

African team conducts study of poultry farming

M.K. Ananth

The members were also exposed to ethnoveterinary medicines

Members awestruck by the practical low-cost methodologies implemented here

Namakkal: For the first time, a team of 13 persons from eight African countries came to India for a two-week international training programme on small hold livestock and commercial poultry farming that concluded on Sunday.

Assistant Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Dr. V. Venkatasubramanian told The Hindu that the programme was organised under the Indo-African Forum Summit that includes technology know how's, human resource development and resource sharing of men and materials.

He said that the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Namakkal was the first among 589 KVKs in the country to host a programme on poultry and animal husbandry for an international delegation.

According to him, the climate and topography of Africa was more like India while problems such as shrinking land, water, forest, animal, and human resource shortages were also similar in the two places, he said.

The members said that they were awestruck by the practical low-cost methodologies implemented here and added that they were far ahead of practices followed in their homeland. Kodwo Ennin Fynn of Ghana (45) said that they were attracted by the alternative poultry farming industry and expressed confidence that his country would be greatly benefited if they followed the Namakkal methodologies.

Wogenie Birhanie (35) of Ethiopia said that they were nominated by their respective governments to undergo the programme.

“A report would be submitted to the government for implementation to tackle the issues faced by locals there (Africa) and thereby improve small-scale poultry and animal husbandry,” she added.

Other members of the team were Opara Ljeoma Chisa, Tsowa Idris Masha, Onuh – Jibo Odawn, Offiong Eyo Effiong and Akeem Bolaji Ibilade of Nigeria, Dawlat Abdalla Mahboub Abdalla of Sudan, Shuuluka Victoria Nghituvali of Namibia, Gezahegne Tadesse of Ethiopia, Chongwe Mwachilenga Andrew of Zambia, Bantieni Traore of Mali and Priscillah Noegwa of Kenya.

Focus

Director of the Extension Education, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS), Dr. D. Kathiresan said that focus was on crossbred dairy cattle, buffalo rearing from a single cow to an organized dairy farming with 120 dairy animals.

They also underwent hands-on training in sorghum stover dairy animal production, milk procurement and processing done by co-operative societies and private vendors.

Present status of sheep and goat rearing and importance of genetic upgradation of native sheep and goats and its performance in field conditions were shown to the participants.

They were also exposed to re-emergence of Ethnoveterinary medicines, commercial broiler farms, layer farms, alternative poultry units, small and large scale animal feed and meat processing units, animal feed analytical and quality control laboratory, poultry diseases diagnostic services and agromet advisory services rendered for scientific poultry farming.

Recent developments in intensive pig farming, rabbit farming, livestock and poultry farm waste disposable management, low-cost feed formulation and interaction with local farmers were part of the exercise.

The programme comprised of theoretical and practical exposure during which they toured various facilities in Namakkal, Erode, Tirupur, Kochi (fishery industry) and Thrissur.

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NABARD plans to have one lakh farmers' clubs

Staff Reporter

Aims for one in each village of the country

— PHOTO: G. KARTHIKEYAN



FUTURE PLAN:S. Natarajan, Deputy General Manager, NABARD, addressing a workshop at Gandhigram Rural Institute near Dindigul on Monday.

DINDIGUL: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) would increase the number of farmers' clubs in the country to one lakh this year in order to have one at each village, said S. Natarajan, Deputy General Manager.

Inaugurating a national-level workshop on 'Inclusive Growth in India: A re-look into the service delivery system in rural areas' at Gandhigram Rural Institute near here on Monday, he said that the NABARD had 65,000 clubs that had been catering to various needs of farmers.

On functioning of self-help groups (SHG), he said that the members must take efforts to go to the next level for sustainability and standardise their income. Capacity building, transfer of technology and information, right type of training on production, and marketing techniques would take them to the next level.

Similarly, there was no dearth of schemes for rural development. Convergence of schemes suitable to their needs and effective utilisation was necessary to develop rural areas. He appealed to non-governmental organisations and researchers to either evolve new models or adopt existing models to develop villages.

Growth of agriculture and marginal farming in rural areas was important without which growth of economy on all parameters would not gain momentum, he said.

Assistant General Manager S. Ramesh said that development of orchards on lands owned by marginal farmers would not only help in village development but also prevent migration of people to urban areas. "We have been implementing two projects in Namakkal and Krishnagiri and searching suitable land for development in Kodaikanal."

GRI Registrar N. Narayanasamy said that more employment and more income to weaker sections of people would certainly promote sustainable and balanced economic growth. The marginal and small farmers and agriculture labourers needed more support, he said.

Professor S. Lalitha said that benefits of the country's rapid growth of GDP should spread to all sections of the society.

Research papers on financial inclusion, social inclusion, and gender development were presented at the meet.

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Flood-control measure for three districts

THANJAVUR: Schemes would be implemented by the Public Works Department (PWD) to find a permanent solution to floods in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts, said K. Dhanevel, secretary, PWD department, here on Sunday. He conducted a review of the PWD

works going on in the three districts and proposed works with three district Collectors - M. S. Shanmugham (Thanjavur), K. Baskaran (Tiruvarur) and C. Munianathan (Nagapattinam).

Date:22/02/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/02/22/stories/2011022259900500.htm>

Farmers seek relief for crop loss

Staff Reporter

TIRUNELVELI: Demanding compensation for crop loss, a group of farmers from Sivagiri in the district submitted a petition to Collector M. Jayaraman on Monday at the weekly grievance redress meeting.

The farmers said that since the entire Sivagiri region had failed to experience good rainfall for the past two years, 70 to 90 days old paddy cultivated on over 4,000 acres had wilted.

Interest-free loans

Hence, apart from giving adequate compensation to the crop loss suffered by the farmers, interest-free long-term loans should be given to the agriculturists to sink borewells and to deepen wells after due inspection by an expert team.

The Puliyangudi Vaalamalayaiyaaru road scheme should be completed at the earliest by allotting adequate funds and the construction of Vaalamalayaiyaaru dam, which was approved by the government during the fiscal 2009 – 2010, be commenced at the earliest.

Though the farmers suffered huge crop loss during the storm on July 2, 2006, no compensation was given to the agriculturists. Hence, the compensation should be given, they demanded.

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Farmers bear the brunt of nature's fury

Ryots in Adilabad suffer huge losses due to gales and hailstorm on February 20

Standing crop lost in thousands of acres at a time when it was about to be harvested

Preliminary survey on crop damage puts crop loss at Rs. 5 crore in 2,300 hectares

- PHOTO: G. RAJESHWARA CHARY



Hard hit: Ryots assessing loss to cotton in Jainad mandal on Monday.

GIMMA (ADILABAD DT.): The gales and the hailstorm on February 20 seems to have completed the task left unfinished by the adverse weather conditions of last monsoon.

Farmers, especially those who grow cotton, red gram, Bengal gram and jowar in Adilabad district, once again suffered huge losses as this deadly natural phenomenon flattened the crop that was spared during last year's excessive rainfall.

Heavy rain accompanied by gales and hailstorm struck the mandals of Jainad, Bela, Tamsi, Narnoor, Wankidi and Kerameri forming the Penganga hinterland on Sunday afternoon. Standing crop has been lost in thousands of acres leaving many an agriculturist crestfallen at a time when they were about the reap the benefits.

A. Raju, a cotton farmer from Gimma in Jainad mandal, stands to lose over Rs. 6 lakh as he lost the crop in 30 acres. "I had taken 25 acres on lease investing about Rs. 6 lakh in it," says the dejected farmer staring blankly into the distant horizon.

"My mother had sold her gold ornaments to mobilise money for obtaining the lease. She is crying inconsolably at home," he adds cursing the fate wrought by the sudden turn of events.

B. Ashanna, who took on lease 6 of the 10 acres in which he grew cotton, is also on the verge of tears as he surveys the damage. "Even the unopened bolls will not produce cotton now," he reveals as he contemplates the impact of the hailstorm on the plants.

"I was quite hopeful of getting good returns this year owing to the high price of cotton. It is unbelievable that I have lost cotton and red gram in all the 25 acres at one go," he says.

The preliminary survey on crop damage conducted by Agriculture Department puts crop loss at Rs. 5 crore in a total of 2,300 hectares. This may be a bit conservative because private estimates say only cotton has been lost in 2,000 acres in Jainad mandal alone.

While Gimma, Mandagada, Pendalwada, Korta, Sangvi and Kouta bore the brunt in Jainad mandal, crop was lost extensively in Bela, Bedoda, Sangdi and Maniarpur in Bela mandal all along the bank of Penganga.

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'Likening PDS, fertilizer subsidy to 2G spectrum losses incorrect'

Special Correspondent



U.R. Ananthamurthy

BANGALORE: Jnanpith Award winner U.R. Ananthamurthy on Monday criticised Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for likening the losses caused by the 2G spectrum scam to the subsidy given by the Government on PDS and fertilizers supplied to the families belonging to the below the poverty line and farmers respectively.

Speaking at the condolence meeting organised by Sambhrama to pay tributes to the former Deputy Chief Minister M.P. Prakash, Mr. Ananthamurthy termed it a bad analogy. "How could the subsidy given to poor people in a welfare state be compared with the losses caused by a few rich, who siphoned it off?" he asked. Dr. Singh had made such a reference during a TV interview. The writer, a close associate of Prakash, said that there was no doubt about the integrity of Dr. Singh, but, he should not have likened the 2G spectrum losses to the subsidy. This only shows that economists have no value for things like subsidy, which was an important element of alleviating poverty.

Agreeing with the former Chairman of the Legislative Council B.L. Shankar that Prakash had developed a sense of detachment with politics, the writer said such politicians, who have modesty should get involved in public life to protect the interest of the people.

Mr. Shankar said that the former Deputy Chief Minister had the distinction of being a person, remembered more after his death.

Congress leader and former MLA Mahima Patel said Prakash was a multi-faceted genius and honest politician and unfortunately died before implementing his philosophy of how to involve oneself in public life. Huligappa Kattimani of Rangayana spoke. Karnataka of Sambhrama welcomed the gathering.

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'Agriculture budget should help farming community'

'Government should accord priority to providing irrigation' Farmers hit by absence of scientific support price policy '

KOLAR: Several speakers at a seminar organised by Manwantara Prakashana here on Monday expressed doubts over the much-talked about agriculture budget to be presented by the B.S. Yeddyurappa Government.

Such a budget should be more realistic and help the farming community to come out from the present agrarian crisis, the speakers felt. If there is no proper vision, there could not be proper provisions for the welfare of farmers,” the meet opined.

The seminar urged the Government to accord priority to providing irrigation and set up agro-based processing units in Kolar and Chickballapur districts.

It also called upon the Government to resist the retrograde moves of the Centre such as Seed Bill 2010 and duty-free import of silk.

Inaugurating the seminar, Kolar and Chickballapur Cooperative Milk Union Limited president S. Ramesh said the facilities to the beneficiaries should reach in time. Absence of a scientific support price policy was a major problem facing the farming community, he said.

The speakers alleged that the State Government was more keen on attracting foreign capital to corporatise the agriculture sector. Inviting foreign capital and providing them lakhs of acres of land will spell doom to the farming sector, they said.

“At a time when the agriculture department itself has become inactive what the farming sector can expect from such budget,” senior cooperative leader Byalahalli Govinda Gowda said. However, he supported the concept and remarked the Centre should have come out with such a budget.

Agri policy

JP Vichara Vedike State convener R. Dayanand opposed the concept and said instead of agriculture budget an agriculture policy was the need of the hour.

The former councilor K.N. Tyagaraj, District Chamber of Commerce and Industries president B. Suresh, progressive farmer Nenamanahalli Chandrashekhar, journalists K. Narasimhamurthy and S. Chandrashekhar spoke.

P.S. Anantaram of Manwantara Prakashana was present.

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Steps on to provide title deeds to settler farmers

Special Correspondent

Central clearance awaited to provide documents: Minister

4,119 farmers to get land rights Aid from Chief Minister's fund given away

THRISSUR: Revenue Minister K.P. Rajendran on Sunday said the government had initiated measures to provide title deeds to 4,119 settler farmers in the district who had applied for the documents.

He was addressing a district-level meeting here to hand over land documents.

“Central clearance is awaited to provide title deeds to settler farmers who had occupied land since January 1, 1977,” he added. The Minister said that the LDF government had given title deeds to 8,148 indigent people in the district during the past five years.

In all, 1,271 land documents were distributed at the function. They comprised 126 forest land use rights documents; 43 title deeds for surplus land; 125 title deeds for 'poramboke' land; 200 'Devaswom land' title deeds; 412 'Land Tribunal' title deeds; 34 title deeds for forest land; five possession documents; and 326 'Kanam' certificates.

A sum of Rs.11.24 lakh from the Chief Minister's relief fund was also distributed.

B.D. Devassy, Rajaji Mathew Thomas, C. Ravindranath, Thomas Unniyadan, MLAs, and district panchayat president K.V. Dasan were present.

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Farmers' convention in Udupi on Saturday

Staff Correspondent

Udupi: The Udupi Zilla Krishik Sangha will organise its annual farmers' convention here on February 26.

President of the sangha Ramakrishna Sharma Bantakal told presspersons here on Monday that seminars on various topics related to agriculture would be held at the convention. The topics to be discussed included "Value-added agricultural production", "Agriculture and culture", "Economical dairy farming", "Role of micronutrients in horticultural crops", and "Integrated maintenance related to paddy crop".

Experts in agriculture and horticulture would participate as resource persons. There would be an interaction between farmers and heads of various government departments in the afternoon.

There would be an exhibition-cum-sale of agricultural equipment and books on agriculture at the venue, he said. The sangha opposed the release of saline water from the thermal power plant of Udupi Power Corporation Ltd (UPCL) into fields, Mr. Bantakal said. President of the Alva's Educational Foundation Mohan Alva would inaugurate the convention. N. Karanth Peraje of "Adike Patrike" would deliver the keynote address. Deputy Commissioner P. Hemalatha would be the chief guest at the inaugural function, Mr. Bantakal said.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/2011/02/22/stories/2011022250310200.htm>

Campaign against climate change

KOCHI: The student community here joined hands on Monday to learn more about various

aspects related to climate change through the medium of arts.

An initiative of the Association of British Scholars (ABS), Kochi, and British Council, the event has been designated as 'ACCA Week-2011'. Yesudasan, noted cartoonist, inaugurated the programme at the Sacred Heart College . He urged the students to participate in the global campaign against the adverse impact of climate change.

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hindustantimes



HT Correspondent, Hindustan Times

Email Author

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PM's panel sees 9% GDP growth in 2011-12

India's economy is set to grow by 8.6% this year and 9% the year after, buoyed by a strong farm sector growth, but high food and manufactured product prices remain a cause for concern, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) said on Monday.

In its "Review of the Economy 2010-11" report, the PMEAC said benchmark inflation could come down to 7% by the end of March aided by strong farm output.

While food inflation has shown signs of abating, appropriate policy prescriptions are required to cool prices of manufactured products.

"Considerable care from the policy side, however, needs to be taken to ensure the manufactured goods inflation remains below 5% in 2011-12," PMEAC chairman C. Rangarajan said.

"Given that there is a healthy growth in investment and savings rates, the economy should be able to grow at 9%," he said.

Rangarajan said the agriculture sector is set to grow at 5.4% in 2010-11. "Agriculture will do very well this year. We might have a record harvest of wheat," he said.

Rangarajan also said there is a need to maintain tighter monetary and fiscal policies to fight inflation, besides managing fiscal consolidation

The fiscal deficit, budgeted at 5.5% for the current fiscal, could be marginally lower, Rangarajan added.

To sustain a 9% growth rate, controlling inflation through a combination of monetary and fiscal policies and supply side management would be critical, he said. Besides, there has to be increased focus on infrastructure creation.

Rangarajan said agriculture holds the key. All steps must be taken " to ensure that the agriculture sector shows a sustained growth rate of 4%," he said.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/665148.aspx>

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Feb 22

Max Min
31° | 24.2°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 75%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 6:29

Sunset: 18:16

Barometer: 1007.0

Tomorrow's Forecast








Rainy

Wednesday, Feb 23

Max Min
32° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Feb 24	Friday Feb 25	Saturday Feb 26	Sunday Feb 27	Monday Feb 28
				
30° 23° Rainy	30° 23° Partly Cloudy	30° 22° Partly Cloudy	29° 22° Cloudy	29° 20° Cloudy

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'Centre in talks with states on Food Act'

Feb 22 2011

President Pratibha Patil on Monday said the Centre is consulting state governments on the proposed National Food Security Act (NFSA), which will give the poor a legal entitlement to subsidised foodgrains.

"The states are being consulted as the success of the programme (NFSA) hinges critically on their commitment to reforms in the public distribution system (PDS)," Ms Patil said in her address to parliament to mark the beginning of the Budget Session.

Signalling that the forthcoming Budget would give a vigorous push to economic reforms, Ms Patil said the government's top priority would be to check inflation without hurting growth.

"We have to maintain the momentum for reforms on a wide front," she said.

The indication comes a week before the presentation of the General Budget for 2011-12 in the Lok Sabha on February 28 by finance minister Pranab Mukherjee.

In her speech which lasted over 45 minutes at the historic Central Hall of Parliament, the

President highlighted key issues before the nation and the government's plan to tackle it. She also said the government attaching the "highest importance to the implementation of all laws relating to the protection of the environment and forests." The rapid pace of economic growth is imposing new challenges, she viewed and said "a developing country like ours must find ways to strike an appropriate balance between environmental imperatives and developmental needs." On the NFSA, she said the government has received important inputs on the proposed act from the National Advisory Council (NAC), headed by UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

"I had announced earlier my government's commitment to bring forward the NFSA that will entitle statutory every family below the poverty line to foodgrains at highly subsidised prices.

Important inputs in this regard have been received from the NAC," the President said.

Pointing out that inflation has been "a problem in the past year", she said the long-term solution lies in raising production and the productivity of agri-crops.

She listed "combating inflation" as one of the top priorities for the government in 2011-12.

Prez: Steps to revamp armed forces soon

Age Correspondent

New Delhi

Feb. 21: President Pratibha Patil in her address to Parliament on Monday said the government will insist on "the highest levels of probity and professionalism in the armed forces". The statement is significant, considering that the Army's image has been affected by a series of scams such the Sukna scam, Adarsh scam and Kandivili scam. Praising the bravery of the armed forces, the President said the government is taking all steps to transform the armed forces into a modern force that is equipped to meet the security challenges of the 21st century. She also said special attention was being paid to indigenous development of defence technologies.

Source URL:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/national/%E2%80%98centre-talks-states-food-act%E2%80%99-843>

PM's panel pegs next year's growth at 9%

Feb 22 2011

Feb. 21: At a time when concerns are being expressed over India's economical growth in the next fiscal, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) on Monday projected a growth of 9 per cent in 2011-12. The council is also in favour of a tight monetary policy to control inflation and some withdrawal of stimulus package in the forthcoming budget.

"We hope that the economic growth in the next fiscal year will be about 9 per cent. Services as well as industry are expected to do better," said PMEAC chairman, Dr C. Rangarajan, while releasing the Review of the Economy for 2010-11. In line with projections by other government arms, the PMEAC projected that the GDP will grow by 8.6 per cent in the current fiscal.

PMEAC has projected that in the next fiscal the industry will grow by 9.2 per cent as compared to 8.1 per cent in the current fiscal. The services will grow by 10.3 per cent in 2011-12 as compared to 9.6 per cent in 2010-11. The agriculture sector will see a slowdown by growing at 3 per cent in 2011-12 against an expected growth of 5.4 per cent in 2010-11.

The council projected that the inflation will come down to 7 per cent by March. "The declining trend in food prices, particularly that of vegetables, will result in lower food inflation...considerable care from the policy side has to be taken to ensure that the manufactured goods inflation remains below 5 per cent in 2011-12," said the report.

The council is in favour of a tight monetary policy to control inflation which it termed as being "uncomfortably high". "Inflation currently stands at an uncomfortably high level. Monetary and fiscal policies have to be appropriately tight to protect the economy from inflation. There is a need to maintain a tight monetary policy. We believe monetary policy has an important role to play," said Dr Rangarajan. He said that the country needs to get back to the fiscal consolidation path. "This means withdrawal of some of the stimulus," he added.

The council expects the high capital inflow to continue in India."Against the level of \$47.8 billion in 2009-10, the capital inflows are projected to be \$ 64.6 billion for 2010-11 and \$76.0 billion for 2011-12," it said.

However, the report projected merchandise trade deficit to be \$132.0 billion or 7.7 per cent of the GDP in 2010-11 and \$151.5 billion or 7.7 per cent of GDP in 2011-12. It said that fiscal deficit outcome for 2010-11 could be marginally better than the budget estimates. "The consolidated fiscal deficit is likely to be 7.5 to 8 per cent of GDP for 2010-11," said the report.

Source URL: <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/business/pm%E2%80%99s-panel-pegs-next-year%E2%80%99s-growth-9-738>

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Indian economy to grow by 8.6% in 2010-11

PTI, Feb 21, 2011, 05.32pm IST

NEW DELHI: The Prime Minister's economic advisory council on Monday projected the economic growth in the country at 8.6 per cent for the current fiscal on the back of rebound in farm output and inflation to come down to 7 per cent by March-end due to declining food prices.

The PMEAC, in its 'Review of the Economy 2010-11' report released on Monday, also said the country's GDP is likely to grow by 9 per cent in 2011-12, back to the high rate it had witnessed before onset of the global economic recession.

PMEAC's projection of 8.6 per cent growth is in line with government estimates released earlier this month.

According to PMEAC, the agriculture sector is expected to grow at 5.4 per cent this fiscal.

This is higher than the 0.4 per cent rate of growth registered by the farm sector in 2009-10.

"Agriculture will do very well this year. We might have record harvest of wheat," PMEAC chairman C Rangarajan said here.

The council also said the services and industry sectors would maintain the high growth rate of

last few years.

While services is expected to register a growth rate of 9.6 per cent, industry is projected to grow by 8.1 per cent.

During the last fiscal, services sector had witnessed a growth of 9.1 per cent, while manufacturing had grown by 8.8 per cent.

The PMEAC further said the overall inflation is expected to be at 7 per cent by March-end and that the rate of price rise in the case of manufactured goods has been low.

"The declining trend in food prices, particularly that of the vegetables, will result in lower food inflation... considerable care from the policy side has to be taken to ensure that the manufactured goods inflation remains below 5 per cent in 2011-12," it said.

The overall inflation for January has been at 8.23 per cent, while food inflation was at 11.05 per cent in the first week of February.

22 Feb, 2011, 04.04AM IST, S Sanandakumar,ET Bureau

Rubber takes root in new regions on record prices

KOCHI: Supply shortage and record prices have prodded planters to expand rubber acreage this year. Farmers in regions where rubber trees are not normally grown have taken up rubber farming in a big way, thanks to the unrelenting rally in prices.

A half of the new land brought under rubber this year is in states such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa and the North-Eastern states, Rubber Board officials said. The rest of the expansion is seen in the rubber belt of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

"It is difficult to find land in Kerala," said Satish Abraham, president, Latex Manufacturers

Association. He said rubber was now being cultivated as an inter crop in many new regions of the state.

Rubber Board former vice chairman Siby Monippally said rubber was replacing many other crops.

Experts said rubber replanting was progressing at a slower pace. "Replanting will slow down when prices are high," said a Rubber Board official adding that even scrap rubber was getting nearly Rs 200 per kg.

More people are taking to rubber planting across the globe as shortages and a rising demand are pushing prices to record levels.

International prices stood at Rs 292.98 per kg on Monday. Local prices which stood at around Rs 139 per kg in January 2010 rose to Rs 240.50 per kg on February 19, 2011. The shortage is estimated at around 85,000 tonne last year and 1 lakh tonne this year.

Rubber Board estimates show the area under rubber has been expanding by around 6,000 hectares since the beginning of this decade. However, this increased to 22,700 hectare by 2007-08 and to 30,200 hectare in the subsequent year. The provisional figure for 2009-10 put the new plantation at 25,500 hectares. The extended rainy season this year has forced growers to cut back production.

22 Feb, 2011, 03.33AM IST, Jayashree Bhosale,ET Bureau

Sugar mills survive on byproducts in a dull year

PUNE: Depressed prices and a lower offtake have strained the finances of sugar companies this season. But about a half of cooperative mills in Maharashtra have managed to stay afloat thanks to byproducts such as power, ethanol and carbon credits.

Sugar prices have dipped to Rs 26/kg and mills have not been able to sell the February quota till now. They have to pay anything between Rs 1,500/quintal and Rs 2,000/quintal for cane excluding the harvesting and transport charges. With sugar prices becoming uneconomical, mills having no by-products have been affected the most. The Bhima Patas Cooperative Sugar Mill in Pune district falls in this category.

“Our sugar production cost and selling price are neck to neck right now. The recovery is less by 0.5%. If sugar prices go below Rs 26/kg, the financial position of the mill will become worrisome,” said Nandkumar Kadam, managing director, Bhima Patas cooperative.

But the by-products are giving good returns to the cooperatives. The mills get Rs 4.79/unit of electricity sold to the grid, the highest rate in the country for non-fossil fuel-based power. The sale of rectified spirit earns more than Rs 200/tonne of sugar cane for the mills. The Malegaon cooperative in Baramati, controlled by the family of union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar, too has a co-generation unit and a distillery attached to the sugar factory.

“The co-generation unit has started recently and hence we have to service its loan. But the production of 40,000 litres of extra-neutral alcohol every day is giving us Rs 30/litre to Rs 32 /litre for use in potable liquor,” said Malegaon cooperative’s MD SM Taware.

The Pandurang cooperative exports 4.5-5 crore units of power per annum to the grid which gives it a revenue of about Rs 23 crore. It is also expecting to get Rs 7 crore as carbon credits this year while the sale of 40,000 litre of molasses will help it earn Rs 14 crore.

“The cane the mill crushes is registered... allowing... to keep a check on its quality. This results in better recovery as compared to other mills in the region,” said Pandurang cooperative’s managing director KN Nibe.

PMEAC projects 8.6% GDP for FY11, March-end inflation at 7%

February 22, 2011 10:49:13 AM

PNS | New Delhi

Pegging growth at more or less similar lines, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council on Monday projected the economic growth in the country at 8.6 per cent for the current fiscal on the back of rebound in farm output. It also projected inflation to come down to 7 per cent by March-end due to declining food prices.

The PMEAC, in its 'Review of the Economy 2010-11' report released on Monday, also said the country's GDP is likely to grow by 9 per cent in 2011-12, back to the high rate it had witnessed before onset of the global economic recession.

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"Agriculture will do very well this year. We might have record harvest of wheat," PMEAC Chairman C Rangarajan said here.

The council also said the services and industry sectors would maintain the high growth rate of last few years.

While services is expected to register a growth rate of 9.6 per cent, industry is projected to grow by 8.1 per cent.

During the last fiscal, services sector had witnessed a growth of 9.1 per cent, while manufacturing had grown by 8.8 per cent.

The PMEAC further said the overall inflation is expected to be at 7 per cent by March-end and that the rate of price rise in the case of manufactured goods has been low.

“The declining trend in food prices, particularly that of the vegetables, will result in lower food inflation... considerable care from the policy side has to be taken to ensure that the manufactured goods inflation remains below 5 per cent in 2011-12,” it said. The overall inflation for January has been at 8.23 per cent, while food inflation was at 11.05 per cent in the first week of February.

Business Standard

Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011

Coffee to touch new highs on supply concerns

Debasis Mohapatra / Bangalore February 22, 2011, 0:34 IST

Coffee prices in the international market are expected to touch new highs in the near term on the back of tight supply coupled with speculation buying before a possible correction in the next six to nine months.

While arabica prices in ICE Futures are now at 14-year high of \$2.72 a pound for March delivery, robusta is at \$2,290 a tonne for March delivery in Liffe futures.



“Due to supply concerns in Brazil and Columbia, two major producers of arabica, prices are expected to reach \$2.90 a pound in the near term,” Ramesh Rajah, president of Coffee Exporters’ Association said.

Though speculation buying along with holding back of stocks are fueling such price rise, arabica prices will see correction in the next six to nine months, he added.

Meantime, robusta variety of coffee may also firm up in the future due to higher consumption demand and speculation buying.

“Though robusta will not see much upside, it may reach \$2,400 a tonne in the next three months before a correction,” Rajah said.

Along with supply constraints, falling inventory level will support this trend. According to the International Coffee Organisation, stocks registered with New York’s coffee exchange have fallen sharply in the last one year.

As physical beans from Colombia and Central America are being traded at a premium to New York exchange, traders are unlikely to give their produce to warehouse of the exchange.

“In the wake of the overall demand-supply scenario along with increase in consumption, prices of both variety of coffee have an upward bias in the near future,” Jawaid Akhtar, chairman of Coffee Board of India said. He, however, declined to give any specific figure saying that it would depend not only on demand-supply scenario, but also on the overall market sentiment. Meantime, price difference between arabica and robusta variety has touched an all-time high level after 1997 in the recent time, which may prompt planters to shift to arabica variety.

“Though a bigger price difference should trigger shifting to arabica variety, higher gestation period of four to five years of arabica will discourage planters to opt for this variety,” Marvin Rodrigues, vice-president of Karnataka Planters’ Association said.

He also said that growing arabica was difficult as compared to robusta due to higher labour requirement and other factors.

Despite high international prices, coffee retailers are not ready to pass on the price rise to end consumers yet.

“We know that prices are at all-time high. However, retail prices are not expected to follow suit as we procure most of our produce from captive estates,” K Ramakrishnan, marketing head of Cafe Coffee Day said. He also said retail prices had to follow a stable cycle for sound business growth.

Robusta coffee hits 2-1/2 year high, demand strong

Reuters adds: Robusta coffee futures climbed to a fresh 2-1/2 year high on Monday as the market retained its strong upward momentum, dealers said.

Cocoa futures on Liffe rose to 7-month high as the market eyed the deepening crisis in top grower Ivory Coast. White sugar eased slightly as physical demand remained slow following the recent run-up in prices. ICE markets were shut on Monday for US Presidents' Day.

THE HINDU Business Line

Coffee Board lists out machines eligible for subsidy



The Hindu Exhibits displayed at the UPASI - KPA Coffee Conference in Bangalore. A Coffee Drier which is as easy as coffee drinking being demonstrated. (file photo): K. Gopinathan

Bangalore, Feb 21:

Shortly after announcing a Rs 50-crore mechanisation scheme for small growers, large growers and self-help groups, the Coffee Board has spelt out the kind of equipment that would qualify for subsidy.

In a meeting held late last week, the Coffee Board identified the following categories of machines as eligible for mechanisation subsidy: weed cutting machines or brush cutters; pit digging machines or augers; hand-held, battery-operated harvesting machines; telescopic pruners; and hi-tech sprayers. For each of these categories, the models, manufacturer and the maximum permissible price has been decided upon.

The subsidy would be claimed by growers or growers' collectives, depending on their eligibility, after they pay the full price of the equipment, officials said. On receipt of the subsidy claim, there will be a physical verification of the equipment. The Deputy Director (Extension) will finally disburse the claim.

The Coffee Board has assessed the "adequacy" of the machines eligible for subsidy. One pit digger can cover 20 hectares, whereas the weeder, lightweight battery-powered harvester, telescopic pruner and hi-tech sprayers can cover four hectares. "For a holding of 20 hectares, a grower can procure one pit digger and up to five of the other machines to be eligible for subsidy," officials explained.

Right timing

Coffee Board officials said that in view of good crop prospects this year, this scheme has come at the right time, encouraging growers to invest in mechanisation of digging, weeding, pruning, spraying and harvesting operations. The scheme will be in effect from January 24, 2011 to March 31, 2012, coinciding with the end of the Eleventh Plan.

About two weeks ago, the Board notified the level of subsidy for different categories of growers. Under this, growers holding up to 20 hectares can avail of a subsidy of 50 per cent subject to a

ceiling of Rs 2 lakh, whereas those holding above 20 hectares can avail of a subsidy of 25 per cent subject to a ceiling of Rs 4.5 lakh.

SHGs are eligible for 50 per cent subsidy, subject to a ceiling of Rs 5 lakh.

SHGs or growers' collectives should be formed by a group of at least 20 small coffee growers having an individual holding of up to 10 hectares.

The subsidy benefit is only for new machinery, officials clarified.

Competition panel asked to act against APMC Act

Recently in New Delhi:

A group of agricultural economists has asked the Competition Commission of India to suo motu act against the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act (APMC) as it is leading to inefficiency in marketing of agricultural products and thereby, denying better prices to farmers.

An international workshop on "Indian Agriculture: Improving Competition, Markets and the Efficiency of Supply Chains" last week discussed the issues of agricultural products marketing threadbare and zeroed in on the minimum support price, procurement by the Food Corporation of India and levy obligations for rice as issues impeding agricultural growth.

Mr Dhanendra Kumar, Chairperson of Competition Commission of India, who chaired a session on assessing impacts of regulatory constraints to food chain competition, did not respond to the pleas for action against APMC Act.

However, sources in the Government said the commission could act even if any individual filed a case against a State government or the Centre or even the Ministry of Agriculture.

If a case is filed, then the Competition Commission of India can issue notice to those responsible for implementing the act, the sources said.

According to Ms Jyoti Gujral, Director of IDFC, only 20-30 per cent of the transactions are open, while others are done in a closed way. “The APMC Act issue is complex, especially pertaining to States,” she said.

Secluded markets

Mr Piyush Joshi, an expert, said the APMC yards in most places were not connected by all-weather roads, while they need to be connected by tools such as information technology. Prof Ramesh Chand, Director of National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy, said there is deceleration in growth in the domestic agriculture sector. Though horticulture production is increasing, basic foodgrain production was decreasing, he said. More importantly, nutrition consumption was worsening, he said. Dr Simon Hearn, Senior Adviser of Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, said India and Australia were working jointly on water management and crop reading.

Prof Donald Maclaren of Melbourne University, said if more agencies other than the Food Corporation of India are allowed to procure foodgrain in markets, it would improve farmers' situation. Dr Abusaleh Shariff, Senior Fellow of NCAER, said the public distribution system served the middle class more than the below poverty line. A pilot study on regulatory constraints to competition in food chain presented at the workshop showed that the yield in foodgrain is rising but its rate of increase is decreasing. It also found the retailer's margin being quite high.

Lack of mills, export demand drags cotton



Cotton prices dropped Rs 200-300 for a candy (356 kg) on Monday on lower demand from exporters and millers. Raw cotton rates also declined as buying by ginners was limited. At Rajkot and Gujarat, the Sankar-6 variety was traded on Rs 58,000-58,500 a candy. About 35,000 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat and 1 lakh bales arrived in the country. Raw cotton prices declined by Rs 10-15 for 20 kg to Rs 1,325-1,350, while gin delivery raw cotton price was Rs 1,360-1,365.

Rajkot, Feb 21:

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Raw cotton prices declined by Rs 10-15 for 20 kg to Rs 1,325-1,350, while gin delivery raw cotton price was Rs 1,360-1,365. Surendranagar Kapas for April Delivery contract on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange decreased by Rs 5.60 to Rs 1,193 a 20 kg on an open interest of 4,294 lots.

According to Mr Samir, a broker, exporters are keeping away from the market as their demand has almost been met, while millers are waiting for further fall in the market.

According to Cotton Corporation of India's latest report, cotton arrivals in the major mandis increased 4.7 per cent from a year ago to 222 lakh bales (170 kg each) till February 20 from October 1.

The report said that cotton arrivals in Gujarat gained by 2.9 per cent at 71 lakh bales, while in Maharashtra, arrivals were up nearly 37 per cent at 56 lakh bales and in Andhra Pradesh, arrivals gained 13 per cent at 36 lakh bales.

Meanwhile, in Andhra Pradesh raw cotton prices ruled at Rs 6,100 a quintal, while in places such as Krishna district, they were quoted above Rs 5,700 a quintal.

According to trade sources, cotton in Andhra Pradesh was ruling firm despite higher moisture in the crop.

Hyderabad to host Indian Seed Congress

Hyderabad, Feb. 21:

The National Seed Association of India (NSAI) will hold the two-day Indian Seed Congress (ISC) - 2011 in Hyderabad beginning February 22.

The meet would “crystallise the industry's views and seek policy support from the Government to encourage investment in technology and infrastructure,” Mr G.V. Bhaskar Rao, Chairman of National Organising Committee of the conference, said here in a press release.

“It would also devise free market principles and streamline the deregulation process of new breed of crops,” he said.

The meeting, scheduled to be held at Hyderabad International Convention Centre at Madhapur, would be attended by about 700 delegates, including 50 from abroad.

The Indian seed industry, the fifth largest in the world with an estimated size of Rs 8,000 crore, is growing at 12-13 per cent annually. “The meeting will see signing of several tie-ups between Indian and international seed companies,” Mr M Harish Reddy, convener of ISC 2011, said.

FACT signs pact with agriculture university for organic manure



Business Line Vice Chancellor of the University of Mysore Prof.V.G.Talawar at the launch of a new project to convert solid waste to organic manure (file photo)

As city compost is manufactured from urban waste, the quality control is a cumbersome process which finally decides the quality of the product.

Kochi, Feb 21:

Fertilisers and Chemicals Travancore Ltd (FACT) has signed an memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) for quality analysis of the manure, FACT Organic, for two years.

The MoU was signed by Dr T.R Gopalakrishnan, Registrar and Director of Research, KAU and Mr V.K. Anil, General Manager, (Marketing).

Mr V.G. Sankaranarayanan, Chairman and Managing Director of FACT, who offered felicitations, said that cooperation between these two major institutions would foster the agricultural sector in Kerala.

Samples testing

According to the MoU, the KAU will collect samples of city compost at Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Kottayam and Kozhikode at fortnightly intervals and analyse in KAU labs for determining various parameters such as moisture content, colour, odour, particle size, bulk density, content of organic carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, potash, carbon, nitrogen ratio, pH value indicating acidity/alkalinity, conductivity, presence of pathogens (disease causing agents), presence of heavy metals such as arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, mercury, nickel, lead, and zinc. Only the successful lots will be accepted by FACT for bagging as FACT Organic.

Earlier FACT had signed MoU with the corporations/municipalities and other manufactures of city compost in the State for trading the compost in the trade name - FACT Organic.

From urban waste

As city compost is manufactured from urban waste, the quality control is a cumbersome process which finally decides the quality of the product.

The product got well acceptance in the market and the company could distribute about 4,000 tonnes up to January in the State. FACT Organic is widely used for vegetables, banana,

coconut, rubber, pepper and even by cardamom growers in Idukki. As the product is purely organic, it contains all major and minor plant nutrients along with its other properties of organic manure such as activating microbial action in soil, increasing water holding capacity, improving soil structure and texture, controlling soil reaction etc.

The product is now available in the market at a very low price of Rs 5 a kg whereas the market price of other compost and even cow dung is much higher.

FACT is not only promoting use of FACT Organic in agriculture supplemented by its own fertilisers and bio-fertilisers, but also extending service to the society in helping disposal of urban waste by recycling it as a manure.

The Agriculture Department is also supporting FACT Organic by offering subsidy for the product under various schemes being implemented through krishi bhavans for promoting integrated nutrient management and organic farming at grama panchayat level. FACT is planning to sell around 10,000 tonnes of FACT Organic in the State during next year and to extend the marketing to other States.

Pepper up on bullish reports



Business Line A file picture of pepper kept for sale.

Kochi, Feb.21:

The pepper futures market moved up on Monday on bullish reports. The market opened on an easier note and later touched the highest level of the day, slid in the afternoon, and closed above the previous day's closing. Arrivals picked up slowly but there was no selling pressure. Arrivals at the terminal market were thin. Afloat consignments were available and depending upon the quality, pepper was being traded at Rs 226-231 a kg.

Since growers had liquidated their old stocks when prices were ruling above Rs 200 a kg they are replenishing their stock now and that appears to be the reason for the slow arrivals.

Additional buying and taking delivery of the 2,500 tonnes was also seen as the reason for the price hike on Monday, market sources told *Business Line*.

March contract on NCDEX moved up by Rs 161 a quintal to close at Rs 23,696. April and May contracts went up by Rs 172 and Rs 101, respectively, to close at Rs 23,907 and Rs 24,192 a quintal.

Total turnover increased by 2,267 tonnes to close at 8,431 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 382 tonnes to close at 12,240 tonnes.

March open interest increased by 282 tonnes to 9,889 tonnes. April and May also moved up by 97 tonnes and 10 tonnes, respectively, to close at 1,849 tonnes and 296 tonnes.

Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend moved up by Rs 100 a quintal to close at Rs 22,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 23,300 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market remained slightly above other origins at \$5,500 a tonne (c&f) because of the rise in the futures market and strengthening of the rupee against the dollar.

However, bullish reports from overseas indicated a tight supply scenario, they said.

Barak Valley tea farmers seek level-playing field



Business Line Women workers coming out after the days labour of plucking at the Asia's largest Tea estate Monabari Tea estate in Sonitpur district of Assam. (file photo)

Kolkata, Feb. 21:

Mr Hemant Bangur, Senior Vice-President of Tea Association of India, (TAI) has appealed to the Assam Government and the Members of Parliament elected from the region to do the needful for an early end to the “step-motherly treatment to Barak Valley”.

Addressing the 40th annual general meeting of the Barak Valley branch of TAI at Silchar recently, Mr Bangur said, “we seek nothing more than a level-playing field to enable us to compete with other tea growing regions and we are confident that with consistent support from the Government and administration we will be able to produce better quality teas and compete in the market”.

In 2010, as he pointed out, the tea estates in Barak Valley suffered a crop loss of about six per cent and price realisation was down by another six per cent where during the same period the tea estates in Brhamaputra Valley gained more than three per cent as compared to 2009. The Barak Valley produced around 50-55 million kg of teas annually, roughly 10 per cent of the total production in Assam.

Quality teas

Although quality-wise, the Barak Valley teas were almost at par with the South Indian teas of premium grades, no attempts had ever been made to promote these teas, either for exports or for domestic market, he observed.

Mr Bangur regretted that none of the recommendations of the S.N. Menon Committee, set up by the Union Government to grant special attention to the region with specific suggestions for creating a comprehensive package for infrastructure development, had been implemented yet.

Transportation

Emphasising the need for including Barak Valley tea gardens within the ambit of Transport Subsidy Scheme under North-East Industrial and Investment Policy, he pointed out that the

poor connectivity in the valley rendered the cost of transportation very high for both inbound and dispatch of made teas, thus rendering them uncompetitive.

Mr Bangur also appealed to the Assam Government for rationalisation of various taxes and levies slapped on the State's tea industry over the past few years such as hefty hikes in pollution and consent fees and land revenue rates. "The misuse of NREGA is also contributing to large-scale absenteeism in the plantations", he added.

Mahyco denies violations during herbicide trials on non-Bt cotton



Business Line The new hybrid ELS Bt.cotton released by Mahyco Seed Ltd for commercial cultivation (file photo): S Siva Saravanan

Hyderabad, Feb. 21:

Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company (Mahyco) has submitted to the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) that it has done no wrong in conducting herbicide trials in non-Bt refuge cotton seed.

"We have received their letter and clarified our position. We indicated the chronological events and relevant permissions to use the herbicide in refuge seed," Dr Usha Barwale Zehr, Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of Mahyco, told *Business Line* here on Monday.

Business Line had reported on February 10 that GEAC objected to company's trials in Bollgard-II with Round-up Ready Flex (RRF) in refuge seeds. RRF, an add-on to the second generation

biotech cottonseed, gives the cotton plant the additional protection from herbicides. When sprayed, herbicides can only kill the unwanted weeds. The internal protection given by RRF would help the plant withstand the herbicide spray.

“When you are using RRF in the main crop, you have to have RRF protection for refugee seed too. Otherwise, it too will turn susceptible to herbicide,” she said.

Under Rules 1989

The committee, which grants permissions for biotechnology trials in the farm sector, argued that using RRF in non-Bt refuge crops amounted to using unapproved events and, thus, could not be allowed. It had decided to invoke Environmental (Protection) Act and asked the company why it should not take action against it for violations of Rules 1989.

Wanted: Indian buffaloes!



Najaf, Iraq, Feb. 21:

Well, in the course of your life and work, you come across all kinds of offers, deals and propositions. But this one really left me stunned. For, I've never been asked if I, or well, my family, would like to supply buffaloes to Iraq.

But this is exactly what an Indian businessman, who is doing roaring business with Iraqis for the last couple of years, asked me during a casual conversation in a restaurant in Najaf.

“Iraqis are trying to set up new dairies and want quality milk; they are getting their cows from the West but are very keen to get buffaloes from India, particularly Punjab. If you are interested, I can put you in touch with people who will give you details about the tender,” he says enthusiastically.

'Only curious'

I tell him that I am interested, not in supplying buffaloes, but knowing the details of the requirement as I am a journalist.

“Oh, they require buffaloes in thousands of numbers and want Indian animals because they give 10-12 litres of milk both in the morning and evening. I was offered the opportunity, but turned it down.”

His line of business is completely different, he says, adding that he was tempted to take on the order but was advised by local Iraqis, with some knowledge in livestock dealing, that this could be dicey.

“The buffaloes will have to travel by ships from India with a veterinarian first examining them for good health and then accompany them in the vessel. But I was told that even if one animal had some infection, there was the danger of the rest catching it on the journey and then the entire consignment would be rejected. So what would I do if this happened,” he asks.

I move on with a polite 'no, thank you' to bring in the buffaloes, telling him that my skills lay in delivering neither this nor any other “consignment”!

Service staff needed

But as normalcy returns, the entire country is buzzing with activity, and there are business opportunities in the supply of more manageable things than buffaloes.

Basmati rice, for one, is something that is already being procured from India.

Skilled and semi-skilled labour such as plumbers, engineers, carpenters, helpers in hotels, salesmen in stores and drivers, are required in huge numbers.

I meet Gurdeep, from Punjab, who has come to work as a waiter in one of the upmarket restaurants – Dur Nasrawi – in New Karbala.

The kebabs here are to die for; juicy, succulent and soft and the starters, complete with humus, fresh leafy vegetables, delicious fruits, chicken, liver and brain (if you have the stomach for it) are awesome. The bread is of the same quality one finds in Europe... crisp on the outside and absolutely soft within. The pomegranate juice is sweet sans sugar and refreshing. And the entire meal costs barely Rs 400! Indian money, by way, is accepted in many places in Karbala and Najaf, though not at this restaurant, where US dollars, of course, are welcome.

Anyway, returning to Gurdeep, he had to pay Rs 2 lakh to a recruiting agent in Punjab to get this job. He has been here for four months. "*Pehley tau thoda mushkil laga* (at first I found it difficult) but now I am absolutely fine. I was scared about security but this place, I find, is no Baghdad. It is very safe, and I've made lots of friends with people from Bangladesh, and there are some Indian workers here too," says the 21-year old Indian. One soon finds that the Bangladeshis find a lower category of jobs compared to Indians. But only a trickle of Indian workers has started to come to Iraq; expectedly security is the biggest inhibiting factor in this.

Cashew continues to rule steady



Business Line A street vendor selling cashew nuts in Kerala. (file photo) K K Mustafah
Kochi, Feb. 21:

Steady to firm undertone continued last week in the cashew market. India sold W240 at around \$4.30 and W320 at around \$3.75 f.o.b. while some processors were able to sell few cents higher.

Splits and pieces moved up a marginally. It is reported that some Vietnam processors sold a few cents lower than India. There is reasonable buying interest around these levels but offers are limited. The domestic market continues to be quiet, according to trade sources.

Raw cashew nut (RCN) market was quiet. However, some business was done for Tanzania at around \$1,750 and Mozambique at around \$1,475 C&F. West African RCN quotes were Benin at around \$1,600, Ivory Coast (IVC)/Ghana at around \$1450, Nigeria at around \$1,250 C&F but these can only be considered indicative until physical movements start, Mr Pankaj N. Sampat, a Mumbai based dealer, told *Business Line*.

India and Vietnam crops are reported to be late and small arrivals have started and prices are very high.

“The situation in IVC needs to be watched closely - if not settled soon, it could lead to big delay in movement of 20 per cent of the world RCN production + more competition for lower RCN availability during March-May,” he said. The delay would also mean quality deterioration and consequent reduced kernel availability even if the crop is normal in quantity. Another impact of this delay would be that the 2011 crop will be spread over a longer period reducing the pressure on available finances.

Uncertainty

Everybody in the Cashew supply chain is confused (and uncomfortable) with the current situation as the uncertainties are much larger than

normal, he said. Shellers and buyers (traders and roasters) seem to be content to sell/buy limited quantities as and when needed – neither want to take any big positions.

Mixed trend in rubber



Business Line Rubber being tapped at a plantation near Kochi (file photo)

Kottayam, Feb. 21:

Spot rubber showed a mixed mood on Monday. RSS 5 and ISNR 20 edged up amidst scattered transactions, while latex lost ground on low demand. Sentiments were partially affected by weakness in domestic and international futures but sheet rubber managed to sustain at the previous levels on supply concerns. The volume was dull.

RSS 4 ruled steady at Rs 240 a kg, according to traders. The grade finished unchanged at Rs 240.50 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

Futures weak

In futures, the March series weakened to Rs 242 (244.98), April to Rs 251.70 (255.01), May to Rs 257.35 (260.83), June to Rs 262.41 (264.51) while and July to Rs 263.06 (265.37) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

The February futures for RSS 3 declined to ₹539 (Rs 292.24) from ₹544.2 a kg during the day session and then to ₹529.8 (Rs 287.25) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) improved to Rs 292.98 (291.14) a kg at Bangkok. Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 240 (240); RSS-5: 232 (231); ungraded: 228 (228); ISNR 20: 240 (239) and latex 60 per cent: 147 (149).

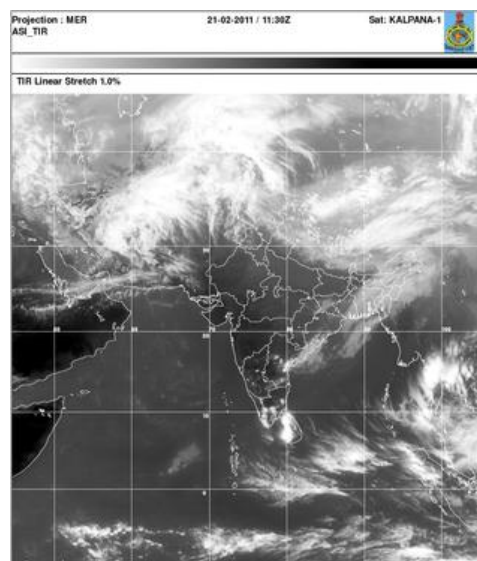
Jaggery workers strike for higher wages



Business Line Production of Jaggery (Achu Vellam) in full swing near Kumbakonam in Thanjavur District. Jaggery is extracted from the sugarcane: Photo: M.Srinath Visakhapatnam, Feb. 21:

Jaggery trade came to a halt on Sunday at the Anakapalle jaggery market, the biggest in the State, as the workers went on a strike demanding a wage hike. Wage revision is due and the workers served a strike notice fifteen days ago. Presently, the workers are being paid 90 paise for 10 kg of jaggery and they want it raised to Rs 1.20 per lump. The Anakapalle Jaggery Merchants' Association has offered Rs 1.10 per lump. The talks failed on Monday and another round is scheduled for Tuesday. According to Mr Butchiraju, a trader, the issue should be resolved quickly, or the trade as well as the farmers would suffer.

Thundershowers march into east, east-central India



Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 21:

Thundershowers have enveloped the plains of northwest and even marched into east and east-central India with localised heavy rainfall being reported from isolated places in the region during the 24 hours ending Monday afternoon.

Scattered rain or snowfall has occurred over Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh and isolated over Uttarakhand ahead of the arrival of an 'active' western disturbance from across the border.

An India Meteorological Department (IMD) update said that widespread rainfall has been reported from Orissa while it was fairly widespread over Haryana, east Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

It was scattered over Punjab, east Rajasthan, Gangetic West Bengal and Vidarbha.

The fresh 'active' western disturbance would affect western Himalayan region from Tuesday onwards and the plains of northwest India mainly from Wednesday to Saturday.

A weather warning issued by the IMD said that isolated thunder squalls or hailstorms may occur over Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand and north Andhra Pradesh until Tuesday evening.

The weather will shift gradually to south India, with an outlook valid until Saturday saying that scattered rain or thundershowers would occur over Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Rayalaseema and south Karnataka.

But fairly widespread precipitation would break out fresh over northwest India with isolated thunder squalls or hailstorms over the plains of the region during this period, a condition normally associated with the arrival of a western disturbance.