25	1	23
Ahmedabad	36	21	0	0
Bangalore	34	22	0	1
Bhubaneshwar	39	23	0	0
Bhopal	35	18	0	20
Chennai	35	23	0	32
Guwahati	33	16	14	14
Hyderabad	38	25	0	0
Kolkata	37	25	0	0
Mumbai	31	24	0	0
Nagpur	38	19	0	15
Patna	34	19	0	0
Pune	35	16	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	34	24	0	69
Imphal	31	15	tr.	4
Shillong	22	19	6.6	19

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

## DRY WEATHER

**RAINFALL:** Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region.

**MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES:** The maximum temperatures changed little over the region. They were markedly above normal in Jammu and Kashmir, appreciably above normal in Himachal Pradesh and west Rajasthan, below normal in east Uttar Pradesh and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 37.9°C recorded at Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh).

**MINIMUM TEMPERATURES :** The minimum temperatures fell in Himachal Pradesh and changed little elsewhere.

They were above normal in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan and normal in rest of the region. The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 11.5°C recorded at Adampur (Punjab).

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 24th March 2013:** Rain/thundershowers would occur at many places over Jammu and Kashmir on 23rd and 24th. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places on 23rd and at many places on 24th over Himachal Pradesh. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Uttarakhand on 23rd and 24th. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

**WARNING :** Thunder squall accompanied with hailstorm could also occur at one or two places over Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Haryana on 23rd and 24th.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 24th March 2013:** Partly cloudy sky. Mist in the morning.

## **Water level**

: Water level in Papanasam dam on Friday stood at 80.80 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 216.24 cusecs and nil discharge. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 91.48 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 32 cusecs and 430 cusecs is discharged.

## Nagercoil

Water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 7 feet, 30.35 feet in Perunchani, 4.43 feet in Chittar I, 4.52 feet in Chittar II and 4 feet in Poigai dam.

Water level in Periyar dam stood at 112.90 feet with an inflow of 100 cusecs and discharge of 100 cusecs on Friday.

In Vaigai dam, water level stood at 46 feet with an inflow of 28 cusecs and discharge of 60 cusecs, according to Public Works Department. There was no rainfall in this region in the last 24 hours.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA | India

# Tamil Nadu agriculture sector gets Rs 5,189 crore

CHENNAI: The state, which saw a disastrous crop failure owing to poor monsoon and Karnataka's refusal to release water, has decided to give more thrust to the [agriculture](#) sector, with the AIADMK government allocating Rs 5,189.15 crore for the next fiscal year. Chief minister J Jayalalithaa will shortly announce a relief package for the farmers of non-delta districts,

who were worst hit by the poor monsoon.

This was announced by the finance minister O Pannarselvam, while presenting the [budget](#) for the year 2013-14. The [state](#) witnessed the worst yield in the last irrigation year, with tens of farmers who were unable to overcome the loss committing suicides. The state's high-level team, including senior ministers and bureaucrats of various departments, including public works department, municipal administration, rural department and agriculture conducted field investigations and upon their report, the state government announced a relief package to the tune of Rs 1,517 crore in February last.

"A drought memorandum is being submitted to the Centre," Pannarselvam said. Having got the final order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal notified, the state is now taking steps to have the Cauvery Management Board and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee constituted. The state government has already moved the Supreme Court praying for a direction to the Centre, as this would ensure that the Karnataka store the stipulated quantum of water for the Tamil Nadu's irrigation year that begins in June.

# Whistleblowers' life in peril, farmers complain to district administration

MADURAI: Farmers from Madurai district have raised concerns that information about whistleblowers are allegedly passed on to the mining mafia, thereby putting their lives at stake. At a meeting here with the district collector [Anshul Mishra](#) on Tuesday, farmers cited recent incidents that made them fear about likely reaction from quarry owners if the confidential information they pass on reaches the hands of the other party.

A week back, a farmer lodged a complaint with the Mines Office that quarry activities are apparently affecting agriculture in Thirumangalam. The complaint was allegedly leaked to the quarry owner who himself threatened the farmer with dire consequences. Upset over this, the farmers demanded that the vital information of the complainants should not be passed on to their detriment.

[P Rajamanickam](#), a farmer from Vellaripatti informed the meeting that such leaks will endanger the life of a

farmer who complaints. "We insist district officials to maintain confidentiality with our complaints," he stressed.

Another farmer from Alagarkoil narrated a few incidents when he realised that the confidential information was compromised by the authorities, especially at the village level. He had registered a complaint about illegal sand mining in the region at the special cell functioning in the collectorate. The complaint was directed to the concerned official and later to the village administrative officer (VAO) who unwittingly passed on the information to the sand miners. "The officials should note that in many occasions, VAOs will be relatives or friends of the people involved in such mining activities and they will pass on the information that so and so from the village preferred a complaint. The culprits in these cases will pick up quarrels with us or with our family members," he said.

Upon hearing their concerns, district collector strictly instructed the officials to maintain confidentiality with the complaints. "We should concentrate on the complaints more than complainants. We don't have to authenticate the complaints like the police but look into the complaint," he said. He also told the officials if the identity of the complainants is revealed, people will



not come forward to register complaints and such issues will go unnoticed.

## Desilt Vaigai and water bodies, farmers urge government

MADURAI: Farmers in the district stressed the importance of conserving water bodies, especially the desilting of Vaigai dam, which is the major reservoir. The farmers took part in a discussion held as part of the grievance redressal day on Tuesday at the district collectorate where they insisted the demand of cleaning and repairing the water bodies due to the prevailing drought conditions.

M Pandian, president, District Farmers Association said that steps should be taken from the officials to desilt the Vaigai reservoir. He also pointed out the alarming trend of groundwater depletion in many blocks especially Kallikudi, Usilampatti, Chellampatti, T Kallupatti, where the level is critical. "A government order on utilising work force of [Mahatma Gandhi](#) National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to establish farm ponds in the lands of the farmers is issued. This workforce should be used to

improve rain water harvesting and establishing farm ponds for charging ground water," he said.

Commissioned in 1959, the dam was not desilted till date due to which a considerable amount of slush has formed. The joint credit of Vaigai reservoir and [Mullaperiyar](#) dam is the lifeline of farmers in the five districts down south. "We have stressed this demand during the drought committee visit as well. Though the dam level is 69 feet, there is an average level of 20 feet slush considerably reducing the dam capacity. If the dam is desilted, more water can be stored catering to both irrigation and drinking water needs," he said on the sidelines of the meeting.

The farmers also pointed out the increased stress on Vaigai reservoir for drinking water needs of Madurai city. "The number of wards had increased from 72 to 100 and the water credit set aside for drinking water may go up once more number of drinking water schemes are implemented. It is important that the water storage level is increased in Vaigai dam," P Rajamanickam, another farmer said.

Desilting of village tanks and removing the encroachments from the tanks were also put forward by the farmers.

Another discussion that came up during the meeting was the auctioning of the tanks for inland fishing. The farmers pointed out that most of the tanks in the district are dry due to drought and the [aqua](#) culture cannot be carried out. However, farmers pointed out the inland fisheries department had recently auctioned 25 tanks for the period of three years. They urged the administration to look into the issue extending the lease period for one more year. "The aqua farmers would have paid the lease money for three years and they will not have any yields this year. Hence, the period can be extended," a farmer said.

Inland fisheries officials said that the auction order was received from the directorate. The proposal of extending the lease period will be forwarded to the directorate, officials said. The farmers also stressed on proper drought assessment and crop [insurance](#) distribution.

Upon hearing their demands, district collector, Anshul Mishra assured action on their petitions. He proposed to discuss the inland fishing issue in a separate meeting to arrive at some solution.

## Coconut farmers offered all support to tap 'Neera'

A discussion was conducted for the benefit of coconut producers in Thiruvananthapuram who have registered with the Coconut Development Board in connection with the production of 'neera' at Kottakkakam Auditorium here the other day.

State Planning Board member C P John, who participated in the debate, ensured all support for the Coconut Development Board and coconut farmers in tapping 'neera.' He said that 'neera' should be upgraded as processed food.

The policy of the government has already been announced in the budget, John said. He also urged the Coconut Development Board and Agriculture University to help the coconut producers to diversify for the manufacture of 'neera.'

Francis George, former MP, pointed out that farmers should be given the facility for the production of 'neera.' From five coconut trees, around Rs 62,000 can be made in six months which can bring about a drastic change in the economy of Kerala along with a change in service and wage conditions. Karnataka has already

started the production of 'neera' and Kerala could also achieve the target very easily.

The representatives of coconut farmers were of the view that value-added services only could help the farmers to overcome the crisis faced by them. The farmers should be allowed to tap 'neera' from the trees owned by them.

They also pointed out that a legislation should be brought by the government for an amendment in the abkari law to ensure that 'neera' does not come under it.

The toddy tappers who participated in the meeting also said that they did not have any objection to farmers taking their own decision in tapping 'neera', but the interests of the tappers should be protected.

Agriculture Department former director A R Heli was the moderator. Kerafed former director M Sukumara Pillai, former PSC member Thomas Mathunni, Coconut Development Board members Varkala B Ravikumar and Dharmarajan, All India Radio programme executive Muraleedharan Thazhakkara, Kerala State Chettuhozilali Federation general secretary N Rameshan, Kerala Toddy and Abkari Mazdoor Sangh general secretary M K Unnikrishnan, farmers' representative in 'neera' Babu Joseph, Board publicity officer Mini Mathew, marketing officer Deepthi Nair, assistant marketing officer K S Sebastian and representatives of coconut producers participated.

The discussion was held to end the confusions and prepare a plan for future operations regarding 'neera.'

It was also part of the allotment of Rs 15 crore in the budget for the establishment of 10 Neera units in the State and would help in preparing a draft policy by the Neera Committee.

## Agriculture, allied sectors under one umbrella mooted



Chief minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy has said that the government was contemplating to bring agriculture and allied sectors under one umbrella at the mandal-level to be monitored by one officer which would be beneficial to the farmers.

Efforts were being made to synchronise agriculture, dairy, horticulture, sericulture, poultry and fisheries sectors with power and irrigation sectors to ensure benefit to the farmers. The government had also

introduced agricultural action plan in the Assembly recently and the changes would be in accordance with the action plan, he said.

The Chief Minister visited Dairy Show-2013, organised at Hitex, Madhapur on Friday. He interacted with the dairy farmers and enquired about the various breeds of cows, and buffaloes.

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## **Business Standard**<sup>beta</sup>

# Market pulse for various agro commodities: Mangal Keshav

**Finance minister of Maharashtra has proposed to hike tax on sugarcane purchase from 3% to 5% to raise fund for drought relief, as per annual state budget for FY2013-14.**

Arrivals of chilli crop declined to about 0.8-0.9 lakh bags while demand remained strong among local & export buyers at auctions held at Guntur market. Spot rates were up by '100-'150 per quintal, mainly due to higher off-take & a dip in supply.

Arrivals of jeera crop declined about 35,000 bags & the same were



traded at auctions held at Unjha market. Spot rates were down & quoted around '130-'132 per kg, as per local traders.

Spot rates of pepper garbled were unchanged at '361 per kg and that of un-garbled was steady at '346 per kg. Arrivals were unchanged at 8 tons while trades were steady at 10 tons at auctions held at Kochi market, as per IPSTA.

Arrivals of turmeric crop declined to almost half to about 12,000-12,500 bags at Nizamabad market, but increased to more than 6,000 bags arrived across mandis of Erode. Spot rates were quoted in the range of '61-'65 per kg across different trading centers, as per local traders.

Average price of small cardamom declined to '642.6 per kg while maximum price offered was up at '1,085 per kg, as per spice board.

Total inflow of small cardamom crop increased to 72.8 tons from which ~70.1 tons were sold at auction held at Nedumkandam.

Arrivals of Soya bean crop were steady ~0.9-1lakh bags across MP market, but increased to more than 3,000 bags at mandis of Indore while supply at mandis of Maharashtra increased to about 50,000 & at mandis of Rajasthan ~20,000 bags, as per trade reports.

Spot rates of soya bean crop offered by planters were unchanged at '35-'36 per kg while rates across mandis of Indore were steady at '34-'35 per kg, as per local traders.

Inflow of mustard seed crop increased to 159,779 quintals, while

average of closing spot rates were up at '3,048.8 per quintal, as per agriculture marketing board of Rajasthan.

Total arrivals of mustard seed crop stood ~5.5lakh bags across major trading center while spot rates were up & quoted at '34-'36 per kg. based on location, as per market reports.

Mentha oil futures traded in positive territory for most of the trading session, but later declined on increased selling at higher levels. Spot rates were up by '15-'20 per kg with average daily supply of ~240-250 drums across major mandis.

Finance minister of Maharashtra has proposed to hike tax on sugarcane purchase from 3% to 5% to raise fund for drought relief, as per annual state budget for FY2013-14.

## Oil and Oilseed market update: Nirmal Bang

**In the domestic market, soybean complex edged higher after trading in a narrow range for five days in a row.**

In the domestic market, soybean complex edged higher after trading in a narrow range for five days in a row. Prices edged higher tailing the gains from the international market. However, many participants stayed away due to year end. Going forth, we must note that spot markets in Madhya Pradesh shall remain closed from 27th March - 2nd of April on account of festivals and yearly

bank closure. This will trim arrivals and keep sentiments in favour of the bulls. However, post the month of March, supplies of mustard will set to rise and this is expected to pull down mustard price. Arrivals are expected to rise to average of 380,000-400,000 bags from the current arrivals of 280,000 bags. For the day we can expect a continuation of the upside in the soy complex.

In the Chicago Board of Trade, soybean futures rose 2 percent on bargain buying amidst tight stocks. Hopes of fresh demand to set in after China plans to cancel more cargoes from Brazil due to the logistic delays supported the buying interest at lower levels. Near month futures showed more strength while gains in the far months were capped by expectations for expanded U.S. soy plantings in 2013. Soy oil futures supported by firming U.S. cash soy oil market amid a slowing U.S. soy crush and continued demand from biodiesel producers. However, the slowdown in weekly export numbers did little to cool down prices. USDA reported export sales of U.S. soybeans in the latest week at 107,800 tons for 2012/13 which were below the trade expectations of 3,00,000 – 6,00,000 tons and 234,100 tons for 2013/14 for new crop soybean, which were within the trade expectations of 1,50,000 – 4,00,000 tons. Brazilian dock workers called off a national port strike set for next week, following talks with the government over reform of the country's ports.

# Mentha oil up 0.8% on firm spot demand

**Expectation of lower arrivals in spot markets influenced the trade**



Mentha oil futures for April gained Rs 8.70, or 0.76%, to Rs 1,150 per kg in 154 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the March contract edged up by Rs 8.50, or 0.74%, to Rs 1,142 per kg in 356 lots.

Prices went up as speculators created positions largely on the back of strong demand from the pharmaceutical industries.

Expectation of lower arrivals in the spot markets from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh influenced the trade.

# Crude palm oil up 0.4% on firm overseas cues

**Firming overseas trends influenced crude palm oil futures**



Crude palm oil futures for March rose by Rs 1.60, or 0.35%, to Rs 456.80 per 10 kg in 120 lots.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the April contract traded higher by Rs 1.50, or 0.32%, to Rs 461.40 per 10 kg in 167 lots.

Crude palm extended the gains for fourth day.

Prices went up as speculators built up positions amid strong spot demand.

Firming trend in the overseas markets also influenced crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

On the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange (MDEX), the June contract rose 1% to 2,480 ringgit (\$796) a tonne.

It is the highest price for the most-active contract since February

25 on speculations that stockpiles in Malaysia, may decline as output drops.

## Sugar up on 0.4% short-covering

**Ample supplies in physical markets limited the gains**



Sugar futures for April traded Rs 11, or 0.37%, higher at Rs 2,975 per quintal in 32,170 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the far-month May contract gained Rs 10, or 0.33%, to Rs 3,014 per quintal in 23,290 lots.

Prices went up as speculators covered-up their short positions amid pick up in spot demand.

However, ample supplies in the physical markets following beginning of summer season, limited the upside.

# Cardamom falls 0.6% on comfortable stocks

**Prices fell as speculators reduced their positions**



Cardamom futures for April declined by Rs 5.30, or 0.59%, to Rs 885 per kg in 1,596 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the May contract traded lower by Rs 4, or 0.43%, to Rs 910.90 per kg in 221 lots.

Prices fell as speculators reduced their positions amid adequate stocks position in the physical market on account of higher supplies from producing belts.

# Coriander down more than 1% on poor demand

**Prices fell as speculators trimmed their positions**





Coriander futures for April fell by Rs 81, or 1.19%, to Rs 6,745 per quintal in 22,100 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the May contract fell by Rs 78, or 1.12%, to Rs 6,864 per quintal in 17,870 lots.

Prices fell as speculators trimmed their positions as demand waned in the spot market against the higher supplies.

The fall in the price of coriander was also attributed to profit-booking at prevailing higher levels.

## Pepper down 0.4% on higher output hopes

**Hopes of higher output estimates also influenced the trade**



Pepper futures for April fell by Rs 140, or 0.39%, to Rs 35,390 per quintal in 1,339 lots.

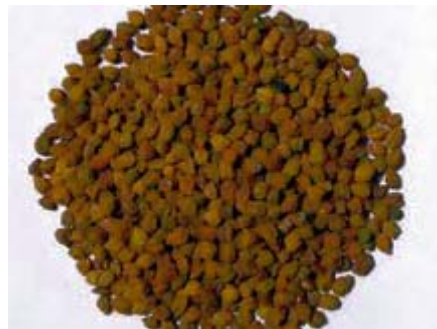
At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract moved down by Rs 75, or 0.21%, to Rs 35,375 per quintal in 1,002 lots.

Prices fell as speculators trimmed positions amid higher output estimates.

Hopes of higher output estimates also influenced the trade.

## Chana up 0.6% on good demand

### New season arrivals capped the gains



Chana futures for May rose by Rs 22, or 0.63%, to Rs 3,466 per quintal in 69,130 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the April contract increased by Rs 17, or 0.49%, to Rs 3,440 per quintal in 54,860 lots.

Prices went up as traders enlarged their holdings on account of

rising spot markets demand ahead of festivals.

However, new season arrivals and expectations of a rise in output capped the gains.

## Turmeric down more than 2% on profit-booking

**Prices were affected due to profit-booking**



Turmeric futures for April declined by Rs 150, or 2.18%, to Rs 6,722 per quintal in 20,485 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract traded lower by Rs 104, or 1.51%, to Rs 6,784 per quintal in 18,405 lots.

Prices were affected due to profit-booking.

However, speculation of lower output estimates and firm spot demand, limited the fall.

# Potato down almost 3% on poor demand

**Increased supplies in the spot market affected the trade**



Potato futures for May fell by Rs 26.90, or 2.98%, to Rs 875.20 per quintal in 161 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the April contract traded lower by Rs 16.70, or 1.84%, to Rs 886.40 per quintal in 77 lots.

Prices were affected as traders reduced their positions on back of increased stocks in the physical market.

The prices weakened further when traders booked profits at higher levels due to decline in demand also put pressure on the potato futures prices.

Increased supplies in the spot market, following persistent arrivals from producing region further pulled down the prices.

# India's per capita consumption of edible oil may rise 4% on low prices

**Overall consumption of cooking oil hit 17.5 mn tonnes, up 6% over last year's usage**



With edible oil prices remaining under pressure due to surplus availability from the world's two leading producers – Malaysia and Indonesia – India's per capita consumption of cooking oil is set to increase 4.19 per cent in the current financial year.

Price-sensitive low strata consumers that make up about 40 per cent of India's edible oil demand are set to consume an additional 0.4 million tonnes of cooking oil this year, increasing its demand per capita to 13.92 kg this year as compared to 13.36 kg in the previous year.

This, along with the continuous focus of the affluent class more on outside foods that are generally rich in oil, would set to raise India's overall consumption of cooking oil to 17.55 million tonnes this year, a rise of around one million tonnes or six per cent over the figure the previous year.

“We expect India’s per capita edible oil consumption to continue to rise this year in the wake of sustained positive growth in the country’s economy. Also price sensitive consumers continued excessive consumption this year, resulting in higher per capita consumption in the country,” said Dorab Mistry, director, Godrej International and a global voice in edible oil industry.

With estimated crude palm oil (CPO) production between 19.5-19.7 in Malaysia and around 30.5 million tonnes in Indonesia, a large quantity of about six million tonnes of surplus oil is expected to remain available for world consumption for the current year. Large tracts palm plantations in Thailand, Central America, Colombia and Africa would also come into maturity during 2013. As a result total palm oil production in 2013 is set to grow by about 3.9 million tonnes globally.

CPO prices in the benchmark Bursa Malaysia market remained under pressure, quoting at about 2,400 ringgit, and are seen falling to 2,200 ringgit by June-end. Breaching this level would take this price further down to 1,800 ringgit, said Mistry.

The current CPO price is down about 33 per cent during the last two years due excessive supply. Additionally, edible oil availability from domestic sources is set to increase this year despite lower estimated oilseed production. A COOIT estimate puts India’s oilseed output at 25.62 million tonnes during 2013, against 26.02 million tonnes last year, down four percent.

“Favourable climatic condition, however, has increased oil content in seed with an average 42 per cent this year from 38 per cent last

year. This would increase overall oil availability from domestic sources to 8.20 million tonnes this year from 8.15 million tonnes last year," said B V Mehta, Executive Director of the apex trade body the Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA).

Mistry puts India's edible oil out at 7.1 million tonnes this year, up marginally from 6.8 million tonnes last year.

Still, according to Mistry, India would require record vegetable oil imports to meet its burgeoning deficit. According to him, India's imports would rise to 10.9 million tonnes to set a new all time high record this year as compared to 10.2 million tonnes in the previous year.

Rising import dependence may escalate India's swelling current account deficit which has been a major concern for India's political think tank, he added.

## Tea season starts on a strong note

**Good varieties of Assam tea are sold at Rs 200-250 a kg, against Rs 180-200 a kg a year earlier**





This tea season, prices have recorded a rise of Rs 30-50 over the corresponding period last year. Through the last few days, private sales of medium-grade varieties of Assam tea recorded prices of Rs 180-220 a kg, compared with Rs 150-180 a year ago. Good varieties of Assam tea were sold at Rs 200-250 a kg, against Rs 180-200 a kg a year earlier.

Industry veterans expect this season, prices would settle at Rs 25-35 more than prices in the previous season. This year would see an average price rise of Rs 15-20 a kg, they say. "It's a late start for the season. But the weather conditions are good and we expect the increase in prices to be in the range of Rs 20 a kg. There has been good rainfall over the past few days, but there should not be too much rain," said Aditya Khaitan, managing director of McLeod Russel (India). McLeod is the world's largest bulk tea producer.

"End-season teas were selling Rs 20-30 a kg higher. We expect this momentum to continue," said Azam Monem, additional vice-chairman of India Tea Association. From early April, it is expected more new-season teas would come into the market.

The season started with a pipeline deficit of about 100 million kg. Recently, the Tea Board of India had revised its 2011 production figures upwards. The revised production, which also takes bought-leaf factories into account, stands at 1,115.72 million kg, against 988 million kg earlier. Bought-leaf factories are small growers who source two-thirds of the green leaves processed in their factories from other growers.

"We believe in India consumption has been growing at a level higher than calculated earlier," Khaitan said. Till recently, the

industry estimate for growth in consumption was three per cent a year.

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## THE HINDU Business Line

### **Ooty: Three-day annual flower show from May 17**

**UDHAGAMANDALAM, MARCH 23:** The annual flower show, the major tourist attraction during the month-long summer festival, would be held from May 17 at the Government Botanical Gardens here.

Giving details of the festival, Sathyaprakash Sahu, Director, Horticulture Department, said Kothagiri will host the two-day vegetable show from May 4 and Spices show will be held at Gudalur on May 6 and 7.

Another major attraction, Rose Show would be held at Centenary Rose Garden here from May 11-12, during which thousands of rare roses will be on display, Sahu said.

The May 17-19 flower show would attract visitors and tourists, not only from India but from abroad and all arrangements have been made to make it more attractive and with usual security, he said.

The fruit show will be held at Sim's Park in Coonoor on May 25 and 26, he said. Besides horticultural departments

from all districts in Tamil Nadu, this time competitors from outside the State have also been invited to participate in the festival, Sahu said.

## **SISPA appeals to Cotton Corporation to ensure quality cotton supply**

**COIMBATORE, MARCH 23:** The South India Spinners Association (SISPA) has appealed to the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) to ensure adequate supply of quality cotton at a stable price to the domestic industry throughout the year.

SISPA President K Thirunavukarasu has in a communication to the Chairman of CCI explained the precarious position of the mill sector in the aftermath of the spiralling price of cotton.

‘Cotton prices have soared to unbelievable levels in the last fortnight. Since the member mills under SISPA come under the SME sector, we have been severely affected as the traders and MNCs are not offering cotton to this sector and quality cotton is not available at reasonable rates to the domestic spinning sector.’

He appealed to the CCI Chairman to release adequate quantity of cotton in the domestic market, both to stabilise the price as also ensure adequate supply.

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