

THE HINDU

15,000 farm ponds to be created under MGNREGS

To be dug in eight delta districts at a cost of Rs. 181 crore



DISTRICT	FARM PONDS TO BE CREATED	ADMINISTRATIVE SANCTION GIVEN	WORKS COMMENCED
Nagapattinam	5,500	5,500	518
Tiruvarur	5,160	5,160	20
Thanjavur	2,373	2,373	250
Tiruchi	1,110	527	447
Pudukottai	568	320	78
Karur	75	75	75
Ariyalur	55	55	25
Cuddalore	45	45	13
Total	14,886	14,055	1,426

Note: The table pertains to the position as on March 23, 2013

PHOTO: B.VELANKANNI RAJ

At a time when the State, particularly Cauvery delta region, is in the midst of a drought, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) has come in handy for the government to order the creation of 15,000 farm ponds in eight delta districts.

The ponds are to be dug on lands of agriculturists who belong to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes; the category of small and marginal farmers and other groups approved under the scheme.

Wrapping up the debate in the Assembly on the Governor's address in early February, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had announced that Rs. 181 crore would be sanctioned for the project.

As of now, work on 1,426 ponds has begun and in respect of the remaining ponds, it will begin in a matter of time, say officials at the Commissionerate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RD&PR). As per the plan, by the end of May, the target - 15,000 ponds – will be achieved.

Making it clear that the project would have to be carried out through 100 per cent labour component of the scheme, an order issued by the State RD & PR Department last month reiterated that no machinery would be allowed.

Beneficiary-land owners should be job card holders and only registered workers could be employed. Social audit through the respective gram sabhas would be an integral feature and the maintenance of the ponds would rest with the beneficiary-households.

Regarding the capacity of farm ponds, the officials say the department is for building deeper ponds to minimise the use of farm land and evaporation loss.

Regarding the permissible number of ponds per farmer, an official explains that the critical issue is the ceiling of Rs. 1.5 lakh for every beneficiary. Nothing stops anyone to have more than one pond on the land of a beneficiary-

farmer provided the entire work can be completed within the amount of Rs. 1.5 lakh.

Farmers protest bus terminus plan in Vandalur

Over 50 residents of Vandalur, along with the CPI (ML) and the All India Agricultural Labour Association, attempted to march to the Kancheepuram collector's office on Sunday morning.

The residents were protesting the State government's plan to set up a bus terminus on agricultural land. Police said the protesters gathered around 10 a.m., and 15 of them were arrested but released in the evening.

With Chennai Moffusil Bus Terminus (CMBT) in Koyambedu struggling to accommodate the increasing number of buses to other districts and States, the government has decided to set up a new terminus that would handle some of this load.

The Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority has identified 65 acres in Vandalur, where the new terminus is to come up. "The land, on the Vandalur–Walajahbad Highway, is fertile agriculture land which is a source of livelihood for over 1,200 families," said C. Eraniappan, Kancheepuram district secretary of the CPI (ML).

According to him, the land was selected for the new terminus as there is a railway station nearby which can provide connectivity. "The government can construct the

terminus on waste land instead of taking fertile farming land,” Mr. Eraniappan added.

V.A. Dharma Naicker, who owns 8.5 acres of land on the proposed site, said, “We have been agriculturists on this land for generations. If the government takes it away from us, how will we find another profession?”

Say livelihood of 1,200 families will be affected as site is on fertile land

9,902 farmers to benefit from subsidised fodder supply

A total of 9,902 diary farmers in 191 villages in Thanjavur district will benefit from the supply of cattle fodder at subsidised rate, said R.Vaithilingam, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, at Thuraiyur in Orathanadu taluk on Sunday. He inaugurated the distribution of subsidised fodder, minerals and mixture scheme at Thuraiyur. Chief Minister J.Jayalalithaa, with a view to save the cattle in drought-hit Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Karur, Cuddalore, Pudukottai, Tiruchi and Ariyalur districts, has announced the scheme with an allotment of Rs. 15 crore. Under the scheme, one kg of fodder will be supplied to milk producing farmer every day at a cost of Rs.4. Fifty grams of minerals and mixtures will be supplied at a cost of Rs. 25. Amutha Rani Ravichandra, chairperson of Thanjavur district panchayat council, took part .

Red tape delays payment to farmers

Farmers whose agricultural produce are auctioned at the Urban World Market in Anayara can finally breathe a sigh of relief. After a delay of more than a month, these farmers would finally receive their cheques for the agricultural produce, which were procured by HortiCorp during February.

As per the procurement model, the farmers were encouraged to sell the produce directly to HortiCorp through wholesale markets. The farmers are supposed to receive the fair price within 48 hours of procurement through online banking.

“We depend on this money to procure various items for farming and cultivation. The delay in releasing the funds is affecting our livelihood,” said Raja Ratnam, a farmer from Kottukal cluster.

Not received

Farmers of six cluster groups (25 farmers in each cluster) are yet to receive the payment for Rs.20 lakh worth surplus produce, which was procured by HortiCorp in the month of February-March.

Assistant Director of Agriculture, A. Kalakumari told *The Hindu* that payments for the procurement made in the month of February were released from the market fund.

In two days

“Delay in releasing the funds from Horticornp was affecting the farmers, so a payment of Rs.11 lakh was made to the farmers from the available market fund for the month of February. It is not possible to depend on these funds for future payments. On Thursday , after a month’s delay we finally received the funds, which will be dispersed in two days, ” said Ms.Kalakumari.

Internal revenue

Speaking to *The Hindu* , Director of State Horticulture Mission K.Prathapan, who holds additional charge of Horticornp said that the funds were not released by the Agriculture Department on time, which has forced Horticornp to depend on its internal revenue for the past nine months.

“The funds meant for Horticornp are diverted for other ventures under the Department of Agriculture, which has caused the delay. If the funds are to be released in time, there should be a facility under Horticornp for direct fund transfer and market intervention,” said Mr. Prathapan.

Horticornp procures both grade one and grade two produce at the same rate.

Direct procurement

This has proved costly to it. The officials have now decided to reject last grade agricultural produce and has encouraged direct procurement from farms to help the

farmers receive a fair price without the intervention of middle men, added the Director.

Farmers are supposed to receive the money from HortiCorp within 48 hours.

Will replicate pro-farmer models of governance in Delhi, says BJP chief



BJP president Rajnath Singh and party's Delhi unit chief Vijay Goel at the Gramin Akrosh Rally at Bawana on Sunday.

Holding out that development in Delhi has eluded the villages whose condition was not as good as in the BJP-ruled States of like Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh where farmers are provided with zero per cent interest loans and other facilities, party president Rajnath Singh on Sunday declared that on coming to power in Delhi his party would replicate those development models in the city.

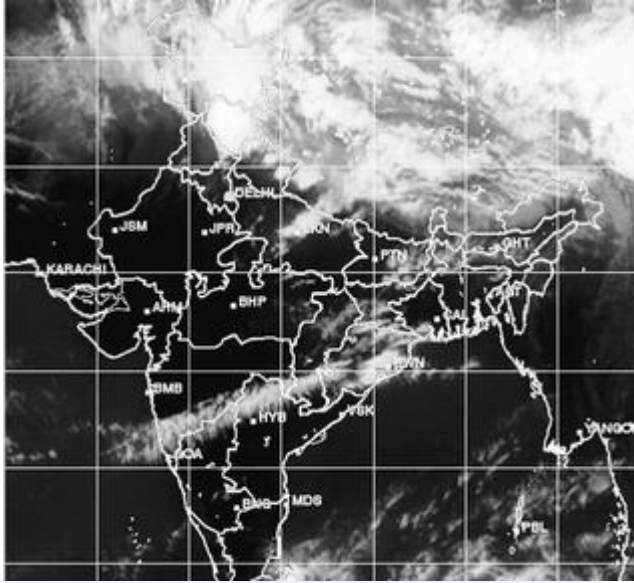
Addressing the Gramin Akrosh Rally organised by the Delhi BJP at Bawana in North-West Delhi, Mr. Singh

claimed that people of the Capital were fed up with the 14 year rule of the Congress. He said at the Centre too the situation was no different and corruption and price rise will lead to an early demise of the UPA Government.

Delhi BJP president Vijay Goel said the rally was organised to raise the problems being faced by the 360 villages of Delhi. He declared that on coming to power BJP would extend the Lal Dora area, provide tube wells within one month, ensure three times higher compensation for land acquisition and reduce the power tariff by 30 per cent.

Apart from this, Mr. Goel avowed to abolish Section 81, 65-A and 33 of Land Acquisition Act immediately so that the land of the villagers was not taken away. He alleged that Delhi Government had completely neglected the villages. "We shall make arrangements for good roads, sewer system and water supply. There will be no need to get approval of lay out plans in villages and the farmers would be able to construct houses, godowns, educational institutions, nursing homes etc. and this would also lead to generation of employment," he said.

Weather



ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	41 220 0
Arogyavaram	37 17 0 1
Bapatla	33 220 0
Calingapatnam	34 220 1
Gannavaram	35 230 0
Hanamkonda	39 220 0
Hyderabad AP	37 230 0
Kakinada	34 240 0
Kavali	35 240 0
Kurnool	39 250 0
Mahabubnagar	39 230 0
Machilipatnam	34 230 0
Nandyal	38 220 0
Narasapur	34 240 0
Nellore	36 250 2
Nizamabad	39 250 1
Ongole	35 240 0
Ramagundam	37 240 0

Tirupathi AP	37 230 90
Tuni	36240 0
Vizag AP	36240 0
Vizag	32240 3

KARNATAKA

Agumbe	3316 0 13
Bangalore AP	34200 tr
Bangalore	35 21 0 1
Belgaum AP	35 17 0 4
Bellary	39230 0
Bijapur	36200 1
Chitradurga	37 22 0 7
Chickmagalur	3017 0 21
Chintamani	3417 0 0
Gadag	37 200 7
Gulbarga	39230 0
Hassan	33200 39
Honavar	33230 0
Karwar	33240 0
Madikeri	27 13 0 110
Mangalore AP	34240 0
Mysore	35 19 0 4
Mandya	3621 0 4
Panambur	33250 26
Raichur	39230 0
Shirali	33250 0

KERALA

Alappuzha	33260 53
Kannur	34260 11
Kochi AP	33250 21
Kottayam	34250 65

Kozhikode 35 260 16

Punalur 38240 5

Thiruvanantha

-puram AP 33250 25

Thiruvanantha

-puram City 33250 75

Vellanikkara 34250 15

TAMIL NADU

Adiramapattinam 33240 100

Coimbatore AP 36220 2

Coonoor 25130 126

Cuddalore 33230 73

Chennai AP 35230 32

Chennai 33240 12

Dharmapuri 38200 0

Kanyakumari 34250 27

Karaikal 32240 10

Kodaikanal 2011 0 51

Madurai AP 37240 18

Nagapattinam 33250 27

Palayamkottai 36230 71

Pamban 33240 83

Parangipettai 31 230 40

Puducherry 33230 8

Salem 38220 0

Thanjavur 35270 33

Tiruchi AP 38250 15

Tirupattur 3817 0 1

Tondi 31 240 56

Tuticorin 33250 40

Ooty 23100 11

Valparai 2912 0 68

Vedaranyam — — —

Vellore 37 21 0 45

LAKSHADWEEP

Amini Divi 33 26 0 1

Minicoy 33 27 0 69

Kavarathi 36 27 0 64

OTHER STATIONS

Kolkata (Alipore) 37 25 0 0

Mumbai 31 25 0 0

New Delhi 35 22 0 1

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since March 1, 2013.

ISOLATED RAIN

IN KERALA

CHENNAI: Isolated rainfall occurred over Kerala. Dry weather prevailed over Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Lakshadweep. On Saturday, the maximum temperature fell at one or two places over Andhra Pradesh, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, south Kerala, rose at one or two places over rest Tamil Nadu and changed little elsewhere over the region.

They were above normal at one or two places over Rayalaseema, north coastal Andhra Pradesh, below normal at one or two places over Telangana, north interior Karnataka and remained normal over the rest of the region.

They were appreciably to markedly below normal at a few places over north interior Karnataka, at one or two places over north interior Tamil Nadu, below normal at one or two places over north coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, rest Tamil Nadu, appreciably above normal at one or two places over Telangana and remained normal over the rest of the region.

Arogyavaram, Belgaum Airport and Tirupattur recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 17 degree Celsius in the plains of the region.

Forecast (valid till Tuesday morning): Isolated rain or thundershowers may occur over south Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep. Mainly dry weather will prevail over north Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Weather Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Mar 25

Max Min

31° | 25°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:10

Humidity: 74

Sunset: 06:20

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1012

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Mar 26

Max Min

35° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Mar 27	Thursday Mar 28	Friday Mar 29	Saturday Mar 30	Sunday Mar 31
37° 24°	36° 23°	35° 23°	36° 23°	35° 25°
Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

THE TIMES OF INDIA | India

800 suicide-hit families of farmers get Rs 1 lakh each

SANGRUR: [Shiromani Akali Dal](#) secretary general [Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa](#) on Sunday distributed cheques worth Rs 8 crore to 800 suicide-hit families, with every family getting Rs 1 lakh as first installment of the total Rs 2 lakh announced by the state

government.

[Punjab government](#) has identified 4,688 suicide-hit farm and farm labourer families to be compensated. [Punjab Agriculture University](#) in a study conducted in 2009 had identified 2,990 suicides by farmers and farm labourers from year 2000 to 2008 in two districts of Sangrur and Bathinda.

Surprisingly, Ballran and Chottian villages, which have been identified as the two worst hit villages in the state on suicide count, were not given preference. "Only one family, out of 60, from Chottian has been called for giving assistance and Ballran got invites for 14 families," said sources.

CM to get loan from Nabard for elephants

CHENNAI: Chief minister J Jayalithaa has instructed the forest department to acquire a 50 crore loan from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) for extension of the green fodder programme for elephants, said minister for forests, [K T Pachamal](#) on Sunday.

This comes in addition to the 20 crore granted by the

CM in 2011 for a five-year scheme to reduce man-animal conflict. Another 10 crore has been sanctioned this year to create elephant proof trenches. "The idea to create watering holes and fodder patches for elephants to prevent them from raiding farms was mooted by the CM in her previous tenure," said Pachamal. "We began building check dams in 2002 as per her orders to increase water levels and ensure supply during summer for elephants, apart from creating more watering holes."

Chamber of Marathwada and Agriculture, Confederation of Indian Industry to offer employment to 1,000 villagers

AURANGABAD: The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Chamber of [Marathwada](#) and Agriculture (CMIA) have decided to provide employment to around 1,000 people who are migrating from rural areas severely affected by drought.

"The decision was taken at a meeting held on Friday, which was attended by Rishi Bagla, chairman of the CII Marathwada Zonal Council," said the CMIA secretary, Munish Sharma.

"Since Aurangabad is a major hub for industries, it is

expected that many people will migrate to the city for employment. We have already started witnessing people migrating from rural areas in search of jobs. Due to inadequate rains since two consecutive years in the districts of Marathwada, the survival of families who solely depend on agriculture has become difficult. Hence, to support and rescue them, the industrialists have decided to provide these villagers with jobs," said the vice-president of CMIA, Milind Kank.

"A joint fund will be raised with the involvement of CII and CMIA. These funds will be mobilized through various organizations and NGOs for water conservation, transportation, de-silting and starting cattle camps," added Kank.

"The villagers will get jobs based on their skills. Even if the industry does not have vacancies, the jobs will be created as per their knowledge such as gardening, labour work, etc. They will be given help for a temporary period till the region receives rainfall," Kank said.

The industry has been mulling over options to extend help to the drought-affected people. Kank said, "Industrialists, who own farms and have water available, will start cattle camps in their farms."

Regarding the consumption of impure water, Kank said, "The water crisis is so severe that people are not thinking about their health. The villagers are consuming water from any source that is available to them. This raises an alarm regarding [spread](#) of infectious diseases. To avoid creation of such a situation, the industry has thought of approaching the district administration and offer filters to the villagers, which can be installed in the villages. We appeal to the people of the drought-affected villages to consume water only after filtering it. A simple household method of creating an eight-fold muslin cloth [filter](#) can be used to purify water."

"There are great chances of children in the age group of 1 to 5 getting infected since they are more prone to disease. To prevent health hazards, the industries will install filters with 1,000 to 18,000-litre capacity, which function without power and on gravity," said Sharma.

‘Water conservation schemes made Pimpalkhunta village self-reliant’

AURANGABAD: Pimpalkhunta - a village 35 km from Aurangabad city manages to supply water not just to its 1,500 residents but to three adjoining drought affected villages.

Social activist and resident of the village [Vishnu Pawar](#) said that it is the systematic execution of water conservation schemes and active participation of villagers that made the village self-reliant. The wells and farm ponds in the village has enough water till the next monsoon, he added.

However, until a few years back the village was facing acute water crisis. Pimpalkhunta sarpanch Dwarka [Sanjay Hekade](#) said that people used get water through tankers during summer till 2006. "But after we began rainwater harvest and created gali plugs, the condition started changing," she added.

Pawar said the villagers realised the importance of rainwater harvesting and implemented it at Gram Panchayat school, anganwadi school, Gram Panchayat office and all other government buildings. The concept become so popular in the village that three of its residents created the facility on their private property, he said.

Pawar said the quantum loss of horticulturists in the village was low compared to farmers of other drought affected villages. "In our village, only 25% of the sweet lime plants were destroyed due to water scarcity while there was no loss of pomegranate plants," he said.

Of the total 1,081 hectare land in Pimpalkhunta , farming is done on 826 hectare area and sweet lime on 52 hectare and pomegranate on 50 hectare, which are the two major crops in the village.

"All the 230 wells in the village have sufficient water stored for the residents. Apart from this, residents of Murumkheda, Sayyadpur and Aurangpur villages are being supplied water from Pimplakhunta," said Bhausahed Namdeo Dhabhade, deputy sarpanch.

Dhabhade further added that the villagers had managed to increase milk production from 250 litre per day in 2006 to 1800 litre per day in March 2013.

"Availability of green fodder as well as support from the government under the Rural Agriculture Development Programme (RADP) made it possible," Dhabade added.

Funds fail to boost paddy farming

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The state government has been trying hard to push the declining paddy cultivation by allocating huge funds and proposing innovative projects in the last two budgets, but these initiatives have not made much of a positive change in

the sector.

The latest land use pattern released by the planning board show that the net sown area in the state declined by 1.5% in the past two years. The rice cultivated area decreased by 5,027 hectares in these years while there has been an increase of 5,727 hectares in the area of fallow land.

Of the total geographical area of 38.86 lakh hectares, the net sown area now stands at 53% while the total food grain production reached 0.6 lakh tonnes last year. Essential food crops like rice, pulses and tapioca occupy just 10.8% of the total gross cropped area of 26.6 lakh hectares.

"It is a matter of concern that the area of paddy fields is decreasing year after year. The paddy fields, in the low lands, have a greater environmental role to play in conserving water and rejuvenating ground water resources. The increase in fallow land would invariably increase the possibility of reclamation of paddy fields in the coming years," warns environmentalist M K Prasad.

He says many projects like rice bio parks still remain on paper as officials are not pushing for the implementation of the project in an effective manner.

"The state should take a few lessons from Tamil Nadu, which is doing a marvellous job in running effective rice-parks," he says.

Finance minister K M Mani has, in this year's budget, made a huge allocation for agriculture sector and set aside Rs 200 crore for various projects. Last year, Mani had introduced concepts like rice-parks and high tech agriculture to increase productivity.

"The main advantages of high-tech farming are capacity to overcome climate change, increased productivity and improved quality. We have also introduced concepts like high-tech farming and micro irrigation, capable of controlled and effective utilization of water, green house farming techniques with minimal dependency on soil and usage of advanced hybrid seeds," a senior official said.

On the positive side, the production of rice has increased by 281 kg/hectare in the past two years.

"This is due to better usage of mechanised technology. But more needs to be done to encourage farmers to sow paddy and not let the paddy fields become just fallow lands," said a senior official with agriculture department.

"Kerala is facing a serious challenge in maintaining the

meagre agriculture area. The state's agriculture [economy](#) is undergoing structural transformation from mid-seventies and over a large proportion of its traditional crop area which was devoted to subsistence crops like rice and tapioca to more remunerative crops like banana and plantation crops," the state planning board had said.

Emu farming: Is it a mere flight of fancy?

VISAKHAPATNAM: Emu farmers in the district are a worried lot, unsure of whether there will be a surge in demand for emu chicks or meat or whether it is just hype.

A large number of farmers in the district have taken to rearing emus, hoping to cash in on the high prices that the chicks meat would fetch, despite a Ponzi scheme involving emus rearing its head in Tamil Nadu last year. More than 60 emu farms, which have a total of more than 3,000 emus, have sprung up in the district over the last seven years, according to sources in the animal husbandry department.

An emu chick can be purchased for Rs 3,000 and can live for 40 years, several farmers told TOI, adding that each year the emu lays between 30 and 40 eggs. Thus,

if the farmer sells 30 emu chicks a year he would get Rs 90,000. The farmer could also rear the birds for about 18 months and sell the meat at Rs 400 per kg.

However, the apprehension of a slump in the market for emu chicks or meat is a cause of concern for the farmers. "Emu rearing is going on for quite some time now. However, nobody knows for sure if the emu meat and its oil have a market," said a senior official of the animal husbandry department.

"There is no boom in the market now. The market is witnessing a slowdown because of the recent scam in Tamil Nadu. A large number of people opted for [emu farming](#) without knowing if there was actually any market. A lot of farmers are suffering because there is no demand for emu meat or eggs," said the owner of S K Farm, G Shanthakumar. The cost of feed for emus is also burning a hole in the farmers' pockets. "A 50 kg bag of feed costs around Rs 1,200 and each emu needs anywhere between 500 and 750 grams per day. The price of feed needs to be controlled for farmers to be able to sustain emu farming," he said.

Another farmer, [B Sridhar](#) of [Devarapalli](#), pointed out that there was no physical market in place for selling emus. "As a result of the lack of designated market places, people also don't know where to purchase the

meat. A few come directly to us asking for emu meat, but we can't sell if the order is less than 20 kg as it will not be viable," said Sridhar.

Vijay Kumar of Anandapuram pointed out that banks had also stopped giving loans for emu rearing unless collateral was provided. "We are trying to get in touch with the emu processing plant at Nuzvid, but have not been able to get through. We even went for the inauguration of the plant in January and they said that it will require 300 emus every day. After that nothing seems to have moved," said Kumar.

"If the market doesn't improve by next year, farmers will be in a huge debt trap," he said.

City Farming launched



Students working on the city farming project | N Vinoth Kumar

ExNoRa International launched its 'City Farming' programme at Arihant Majestic Towers, Koyambedu here on Sunday. The programme is aimed at proper use of Open Space Reserve (OSR) in residential flat areas.

Speaking to City Express, M B Nirmal, founder of ExNoRa International said, "Chennai is fast becoming a polluted city and Koyambedu is one of the areas that tops it. Every flat in the city has enough open space, which can be used as Open Space Reserve, where residents can plant various types of trees and vegetable plants. These OSRs are considered as 'lung spaces' since they provide oxygen."

He added, "By cultivating such home gardens in these lung spaces, the residents will be able to harvest vegetables right at their home. This is a kind of 'vertical horticulture', where kitchen wastes and coconut piths are reused as manure. This type of organic farming helps reduce the use of harmful fertilizers." He further said, "It is almost a 'zero budget city farming' since one can use materials like discarded TV sets or fish tanks, instead of spending for pots." Around 50 students from seven city colleges participated in the event.

THE HINDU Business Line

As global prices fall, Govt may cut subsidy on non-urea fertilisers

New Delhi, March 24: The Government proposes to slash the subsidy on non-urea fertilisers such as di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) by 14 per cent and muriate of potash (MoP) by about 19 per cent for 2013-14, following the decline in global prices of these nutrients. The Fertiliser Ministry has proposed a subsidy cut of Rs 2,000 a tonne for DAP and Rs 2,700 for MoP for the 2013-14, sources said.

The subsidy on DAP is likely to be pegged at Rs 12,350/tonne for 2013-14 against last year's Rs 14,350. Similarly, the subsidy for MoP may be fixed at Rs 11,740 (Rs 14,440).



P & K fertilisers

The proposed cut may not hit the maximum retail prices of these complex nutrients as global prices have softened by 15-20 per cent in recent months. As the country is nearly fully dependent on the imports of phosphatic (P) and potassic (K) fertilisers either in the form of finished fertilisers or their raw materials and the subsidy being fixed, its international prices affect the prices of these nutrients.

On Friday, Minister of State for Fertilisers Srikant Jena hinted at a reduction in subsidy rates for P&K fertilisers.

“Since the present international prices of P&K fertilisers are comparatively less as compared to those in last year, the subsidy rates for the year 2013-14 will be fixed accordingly,” Jena told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply.

Subsidy fixing

The subsidy rates are fixed on an annual basis considering factors such as international and domestic prices of fertilisers, inventory and the exchange rates.

The Cabinet is expected to approve the proposed rates ahead of the new financial year. Such a move would help the manufacturers to print the maximum retail price on bags and start bagging the nutrients for despatch ahead of the forthcoming kharif season.

The Government, which implemented the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) policy for P&K fertilisers since April 2010, has been announcing the subsidy rates before the start of the financial year. The subsidy is to make P&K fertilisers available at a lower price than its delivered costs and is reimbursed to the fertiliser companies.

budgetary provision

For 2013-14, the Government has made a budgetary provision of Rs 29,427 crore for de-controlled fertilisers such as DAP and NPK, against the revised estimate of Rs 30,576 crore for 2012-13.

While urea is heavily subsidised by the Government and is currently priced at Rs 5,360, the DAP and MoP prices ruled at Rs 24,000 and Rs 17,000 respectively in the current year.

The huge difference in prices led to imbalance in fertigation, resulting in a build-up of non-urea fertiliser stocks, estimated at over seven million tonnes.

Recently, some companies such as Indian Potash Ltd have contracted to import about one million tonnes of MoP for 2013-14.

Pepper buoyant on export inquiries, supply squeeze



Kochi, March 24: Pepper futures remained volatile last week.

However, there was near convergence of spot and futures price. Besides, on maturity of the March contract, three tonnes were delivered as against “zero” delivery.

However, unlike in the past, the volume delivered was only three tonnes while the spot and futures prices almost converged. In the domestic market, interstate dealers were buying material on behalf of upcountry dealers directly from the primary market/growers at terminal market prices and transported by rail to upcountry destinations.

As obtaining of “C” form in the north Indian markets is claimed to be very difficult, these goods are moved out without any papers, market sources alleged. Apart from this, the refund is also allegedly delayed and, hence, some traders seemed to have preferred to send without papers.

On the other hand, the financial year ending is also pointed out as the reason for such trading. As the growers

are getting terminal market prices at their doorsteps, they were selling their produce to them.

Consequently, arrivals at the terminal market were squeezed. What ever business had taken place were mostly afloat. Overall the futures market was highly volatile last week. June contract has not been listed on the exchange and it is understood that it would be done on receipt of permission from the FMC once all the quality parameters are corrected and complied with, they said.

Selling pressure continued to persist in Karnataka and it was offering 525-540 GL pepper at Rs 335-345 and an estimated 55 tonnes of pepper with 13-13.5 per cent moisture content were traded by Kochi-based leading Indian pepper exporters, they said. Karnataka based exporters were also shipping out pepper from Mangalore port, they said. April and May contracts showed a marginal increase by Rs 225 and Rs 205 respectively to close at Rs 35,990 and Rs 35,930 at the weekend.

The total turnover decreased by 4,358 tonnes to close at 8,447 tonnes indicating fall in activities. Total open interest also fell by 304 tonnes to 2,289 tonnes. Spot prices declined marginally by Rs 200 a quintal to close at Rs 34,800 (ungarbled) and Rs 36,300 (MG 1) a quintal.

Lack of buying pulls down rice, wheat



Karnal, March 24: After ruling firm in the first half of the week, rice, wheat, and poultry items came down on lack of buying in the last three days.

Rice

Lukewarm trading pulled aromatic and non-basmati rice marginally down by Rs 20-100 a quintal. Rice market witnessed only need-based buying last week.

Due to year-ending in March, buyers are placing smaller orders. Traders expect that the market may continue to witness low trading even in the next few days and may witness some good buying in April.

Wheat

In the physical market, dara wheat and flour prices fell by Rs 20-25 a quintal, on lack of buying interest and ample stocks. Dara wheat ruled at Rs 1,520-1,525 while flour ruled at Rs 1,750.

Following a fear of drop in prices in the near future, demand at present in the local market is quite low.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat contracts from April to June ended up with a negative note on the speculation that a rebound in global output will reduce demand.

Similarly, spot market remained bearish and went down by Rs 65, last week.

Poultry

After witnessing some recovery on Wednesday, egg prices decreased in the last couple of days while broiler and chick continued to witness the downtrend on account of reduced off-take and higher supplies.

Egg prices decreased by 28 paise at Rs 2.42. Broiler moved down by Rs 5 at Rs 72-75 a kg, while chick sold at Rs 15-16, Re 1 down. According to the trade experts, poultry items may witness some recovery next week.

Low availability, frantic buying push up tomatoes



Karnal, March 24: Lower arrivals in the market pushed up tomato prices on Sunday by Rs 100-300 a quintal for the different varieties.

Around 600 crates (a crate is 25 kg) of different varieties of tomatoes arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and were quoted at Rs 600-2,200.

Around 2,500 crates of varieties such as Anoop, Himsona, Trishul, Himshikhar and Ahmedabad arrived at Karnal markets.

Vikas Sachdeva, a trade expert, told *Business Line*, that low availability of stocks coupled with frantic buying by the traders mainly pushed tomato prices upwards. There was no particular reason behind the fall in arrivals and it may improve in the coming days, he added.

Out of total arrivals, about 35 per cent stocks were of low quality, 30 per cent medium while about 35 per cent superior quality.

Prices of superior quality increased by Rs 200 at Rs 1,800-2,200; medium quality produce was up by Rs 300 at Rs 1,100-1,700 while low quality was up Rs 100 at Rs 600-1,000.

After trading in a tight range throughout the week, tomato price improved on low stocks, said Vikas Sachdeva. Traders expect that market may continue to rule around current levels for the next few days.

On Sunday, not a single crate remained unsold because of low stocks.

As expected, unwanted rainfall in February has affected the yield and quality of the new crop. Yield from the new crop is lower and the tomato size is smaller. Quality of the stocks is likely to remain lower in the coming days.

Coonoor tea sale turnover up 83%

Coonoor, March 24: The Coonoor Tea Trade Association (CTTA) auction turnover has risen by 82.96 per cent in the first two months of this calendar over last year, says an analysis of market reports.

In January and February, eight auctions had been conducted when 1.03 crore kg was sold against 0.79 crore kg in 2012. On an average, each kg fetched Rs 98.51 (Rs 70.20 last year).

Consequently, the turnover rose to Rs 101.47 crore from Rs 55.46 crore. This marked an increase of Rs 46.01 crore or a whopping 82.96 per cent in just two months.

The average price which was Rs 99.95 a kg in the first sale in March crossed the Rs 100-a-kg mark for the first time in the 50 year history of CTTA auctions and rose to Rs 104.11 in the second sale before peaking to Rs 106.49 in the third sale.
