

Date:19/01/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/19/stories/2010011959080300.htm>

Cotton prices

This has reference to the report 'Cotton prices are likely to soften' (Dec. 22). Cotton spinning mills in Tamilnadu and their labour force will be happy to see the sliding down of cotton prices. According to the report, 30 lakh bales were registered in November for exports of which only eight lakh bales have been exported and there has been no further enquiry for exports. Is it not a fact that cotton exporters registered an unrealistic quantity for export and failed to export the said quantity? Will this practice not lead to cotton prices being jacked up by cotton merchants and cotton exporters with vested interests? The Ministry of Textiles and the Textiles Commissioner should blacklist the defaulted cotton exporters.

R. Rajagopalan,

Ramanathapuram.

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Farmers throng collectorate

Staff Reporter

Demand release of water from Upparu dam

Tirupur: About 700 farmers thronged the Collectorate here on Monday demanding release of adequate water from Upparu dam for irrigation and drinking purposes.

Upparu Dam Farmers Association president P. Thirugnanasambandamoorthy explained to the Collector C. Samayamoorthy that despite their repeated requests to the authorities concerned, water was not released this crop season. The dam which is situated across Upparu River, a tributary of Amaravathi River, was normally fed by the water flowing down the Thirumoorthy reservoir through PAP Canal system.

Mr. Thirugnanasambandamoorthy cited a Government Order issued in 1994 which promises release of adequate water to the farmers functioning in the 6,060 acre command area of the Upparu dam both for irrigation and drinking needs. Public Works Department (Water Resources Organisation) sources told *The Hindu* that water could not be released at the moment as the dam received an inflow of 78 mcft this rainy season.

"This is not sufficient for release into the channels that feed the crops in the command area," sources added. The crowd moved away only after they got an

assurance from Mr. Samayamoorthy that their grievances would be addressed.

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Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 82.93 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 612 cusecs and the discharge, 4,003 cusecs.

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Uzhavar Sandhais working successfully, says Karunanidhi

Special Correspondent



M. Karunanidhi

CHENNAI: The scheme of farmer markets (Uzhavar Sandhai) is, by and large, functioning successfully, Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi said on Monday.

The number of farmers visiting the markets in December 2009 was 2,65,671 whereas it was 2,09,128 last year and 1,90,187 in 2007. The sale of fruits and vegetables was 60,501 tonnes in December 2009, 47,173 tonnes in 2008 and 33,992 tonnes in 2007.

The number of consumers went up from 57,51,138 in December 2007 to 1,07,83,055 two years later, the Chief Minister said in a statement.

On the coverage for beneficiaries under the Kalaigarnar's Insurance Scheme for Life-Saving Treatments, Mr. Karunanidhi said of the 77.3 lakh identity cards supplied to District Collectors till January 5, around 40.4 lakh cards had been distributed, accounting for nearly 50 per cent.

While 5,027 persons had benefited under the scheme in November, the number went up to 10,994 in December. As on January 12, the total number of beneficiaries was 29,355 persons. A sum of Rs.91.35 crore had been sanctioned towards claims, the Chief Minister added.

Addressing a function, Mr. Karunanidhi called upon people to ensure that the

notion of equality was a reality.

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Water level

MADURAI: The level in Periyar dam on Monday stood at 116.50 feet with an inflow of 298 cusecs and a discharge of 925 cusecs. The level in the Vaigai dam was 52.79 feet with an inflow of 564 cusecs and a discharge of 310 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit stood at 3,210 mcft.

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DECCAN
Chronicle *On The Web*

Botanical garden blueprint ready

By By Our Correspondent

Jan 19 2010

Jan. 18: The state horticulture department has finalised blueprints and architects for the 'world-class' botanical gardens proposed at the dismantled Chennai landmark, Woodlands drive-in restaurant.

The Rs 8 crore project is supposed to provide the largest lung-space for the crowded metropolis.

There will be no permanent structures in the 20-acre gardens but there will be enough space for Chennaiites to relax and take a stroll. It will be thrown open to the public by September 2010.

Sources in the horticulture department, to which the land belongs, said the garden would be set up in two-phases on the either side of the Cathedral Road.

"The south phase of the garden will be at the Woodlands drive-in site and the north phase will be next to the CSI church near the American embassy," said a senior official. "The total built up area of the garden will be 20.76 acres. The two phases will be connected by a flyover or a subway after approval from the CMDA."

The agricultural engineering department and Sri green makers are executing the design for the south phase, developed by Rajendran Associates, an architect firm in Chennai. Work on the south phase began in November 2009 and will be completed by early September.

The garden area in the south phase will be 7.94 acres and it will incorporate various elements such as an entrance plaza, Italian, Japanese and English gardens, water garden, aroma garden, butterfly garden, rock garden and a children's play area.

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Price of toor dal eases, sugar, jaggery still dearer

By By Our Correspondent
Jan 19 2010

Jan. 18: Here is some bittersweet news for the middle-class - even as the price of toovaram paruppu (tur dal) has dropped from Rs 95 to Rs 80, thanks to the new crop, the price of sugar and jaggery has spiralled in the last two weeks and become dearer by at least Rs 5 per kg. While the cost of sugar has increased from Rs 38 to Rs 42 in most retail outlets, the price of jaggery has increased from Rs 42 to Rs 48.

The prices of rice, however, have more or less remained the same since last year. "Raw rice is available for Rs 40 a kg, and boiled rice costs anywhere between Rs 40 and Rs 44 a kg," says Mr Mari Thangam, president, Mylapore Traders Association.

With the upcoming harvest, the prices are expected to drop by a few more rupees, he explains.

Housewives in the city are relieved at even the slightest easing of the purse strings, though they are still battling with heavy grocery budgets that doubled in 2009.

"The fall in dal prices means we can cook more sambar now," says Ms Pratichi T., a homemaker in Virugambakkam. "As there is no substitute for sugar, my family is taking less of it in our beverages and cutting down on favourite desserts like kesari," the woman laments. Even as the government has a towering food subsidy bill, food secretary K. Shanmugham maintains that the food situation in Tamil Nadu is under control.

"Sugar, made available through the Public Distribution System for Rs 13, is the only commodity that is cause for concern, and the government is having a close watch over it," Mr

Shanmugham said.

Though the Telangana issue in Andhra Pradesh has affected supply of boiled rice, Tamil Nadu has filled the gap by procuring it from Chhattisgarh, the state food secretary explains.

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PM to meet environment ministers on Jan 23

With pressure mounting on India to sign the Copenhagen Accord, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is expected to meet environment ministers from China, Brazil and South Africa — which, along with India, form the Basic countries — on January 23 to discuss the issue.

The decision was taken after Environment and Forest Minister Jairam Ramesh met the PM on Wednesday.

The Copenhagen Accord has to be signed by January 31.

The ministers of the Basic countries will be holding consultations in New Delhi on January 24 for a joint strategy on climate negotiations in 2010. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon had asked countries to sign a binding legal treaty on climate change by the year-end.

Ramesh had said earlier this month that there was increasing pressure on India from the developing nations, including Bangladesh and the Maldives, to sign the Copenhagen Accord.

“The US president kept on saying to the head of state of Bangladesh and the Maldives that ‘you are not going to get money (for climate steps) unless these four guys (BASIC nations) sign the accord’,” Ramesh said.

According to the Copenhagen Accord, rich countries have committed to provide \$100 billion a year by 2020 to developing nations for climate mitigation and adaptation.

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India to decide Copenhagen accord stance in 2 weeks

India is expected to decide within a fortnight if it'll ratify the accord reached at the last month's climate change summit in Copenhagen.

The cabinet will take a call on agreement before the environment ministers of the Basic countries — India, China, Brazil and South Africa — meet in Delhi on January 24 to draw strategy for year-long negotiations. A new agreement is to be signed in Mexico in December.

All the 193 countries that attended the summit have to inform the UN by January 31 if they will sign the accord.

The deal was primarily an agreement between the US, European Union and Basic countries, but the conference decided to take note of it.

Only Maldives, Canada, Australia and Papua New Guinea have responded positively, while Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia haven't rejected it. The EU and Britain are expected to inform the UN by next week.

With most rich countries willing to go with it, pressure is mounting on India to do the same. Environment and Forest Minister Jairam Ramesh is now expected to seek the cabinet's view on the summit outcome.

"The accord has many new elements which need the government's approval, if we have to sign it," said a ministry official on condition of anonymity.

Though the accord is non-binding, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon wants it to be binding.

"We have agreed to the accord because it's non-binding," Ramesh had said at Copenhagen. Recently, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said no one was satisfied with the summit outcome.

With Ban writing to the governments, India may have to rethink. The UN chief on Tuesday termed a binding treaty as important "to-do" for the world body in 2010.

There is an increasing concern that a binding accord will be the death of Kyoto Protocol, the existing climate treaty that has differentiated responsibility on climate mitigation for the rich and the developing worlds.

India had more to loss than gain from the accord, said Sunita Narian, director of Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment. "There is no money or technology... But, it makes India to commit on domestic mitigation actions." It doesn't provide for equitable burden-sharing, the mainstay of India's stance, she said.

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