

### Campaign to create awareness of IAMWARM project

Special Correspondent

VILLUPURAM: District Collector R.Palanisamy on Wednesday flagged off a campaign vehicle to create awareness among the farmers of the Rs 20-crore World Bank-aided IAMWARM project to increase crop yields and to augment their income. The vehicle would cover the stretch from Kachirapalayam to Eeriyur in the Gomukhi sub-basin area, and, from Peral to Sengurichi in the Gedilam sub-basin area in the next eight days. The Collector said the Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation and Water bodies Restoration and Management (IAMWARM) project was being implemented through a host of departments.

Date:21/01/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/21/stories/2010012154690500.htm>

---

### Farmers boycott 'Uzhavar Santhai'

Staff Reporter

Photo: N. Bashkaran.



***Official indifference: Farmers put up shops outside 'Uzhavar Santhai' in Kaveripattinam on Wednesday protesting against official apathy. —***

KRISHNAGIRI: Farmers on Wednesday boycotted Kaveripattinam Uzhavar Santhai protesting against official apathy. About 13 farmers put up shops outside the Santhai, sold their products for prices less than the ones fixed by the Agricultural Marketing Board.

Tamilnadu Vivasayigal Sangam Taluk Committee member G. Periyasamy told *The Hindu* that the farmers' market was opened by District Collector V.K. Shanmugam on February 23 last year.

Adjacent to the Uzhavar Santhai, another market has been put up by a few people with local political support. This affects the farmers as they cannot sell their produce inside the Santhai.

Mr. Periyasamy said the parallel market complex christened 'MGR weekly market' was built by the Kaveripattinam Panchayat Union 10 years ago as wholesale tomato mandi.

Intermediaries were blocking the farmers who brought their produce to the market and diverting them to markets in Royakottai and Palacode for a huge commission. As a result, the farmers could not sell their products at uzhavar santhai.

The intermediaries buy farm products on a lesser price and sell them for a high price to outside traders. It was said the farmers could not even sell even 30 kg of tomatoes.

Tomato, brinjal and ladies finger were the common vegetables produced by the local farmers. Other

vegetables were bought from Hosur Uzhavar Santhai and sold here, said a farmer.

Petitions to the Chief Minister's cell, the District Collector and representations on the farmers' grievances day did not bear fruit, he added.

He said the boycott would continue till the officials removed the retail vegetable market adjacent to the Uzhavar Santhai.

K. Meganathan, Administrative Officer from the Agricultural Marketing Board, visited the santhai and held talks with the farmers and asked them to sell their produce inside the market till the Deputy Director of the Board returned from Chennai.

**Date:21/01/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/21/stories/2010012159410300.htm>**

---

### **Mettur level**

The level in the Mettur dam stood at 81.75 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,087 cusecs and the discharge, 8,000 cusecs.

**Date:21/01/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/21/stories/2010012151970200.htm>**

---

### **Short film on Bt brinjal**

Staff Reporter

*Celebrities pitch in to protest GM food*

— Photo: R.Ravindran



**Bharatnatyam dancer Chitra Visweswaran speaking at the launch of an awareness short film on Bt Brinjal 'Kathireekaaa' in Chennai on Tuesday. Vocalist T.M.Krishna, director Vasanth and actor Rohini are in the picture.**

CHENNAI: People from various walks of life, including physicians, human rights activists and farmers, came together here on Tuesday to register their protest against the introduction of Bt brinjal by launching a short film *Kathireekaaa*.

Performing artists such as Chitra Visweswaran, Priyadarshini Govind, T.M.Krishna, Vijay Siva and Chitravina N. Ravikiran addressed the gathering.

The focus of the network, Safe Food Alliance (SFA), is to raise awareness and express the concerns of farmers and consumers on the introduction of Genetically Modified (GM) food.

Union Minister for Environment Jairam Ramesh has announced that a final decision on giving approval for Bt brinjal will be taken on February 20 after a series of consultations in seven cities.

An open discussion on GM food followed the screening of the 24-minute documentary which

features film directors Vasanth and Cheran; actors Revathy and Rohini; writer Gnani; academician Sultan Ismail Ahmed; and farmer Nammalwar.

Pointing out that many western countries have banned GM food because there have been no studies on the long-term genetic impact, V.Suresh of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) said: "The Tamil Nadu government must take note of at least what some other States have done. Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and a few other States have already rejected the introduction of Bt brinjal."

Singer T.M.Krishna said that while manipulating nature in the name of productivity and profit, the impact must be fully understood before taking any decision.

Director Vasanth said that a series of film screenings and events will be organised over the next two weeks culminating on January 30 with a consumer event to save food from genetic contamination.

**Date:21/01/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/21/stories/2010012152990300.htm>**

---

### **Harvesting machinery to be brought from other districts**

Special Correspondent

CUDDALORE: As the harvesting season has begun in the district now the farmers are hamstrung by acute shortage of harvesting machinery.

Following their appeal to District Collector P.Seetharaman, the district administration has made arrangements to bring seven harvesting machinery from various districts. A statement said that six wheel-type harvesting machinery would be brought from Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai, Virudhunagar, Tiruvallur and Tirunelveli districts. It would be rented out to the farmers at the rate of Rs 780 an hour. One more belt-type harvesting machinery would be brought from the Nandanam Agriculture Office, Chennai, and the rent for its usage would be fixed at Rs 1,145 an hour.

**Date:21/01/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/21/stories/2010012156810200.htm>**

---

### **'Madurai Malli' farmers likely to get land for collection centre**

Staff Reporter

*State Horticulture Farm at Theni to provide technical assistance*

— Photo: R. Sairam



***Special: A view of 'malli' (jasmine) farm at a village in Madurai district.***

MADURAI: The district administration has agreed to consider allotting land for establishing a common collection centre to the farmers of Uthappanaickanur near Usilampatti block in the district who cultivate the famous 'Madurai Malli' (jasmine).

District Revenue Officer Dinesh Ponraj Oliver, who chaired a meeting recently to discuss the problems of jasmine growers also suggested that the State Horticulture Farm at Periyakulam, Theni district, may be approached to ascertain the feasibility of establishing the collection centre and also

make available their expertise to the Uthappanaickanur flower growers.

R. Shankar Narayan, Assistant General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), M. Kathiresan, Deputy General Manager of Indian Bank, V. Chidambaram, Deputy Director, Agriculture Business, M. Krishnaswamy, Deputy Director, Horticulture Department, Federation of Flower Growers of Uthappanaickanur and ARD, an NGO, were among those who took part in the meeting.

Mr. Shankar Narayan told *The Hindu* that around 500 small and marginal farmers were growing jasmine and other commonly-used flowers at 1,250 acres of land in the two blocks of the districts. One was Usilampatti block, in which seven panchayats were involved in this sector while the other was Chellampatti block in which two panchayats were into flower cultivation.

“As the farmers are mainly dependent on commission agents, who pocket at least 20 per cent of their income, this meeting was held to help farmers get the full benefits of their produce,” he said.

The meeting was also intended to address another major issue of farmers which was the fluctuating prices. He said that while jasmine prices sometimes went as high as Rs. 600 per kilogram during peak seasons or when productivity was low, it also plummeted to levels as low as Rs. 20 a kg when there was a glut in the market.

Further, proposals to grant licence in trading of fertilizers and pesticides to the farmers’ federation were also mooted, to which the Department of Horticulture assured full support.

They also agreed to ensure technical guidance to farmers in improving productivity. Mr. Shankar Narayan also suggested that the jasmine farmers be considered for providing drip irrigation facility.

The meeting decided to seek the Collector’s approval to form a high-power committee, headed by him and comprising AGM, NABARD, Indian Bank and the Deputy Directors of Departments of Horticulture and Agriculture Business to oversee progress and achievements in this regard.

**Date:21/01/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/21/stories/2010012158870300.htm>**

---

## **Onion merchants willing to move out of city**

Special Correspondent

*But seek space on outskirts, says Commissioner of Police*

MADURAI: Considering the burgeoning traffic in the city, the wholesale onion merchants had expressed willingness to move out but sought space on the outskirts, said Commissioner of Police P. Balasubramanian here on Wednesday.

Representatives of Lorry Owners’ Associations, Tamil Nadu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Food grain Merchants’ Association, Vegetable Wholesale Merchants’ Associations, consumer forums and officers from the State Highways, Madurai Corporation, Regional Transport Authority, police officers and Transport Department attended the meeting.

Later, talking to reporters, Mr. Balasubramanian said that keeping in mind the need to decongest traffic, the police had convened a joint meeting involving various government and trade associations.

“Only with the support of every user, traffic can be improved...The police alone cannot bring in the desired results,” he underlined.

The Corporation authorities had agreed to identify suitable space for onion merchants on the

outskirts soon, he replied to a query. At present, a majority of these traders are located on the narrow East Marret Street.

Among other points discussed to decongest traffic, he said that the possibility of unloading/loading consignments in trucks by traders during night time was discussed.

The present arrangement of letting in lorries would continue for sometime, he clarified, but said that all the members unanimously agreed that a permanent solution would be taken to keep heavy vehicles out of the city limits.

The Commissioner said that traders had assured to get back for another round of meeting in a week's time. They were told to make use of the truck terminals at Maatuthavani, Kochadai and Avaniapuram.

Once the idle trucks moved out to the respective terminals after unloading before morning, there would be better space to go around for other vehicles even during peak hours, Mr. Balasubramanian said.

Deputy Commissioners of Police P.C. Thenmozhi, V. Jeyashri, Chamber senior president S. Rethinavelu and president N. Jegatheesan participated.

**Date:21/01/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/21/stories/2010012159390300.htm>**

---

### **Water level**

MADURAI: Water level in the Periyar dam on Wednesday stood at 115.90 feet. The level in the Vaigai dam was 53.25 feet.

**Date:21/01/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/21/stories/2010012157430300.htm>**

---

### **Erratic spell lowers the prospects of a good yield**

C. Jaishankar

*Agricultural officials expect normal production*

— Photo: L. Balachandar



***Dampened hope: Farmers harvesting paddy crop at Vayalur near Ramanathapuram on Wednesday.***

RAMANATHAPURAM: Even as harvest has started gaining momentum in different parts of the district, the ground situation reveals that harvest may not be bountiful apparently due to the irregular rainfall received during the last rainy season.

According to a cross-section of farmers, the harvest, which should have begun in the first or second week of January, has begun only in the third week. It is said that the delayed start of the north-east monsoon, which actually began on the penultimate day of October than 10 days before, had

ultimately caused the delay in harvest. Moreover, the quantum of production had not been that good when compared to normal harvest.

The farmers were also of the view that paddy fields in several areas had dried out marginally due to lack of rain. In some areas, paddy crops could not step up again from the fields due to excessive rain.

As against the normal rainfall of 827 mm a year, the district received 957.24 mm up to December 24, which is 130.24 mm more than the normal rainfall. The northeast monsoon period alone had contributed 691.94 mm, just 135 mm short of normal rainfall in a year. Though it meant that the period – October, November and December – received 190.34 mm more than normal rain, those areas where the standing crops stood for want of rain did not receive adequate spell.

“I have raised paddy on 3 acres of land. While a few patches were good, others were not satisfactory. Moreover the paddy seeds were also not healthy. I would say the efforts have not borne the expected fruit,” said Vellaichamy of Vayalur near Ramanathapuram.

While echoing the same sentiment, another farmer of the same village said she was neither satisfied nor dejected over the production. She termed that yield was just below normal. She added that though the area received more rain than normal, it was erratic rain that brought down the prospects of good harvest.

According to the information, the harvest had picked up momentum in a few areas in Ramanathapuram, R.S Mangalam and Thiruvadanai, which were considered as rice bowl of the district.

When contacted, the agricultural officials said that the harvest operation would reach peak in another ten days. Though there might be less production in some areas, normal production was expected in general.

© Copyright 2000 - 2009 The Hindu

## **THE TIMES OF INDIA**

### **Maha Govt plans eco-villages for rural development**

PTI, 21 January 2010, 08:30am IST

MUMBAI: Maharashtra government is planning an ambitious project for development of rural areas by introducing an eco-village concept, which would give incentives to the villages for preserving environment.

"We are planning the eco-village concept which would serve both the purposes - development and preservation of environment of the villages," Rural development minister Jayant Patil said.

Patil has been taking opinions and suggestions from experts in the rural sector and activists on the issue.

"I have been discussing the issue with experts and we will try to get the plan approved by the cabinet soon," he said.

In the concept, the rural areas would have a development plan like cities to avoid haphazard constructions in future.

"The rural areas are expanding but they have no proper development plan. We would design the plans too for these areas," an official from the rural development department said.

The concept would also ensure the basic minimum facilities for the villages like water and sanitation, power, schools and markets, the official said.

"Certain guidelines and rules would be set up for villages like using bio-gas, preserving forests, maintaining sanitation against which incentives would be given to them," the official said.