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Samba harvest begins

Special Correspondent

13,500 tonnes of samba paddy procured in Thanjavur

Photo: M. Srinath



SOW, YOU REAP: Samba paddy being harvested at Thuraiyur near Thanjavur on Thursday. —

THANJAVUR / TIRUVARUR: With Samba harvest picking up in Orathanadu area in Thanjavur district and Thiruthuraipoondi and Tiruvarur in Tiruvarur district, Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation has started procuring samba paddy.

According to M. S. Shanmugham, Thanjavur Collector, 199 direct purchase centres of the TNCSC are functioning in the district. Till Thursday, 13,500 tonnes of samba paddy have been procured. Farmers used harvesters in many places.

“We may increase the number of DPCs upto 360 with the progress in the harvest. The crop is in good condition and target for Thanjavur district is five lakh tonnes of samba paddy this year. We are well prepared,” the Collector said.

Tiruvavur district has 370 DPCs and procurement till Thursday was 13,416 tonnes. The target is 5,60,000 tonnes.

According to Agriculture Department officials, harvest has been completed on 1,800 hectares in Thanjavur district. In Orathanadu area, 70 per cent of the harvest will be completed in a week. Harvest is expected to touch its peak in the district in 20 days. Samba and Thaladi have been raised on 1,36,000 hectares in Thanjavur district. Harvest has been completed on about 3,000 hectares in Tiruvarur district. The DPCs pay Rs 1,050 per quintal for grade A paddy and Rs. 1,000 per quintal for common variety of paddy.

Incentive of Rs 50 announced by the State Government would be added after orders are received, the officials said.

Farmers will raise pulses in harvested areas in Orathanadu and Thanjavur areas in Thanjavur district.

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Disbursal of crop loans reviewed

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: Co-operative institutions in the State disbursed crop loans of Rs. 1,668.90 crore to farmers till the end of December.

On Thursday, Ko.Si.Mani, Cooperation Minister, held a meeting with Principal Secretary (Food, Civil Supplies and Cooperation) K. Shanmugam and other officials at the Secretariat.

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Operations hit at vegetable market

K.Lakshmi and Deepa H Ramakrishnan

Dispute between traders, labourers over cargo unloading at Koyambedu

— Photo: K. Pichumani



TENSE: Policemen posted at the Koyambedu market, following a dispute between traders and labourers on Thursday morning.

CHENNAI: Operations at the wholesale vegetable market in Koyambedu came to a standstill on Thursday after a dispute between traders and labourers belonging to a few trade unions over unloading of cargo from the trucks. Over 50 trucks laden with potatoes, onions, yam and green vegetables could not be unloaded till late

evening.

Traders said that the labourers had picked a quarrel with the employees of a wholesale vegetable dealer around 4 a.m. The labourers forcefully unloaded a lorry that brought consignments for one trader. In the melee that ensued, one of the employees was injured.

The practice in the market is that labourers who are part of the trade unions unload trucks that bring vegetables meant for more than one trader. If the vehicle contains perishables meant for one trader, then persons employed by him would only unload the cargo.

After a brief halt following the skirmish, the unloading resumed but by noon it came to a grinding halt. Traders held a demonstration condemning the forceful unloading by the labourers. Sources in the market that the labourers and traders were at loggerheads for sometime on the issue of unloading.

A posse of policemen had been posted in the market, where a tense atmosphere prevailed. A few employees of traders said they feared an attack by those belonging to the trade unions and did not even go out for lunch. "When we are accosted by 100 men what can we do? For two or three days we have been moving in groups but still the incident happened this morning," said a worker.

Chennai Metropolitan development Authority's Market Management Committee's Chief Administrative Officer M. Rajendran said that a meeting of traders and union representatives was held in the afternoon with senior police officials and it was decided to allow trucks to be unloaded. "We will ensure that vegetables are unloaded and we have asked for additional police force to be present there to ensure smooth functioning of the market."

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Anna Nagar) Ganesh Moorthy said a police force had been posted at the market to prevent any untoward incident.

There are over 300 wholesale traders in the market and each of them employs about 15 workers. Each day, about 400 vehicles carrying 7 to 10 tonnes of vegetables are unloaded.

Work starts around 1 a.m. and workers unload sacks of vegetables, weigh and classify them and repack bags to be sent to retail markets.

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All set for Covai flower show

Special Correspondent

– Photo: S. Siva Saravanan



Vibrant and beautiful: A picture from Covai flower show 2006, which was held at TNAU in Coimbatore on January 27, 2006.

Coimbatore: The third Covai flower show is all set to open at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) here on Saturday (January 9).

The two-day show, organised jointly by the TNAU and the Rotary Club of Coimbatore Uptown, will be inaugurated by Minister for Agriculture Veerapandi S. Arumugam.

According to a release from N. Kumar, Dean, Horticulture, TNAU, the main aim of the show is to educate the children and public to love nature and conserve the environment.

This show brings flower and garden industry professionals, buyers, wholesalers, importers and growers from all over the country. It also serves as a platform for gaining knowledge to showcase talents of students and researchers. It is an entertainment to relieve stress as well.

The highlights of the show, according to M. Jawharlal, Professor and Head, Floriculture, are Dutch decoration gallery, display of the ruling Indian cut and loose flowers, flower rangoli, floristry, and various styles of flower arrangement, dry flowers, cut foliages, bonsai, and conceptual flower designs, conservatory of high valued flowers, flower messages and vegetable carving. Exotic flowers from South Africa, Singapore and Netherlands will also be displayed.

In addition, competitions on creative activities like painting, poem writing, flower arrangement, flower rangoli, vegetable carving and photography were organised for school and college students. Competitions for college\institution garden, home garden and corporate garden were also conducted. Prizes for these competitions will be presented on Sunday (January 10) by P. Sivanandai, Commissioner of Police, Coimbatore.

An entrance fee of Rs. 10 for adults and Rs. 5 for children will be collected. Tickets can be purchased in advance from January 6 onwards at the Botanical Garden of the university.

For details, contact Professor and Head (Floriculture and Landscaping) 0422-

6611230\ 94421-26242 email: flowers@tnau.ac.in

Also, Rotary Coimbatore Uptown president 93631-03457 and secretary 93455-77088, email: jungledoctor007@yahoo.in

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Water level

MADURAI: The level in the Periyar dam on Thursday stood at 119.80 feet (full level 136 feet) with an inflow of 61 cusecs and a discharge of 1,175 cusecs. The level in the Vaigai dam was 53.97 feet (71 feet) with an inflow of 776 cusecs and a discharge of 60 cusecs.

The combined Periyar credit stood at 3,972 mcft.

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Market revs up for Pongal

Special Correspondent

—Photo: M. Srinath



***CRUSH ON SWEET THINGS:* Sugarcane has started arriving in the market at Kandiyur in Thanjavur district in view of Pongal festival. A bundle of ten sugarcanes is being sold for about Rs. 80.**

THANJAVUR: Thanjavur market is getting ready for Pongal festival what with bundles of sugarcane arriving from fields to rural areas like Thiruvaiyaru and Thirukattupalli.

A bundle of sugarcane with ten sticks is now priced at Rs. 80 to Rs. 100.

Potters of Keelavasal area are working overtime to produce pots and other clay materials required for Pongal. While bananas, turmeric and ginger saplings will

flood the market a few days before Pongal, jaggery and other condiments are already available in the market. Jaggery is prepared in houses in Thiruvaiyaru for Pongal.

Clay pots and stoves are priced at Rs. 45 in Keelavasal area. “The small pot priced at Rs. 45 can cook one kg of rice. Bigger ones priced at Rs. 65 to Rs. 70 can cook one and a half to two kgs of rice”, said a vendor at Keelavasal. However he regretted that the sales are not as good as in olden days as many prefer bronze utensils to cook Pongal in gas stoves instead of special clay stoves prepared for the purpose in olden days. But still there are some who cook Pongal in clay pots, enabling us to eke out our livelihood, she said. Thanjavur gets sugarcane and banana from Thiruvaiyaru and Thirukattupalli and turmeric and ginger from places like Erode for the festival.

Nagapattinam

The district administration has called for eco-friendly ways to celebrate Bhogi Pongal, the first day of the harvest festival. Bhogi Pongal, that is observed with burning of old clothes, and other household articles has come to cause environmental pollution. The district administration has appealed to the people to observe the ceremony in an eco-friendly manner. Madras High Court has directed that products other than wood, dried dung and ecologically safe commodities, should not be set on fire.

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Water supply to be hit for two days

SALEM: Water supply to the following areas will remain suspended on January 8 and 9 owing to leak in the main pipeline carrying water from Mettur: Sooramangalam, Hasthampatti, Hanging Garden. Ayyanthirumaligai, Ammapet, Ponnammampet, Erumapalayam, Kitchipalayam, Gugai and Karungalpatti. Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board officials had taken up works to plug the leak.

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Mettur level

TIRUCHI: The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 87.82 feet on Thursday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 2,157 cusecs and the discharge, 12,000 cusecs.

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Keen to study farm techniques

D. Radhakrishnan

Students and faculty of Cornell University visit Wood House

Photo: M. Sathyamoorthy



A learning experience: Cornell University students at the Wood House farm of the Institute of Commercial Horticulture near Udthagamandalam on Thursday. —

Udthagamandalam: It was an enriching experience for about 34 students and a number of faculty members of the Cornell University, USA who visited the Wood House farm of the Institute of Commercial Horticulture (ICH) here on Thursday.

Though the objective was to only familiarize them with various aspects of organic horticulture, the visitors returned with valuable knowledge relating to modern and traditional methods of farming which were adopted in the Nilgiris.

Signed

Speaking to *The Hindu*, the head, ICH, N.Selvaraj, said that the educational tour was part of a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Tami Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and the Cornell University.

TNAU, a university that is a pioneer in developing agriculture in the country through research, extension and teaching activities, has introduced e-learning, online examinations and dual-degree programmes in association with premier agricultural universities in developed countries.

Collaborative research and exchange of Under Graduate and Post Graduate students between universities formed part of the programmes. The ICH was part of TNAU.

Stating that organic farming was growing by leaps and bounds at the global level, he said that the exposure will help the students in their research activities.

Cornell University faculty member Tim Setter said, “We are receptive to new ideas and we will try to implement them back home.”

Another member Ronny Carlman said that over the years organic products are bound to become popular.

Benefit

Such exchange programmes would be of considerable benefit to the students.

A display of herbal and organically grown products and a demonstration in producing organic manure marked the occasion.

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