

Date:13/01/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/13/stories/2010011352400300.htm>

More farmers' markets planned

R. Arivanantham

KRISHNAGIRI: The State Government will open another 50 'Uzhavar Santhais' before the end of this financial year.

A decision to this effect was taken at a recent cabinet meeting held in Chennai, an official of the State Agricultural Marketing Board (the nodal agency to run such markets in the State) told *The Hindu* on Tuesday. An announcement is likely to be made during the budget session.

The Board has been asked to identify four sites in each district which should be near towns accessible to the public and farmers to bring their produce to the santhai, the official said.

The places would be short-listed at a meeting to be convened by the Board in Chennai on January 20 which would be submitted to the Government for approval.

The official said lands have been identified in some districts.

The district administration has identified two sites each in Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri. The likely places are Uthangarai and Bagalur Road in Hosur and Dharmapuri and Karimangalam in Dharmapuri district..

The 'uzhavar santhais' at Hosur in Krishnagiri district and R.S. Puram in Coimbatore are functioning well.

Date:13/01/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/13/stories/2010011353790400.htm>

Compensation for crop loss

CHENNAI: The State government on Monday announced that Rs.77.451 crore, received as the Centre's share of crop insurance, would be distributed to delta farmers before Pongal.

The delta farmers and those in Ramanathapuram districts had already been paid Rs.457.425 crore as compensation for the loss of crops caused by Cyclone Nisha in 2008, according to an official release. — Special Correspondent

Date:13/01/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/13/stories/2010011360690600.htm>

Green cover will bring down global warming: conference

Staff Reporter

— PHOTO: G. KARTHIKEYAN



NEED OF THE HOUR: A.K. Rajan, chairman, Coastal Aquaculture Authority, right, releasing a handbook and a CD on climate change at a conference in Dindigul on Tuesday. Nature scientist Nammalvar receives it.

DINDIGUL: Creation of more green cover by growing a large number of trees will scale down global warming and keep the earth cool and make it an ideal place for all living things; traditional agriculture practices will protect cultivable lands.

These observation were made at the South Regional Environment Conference here on Tuesday. Coastal Aquaculture Authority Chairman A.K. Rajan said that trees were the only viable source to bring down temperature. Degradation of environment and rise in temperature were faster than scientists' expectations. The poor would be the worst affected.

Rise in temperature by one degree centigrade would force surface-living fish to go 15 metres deep into the sea. Further increase would force them to go deeper and even migrate towards north or south. Such a change would make fishermen's life miserable creating acute sea food shortage. Natural farming scientist K. Nammazhvar said that human greed was the sole reason for the pathetic conditions prevailing on earth. Drought had gripped 14 districts. Remedy to this crisis was not known. "If you protect trees for three years, it will protect you till death and also your future generations."

Former Vice-Chancellor of Gandhigram Rural University T. Karunakaran said that decentralisation of production would bring a desirable impact on global warming.

Peace Trust Chairman J. Paul Baskar said that Asian and African countries had

realised the impact of global warming but only developed nations refused to take any preventive measures even though they realised the impact.

Date:13/01/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/13/stories/2010011359580300.htm>

Water level

MADURAI: The level in the Periyar dam on Tuesday stood at 118.30 feet (full level 136 feet) with an inflow of 553 cusecs and a discharge of 975 cusecs. The level in the Vaigai dam was 54.40 feet (71 feet) with an inflow of 681 cusecs and a discharge of 1,860 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit stood at 3,772 mcft. Sattayar dam recorded 1 mm of rainfall.

Date:13/01/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/13/stories/2010011357590300.htm>

Mettur level

TIRUCHI: The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 84.77 feet on Tuesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,038 cusecs and the discharge, 6,000 cusecs.

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Uzhavar santhais at Avadi and Red Hills to be opened on Tuesday

D Madhavan, TNN, 11 January 2010, 03:18am IST

CHENNAI: The ongoing Telangana agitation in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh has prompted the state government to open two ulzhavar santhais at Paruthipattu near Avadi railway station, some 23 km northwest of Chennai, and in Naravarikuppam near Fire and Rescue Service Station at Red Hills, on Tuesday. Both farmers' markets were built nearly a year ago, but were not opened due to objections from the Tiruvallur district officials.

MLAs D Sudharssanam (Poonamallee constituency) and B Ranganathan (Villivakkam constituency) will inaugurate farmers' market at Avadi and Red Hills respectively. Tiruvallur district collector, V Palani Kumar, will preside over the function.

The two markets could not be opened because officials argued that the Agricultural Marketing Department (the nodal agency that runs similar markets in the state) should first revive the market in Ambattur before opening these markets. However, with traders finding it difficult to procure essential commodities from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh due to the Telangana agitation, the state government has instructed the district administration and the agricultural marketing department to open these markets immediately.

"As local farmers supply essential commodities to these markets, it reduces our reliance on the neighbouring state. Moreover, it helps bring down the price and also makes essential commodities more easily available to consumers. Further, among the 50 uzhavar santhais planned by the state government in 2006, these two markets are the only ones yet to be opened," Tiruvallur district administration officials told TOI.

On Sunday, finishing touches were being given to the santhais in Avadi and Red Hills. "Farmers will be given electronic weighing machines so that consumers get the correct measure of products but at a lesser price. Prices of vegetables and fruits would be monitored at the market on a daily basis and it would be ensured that products sold in the market are cheaper than in the open market," N Thirumavalavan, secretary, District Market Committee (Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur), Department of Agriculture, told TOI.

"It will be beneficial for residents and farmers as well to have a farmers' market in Avadi as it is at the centre of many farming villages and also nearer to the city," said S Rajendran, a resident of Mittanemalli, a farming village some six kms from Avadi.

Villagers like Rajendran can bring their produce and sell it with a marginal profit at the Avadi farmers' market. Farmers are likely to reap better profits than what they would by selling through middlemen at wholesale and retail markets. Agricultural produce from neighbouring farming villages such as Kilkondaiyar, Lakshmiapuram, Melkondaiyar, Paramakulam, Soorancherri, Ayalcherri, Palavedu, Mittanemalli, Pakkam, Vellanur, Tirunindravur, Muthapudupet, and Kovil Padaghai would be brought to the farmers' market in Avadi while vegetables, flowers and fruits from Mallikuppam, Chinnamedu, Arani, Pandikavanur, Soothuperumbedu, Nekundram, Karanodai, Erimettupalayam, Alamathi and Nallur would fill the market in Red Hills.

The total cost of these markets is Rs 22.50 lakh each. Most of the 24 shops at the Avadi and Red Hills uzhavar santhais covering an area of 40 and 20 cents respectively would be run by farmers. Out of 24 shops in each santhai, five shops would be run by women SHGs as per state government norms. Ten per cent of shops in such markets should be reserved for women SHGs. The shops, free for farmers, will be allotted daily on a first-come-first-served basis, as is done in all such markets in the state. Everyday, a government bus will pick up the farmers as well as their produce and bring them to the market free of cost.