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<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/04/28/stories/2011042850261400.htm>

Conserving Kadaknath poultry breed

An Indian poultry breed, called Kadaknath is native to Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh.

The breed is famous for its black meat known for its quality, texture and flavour. This poultry reared mainly by some tribal communities in Madhya Pradesh.

Scientists from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Jhabua, observed that the population of this bird is declining rapidly and is under threat of extinction and genetic erosion.

Project

An attempt was therefore made for conservation and promotion of this high value Indian poultry race under National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP) called "Integrated farming system for sustainable rural lively in undulating and rainfed areas in Jhabua and Dhar districts of Madhya Pradesh".

Major factors

During interaction with farmers it was observed that high market demand, existence of backyard poultry system of its rearing, slow growth on natural feeding (186 days sexual maturity) and more than 50 per cent mortality before maturity are major factors which affect the survival, growth and productivity of this breed. Accordingly, the intervention made in the NAIP project to construct low cost poultry shed, give training on advanced technologies of poultry production, optimum feed and balance diet, vaccination for protection from diseases and explore the marketing avenues.

Beneficiaries

Ten tribal farmers were selected and one hundred ten day old chicks were made available to each beneficiary.

The farmers were advocated on technologies for scientific poultry production, balance feeding, handling of feeder and drinkers, health management and marketing. This new technology reduced the mortality rate from 50 per cent to 10-12 per cent. The bird attains saleable weight of 1.10 kg in 105-120 days and the growers are selling poultry at Rs 300 to 350/kg. In this way, an individual beneficiary is getting a good income. For more information contact the Directorate of Research Services, Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Gwalior, email: drsrvskvv@rediffmail.com

Date:28/04/2011 **URL:**

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/04/28/stories/2011042850251400.htm>

FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

Helping small jackfruit farmers boost yield and income

M.J. PRABU

Consumers book orders through phone for buying the fruits

Photo: M.J. Prabu



Heritage tag: Narasimhaiah pointing to his 300 years old jack tree.

The farm of Mr. K. Narasimhaiah in Doddaballapur taluk in Hubli is easy to locate. Almost every person in the region seems to know him.

The reason: a 300-year-old jackfruit tree that stands majestically in the midst of several mango trees in the field.

“The last Maharajah of Mysore Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, and former Diwan of the royal palace, M. Visvesvaraya relished the fruits of this tree and loved their taste. In fact Mr. Visvesvaraya used to take some fruits back home whenever he visited my place,” says the farmer proudly pointing to the tree.

Taste

The taste of the fruit is so famous in the State that it brings people from far during the harvest season. Mr. Narasimhaiah is a happy farmer, for the tree bears nearly 300 fruits annually, which he sells for Rs 20,000- Rs.30,000.

“This is not an isolated or freak case. Many farmers in the region are selling their fruits for a premium price today as they are considered the best in terms of taste, colour, and appearance.

“Today people book orders through phone for reserving the fruits,” says Dr. K. Narayana Gowda, Vice Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

Several jackfruit growers are able to get some money from their trees through a project called DBT-Rural Bio-resource complex project started by the University.

“Realising the potential of the fruit and the need to exploit it beneficially, the University staff advised Mr. Narasimhaiah to maintain the tree properly and also raise seedlings from the mother tree for the project.

Seedlings

Accordingly the farmer raised the seedlings and supplied it to the project at Rs.15 per plant. The officials handed over the seedlings free of cost to several small and marginal farmers in the area,” explains Mr. K.N. Srinivasappa, program coordinator, KVK, Bangalore rural district, UAS.

“One advantage in planting the tree is that after some initial caring the tree does not require much further attention, and most importantly, does not need labour. Especially today, when rural India faces acute labour shortage, jackfruit farmers are quite happy as the tree generates some income at a very minimal cost,” he says.

The University, in a bid to encourage many people to take up this particular variety of jackfruit cultivation, started selling the seedlings at the annual Krishi melas, specially arranged jackfruit exhibitions, and other functions.

Account details

“If you see the accounts for the last 3 years one can see that during 2007- 08, about 8,900 seedlings worth Rs.1,33,500 were sold. In 2009-10, about 7,056 seedlings worth Rs.1,05,840 were raised and sold. Farmers who used to sell the fruit for Rs.15 to Rs.60 earlier, now get a better price of Rs.50- Rs.500 per fruit depending on the size,” says Dr. Gowda.

A State level jackfruit mela was organized at Lalbagh. On an average, a farmer earned Rs.10,600 in five days. Nine farmers sold the fruits for Rs.2,751 in two days at another function held in the University campus for three days, he adds. The project brought benefits to about 75 villages and more than 4,000 farmers in the region.

Demand

“The demand for the region's jackfruits and seedlings is increasing every year due to the platform, awareness and importance created under the project. Today farmers are selling their fruits at Horticultural Produce Co-operative Marketing Society (HOPCOMS), Bangalore from Rs.5 to Rs. 8 per kg. A private ice cream manufacturing company has also procured 2,000 kg of jackfruit at the rate of Rs.12 per kg,” explains Dr. Gowda.

“Even though this fruit is totally organic in nature, more than 50 per cent of the produce goes as waste nationwide every year due to lack of awareness among consumers.

“A number of value added products can be prepared from the jackfruit tree. The leaves are excellent fodder for animals, fallen leaves act as natural soil mulch and manure, and its wood is

useful in the manufacture of musical instruments, while its latex is useful in ayurvedic preparations,” says Dr. Gowda.

For more details contact Mr. K. Narasimhaiah, Kachahalli village, Tubagere hobli, Doddaballapur taluk, Bangalore rural district, mobile: 09916961666 and Mr. K.N. Srinivasappa at 09845774509.

Date:28/04/2011 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/04/28/stories/2011042850081300.htm>

Using duck eggs to track climate change



A study of a metrics database on 60,000 duck eggs representing at least 40 species and subspecies of ducks in North America could add knowledge about how waterfowl respond to climate cycles and long-term climate change.

Date:28/04/2011 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/04/28/stories/2011042850211400.htm>

Farm Query

Transplanting in watermelon

Is there any other method apart from the traditional method of sowing watermelon seeds directly into the fields?

Soumithra Chaterjee

Assam

Mr. Monoj Kumar Pradhan, Bhejimal, G.P Bandhapathar, Block Harabhanga, Boudh district, Orissa, raised seedling of watermelon in poly bag in the backyard and transplanted them in the pit in the main field (with earth ball intact) after 15 days of sowing. "It is easy to take care of young seedling in the backyard than in the main field, which is labour and time saving. Besides weed population is also reduced owing to faster growth of plant in the later stages," says the farmer . For more details contact Mr. Monoj Kumar at mobile : 09937110582.

Date:28/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/28/stories/2011042854700500.htm>

18 lakh mulberry saplings ready for distribution

K. Raju

Farmers are capitalising on early showers in Theni district

— file photo.



CONDUCTIVE CLIMATE:A view of silk worms and mulberry leaves.

THENI: Even as summer shower brings hope and signals threat simultaneously to different sections of farmers in the district, some farmers have started capitalising on the early showers effectively.

Sericulturists having mulberry plantations are one such group.

Normally, farmers go for mulberry plants, main feed to silk worms, during the first week of June after the commencement of the southwest monsoon.

They leave the field barren during May.

But, they have started preparing the field to sow saplings one month in advance expecting continuous rain the following month also.

Sericulture officials have already expedited their work to meet the demands of mulberry growers.

Now, government sericulture farms are busy raising mulberry saplings.

The officials hope that the enthusiasm shown by farmers will ultimately increase the area under cultivation by at least 50 per cent of the existing area.

At present, the area under cultivation in the district is around 1,600 acres, mostly at villages in and around Theni union.

The Department of Sericulture has kept 18 lakh saplings ready for distribution to farmers.

Talking to The Hindu, Assistant Director of Sericulture P.D. Mohan said that early commencement of agriculture activities will help increase the production also.

“We expect that farmers will start planting mulberry saplings during the first week of May. Anticipating the huge demand, we have been expanding our activities ranging from raising the saplings to procuring other inputs.

Motivation

Motivating farmers to expand the area and increase the production is also on. Effective motivation will rope in more farmers in sericulture.”

Cocoons

The district had produced 1.05 lakh kg of cocoons last year. It registered 30 per cent growth last year compared to the previous year.

“We anticipate at least 50,000 kg of cocoon this season in addition to the existing production of one lakh kg. Farmers are encouraged to produce white cocoon that are in great demand throughout the country,” he added.

Despite a massive production and abundant enthusiasm, farmers have been facing difficulty in marketing their products.

They have to transport the entire production either to Salem or to Coimbatore districts to sell them in the wholesale cocoon market.

With no marketing base in southern districts, farmers have to shell out a sizable amount for freight charges alone.

Setting up of marketing network or establishing a weekly market or procurement centre for cocoon will not only save money and time but also increase their profit margin, appealed farmers.

Date:28/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/28/stories/2011042862760600.htm>

Area sown under cotton, paddy fall short of target in Tirupur

R Vimal Kumar

Tirupur: There was a shortfall in the area coverage of crops like cotton, paddy, gingelly and groundnut, among few more crops, in the district during the just concluded 2010-11 fiscal.

However, a glance through the statistics brought out by the Department of Agriculture could provide cheers for farmers opting for crops like sugarcane, maize and pulses as the area under these crops had exceeded the targets for the last fiscal.

Paddy

The overall area sown under paddy was just 9,560 ha against the target of 15,500 ha. In 2009-10, paddy was raised over 11,500 ha in the district.

The figures for paddy cultivated using the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) also could cause some discomfort to experts and agriculture department officials as it too fell from the mark of the previous financial year. Only 4,825 ha had been brought under SRI methodology vis-à-vis the target of 6,300 ha. During the 2009-10, the SRI technique was adopted in 4,900 ha.

The late arrival of monsoon and the subsequent delay in the release of water from the new ayacut of Amaravathy dam, were the main reasons for the reduction in area coverage of paddy, Joint Director of Agriculture S. Muthusamy told The Hindu.

Cotton

In the case of cotton, the area sown was a mere 392 ha, including the 61 ha sown under Bt cotton, against the overall target of 1,000 ha.

The shortfall was attributed to the heavy shortage experienced in the availability of workforce as cotton cultivation remained a labour-intensive exercise.

Groundnut cultivation also did not take off along the expected lines as only 7,428 ha could be brought under the crop vis-à-vis the target of 20,267 ha.

Similar was the case with gingelly, with the achievement standing at 2,425 ha against the target of 9,025 ha, and crops like millet.

Positive moves

Constitution of special task force last financial year to boost the sagging pulses cultivation had yielded the desired results.

The statistics showed that pulses were raised over 25,262 ha in 2010-11 surpassing the targets of 25,036 ha for the fiscal as well as the achievement of 18,110 ha in 2009-10.

Of the 25,262 ha, horse gram was cultivated on 5,648 ha, green gram on 3,949 ha, black gram on 3,309 ha and the remaining area was used up for other pulses like cowpea and Bengal gram.

The area under sugarcane was 8,234 ha and that of maize 22,469 ha, both exceeding the targets comfortably.

Date:28/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/28/stories/2011042850650300.htm>

Establish paddy procurement centre at Kaveripattinam: farmers

Staff Reporter



Making an appeal:Members of the Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam staging a demonstration at Kaveripattinam in Krishnagiri on Wednesday.

KRISHNAGIRI: Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam has demanded immediate establishment of a government-controlled paddy procurement centre at Agriculture Marketing Cooperative Society at Kaveripattinam.

Over 1,000 members of the Sangam raised slogans supporting their demand. Presiding over the demonstration, K.M. Ramagoundar, State general secretary, Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, said the paddy was being cultivated as second crop in over 50,000 acres in the district, thus producing over 15 lakh bags.

The farmers in the district were being exploited by the private buyers at Rs. 5 per kg on credit.

Delta districts

Whereas the paddy was being procured by the government at the Delta district between Rs. 10.50 and Rs. 11 per kg. The poor farmers are losing over Rs. 6 per kg, as the paddy crops were affected by Pugaiyan attack.

It may be noted that Collector Arun Roy had informed at the monthly farmers' grievances day meeting last year that the district administration recommended the government to establish a paddy procurement centre at Kaveripattinam and Pochampalli.

Date:28/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/28/stories/2011042854260500.htm>

Coconut farmers fear drop in yield

Karthik Madhavan

COIMBATORE: Coconut farmers in the district have a news that is not as sweet as the coconut water they have up the trees.

Vazhukkuparai Balu, head of a wing of the Tamil Nadu Farmers' Association, says the drop in yield will be as much as 40 per cent. Farmers The Hindu spoke to in the district only confirm this.

C. Muthu Manickam, secretary, Uzhavar Mandram, explains that the fall in yield is due to the inadequate water supply to the farms, which again is because of the erratic power supply.

This is the season the 'kurumbai' is formed and this has an impact on the bearing for the next eight months. If the 'kurumbai' formation is impacted because of poor water supply, there will be

poor yield during December, which is the off season, says M. Murugesan, a farmer in Poochanari in Pollachi.

Mr. Balu says the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation's three-phase supply for agriculture pumps is so erratic that the farmers are unable to water the farms.

“The farmers get three hours power in the morning and a like period in the night. But even that is not continuous and with which the pump cannot be run. The water that the motor at my farm pumps with such a supply is adequate for only four of the 30 acres.”

Mr. Muthu Manickam says the power situation at his farm is no different either. “April-May is when coconut needs water. But the farmers are unable to pump water because of the erratic supply,” he laments. For Mr. Murugesan the situation is even worse because he has intercropped banana and cocoa with coconut.

He says that the situation in the past weeks has been so bad that in the next few months there will be no fresh coconut left on the tree. And whatever survives will be of poor quality. The district has coconut trees spread over three lakh acres.

Date:28/04/2011 **URL:** <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/28/stories/2011042850970500.htm>

Delta farmers hopeful of raising kuruvai this year

G.Srinivasan

THANJAVUR: Farmers of Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts are hopeful of raising Kuruvai this year. Comfortable water position at Mettur dam and copious summer showers in the delta region have brought cheers to the farmers and kindled their hopes of raising Kuruvai.

Short term crops of paddy are raised in Kuruvai. The duration is 90 days to 105 days.

It is enough if the water level stood at 90 ft with a storage of 60 tmc ft for opening the dam for Kuruvai cultivation. But at present the storage in the dam is 79 tmc ft and water level is standing at 110.8 ft on Tuesday. “This storage is enough to open the dam on June 12 for Kuruvai cultivation. So this year we are hopeful of raising Kuruvai,” farmers said.

Last year, farmers had to skip Kuruvai as the dam was opened on July 28.

Date:28/04/2011 **URL:** <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/28/stories/2011042857180200.htm>

Watermelon price plunges

Special Correspondent

THANJAVUR: Summer showers in the State have had an effect on the prices of thirst quenching fruits. As the rains have prolonged for nearly three days, the heaps of water melons that have stagnated in the market has led to distress sale. Loads of water melons at throwaway prices, flood the market at the new bus stand, Mary's corner, Ramanathan hospital junction, Medical college road.

A fruit which was sold for Rs.15 is now being sold from Rs.5 to Rs.10. Vendors are in a hurry to sell the fruits as they may perish soon. With a long summer till June, vendors and ice cream shop owners are hopeful of making a good business in the coming days.

Date:28/04/2011 **URL:** <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/28/stories/2011042850470200.htm>

Monthly workshop for farmers launched

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) here in association with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) will host a series of workshops titled 'Farmers monthly interface programme' till March next year.

N. Gopalan, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, inaugurated the programme at the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) here on Tuesday.

The launch of a television serial, 'Krishiyidam,' a joint project of the KVK and the local TV channel, 'Kasaragod Vision,' was also held along with the inaugural function. The serial,

depicting the farming practices adopted by farmers, will be telecast by Kasaragod Vision at 5.30 p.m. on Sundays.

The programme aims at attracting more people to the farm sector.

Aspiring farmers could contact the KVK here on the phone 04994-232993.

CPCRI Director George V. Thomas presided over the function. K. Muralidharan, Head, Social Sciences Division, CPCRI; C. Thamban, Senior Scientist, Agricultural Extension, CPCRI; and R. Sanalkumar, Subject Matter Specialist, KVK, attended the function.

The inaugural function was followed by a workshop on 'Improved dairy management practices.' Divakaran Nambiar, a dairy farmer from Parappa, led the session.

He explained the installation process of an innovative drinking water system in the cattle sheds.

Babitha, veterinary surgeon, Kasaargod, conducted class on 'Advanced technologies in dairy farming.'

Mr. Gopalan and Ajithkumar Menon, Lead District Manager, Syndicate Bank, handled sessions on 'Promotional programmes of NABARD' and 'Agricultural credit facilities' respectively.

Date:28/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/28/stories/2011042861920400.htm>

Quicker shift to organic farming possible: Minister

Photo: S. Mahinsha



Topic of concern: Participants at a seminar on 'Endosulfan: issue and safe alternatives to

**chemical pesticides' organised by the Department of Agriculture in Thiruvananthapuram on
Wednesday. —**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Agriculture Minister Mullakkara Ratnakaran said on Wednesday that Kerala could meet its target of a total switch-over to organic farming sooner than expected.

The Minister was inaugurating a seminar on “Endosulfan: Issues and Safe Alternatives to Chemical Pesticides” organised by the Farm Information Bureau here.

Target set

Mr. Ratnakaran said that Kerala had drawn up an organic farming policy and had set a ten-year target for the change. It would be possible to speed up the process. In places such as Onattukara, farmers had returned to traditional farming practices without using pesticides.

He said that the State would be able to save large sums in health costs if it reduced the use of pesticides. Keralites, who made up only 3.25 per cent of India's population, were now consuming 20 per cent of the medicines marketed in the country.

Refuting the Central government's contention that there was hardly any alternative to Endosulfan, the Minister asked whether agriculture had been affected in Kerala because of the ban on that pesticide. Kerala had been demanding that States should be given powers to regulate pesticide use since agriculture was a State subject.

Referring to the Centre's stand that a national ban on Endosulfan could be imposed only if other States too demanded it, Mr. Ratnakaran asked if India had signed international agreements on agriculture sector after taking the consent of all States. “Did it curtail the Public Distribution System because the States had demanded that?” he said.

The seminar saw presentations on various alternatives to pesticides and ways to achieve food safety.

Date:28/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/28/stories/2011042859660500.htm>

Four tonnes of artificially ripened mangoes seized

Staff Reporter

More such raids to continue: Corporation Health Officer



Unfit for consumption: Officials checking artificially ripened mangoes in Tuticorin on Wednesday.

Tuticorin: Four tonnes of mangoes, reportedly ripened artificially with calcium carbide stones, were seized here on Wednesday. A team of officials led by Health Officer of Tuticorin Corporation, A.D. Bosco Raja, Food Inspectors Ramakrishnan, John Peter and Chandramohan conducted surprise checks at various places.

The team found the mangoes in a fruit stall near the VOC Market not suitable for consumption. Dr. Raja said that such artificially ripened fruits were dangerous to health and would certainly lead to stomach disorders. Similar raids would be conducted, Dr. Raja added.

According to Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954, the seized fruits were destroyed.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Thursday, Apr 28

Max Min

34.5° | 26°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 84%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:50

Sunset: 18:23

Barometer: 1005.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Friday, Apr 29

Max Min

34° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Apr 30



36° | 25°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday

May 1



35° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

Monday

May 2



35° | 26°

Cloudy

Tuesday

May 3



36° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday

May 4



37° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

28 Apr, 2011, 06.37AM IST, S Sanandakumar,ET Bureau

Farm produce prices soar on high demand

KOCHI: There has been an across-the-board increase in the prices of farm commodities from south India. This includes items of daily consumption such as coffee, poultry, eggs and coconut oil, industrial raw materials like rubber, spices such as pepper, cardamom and chillies, snack food like cashew nuts and premium food items like shrimp. Apart from upsetting the family budget, the soaring prices have led to a change in buying pattern .

Coffee prices have jumped from Rs 65 per kg in April 2010 to Rs 100 per kg in April 2011. Coconut oil price went up from Rs 49 per litre to Rs 95 per litre during the period. Poultry prices have increased from Rs 75 per kg to Rs 100 per kg. The average price of an egg rose from Rs 2.17 to Rs 2.23. Supply constraints pushed the price of rubber up from Rs 168.50 per kg in April 2010 to Rs 239.50 in April 2011. Pepper prices rose from Rs 159 per kg to Rs 276 per kg on similar concerns.

Cashew nut saw a sharp increase from Rs 265 per kg to Rs 450 per kg. Chilli prices rose from Rs 55 per kg to Rs 90 while shrimp price shot up from Rs 350 per kg to Rs 380 per kg. Speaking to ET, Dr KK George, chairman of the Centre for Socio-Economic & Environmental Studies (CSES), said domestic prices depend on international market dynamics in commodities such as rubber and pepper. "This is especially true when the domestic production is only a small percentage of the international production," he said. Dr Satheesh Babu, professor, Agriculture Market Intelligence Centre, Kerala Agriculture University (KAU), explained that the price rise was also the result of a widening demand-supply gap. Demand has been consistently increasing due to the burgeoning population and higher per capita income. "On the other hand, supply has been severely affected by climatic variations during the last two years," he said.

Although price spurt in commodities such as spices and coconut oil was expected, the rise quite sharp, said experts. "Such an increase was not predicted. The industry was not prepared to handle it. Given the current situation of demand and supply mismatch, prices are not likely to come down in the immediate future," said Geemon Korah, chairman of All India Spices Exporters Forum.

According to him, spice production has not kept pace with demand for the last several decades. He said there needed to be a concerted effort from all the producing countries to raise productivity , quantity and quality of spices. But the price rise seems to have benefitted farmers. Satheesh Babu said,, "farmers have benefited from the higher prices of agricultural commodities" . He pointed out that the profit share varies from one commodity to another depending on the nature of the marketing intermediary net-work .

A steep climb in prices could ultimately lead to consumer resis-tance . He said this has happened in the case of cardamom in overseas markets. Consumer resistance could also lead to a change in buying pattern as consumer opt for lower grade products, said George. For example, coconut oil prices zoomed to a new peak last year and retail prices went past Rs 100 per kg for the first time. This led to a preference for cheaper cooking oils in Kerala where coconut oil is the principal cooking oil. The prices of coconuts used for oil extraction have also shot up.

27 Apr, 2011, 03.25PM IST,Reuters

Chana flat; guar extends to nearly 2-month high

MUMBAI: India's chana futures were trading almost flat in afternoon trades as lower level demand offset arrival pressures, analysts said.

At 3:23 p.m., the most-active chana for May delivery on the National Commodity and

Derivatives Exchange of India was trading flat at 2,311 rupees per 100 kg.

"Chana is seeing arrival pressure and going forward it may witness some selling pressure also," said Sudha R. Acharya, analyst with Kotak Commodities Services.

Production of chana, or chickpea, is likely to fall to 7.37 million tonnes from 7.48 million tonnes a year ago, the farm ministry said.

In the Delhi spot market, chana price fell 16 rupees to 2,228 rupees.

GUAR: India guar futures extended gains to hit the highest level in nearly two months, as traders held back stocks anticipating higher prices going ahead, analysts said.

The most-active guar for May delivery on the NCDEX was trading 0.75 percent higher 3,071 rupees per 100 kg, after hitting a high of 3,092 rupees, a level last seen on March 1.

"No one is ready to sell as traders are expecting higher prices of 3,150 rupees. Even deliveries on the NCDEX are low," said Chowda Reddy, senior analyst with JRG Wealth Management.

Last year's good export demand has cut the stocks available with traders, thus squeezing supply, analysts said.

Buying could be done at 3,040 for a target of 3,150 rupees, said Reddy.

In Jodhpur spot market, guar seed price rose 9.75 rupees to 2,974.45 rupees per 100 kg.

The government estimates 2010/11 guar seed output in Rajasthan, the country's top producer, at 1.49 million tonnes, much higher than 0.20 million tonnes last year.

India has forecast normal rains in 2011 monsoon, strengthening the prospects of a plentiful farm output that could help bring relief to Asia's third-largest economy in its battle with high prices.

27 Apr, 2011, 12.52PM IST,PTI

Cardamom futures up on fall in supply

NEW DELHI: Cardamom prices rose further by Rs 8.70 to Rs 1,038.50 per kg in futures trade today on fall in supplies against increased buying by traders in tandem with rise in spot demand. Restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the uptrend. At the Multi Commodity Exchange , cardamom for delivery in May rose by Rs 8.70, or 0.84 per cent to Rs 1,038.50 per kg, with a business volume of 55 lots. The spice for delivery in June traded higher by Rs 7.80, or 0.73 per cent to Rs 1,062 per kg, with a trading volume of 12 lots. Likewise, cardamom prices for delivery in July surged by Rs 6.20, or 0.59 per cent to Rs 1,059 per kg, with an open interest of four lots. Traders said rising spot markets demand amid slow down in arrivals from producing regions, mainly pushed up cardamom prices at futures market.



NVDA gets nod for irrigation project

April 28, 2011 10:35:36 AM

The Planning Commission has accorded clearance for a major irrigation project in Mandla district. The project is proposed on Halon river, a tributary to Narmada. The project would create 13,040 hectare irrigation potential in Bichia, Ghughari and Mohgaon block of Mandla district.

The project would prove a boon to this tribal dominated district which has only 7 per cent irrigation. The Halon irrigation project is one of the 29 major irrigation projects to be constructed in the valley by Narmada Valley Development Authority. The project would include 100 metre long and 31 metre high concrete masonry dam on Halon river along with earthen dam. There

would be 81.50 km long main left bank canal with distribution network. The project is aimed to complete within 3 years at the estimated cost `414.21 crore.

Vice-chairman NVDA OP Rawat said that NVDA has got Planning Commission's clearance for two major irrigation projects in the valley within record period of one year. This could happen because we have commissioned a study and research to overcome hurdles in the process which has been causing abnormal delay in getting clearances from various Ministries and institutions. He said that we have deployed IIM scholars to make a thorough study on various aspects of irrigation projects to compress the time span so to provide irrigation facilities to the farmers as early as possible.

Business Standard

Thursday, Apr 28, 2011

Cotton acreage may rise 7-10% in coming season

Anindita Dey / Mumbai April 28, 2011, 0:38 IST

The acreage under cotton crop next season, starting August 2011, is expected to increase 7-10 per cent, following high prices and expectations of higher minimum support price (MSP) from the government. Official sources said acreage may go up from 11.1 million hectares at present (this season) to a high of 12 million hectares. "In fact, acreage under cotton reached a record level in 2009-10 following good prices," said officials.



They explained the increased acreage is happening at the cost of other crops like paddy in the north, soybean, maize and groundnut in the west and tobacco and chilli in the south. "Land is limited and thus farmers are opting for cotton going by high prices both globally and in the domestic market," official sources said.

Meanwhile, the production estimates are likely to hover around 31.2 million bales. In April 2011, the Cotton Advisory Board had revised the crop estimates downwards for the current crop season (2010-11) to 31.2 million, as against the earlier estimate of 32.9 million bales.

At the same time, the cotton acreage was reviewed upwards for the current season from 10.3 million hectares to 11.16 million hectares.

The output estimate was revised downwards due to unseasonal rain in December 2010, followed by extreme cold wave in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Khandesh in Maharashtra and Adilabad and in the Warangal region of Andhra Pradesh.

The Committee for Agricultural Cost and Prices has also recommended a higher MSP for cotton, which was around Rs 2,500 a quintal for the last two years as against a recommendation of Rs 2,800 a quintal for the current season.

The market is witnessing low buying by mill users, whereas farmers are seen stocking on seeds fearing price rise as the season approaches. "Mill users are awaiting fresh arrivals and have been using existing inventory to avoid high prices at this point of time," officials added.

During last month, domestic prices for the popular S-6 variety had been in the range of Rs 55,000-55,500 a candy as against Rs 58,000- 61,000 a candy in previous weeks.

Owing to the fact that the cotton season is almost at its fag end and until low seed cotton arrivals in various upcountry markets, the quality in current arrivals has been going down, officials said. Thus, deterioration in quality in present arrivals and low demand from mills due to lower off-take of cotton yarn has put pressure on the prices, sources said.

Officials also added that according to records till April 2011, world cotton acreage during 2010-11 is estimated to increase by 11 per cent to 33.37 million hectares as against 29.98 million hectares during 2009-10.

The world average yield in 2010-11 is projected up by one per cent to 733 kg per hectare as against 726 kg per hectare in 2009-10.

World cotton production during 2010-11 is expected to rebound by around 14 per cent to 24.46 million tonnes as against 21.85 million tonnes in 2009-10.

Coffee output may fall 10-15% on untimely rain

Debasis Mohapatra / Bangalore April 28, 2011, 0:19 IST

Coffee production in India is likely to drop by 10-15 per cent in 2011-12 crop year to around 260,000-278,000 tonnes due to scanty rainfall during blossom period of the crop in major growing regions of the country.

According to planters in Karnataka and Kerala region, which are the major coffee growing states of the country, robusta production is expected to dip by 10-15 per cent and arabica may fall by 10 per cent in the next crop year.



India, which is estimated to produce 308,000 tonnes of coffee in 2010-11 season, is likely to produce around 170,000 tonnes of robusta and around 97,500 tonnes of arabica during 2011-12 season.

“A combination of untimely and insufficient rain has resulted in an arabica blossom below its potential. This is expected to drag production for the 2011-12 crop year by around 10-15 per cent in comparison to 2010-11 season,” Sahadev Balakrishna, president of Karnataka Planters’ Association (KPA) said.

Though Coffee Board will come up with its post-blossom estimates for 2011-12 crop year in the next two weeks, data gathered from planters show that there will be a reduction in output, he added.

Coffee in India is produced from a standing crop, which is perennial in nature. Coffee blossoms during February-March period and is harvested during November-January, depending on the variety in the coffee growing regions of the country. Blossom is one of the key growth phase of the crop, which determines the annual output. Usually, this is keenly watched by all stake holders as it has significant impact on pricing environment in the future.

“Production of robusta will fall as 2011-12 is an off year in the biennial production cycle of the crop. Also, less rainfall during February-March will adversely impact both arabica and robusta in the country,” Ramesh Rajah, president of Coffee Exporters’ Association of India said. Adding, he said the coffee production would witness a deficit globally.

According to industry experts, both Brazil and Columbia are likely to see a bad crop during 2011-12 season, dragging the production estimate globally. “While 2011-12 will be an off year for Brazil’s coffee crop, production in Columbia is expected to be low due to replanting of coffee plants,” Rajah said.

Arabica output, especially, arabica parchment will remain in short supply due to supply deficit from these countries, he added. However, robusta output may see a normal year in 2011-12 season as crops in Indonesia and Vietnam are expected to be sound.

“Vietnam, which is the world’s largest producer of robusta, is expected to have a normal crop this season. Further, Indonesian crop will be normal during this period,” Balakrishna of KPA said.

According to International Coffee Organisation (ICO), the global coffee output is pegged at 132 million bags (one bag is 60 kg) for 2010-11 season. However, some of the industry watchers have a different opinion about the overall crop estimate.

“There are conflicting reports coming from ground regarding post-blossom estimate. We will rather wait for Coffee Board estimates than jumping into any conclusion,” A N Devraj, a Hyderabad-based trader said.

Pulses import likely to dip 14% on high output

Sadananda Mohapatra / Bhubaneswar April 28, 2011, 0:16 IST

India's pulses imports in the crop year 2010-11 (July-June) are likely to fall 14.28 per cent to 3 million tonnes compared to 3.5 million tonnes shipped in the year-ago period.

Higher production in the country will lead to low imports, traders and importers said.



In its third advanced crop estimate earlier this month, the ministry of agriculture said pulses production in 2010-11 could be 17.3 million tonnes, the highest ever. It pegged tur production at 3.2 million tonnes, urad at 1.8 million tonnes and moong at 1.4 million tonnes.

Trade sources and experts put India's annual pulses demand at 19 million tonnes, out of which nearly 3-4 million tonnes is imported. The country is the biggest importer and consumer of pulses.

"Even if we take the government estimates into considerations, we need to import around 2 million tonnes. But I think by the end of June, we will have to import 3 million tonnes of pulses," said Neeraj Dhawan of New Delhi-based Mega Grain Trading Company, an importer.

"Yellow peas import will be nearly half of the total imports as it is the cheapest among pulses. As other pulses' rates were higher a few months ago, traders preferred this variety to market in the country," said a Mumbai-based analyst.

India imports yellow peas mainly from Canada, Ukraine and the US. Yellow peas demand grew in 2009-10 when consumers started using it as a cheaper substitute to tur dal, which was then priced at Rs 70 a kg.

Even though tur dal rates have nearly halved in past couple of months because of arrival pressure and better production, yellow split peas are still quoting cheaper, at about Rs 15-18 a kg across the country.

State-run trading firms, such as MMTC Ltd has said its pulses import in 2010-11 will be higher.

“We will be importing about 600,000-700,000 tonnes pulses this year (2010-11), up from 300,000-400,000 tonnes imports in the previous year, mainly because of better margins in yellow peas,” said H S Mann, chief managing director of MMTC Ltd.

The trading firms account for about one-fifth of India’s pulses imports while the private do the rest of the shipping.

Many traders opined that the government firm may not import higher in 2011-12 as the government has done away with 15 per cent subsidy provided to them for pulses imports.

Agri reforms panel wants push to contract farming

Komal Amit Gera / Chandigarh April 28, 2011, 0:13 IST

Also asks for changes in APMC law to incorporate private players.

The panel appointed by the Union agriculture ministry to suggest reforms in marketing of farm produce will suggest that states governments reduce the security deposit for the contract farming.



It will also ask for changes in the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) law to incorporate private players in providing infrastructure in this regard.

The committee, chaired by Maharashtra's minister for marketing and cooperation, Harshvardhan Patil, would be soon presenting its first set of recommendations.

It is learnt the committee has suggested all states slash the 'default security', an amount equivalent to a certain percentage of the purchase value that is distributed among farmers in case the buyer refuses to purchase the produce as contracted.

According to sources, Haryana is likely to do this, by reducing the requisite security from 15 per cent of the estimated purchase value to five per cent.

The state allowed contract farming in 2008. Since then, only United Breweries has ventured, engaging about 5,500 acres for barley cultivation."

The corporates refrained due to unsuitable tax structure and high default fee," said an official in the Haryana Mandi Board.

Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Punjab also allow contract farming.

Sources told Business Standard 18 amendments have been suggested in the APMC Act. So far, 16 states have accepted the Model APMC Act framed by the central government and it was under consideration in seven states.

The committee is also exploring the feasibility of involving private companies for post-harvest infrastructure for perishables, specially cold chains and logistics, on a public-private-partnership model.

The committee wishes farmers to have a choice on where to sell their produce, instead of being forced to do so at a single place.

THE HINDU Business Line

Unsold teas to be offered again at Coonoor sale



Arunangsu Roy Chowdhury Kolkata: A daily wage labourer handling tea leaves at a collection center near Mirik in Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The best quality of tea is being produced in Darjeeling. Compared to last year, a better trend in production has been witnessed in Darjeeling and Dooars here. Photo: Arunangsu Roy Chowdhury, April 22, 2011.

Coonoor, April 27:

Amidst widespread concerns of substantial volumes remaining unsold in the recent weeks, as much as 4.59 lakh kg of teas that had remained unsold in previous auctions is being offered for resale at Sale No.17 of the Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions to be conducted on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of the listing by brokers.

This is the highest volume of unsold teas getting re-catalogued so far this year. In the past three weeks, 39-48 per cent of the offer had remained unsold.

Together with the fresh teas accounting for 9.55 lakh kg, the total offer this week is 14.14 lakh kg – some 40,000 kg more than last week's offer but as much as 2.57 lakh kg lower than the offer this time last year.

Of the 14.14 lakh kg on offer, 10.11 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 4.03 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 13.37 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.77 lakh kg, orthodox variety. The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.48 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 9.63 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.29 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 3.74 lakh kg, CTC.

Worried producers have conducted meetings among themselves as also with brokers and Tea Board officials to increase sale percentage, which is being pulled down due to lack of promotion.

Substantial volumes are being withdrawn despite shedding prices week after week, producers have told Tea Board.

Chilli farmers protest frequent fire mishaps in cold storages



THE HINDU Fire engulfing a cold storage at Ankireddipalem in Guntur district in the early hours of Wednesday.--T.Vijaya Kumar

Guntur, April 27:

A fire broke out in a private cold storage unit near here in the early hours of Wednesday, destroying 50,000 bags of chilli.

The fire broke out at 3.30 a.m. in Sri Sai Surya cold storage unit and an electrical short-circuit is suspected to be the cause. According to Mr A. Sarath, the in-charge collector of Guntur district,

significant amount of chilli may have been lost in the incident. He said it was a preliminary estimate and an inquiry was being conducted into the accident.

Farmers blocked traffic on the National Highway-5 near the cold storage unit, demanding compensation of Rs 10,000 a quintal. They said accidents were happening far too frequently in the cold storage units and private companies were not taking proper safety measures.

A week ago, a fire broke out in another cold storage unit in the same area. They wanted the authorities to conduct a thorough probe into the accident and exert pressure on the owner of the cold storage unit to pay compensation to them.

The police used force to disperse the agitating farmers and clear traffic on the National Highway. The district collector said it was for the cold storage management to compensate the farmers. A safety audit would be conducted for all the cold storage units in the area to prevent recurrence of such incidents, he added.

Chilli prices are soaring in the Guntur market this season, with the crop fetching Rs 9,000-10,000 a quintal. The better varieties are stored in numerous cold storage units in the vicinity of the chilli market yard, the biggest in the country.

Basmati exporter files two patents on parboiling technology

Method reduces husk splitting; pares broken range to 4-8%

New Delhi, April 27:

Grain traders are rarely known for shop-floor innovations or even possessing detailed knowledge of production processes. So when one see a basmati rice exporter filing two patents relating to parboiling process in paddy, it is probably worth taking note of.

Mr Vijay Setia, Director of Chaman Lal Setia Exports Ltd – a Rs 200-crore Karnal-based firm owning the 'Maharani' and 'Begum' basmati brands – claims to have invented “a system and method for parboiling paddy” that prevents the husk from splitting, enabling millers to reduce the percentage of broken rice.

Parboiling involves soaking the paddy (rough rice) in hot water and steaming it to gelatinise or swell the starch, making the kernel tougher. The steamed paddy, containing up to 40 per cent moisture, is dried by passing hot air. Once dried, the par-boiled rice is regularly milled, i.e. de-husked to produce brown rice and further polished to remove the bran.

According to Mr Setia, in typical parboiling, the soaking takes place in a tank, where the hot water supplied through an inlet agitates the paddy and causes the husk to split. The split husk tends to open further during steaming and subsequent drying, with the opened grains drying at a faster rate. Uneven drying and high number of split husk paddy, in turn, yields more broken rice on milling.

“If you mill 100 kg of parboiled paddy, it would yield some 65 kg of rice, of which the broken proportion would be 7 to 18 per cent depending on the variety. What I have devised is an improved parboiling technique that reduces husk splitting and brings down the brokens range to 4-8 per cent,” said Mr Setia, who has filed a patent (No. 3029/DEL/2010) for the purported invention.

The second patent (No. 1874/DEL/2010) concerns a process of paddy soaking in parboiling that saves fresh water consumption up to 80 per cent. Soaking a tonne of paddy requires 1.2 to 1.3 tonnes of water. At the same time, only 20-30 per cent of this water is consumed, with the remaining being drained into an effluent treatment plant for re-use as fresh water. “My process allows reuse of the excess paddy soak wastewater as such, without it requiring further treatment in subsequent batches of parboiling,” claimed Mr Sethia. Having filed the patents, “my next step would be to work with parboiling machinery manufacturers to incorporate these inventions”, he added.

While stating that the inventions were his own, Mr Sethia, however, acknowledged his interactions with leading scientists and grain processing technologists, including Dr P. Pillaiyar of the Processing Research Centre, Thanjavur and Dr B.S. Modi of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute's Regional Station at Karnal.

Spot rubber turns weak on global cues

Kottayam, April 27:

Domestic rubber prices turned weak on Wednesday. On the spot, the market lost ground in tune with declines on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE). The sentiments were also affected partially by the weakness in international futures. Traders preferred to wait and watch till the prices stabilise after the ongoing corrective phase. Transactions continued to be low indicating short supplies.

Sheet rubber moved down to Rs 237.50 (240) a kg, according to traders. The grade closed at Rs 238.50 (239.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board.

In futures, the May series weakened to Rs 236.79 (242.68), June to Rs 240.80 (247.04), July to Rs 241.37 (247.98), August to Rs 234.65 (239.55) and September to Rs 230.75 (232.53) a kg for RSS 4 on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) surrendered to Rs 250.95 (254.38) a kg at Bangkok. The May futures declined to ₹430 (Rs 232.42) from ₹435.5 a kg during the day session but then to ₹429.7 (Rs 232.20) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 237.50 (240); RSS-5: 234 (236); ungraded: 230 (232); ISNR 20: 231.50 (233) and latex 60 per cent: 146 (147).

Mangalore emerges as a major importer of Tanzanian cashew

Quality, lesser transit time boost demand for Tanzanian cashew

Mangalore, April 27:

Mangalore has emerged as a major market for Tanzania in terms of raw cashew exports. Of Tanzania's exportable quantities of raw cashew, over 50 per cent are exported to Mangalore alone.

This was revealed by Mr Mohamedi Hanga, Director of Marketing, Cashewnut Board of Tanzania (CBT), who is a part of a delegation to study the cashew industry in Mangalore.

He told *Business Line* here that around 50,000 tonnes of raw cashew were exported to Mangalore in the last season.

Imports were made by processing units in Mangalore.

Mr Omega Mnali, General Manager of Masasi Mtwara Cooperative Union, Tanzania, said that overall about 80,000 tonnes of cashew were exported from Tanzania last season. “We are here to further boost the bilateral relationship between the two with respect to cashew trade,” Mr Hanga said.

Mr Narahari Prabhu, an importer of Tanzanian cashew and who has a processing unit near Mangalore, attributed the reasons for growth in import to factors such as quality of cashew and direct calling of mainline container vessels to Mangalore.

Mr Prabhu said that Tanzanian seeds have good colour and size. This fact helps the processing industry in Mangalore.

Terming quality of Tanzanian cashew as good, Mr K. Prakash Rao, former President of Karnataka Cashew Manufacturers' Association, said that Tanzanian cashew quality is similar that of India, and it is being accepted in the domestic market.

Stating that raw cashew in Tanzania is marketed through CBT, he said the board ensures that all the cargo are well dried. “That being the reason, the quality of the kernels is excellent in terms of Mangalore requirement. That is the reason why Mangalore preferred to buy a lot of seeds from Tanzania,” he said.

Mr Rao said that cashew season in Tanzania starts in August and ends in December. The shipment to export destinations such as Mangalore continues till February-March.

Mr Prabhu said that there will not be cashews of any other origin during that period, and the domestic procurement of cashew begins mostly in May.

He said that the direct calling of mainline container vessels from Tanzania to Mangalore has helped bring down the transit time to seven days. The lesser transit time helps the processors to bring down their risks in the market to that extent.

Stating that the import of the commodity through other means will take almost a month, he said there will be a lot of fluctuation in the market by that time.

India tea festival in Abu Dhabi

Kolkata, April 27:

Indian Tea Association (ITA) is organising India Tea Festival in Abu Dhabi. This is third year in succession the festival is being held in the UAE, the venue of earlier two festivals being Dubai.

The festival, to be held between April 29 and May 1, will have participants from India as well as several tea-buying nations. There will be 33 participants from India representing tea producers, exporters and auctioneers, and another 34 from countries such as Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Russia and UAE, all major buyers of Indian tea.

The highlights of the three-day festival will include, among other things, buyers-sellers meet and elaborate tea tasting sessions. The probable impact of recent developments in some of the West Asian countries on India's tea exports to these countries too is likely to come up for a review, it is learnt.

Kerala plans to observe hartal over endosulfan

Friday's hartal to demand total ban on its production, use

Thiruvananthapuram, April 27:

Close on the heels of a seven-hour fast observed by the Chief Minister Mr V. S. Achuthanandan, the ruling CPM-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the State has declared a dawn-to-dusk hartal on Friday, in support of its demand for a total ban on production and use of pesticide endosulfan.

Just as the 'fast' coincided with the beginning of the conference of parties to the Stockholm Convention at Geneva, the hartal would mark the close of the session, a spokesman for the State Committee of the LDF said here on Tuesday. While seeking cooperation of the larger public for the smooth and successful conduct of the hartal, the LDF State Committee has said that utility services such as hospitals, newspaper vends and milk supplies would be spared.

Taking a cue from the Chief Minister, the LDF spokesman took cudgels at the Centre's 'negative' attitude towards the State's demand for a ban on endosulfan.

It was unfortunate that it continued to refuse to join nations across the world for a global ban on the pesticide known for its harmful impact on public health, as evidenced in Kasaragod district cashew plantations that underwent aerial spraying of the same.

'POSTURING DENIED'

Several studies had pointed to the link between endosulfan and the genetic deformities arising from its widespread use.

What the least the Centre should have done was to not oppose a global ban on endosulfan at the Geneva conference.

The spokesman made mincemeat of the Opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front's (UDF) criticism that the LDF and the Chief Minister were merely posturing after having done precious little to ban the use of the pesticide.

He said an organised campaign against endosulfan had begun in 2000 and the next LDF Government that signed into office had banned its use in the State.

Amul plants 2.35 cr saplings in 4 years

Anand (Gujarat) April 27:

The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) that heralded a White Revolution by marketing milk and milk products under Amul brand across India, has virtually 'diversified' into ushering in a Green Revolution now, planting 2.35 crore saplings across the State in the last four years.

The 17 milk unions, affiliated with GCMMF, had launched a mass tree plantation programme in 2007 that involved nearly 30 lakh members taking up the campaign voluntarily across Gujarat on an annual basis. This has resulted in the plantation of 2.35 lakh saplings so far, according to a GCMMF official.

GCMMF's initiative was recognised both nationally and globally as the Federation has been decorated with the Srishti's G-Cube Award for 2010, with G3 denoting good, green governance. GCMMF has won it for the fourth consecutive year in the "Service Category". Besides, this "Amul Green" movement has also won an award from the International Dairy Federation for the best environment initiative in the "sustainability category".

The campaign was initiated and executed by the milk producing farmer members of the various dairy cooperatives in nearly 15,000 villages of the western state, with each member taking oath to plant saplings and ensuring their growth into trees, according to a release here.

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