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TNAU scientists visit Krishna Delta Zone

As many as 17 agricultural scientists of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University visited Krishna Delta Zone in Andhra Pradesh as part of an exposure visit.

According to a release, Dhanuka Agritech Limited organised the visit of the scientists under the public-private partnership initiative. TNAU representatives from the university, affiliated directorates, research stations, and Krishi Vigyan Kendras, visited the rice fallow black gram area.

Interaction

They also interacted with black gram farmers about the regular cultivation practices, varieties used, seed rate, crop improvement methods, and crop protection.

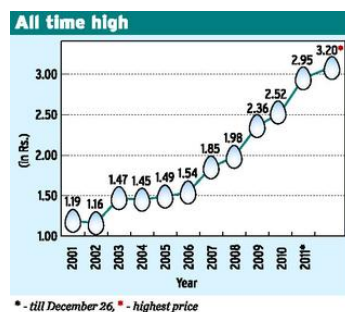
Research farms

The team visited the research farms of Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, and Agricultural Research Station, Ghantasala, and Regional Agricultural Research Station, Guntur.

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Egg rate touches Rs. 3.20

M.K. Ananth



The average wholesale egg rate that has been steadily soaring since the first week of December increased by five paise more on Monday, December 26, surpassing its previous highest rate of Rs. 3.15, as it stood at Rs. 3.20.

Decision for the same was taken at the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) Namakkal zonal meeting here on Monday.

Steady increase

Poultry farmers said that the price hike was expected as it did not go as less as the lowest price of Rs. 2.05 during the same month in 2010. "This year the lowest price was just Rs. 2.79 on December 4, but since then its price has been steadily increasing to Rs. 2.84, 2.87, 2.94, 2.97, Rs. 3.13 and Rs. 3.15," a farmer added.

It is learnt that the reason behind the escalating price is the continuous increase in the demand for egg in the Northern States due to extremely chill temperature.

"This is the first time Rs. 3 has reached the hands of poultry farmers," an NECC source said and added that this was because 20 paise of the rate fixed by the NECC was deducted as handling and transportation charges.

"With the production cost of egg standing at Rs. 2.5 including feed rates, labour and management cost, it has been a long time since farmers reaped a profit of 50 paise an egg," he added.

Farmers are optimistic that the price might increase further as this time the existing rate (Rs. 3.20) was more than the highest rate of Rs. 2.86 during the end of December 2010, which was the record highest price till then.

"This year too, the wholesale price of egg increased further in January and we expect a similar hike in the days to come," a farmer of Pudanchandhai said.

Other NECC zones across the country where the price of egg is more than the price of egg in Namakkal are: Kolkata (3.65), Lucknow (3.63), Kanpur (3.57), Varanasi (3.52), Delhi (3.50), Pune (3.41), Indore (3.40), Miraj and Mumbai (3.39), Barwala (3.36), Bhopal and Raipur (3.35), Allahabad (3.33), Jabalpur (3.30), Vizag (3.25), Nagpur (3.23) and Chennai (3.22).

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Auctioning of agriculture products

Special Correspondent

The auctioning of agricultural products at renovated regulated market will be held at 10.30 a.m. on December 30.

In a statement here on Tuesday, the District Collector Darez Ahmed stated that the Chief Minister recently ordered the renovation of the regulated market functioning at the North Madavi road in Perambalur town. Steps have been taken for the marketing of the products of the farmers at reasonable rate without collecting any commission at the regulated market. Efforts have been initiated for participation of traders of other districts too in the auctioning, he said.

The Collector called upon the farmers to market their cotton and cholam through the regulated market.

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Scientific, sustainable farming: shrimp growers net prize catch

G.Srinivasan

MPEDA has 37 hatcheries in State, supplies high quality seeds to the farmers

basket-full:High harvest of shrimp recorded at a farm at Thambikottai Vadakadu village near Pattukottai on Tuesday.— Photo: B.Velankanni Raj

Thanks to the efforts put in by the Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA) to promote scientific and sustainable shrimp farming, farmers in the district are achieving a good yield. M.K.Sethuraman of Thambikottai Vadakadu village near Pattukottai, is one such farmer who has netted an yield of 5.5 tonnes an hectare against the normal yield of 3.5 to 4 tonnes. Each individual shrimp in his farm weighs 58 grams against the usual 30 to 32 grams.

"Best management practices, eco-friendly, sustainable, and scientific aquaculture techniques employed by farmers has made this achievement possible," said Mr.Kandan, assistant director, MPEDA, who was present during the harvesting of shrimps on Tuesday.

In his eighteen years experience in shrimp farming, Sethuraman, has seen individual shrimps hit 58 grams in weight only this year. This achievement, he reckons, will be a motivating factor for all the shrimp farmers in the area, whom he wants to enrol into a cluster group. There are 60 shrimp farms in the area.

The Bamini River Aqua Farmers Association has 156 farmers under its fold and M.Kalyanasundaram is the president of the association, Sethuraman said. " The association provides us the platform to exchange our experiences in shrimp farming and helps us take steps to prevent incidence of diseases and manage disease attacks," he adds.

"Good pond preparation, efficient water management, right selection of seed, use of aerators and probiotics (beneficial bacteria) are the reasons behind the spectacular yield," Sethuraman lists out. "While the cost of production of one kg of shrimp is Rs.220, it can be sold for Rs.600. Profit is Rs.380 per kilo," he adds.

MPEDA promotes aquaculture through technical and financial assistance, Mr.Kandan said. The main aim of MPEDA is to boost shrimp exports. As the quantum of shrimp caught from the sea is coming down sharply due to overfishing, thrust is now on inland and backwater shrimp farming. Among the shrimp species cultivated in India, *Penaeus monodon* is the most popular.

MPEDA has 37 hatcheries in Tamil Nadu and is supplying high quality shrimp seeds to farmers. Shrimps are subjected to tests in Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) laboratories to ensure that they are disease free and are of high quality. There are 27 such laboratories in the State.

"Antibiotic and banned chemicals test is done in each and every stage under the National Residual Control Programme," Mr.Kandan said. "MPEDA chairman Ms.Leena Nair has said that the productivity of Indian marine products should be doubled by 2015. We are moving towards achieving that goal," he adds.

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Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 100.86 feet on Tuesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 2,450 cusecs and the discharge 10,002 cusecs.

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After the boom comes the crash in prices of white arecanut

Raviprasad Kamila

This is a temporary phenomenon and natural market trend: CAMPCO president

After a relentless increase in the last six months, the prices of white arecanut (also called chali) have crashed in the Dakshina Kannada buyers' market. Arecanut is the major agriculture commodity of the district. Market observers are citing a variety of reasons for the crash.

Ramesh Kaintaje, a member of the committee which revised the production cost of arecanut for the Government last year, told *The Hindu* that the prices have crashed by about Rs. 50 a kg.

He said that the prices began to soar from March 20. The price reached an all-time high in September. The downward trend which began from October has not recovered. Mr. Kaintaje, a grower and close observer of the market, said that prices of "hale adike" (old stocks) increased from Rs. 90 a kg to Rs. 202 a kg from mid-March to September.

The prices of "hosa adike" (new arrivals) increased from Rs. 70 a kg to Rs. 188 a kg during the same period. He said that old stocks now fetched from Rs. 140 a kg to Rs. 153 a kg and new arrivals between Rs. 90 a kg and Rs. 115 a kg.

Mr. Kaintaje said that the decrease from October to first week of November was minimal. But prices started crashing from November 7 onwards.

'Not real'

Konkodi Padmanabha, president, Central Areca nut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative Ltd. (CAMPCO), told *The Hindu* that the boom in price (above Rs. 200 a kg) for the produce in September was a "speculative" and was not "real and maintainable".

He said that farmers need not be apprehensive with the present trend. "This is a temporary phenomenon and is a natural market trend when new arrivals enter the market.

CAMPCO continues to purchase arecanut at reasonable rates and is making all efforts to stabilise the market," he wrote in a note to farmers on the CAMPCO website.

The president wrote that the CAMPCO had learnt that there were minimum stocks of white arecanut in the market.

Manchi Srinivasa Achar, president, All India Areca Growers' Association, Puttur, and Editor of *Adike Pathrike* (a farm journal) told *The Hindu* that arecanut from Bheemasamudra area (Chitradurga district) and Shimoga district have begun arriving in the market even before the entry of "hosa adike" from Dakshina Kannada. It was one of the reasons for the fall in prices.

Mr. Achar said that the boom in price in September had its base in speculation.

A CAMPCO official said that since North India, especially Gujarat, is the main consumer market for white arecanut, cold weather condition in northern parts generally had its impact on arecanut market every year. Business activities suffered because of the cold weather. It was natural, he said.

G.V. Joshi, who headed the committee which revised the production cost of arecanut for the Government, said that he felt that farmers who had held back the produce were now letting them to market.

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- *'The prices of arecanut have crashed by about Rs. 50 a kg'*
 - *'Old stocks fetch Rs. 140 a kg to Rs. 153 a kg and new arrivals Rs. 90 a kg and Rs. 115 a kg'*
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Call to increase lending to farm sector

Special Correspondent

District Collector, P.I. Sheikh Pareed, has called for improvement in credit flow to agriculture sector in view of the food security programme being launched by the government. He was addressing the district-level review and consultative committee meeting under the lead bank scheme held here on Tuesday.

'Deviating from rules'

Referring to education loans, he said some banks were deviating from the rules and had been delaying the sanction of the loans. A bank adalat will be conducted on January 21 for settlement of cases pertaining to default of loans of small value. He also sought the support of banks in

achieving the target set for creating employment for 1 lakh people by starting small industries, under a new scheme being launched by the State government.

Ajith Patil, secretary, Kochi Corporation, said that urban housing and slum upgradation schemes should be promoted by the banks. These schemes are for the betterment of the poor and banks need to take a little more risk, if required, for uplifting the downtrodden, he said. The Corporation is planning to have a Street Vendor Development scheme in tune with a national programme to provide hygienic food outlets in the city. He said the corporation would conduct a loan mela for speedy disposal of loans under the scheme.

Lead district manager K.R. Jayaprakash said the district recorded an increase in deposit by Rs.685 crore during the quarter, June to September, 2011, to attain a total deposit of Rs.38,463 crore. The share of priority sector lending as on September 30, 2011, was 34.76 per cent. Lending to agriculture sector registered a decrease of Rs.1,019.52 crore while that of the SSI sector showed a decline of Rs.145.53crore. A total amount of Rs.51.67 crore pertaining to 2,064 beneficiaries were distributed as educational loan during the quarter.

Mayank Mehta, deputy general manager, Union Bank of India; K.D. Joseph, AGM, Reserve Bank of India; Venu S. Menon, AGM, NABARD, and other officials were present.

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Coconut on a comeback trail in the State

R. Ramabhadran Pillai

Rejuvenation packages and a slew of other measures

Coconut is on a comeback trail after having gone through a perilous journey in recent years. A slew of measures being adopted by the Coconut Development Board are expected to revive the sagging fortunes of the crop.

A rejuvenation package announced by the board envisages removal of old and senile palms and replanting the farms with high-yielding varieties. The board is offering aid for the replanting operations in selected districts and is planning to extend the scheme to more areas.

Over the years, the tough conditions in the agriculture sector, in general, and the coconut farming segment, in particular, had turned away many of the farmers from the crop.

Today, the primary task of the board is to restore the confidence of the farmer in the crop. Board chairman T.K. Jose is confident that it can be done with coordinated efforts of the government, farm agencies, and the people.

He said novel schemes had been devised to help solve the problems at the grassroots level.

Behind in processing

“Though India occupies a comfortable position in production and productivity of coconut, when compared to other major coconut producing countries, we lag far behind in processing and exports. In a small country like Sri Lanka where production and productivity are less than that of Tamil Nadu, the export of value-added products is many fold higher than that of India, except in the case of activated carbon. India has to go a long way in strengthening the processing sector,” Mr. Jose said.

One of the serious issues faced by the farmers in Kerala is the scarcity of climbers who can harvest the crop from the top of the tall palms. It is a job conventionally done by skilled men who belonged to a particular community. The crunch is the fallout of the reluctance of the younger generation of the community to continue the age-old occupation.

Novel scheme

The board has come up with a novel scheme to attract youth in the art of palm-climbing. A project titled 'Friends of Coconut Trees' has been launched by the board, which envisages training with a stipend and guaranteed income.

Safe contrivances, innovatively designed by experts, are used for the operation. The scheme has received good response, with even women having had enrolled for the challenging task. The board has listed the names and mobile phone numbers of the trained candidates on its website so that their services could be made readily available.

Tender coconut water, which had been a favourite drink of people of all ages, is also on a return journey to the marketplace. Packaged tender coconut water is in high demand in several western countries.

The natural drink is considered an ideal energy booster which has been administered by experts for sportspersons. The board is encouraging entrepreneurs to sell the product in packaged form.

Quite a few firms have already made a mark in selling the product.

The board has launched a new project to sell the natural drink at specially designed, attractive kiosks across the country. About 5,000 outlets are to be opened at the national level, with focus on tourism circuits. “We have to encourage and motivate farmers to make use of the knowledge technology and the latest research for improving the status of the crop and to enter into processing and value addition to capture the opportunities of the domestic and global markets,” said the board chairman.

Past experience

In fact, raising coconut saplings in the farm or in the courtyard had been a rewarding experience in Kerala a few decades ago when the farm-based economy had a substantial share from the tall palms that dotted every nook and corner of Kerala.

The crop started losing its sheen after Keralites started migrating in large numbers to the oil-rich Middle East countries. A growing middle class endowed with strong purchasing power, coupled with a weakened labour base had begun to gnaw the roots of coconut farming in the Eighties and Nineties. The arrival of rubber around the same period as the saviour of the farmer resulted in further decline in farms where coconut had occupied a premier position.

Pest attacks that defied effective solution, added to the farmers' misery, leaving them high and dry. The fresh initiatives in the sector are expected to take the coconut sector to the good old days of glory in the farming and business sectors.

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- *Package helps to remove old palms*
 - *To attract youth to the job of palm-climbing*
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Dry weather, smog not good for wheat crop, say experts

A dry spell along with smoggy conditions during the ongoing winter season can impact wheat yield adversely in key growing areas of Punjab and Haryana, say wheat experts.

“We have not experienced rain so far and the duration of sunshine is also less because of smoggy conditions (containing dust particles), although we have low temperatures. Dry spell

and smoggy weather affect the photosynthesis activity, which results into drop in yield,” Punjab Agricultural University Director of Research S. S. Gosal told PTI on Tuesday.

“We need to have rains which will prove to be beneficial for wheat at this stage,” he said, adding, “based on past experience, the northern region has rains during the end of December every year, which is missing this year.” However, experts ruled out that big dip in mercury could cause any frost injury to wheat at this stage. “If the mercury records minus 2 to 3 degree Celsius consistently along with dry spell, then there could be chances of frost injury to wheat. But at present, there is no need to worry,” said Wheat Research Directorate Project Director Indu Sharma. She said five years ago a frost injury hit the wheat crop in Punjab under severe cold conditions which caused heavy damage to crop. “Affected wheat growers used the damaged wheat as fodder for cattle,” she added. However, wheat experts pointed out that intense cold conditions are quite favourable for the crop. “Cold conditions are beneficial for wheat because it helps in development of tillering, which boosts crop yield,” Dr. Sharma said. Temperatures in Punjab and Haryana have been hovering 5 to 6 degrees below normal while some areas they have recorded sub-zero temperatures. Because of favourable weather conditions, Punjab recorded the highest ever wheat output of 164.72 lakh tonnes with a yield of 46.93 quintals per hectare in 2010-11. Moreover, the cold wave also restrains the attack of insect or pests on the crop because of extremely low temperature, experts point out.

The experts have also not found any incidence of yellow rust on the crop, though they maintain that strict monitoring is under way to prevent an attack of yellow rust. The area under wheat is expected to exceed the target of 35 lakh hectares in Punjab and 25 lakh hectares in Haryana, even as both States are eyeing a crop output of 273.75 lakh tonnes in the rabi season (2011-12), 3 per cent lower than last season.

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Bihar to implement new road map for agriculture from next year

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday said his government would soon give its nod in principle to the new agriculture road map to be implemented from 2012 for attaining the objective of a rainbow revolution and introduction of agriculture as subject at high school level.

The road map for agriculture would lay thrust on better marketing, promotion of storage, cooperative, dairy, farming, fishery and horticulture, Mr. Kumar said addressing a seminar on rabi crop here.

The State Government has estimated an expenditure of more than Rs.90,000 crore to implement its five-year agriculture road map comprising loan, storage and marketing from April 2012, which would be extended by another five years.

“Under the road map, we will be introducing agriculture as a subject from the high school level,” he said expounding on the road map under which several Detailed Project Reports would be formulated for expansion of food processing units in Bihar, revitalising the cooperative systems, PACs and enhance the storage capacity and thrust on boosting the production of food grains.

The major share of the estimated amount would be spent on distribution of loans to farmers, storage and marketing. The State Government has decided to increase the storage capacity from 9 lakh metric tonnes to 65 lakh tonnes during the next five years and 85 mt in the next 10 years and would also meet the expenses and interests of the storages and fertilisers during off-season.

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Paddy to be purchased at support prices

Staff Correspondent

The Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation will purchase paddy from farmers in Udupi district at support prices announced by the Government.

The District Task Force meeting chaired by the In-charge Deputy Commissioner S.A. Prabhakar Sharma here on Tuesday decided that the paddy would be purchased from the farmers at the APMC yards in Udupi, Karkala, and Kundapur from January 5.

Prices

The Centre had decided to provide support prices of Rs. 1,080 a quintal for ordinary paddy and Rs. 1,110 a quintal for 'A' grade paddy.

In addition, the State Government had decided to give an incentive of Rs. 250 a quintal of paddy grown.

This meant that farmers would get Rs. 1,330 a quintal of ordinary paddy and Rs. 1,360 a quintal of 'A' grade paddy.

The Support Price Scheme would be available only till March 31, 2012.

Conditions

However, the purchase of paddy was subject to certain conditions. The paddy would be purchased from only those farmers certified by the Revenue Department. A maximum of 100 quintals of paddy would be purchased from farmers only once at the above mentioned rates.

The farmers should produce RTC records during the purchase. Those not having RTCs should produce a certificate from Village Accountants. If the paddy did not meet quality specifications, it would be rejected. Paddy would be purchased directly from farmers.

If anyone tried to sell paddy in the name of farmers, criminal proceedings would be initiated against them. The farmers should bring paddy in sealed bags of 50 kg each. An amount of Rs. 10 would be given for every bag. Cheques would be given within a week to farmers for the paddy purchased.

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Tenders to be called for overbridge

Special Correspondent

: Tenders will be called for construction of an overbridge at Santhapillai gate in the town at a cost of Rs.42 crore in the month of April, according to Savithiri Gopal, Chairperson of Thanjavur Municipality.

The Chief Minister Jayalithaa while campaigning at Thanjavur during the assembly elections promised the construction of the bridge to ensure free flow of traffic.

At the maiden meeting of the newly elected municipal council, a resolution was adopted for the construction , Mrs. Gopal said while addressing the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Thanjavur, on Sunday.

Explaining the various other steps taken by the Thanjavur Municipality for augmenting the drinking water supply to the town, she said that a new pumping station for drinking water other

than the existing ones at Vennar and Kollidam at Thirumanur would be established to meet the needs of Thanjavur town.

Rajagori cremation spot will be renovated and beautified. It is one of the sprawling cremation spots with places reserved for various castes. An approach road to the cremation spot will be improved.

Earlier speaking on the occasion, PLA. Chdiambaram, president of the chamber, appealed to the Chief Minister to locate the special tourism park proposed by the state government in a site between Thanjavur and Tiruchi. It will help in linking these two towns and also their economic development. He also appealed to the Thanjavur Municipality to make operational the defunct electric crematorium by converting it into a biogas crematorium. S. Viswanathan, Editor, Industrial Economist, delivered the silver jubilee address. A. Alagappan, former Rotary district governor, C. Anandhan, secretary of the chamber, Padmanabhan, vice-president of the chamber, participated in the function.

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By Nivedita K G

28 Dec 2011 12:00:00 AM IST

Time to feast on Avarekai



BANGALORE: Come winter and a hot cup of tea or coffee is always welcome. A South Indian side dish that adds flavour to winter is fried flat beans, locally known as avarekai. And the city welcomes the harvest of the bean with the Avarekai Mela to be held on December 30.

Organised by Sri Vasavi Condiments, on the lines of the Kadelekai Parishe, the mela will see

farmers from Magadi taluk put up stalls at Sajjan Rao Circle, V V Puram. The fair will be on for 11 days.

Explaining the significance of the avarekai mela, organiser of the fair, Geeta Shiv Kumar said, “This is a seasonal crop and is available only in the winter season. It is rich in nutrients and proteins. Many carry dry flat beans overseas to feel the taste of home food. Students have also filmed documentaries on this mela.”

Though this bean by itself is a variety of avarekai, the name avarekai in Karnataka conjures up images of flat beans cooked in different forms and flavours. Cashew, garlic, mint are popular ingredients added to the boiled and fried forms of the beans.

“Dosa-Hithkabele Saru, Hithkabele Holige, Avarebele Chikki, Hithkabele Masala, Pepper Hithkabele are some among the many special products available during this fair. Sweet dishes made out of avarekai are also available,” she added. The highlight dishes however were dosas and vadas made with the flat beans.

Last year, the fair registered a footfall of over 15,000 people and the organisers said that the public response was increasing with every year.

Public place in the vicinity of the circle will be used for the exhibition.”The vendors, mostly farmers, use the footpaths. Legal permission has been taken to use the space. Everyone supports the venture including the shopkeepers as it for public good,” said another organiser. Member of Sri Annapoorneshwari Hidukida Avarebele Kendra, K V Venugopala Guptha, has participated in this fair for the past decade. Speaking about his experience, he said, “Such fairs encourage farmers to grow more crops every year. When there are large number of farmers growing the same crop in this season, the stock rates falls. Fairs like these help provide a platform for the farmers to balance their investment on the crop and the income.”

Mayor Sharadamma, Police Commissioner Jyoti Prakash Mirji and Actress Tara will inaugurate the event at 10 am on Friday.

Dip in tomato prices lands farmers in the soup

Last Updated : 27 Dec 2011 12:18:18 PM IST

PALAKKAD: The price of tomato has hit rock bottom at Rs 3.50 a kilo, much to the misery of farmers, who now have to sell two kilos of the vegetable to get a tea from a restaurant in the town.

“Though prices fluctuated daily, a 15-kilo box was sold for anything between Rs 40 and Rs 60 last week. Deliveries from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh is the main reason for the low price. It is said that there has been a bumper crop this season in the two states. This is in stark contrast to the price of Rs 300 to Rs 500 a box during the same time last season,” said Mukesh, who is a wholesale dealer of vegetables in Velanthavalam market. He said Naachipalayam market in Coimbatore and Kinnatikadavu market in Pollachi were selling tomato at Rs 3 a kilo. The farmers in Vadakarapathy, Ozhalapathy, Kuppanda Gounder and Velanthavalam on the Kerala side, and Vazhakal, Pitchanoor, Veerapanoor and KG Chavadi on the Tamil Nadu side depend on the Kerala market to sell their produce. Tomato is cultivated on hundreds of acres of land in the eastern parts of the district like Kozhinjampara, Meenakshipuram, Kozhipara, Elippara and Attayampathy.

For a farmer to break even, he has to sell tomato at Rs 100 per 15-kilo box. The wages for a worker range from Rs 150 to Rs 300. A packet of tomato seed cost Rs 250, and it takes seven packets for an acre.

A tractor load of cow dung costs Rs 1,500. And it requires a minimum of two rounds of chemical fertilisers and pesticides,” says Arumughan, a farmer from Ozhalapathy. “To get a box of tomatoes to Velantavalam market from Kuppandakounder, it costs Rs 7 per box,” says Ananda Kumar, chairman of the standing committee of the Vadakarapathy panchayat, who is both a tomato and plantain farmer in Attayampathy. The panchayat gives subsidy for vegetable cultivation but it is not enough, he said. “We are ready to intervene in the market to ensure a fair price for the farmer. But we are helpless if there is huge arrival from the neighbouring states,” says Arun Kumar, district manager of the Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council of Kerala.

However, the fact is that there are no storage facilities under the Agriculture Department, and farmers are at the mercy of market forces for the price.

Many play it safe on Mullaperiyar issue

Last Updated : 27 Dec 2011 12:14:40 PM IST

KOCHI: However right or wrong the posturing by the powers-that-be of Kerala and Tamil Nadu may be, the stand-off over the Mullaperiyar dam is creating ripples even on the sporting field. The RSC-MBTT-AITA Talent Series national ranking tennis tournament that began at the Regional Sports Centre here on Monday has seen a drop of around 40 entries this year in the wake of the dam row, the organisers told Express.

“The Mullaperiyar issue has affected the tournament this year,” chief referee Shankar K told Express. “Normally, we have more than 100 players participating here. This time also we received a similar number of entries but only around 60 players have actually arrived to play.” He said that fears regarding the safety of their children in the aftermath of reported attacks on people from either state forced the parents to withdraw their names from the annual event. The tournament for under-18 and under-14 players usually witnesses TN players accounting for more than half the participants.

“We have received numerous phone calls from apprehensive parents enquiring of the situation in Kerala, especially at the border. We managed to convince a few that it was safe to travel. Even now, around 30 players have come from TN,” said Shankar.

The apprehension is such that Dr Suresh Kumar R of Coimbatore even borrowed a neighbour’s car with a Kerala registration number to bring his son to Kochi.

“I had to give into pressure from my family to take my friend’s car which had a Kerala registration number,” Suresh said.

“But I did not face any trouble on my way. Now I am absolutely confident that nothing bad is going to happen. If my son wins tomorrow, I am planning to go back and return with my own car.”

Meanwhile, other parents who made the trip are convinced that all quarters concerned are flaring up the ground reality.

“In Chennai, the tennis tournaments in RSC are very popular. All want to come here because the atmosphere is so good. But this year, at least ten parents that I know of have decided not to come here because of the Mullaperiyar issue. Everyone has to handle an issue like that with maturity,” said S Manoharan from Chennai.

Another parent, Arumukham P from Nagercoil, had this to say: “It is sad that politicians of both states are only helping to spread apprehension rather than allay the fears of the people on an issue which cannot be solved in a short period.”

28 DEC, 2011, 07.08AM IST, MADHVI SALLY,ET BUREAU

Cold conditions may aid wheat, oilseeds & pulse

AHMEDABAD: Cold weather conditions across northern and central India are expected to be beneficial for wheat, gram and mustard crops. However, ground frost conditions in many parts of the country could harm potato and other horticulture crops. The meteorological department has forecasted that cold wave conditions would prevail over parts of Punjab, Haryana, north Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and some parts of Bihar and Jharkhand.

The wheat crop is in the tillering stage and the present weather would help in its growth period.

"If the cold weather condition carries on till January 15 and beyond with no ground frost conditions, we can easily touch a production of 86 million tonne," said Dr Indu Sharma, head, Directorate of Wheat Research in Karnal. Usually, severe frost-like conditions occur in the first few days of January. Sharma said that over 80% of wheat sowing (265.5 lakh hectare) has been completed across India till date. Low temperature in the past week has helped mustard and other oilseed crops. "The temperature is conducive for the crop which is in flowering stage. However, we expect the oil content to be less owing to delayed winter and rains across Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh," said Rajesh Bheda, chairman, Indian Oilseeds & Produce Export Promotion Council. The area under oilseeds was at 77.91 lakh hectare till December 23 against 83.11 lakh hectare in the corresponding period of 2010. Similarly, low temperature is beneficial for pulses, particularly the gram which is in the flowering and grain-filling stage. Pulses have been sown on 134.18 lakh hectare as against 135.21 lakh hectare last year.



CAG pulls up Govt for Rs 1,201cr loss in pulses import

TUESDAY, 27 DECEMBER 2011 21:36

Deficiency in design, implementation and monitoring led to Rs1,201 crore loss in pulses import. A Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) report on performance audit of sales and distribution of imported pulses says that mismatch in import and demand, delay in offtake from

ports and inefficient distribution caused this loss to government agencies - MMTC, STC, NAFED and PEC - during 2006-2011, without succeeding in price stabilisation in the market.

In the report presented in Parliament on Tuesday, CAG said, "As against the targeted quantity of import and sale of 53.10 lakh tonnes of pulses during 2006-11, the agencies imported 30.04 lakh tonnes and sold 26.95 lakh tonnes of pulses during this period, incurring losses totaling to Rs1,201.32 crore on these transactions. The shortfall in imports was as high as 76.13 per cent in 2009-10, while the shortfall in disposal of the available quantity of pulses was as high as 50.70 per cent during 2008-09.

"Rs1202 loss includes factors like rise in global prices of pulses, depreciation of the Indian rupee, exchange rate fluctuation, lower sales realisation than the landed cost of pulses, sharp fall in crude oil and ocean freight charges and the global meltdown. The report says that the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution did not conduct any survey for assessing the demand for and consumption of different types of pulses in the country.

It criticizes the Government for importing yellow peas in 2007 as a substitute of chick pea for lower price. The auditor found that out of the total losses of Rs1,201.32 crore, "Rs 897.37 crore (75 per cent) was incurred only on account of yellow peas.

However, the Union Cabinet in March 2009 decided to allow the agencies to import the peas, despite that Committee of Secretaries in 2009 itself had said that there is very low demand for yellow peas. The outcome of this was a loss of Rs 897.37 crore, amounting to 75 per cent of the total loss of Rs 1,201 crore. It said that delay in clearance at ports lead to Rs 42.71 crore.

It further said that in absence of any specific guidelines, all the designated importing agencies sold the imported pulses in the open market through the tendering process, instead of distributing through state agencies.

But, tender conditions, especially those of high minimum bid quantities and corresponding earnest money deposits, ensured that mainly large private players could submit bids, "thus restricting the channels of distribution and keeping most of the smaller parties out of the loop". So, out of the test-checked sale of 8.38 lakh tonnes of pulses, it was found that 6.08 lakh tonnes (73 per cent) was sold to just four large buyers.

Business Standard

Wednesday, Dec 28, 2011

Cashew kernel prices decline in Palasa

VDS Rama Raju / Chennai/ Visakhapatnam December 28, 2011, 0:18 IST

Cashew kernel prices in Palasa have dropped by Rs 70-100 per kg over the last one month due to oversupply.

“This is the first time that large quantities of second grade imported cashew kernels are available in the domestic market, leading to a reduction in prices,” said Malla Srinivasa Rao, president of the Palasa Cashew Manufacturers Association.

Normally, Palasa cashew traders import cashew nuts every year from other countries to feed the processing units here.

However, this year cashew kernels also came to the domestic market in huge quantities, leading to a decline in prices, he added. This apart, economic slowdown led to a decline in cashew exports as a result, exporters diverted their material to the local markets.

“Last month, we sold grade-I cashew kernel at Rs 540-580 per kg. Now, the prices have come down to Rs 440-460 per kg. Similarly, second grade kernel prices have declined from Rs 420 to Rs 350-360 per kg,” he said. Kernel prices generally increase during festival, but this time they may not increase further.

Meanwhile, cashew nuts prices have also declined by Rs 1,000-1,500 per bag (each bag contains 80 kg) in the last two months.

In November, imported nuts were at Rs 7,500 per bag and domestic at Rs 8,000. Now both domestic and imported nuts are available at Rs 6,500 per bag here. Palasa cashew processing units need about 300,000 bags of nuts up to the end of March to operate their units. The new crop w

Pak emerges as leading market for Indian tea

Press Trust of India / New Delhi December 27, 2011, 14:42 IST

Pakistan has emerged as a leading market for Indian tea, particularly the CTC variety of black tea, with India exporting around 20 million tonne of the beverage to the neighbouring country in 2011. The inroads made by Indian tea into Pakistan this year have been helped by a decline in tea production in Kenya, which has a dominant share of the tea market there. "Export of Indian tea has grown from one million tonne 10 years ago to about 20 million tonne in 2011," Indian Tea Association Joint Secretary S Patra told PTI. "In fact, Pakistan has emerged as leading market for Indian black tea, leaving behind traditional destinations like Russia, the UK, US and Germany," Patra said. CTC is machinery processed tea, usually produced in Assam, Sri Lanka and parts of Africa and South America. Processing of this tea has three stages (crush, tear, curl; or cut, tear, curl), hence the name 'CTC'. Black tea is of two types -- CTC and orthodox. Indian orthodox tea is popular in Iran and Iraq.

In India, tea is grown in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Soumitro Banerjee, a senior executive of Kolkata-based Goodricke Group Limited, said easing of restrictions in Pakistan due to recent efforts by governments of the two countries have facilitated the smoother entry of Indian tea into Pakistani markets, particularly in Karachi.

Patra said the trend has been helped by a decline in tea production in Kenya and also due to sustained efforts of the association to market its tea in the neighbouring country.

"Things have improved now after visit of many trade delegations from the two nations to each other to convince the merit of its produce (tea)," Patra added.

As per a report, Kenya's share of the Pakistani tea market is about 65 per cent. Till recently, India's share was just 15%, but it has now gone up. "But the Indian share is now going up in Pakistan very fast," Patra said. Patra said the Indian Tea Association manages almost 65% of Indian tea exports, which total around 200 million tonne.

Crude palm oil futures decline on global cues

Press Trust of India / New Delhi December 27, 2011, 11:53 IST

Tracking a weakening global trend, crude palm oil futures declined by Rs 3 to Rs 539 per 10 kg today, as speculators offloaded their positions. At the Multi Commodity Exchange, January crude palm oil declined by Rs 3, or 0.55%, to Rs 539 per 10 kg, with a business turnover of

109 lots. The December contract shed Rs 1.70, or 0.32%, to Rs 536.20 per 10 kg, with a trade volume of four lots. Market analysts said offloading of positions by speculators on the back of a weakening global trend, mainly led to the fall in crude palm oil futures prices here. Meanwhile, palm oil declined one% to \$993 per tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

THE HINDU Business Line

Potato prices crash in Bengal on new crop, large stocks

Tuber falls to Rs 240/quintal from Rs 350 a fortnight ago

| Production | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Year | Quantity (lakh tonnes) | Average wholesale prices (Rs/quintal) |
| 2008-09 | 55 | 1,000-1,200 |
| 2009-10 | 95 | 400-550 |
| 2010-11 | 99 | 400-600 |
| 2011-12 | NA (*) | 350-500 |

(*) The process of sowing is almost complete but cultivation is yet to begin.

| Price movement in Bengal this year | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Month | Prices (Rs/quintal) |
| May | 580-620 |
| June | 460-500 |
| July | 450-550 |
| August | 550-580 |
| December 12 | 300-350 |
| December 27 | 220-240 |

Kolkata, Dec. 27:

Potato prices in West Bengal plummeted to record low on the arrival of the new crop, primarily from Punjab. The fall was accentuated by a huge 6 per cent inventory of last season's production. The wholesale price of the tuber nose dived to Rs 220-240 a quintal on Tuesday, from Rs 350 a quintal till about a fortnight ago.

Farmers and traders owning a huge 4 lakh tonne surplus stock lying in cold storages are the worst hit as the average price is nearly one-third of the cost of production and preservation estimated at Rs 550-600 a quintal.

While a small quantity of the new crop (potatoes) cultivated in Bankura district of West Bengal has come into the market, the primary reason for the steep fall in prices is the arrival of the new crop from Punjab, said Mr Ram Pada Pal, President, West Bengal Cold Storage Association.

The wholesale price of potatoes in markets such as Punjab and Uttar Pradesh has also witnessed a steep decline on account of good production and oversupply in other markets. "Production in UP and Punjab — which gets through by mid October — has been exceptionally good this year on the back of favourable weather. So the prices are quoting around Rs 200-250 a quintal in both these States," Mr Pal said.

Close to 15 rakes (one rake contains 20,000 quintal) of potatoes have arrived from Punjab. "This has sent prices of Bengal potatoes crashing," Mr Pal said.

Distress selling

Farmers and traders — who were holding on to their stock in anticipation of fetching better prices — are now going in for distress selling. "The country had a bumper crop last year so we were not able to exhaust the entire stock. The old and new crop is now vying with each other thereby dragging down prices further. The potatoes retained by traders or farmers are being sold at such low price that they are not even able to recover the expenses," Mr Pal said.

The West Bengal Government — which had extended the deadline for storage of potato till December 15 — has further extended it till December 31, in order to help release the entire quantity of produce. Six per cent of the 58 lakh tonne of potatoes stored across the 403 odd cold storages in the State are still lying unconsumed.

Typically, potatoes find their way out of these cold storages by the end of November and the storage house is cleared and kept closed for maintenance between early December and mid-February.

“Going by the present trend, we do not think we will be able to consume more than 1-1.5 per cent of the stock. Potatoes have already started rotting because of this long storage period. More than 3 lakh tonnes of potatoes are likely to turn unfit for consumption,” said Mr Jayanta Sau, a potato farmer and trader.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 28, 2011)

AP, Karnataka may drag cotton output to 350 lakh bales

M.R. Subramani

Reduced yield in the 2 States could result in lower output



Bearish Outlook (in tonnes)

| | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Major producers | | |
| China | 6,000,000 | 7,150,000 |
| India | 5,525,000 | 5,950,000 |
| United States | 3,941,000 | 3,446,000 |
| Pakistan | 1,760,000 | 2,142,000 |
| Brazil | 1,960,000 | 1,935,000 |
| Australia | 898,000 | 1,140,000 |
| Total production | 24,173,000 | 26,803,000 |
| Major Consumers | | |
| China | 9,500,000 | 8,900,000 |
| Indian subcontinent | 7,255,000 | 7,214,000 |
| Turkey | 1,100,000 | 1,150,000 |
| Brazil | 850,000 | 850,000 |
| United States | 849,000 | 784,000 |
| Total Consumption | 23,415,000 | 22,715,000 |

Source: Cotton Outlook Limited

Chennai, Dec. 27:

The country's cotton production could be lower by at least 10-15 lakh bales (170 kg each) lower than initial estimates varying between 360 lakh bales and 365 lakh bales.

According to Cotton Outlook, the cotton production and consumption scenario has changed since November, warranting pruning of projections of both.

Cotton Outlook's estimate for global cotton production and consumption this month is the first that has pegged Indian production and consumption lower than estimates, including that of the Cotton Advisory Board (CAB).

The CAB had initially pegged production at 360 lakh bales at its meeting in August and subsequently in November raised it to 365 lakh bales.

The projection is against last year's record production of 325 lakh bales.

Cotton Outlook, however, had not assigned any reason for the revision of the projection in its release.

According to cotton trade analyst, Mr A. Ramani, there is a general feeling of lower production going by drop in arrivals.

“The situation in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh has created a fear of reduced yield. To certain extent, fears of production lower than estimates are true,” he said. The CAB had in its meeting on November 15 estimated that production in Andhra Pradesh would be 55 lakh bales against 53 lakh bales last year and in Karnataka 14 lakh bales (10 lakh bales).

Business Line had, in its edition dated October 28, said that cotton production in Andhra Pradesh was likely to be affected in view of the yield being 50 per cent lower. The yield has been affected this year due to lack of irrigation in view of erratic power supply.

According to cotton scientists, productivity in Maharashtra too has been affected due to dry weather during the crop's crucial growth period.

“There has been lower arrivals of cotton in markets across the country. One reason could be farmers are holding back due to lower prices. But the other reason could be due to drop in production,” said Mr Ramani.

Arrivals drop

According to the Cotton Corporation of India, cotton arrivals as of December 25 dropped to 88.10 lakh bales since the beginning of the current season on October 1 against 117.89 lakh bales during the same period a year ago.

Arrival in Karnataka is down at 2.68 lakh bales (3.62 lakh bales a year ago) and in Andhra Pradesh it is lower at 13.04 lakh bales (18.51 lakh bales). In Maharashtra, the arrivals is down by nearly 50 per cent at 14.17 lakh bales (27.72 lakh bales).

Cotton Outlook said that production in the US could also be lower at 3.44 million tonnes (mt) from initial estimates of 3.55 mt. The crop is likely to be lower at 1.94 mt (2 mt) in Brazil. Last year, the US produced 3.94 mt and Brazil 1.96 mt.

Global scenario

Overall, global production estimates have been pruned to 26.80 mt from 27.1 mt projected in November. It would still be higher than last year's 24.17 mt.

Consumption in the country, on the other hand, could be down to 424 lakh bales from initial estimates of 429 lakh bales. Last season's consumption has been pegged at 426 lakh bales.

Consumption in China, too, is being estimated lower by half a million tonnes at 8.9 mt (9.5 mt last year). Overall, global consumption is projected at 22.71 mt against November estimates of 23.52 mt and 23.42 mt last year.

That would leave the global market with a surplus of over four million tonnes, according to Cotton Outlook.

"In India, mills are still finding it difficult with the current lower prices for cotton. But they are more comfortable than how they were in October," said Mr Ramani.

"The global situation is equally bad," he said.

Prices for Shankar-6 cotton that hit a record Rs 62,000 for a candy of 356 kg have dropped now to around Rs 34,100-34,400.

Globally, cotton prices that hit a record \$2.19 a pound have dropped to \$0.8724 now.

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Rubber ends flat on holiday mood

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Dec. 27:

Spot rubber closed unchanged on Tuesday. According to market circles, there were neither buyers nor sellers in the market and most of the traders were still in a holiday mood in between Christmas and the New Year.

The trend was partially mixed as RSS 5 slipped marginally amidst scattered transactions.

Stocks in NMCE accredited warehouses have been on the rise since last two weeks, reports said. Stocks fell to their lowest level during this year on December 1.

In the international markets, activities were slow ahead of the New Year holidays.

Sheet rubber finished steady at Rs 200 a kg, according to traders. The grade slipped to Rs 200 (200.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

The January series closed at Rs 203.10 (203.88), February at Rs 205.70 (206.06), March at Rs 208.65 (209), April at Rs 214.50 (214.40), May at Rs 214 (214.12) and June at Rs 212.05 (213) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) closed at Rs 180.65 (180.64) a kg at Bangkok.

The January futures declined to ¥ 252.9 (Rs 171.90) from ¥ 257 a kg during the day session but then recovered partially to ¥ 254.4 (Rs 172.92) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 200 (200); RSS-5: 196 (196.50); Ungraded: 190 (190); ISNR 20: 191 (191) and Latex 60 per cent: 110 (110).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 28, 2011)

Tea imports down 14.6% as prices rise

P.S. Sundar

Coonoor, Dec. 27:

The tea import bill fell by 9.12 per cent year-on-year in the first 10 months of current calendar as suppliers raised prices, an analysis of latest data available with importers' organisations and the Tea Board revealed.

Between January and October, the asking price for imported tea rose to Rs 94.87 a kg from Rs 89.10, up Rs 5.77 or 6.48 per cent. Consequently, importers reduced offtake to 14.15 million kg (mkg) from 16.57 mkg, down 2.42 mkg or 14.6 per cent. Due to this, the tea import bill reduced by Rs 13.47 crore or 9.12 per cent to Rs 134.2 crore from Rs 147.67 crore. In dollar terms, India's import bill reduced to \$29.39 million from \$32.23 million despite the price rising to \$2.08 a kg from \$1.94.

In 2010, India imported 20.04 mkg (25.67 mkg in 2009) of tea worth Rs 184.94 crore (Rs 216.03 crore) at an average price of Rs 92.26 a kg (Rs 84.16).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 28, 2011)

Edible oil refiners look to corrective measures from Govt next year

K.V. Kurmanath

Hyderabad, Dec. 27:

Characterised by low yields and poor policy support, edible oil industry faced yet another challenge last year – the decision of Indonesia to encourage their processing industry reducing duties on export of processed oil. This single decision threatens the very existence of Indian oil industry.

Rattled by this decision, the Indian industry wants immediate corrective measures to come to its rescue at least in 2012.

“It is not just for the interest of the industry. It, in fact, is needed to reduce huge oil bill that is assuming serious proportions. During November 2010 to October 2011, the country is estimated to have imported 90 lakh tonnes of edible oil costing Rs 35,000 crore,” an office-bearer of Solvent Extractors' Association of India, said.

There are 15,000 oil mills, 600 solvent extraction units, 600 vegetable oil refineries and 250 vanaspati units in India. While the domestic turn over of the vegetable oil industry is over Rs 1,00,000 crore, import-export turnover is put at about Rs 50,000 crore a year.

The association has already submitted a detailed wish-list for 2012 to the Union Government, asking it to address them in the upcoming Budget.

“We have to begin somewhere. We have to do something to improve capacity utilisation, increase production and productivity to make the Indian industry compete international market,” Mr Sushil Goenka, President of association, said.

The industry asks the Government to earmark at least Rs 7,500 crore in the next three years to expand the area under oil palm cultivation. “Last year's allocation of Rs 300 crore will have a very little impact to meet the demand in oilseeds and hardly sufficient to make the country self-sufficient in edible oil sector,” he said.

The industry feels that it has got a role in addressing the problems. It thinks it needs to enter oilseeds extension programme to provide farmers with necessary agri inputs to achieve higher productivity level. “We suggest that weighted Income Tax deduction should be granted to companies undertaking such programmes,” he felt.

Indonesian impact

The industry is nervous about the likely fall out of implementation of a new tax structure on export of palm oil and by-products in Indonesia. The structure, which came into being in September 2011, significantly reduces duties on export of finished product to 10 per cent (from 16.5 per cent to 10 per cent) and on packaged products to just 2 per cent on packed products.

This, the Indian industry thinks, would have a catastrophic impact on domestic mills as the new duty structure could discourage Indonesian traders to export raw product and encourage millers there to dump finished products in India.

In 2009-10, India imported 6.4 million tonnes of palm products from Indonesia and Malaysia. This included 5.2 million tonnes of raw oil and the rest being finished products. *kurmanath@thehindu.co.in*

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 28, 2011)

Palmolein gains despite weak global cues

Our Correspondent



Mumbai, Dec. 27:

Palmolein extended its gain by Rs 2 for 10 kg, while soya refined oil lost Re 1 for 10 kg in the physical market on Tuesday despite weak global palm oil and soyabean futures. Rapeseed oil increased sharply by Rs 13 for 10 kg, rising totally by Rs 75 this month. Groundnut oil eased by

Rs 5 for 10 kg tracking a weak Saurashtra market. In Rajkot, loose groundnut oil dropped by Rs 20 for 10 kg.

Local refiners kept prices of palmolein and soya oil unchanged as physical demand was need-based. Crude palm oil (CPO) futures succumbed to mild selling pressure after a recent rally on the Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) Exchange amid euro zone debt concerns.

Resellers offered palmolein at Rs 597-598. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 600-602 for delivery in January and at Rs 603-605 for February, and super palmolein at Rs 620.

Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 599 for delivery in January and at Rs 601 for February, soya refined oil at Rs 680 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 715. Allana offered palmolein at Rs 600. In Saurashtra and Rajkot, cotton oil was sold at Rs 627-630 and groundnut oil at Rs 1,515 (Rs 1,510) for a *telia* tin and at Rs 985 (Rs 1,005) for loose (10 kg).

Malaysia's BMD CPO's January contracts settled higher at MYR3,157 (MYR3,170) and February at MYR3,162 (MYR3,175) a tonne. Soya oil for January delivery was up to Rs 714.20 (Rs 706.20) and for February to Rs 710 (Rs 705) on the National Board of Trade in Indore.

Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil — 990 (995), soya refined oil — 677 (678), sunflower exp. ref. — 655 (655), sunflower ref. — 725 (725), rapeseed ref. oil — 793 (780), rapeseed expeller ref. — 763 (750), cotton ref. oil — 643 (643) and palmolein — 597 (595).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 28, 2011)

Buying lifts chana, masoor



Indore, Dec. 27:

Chana and masoor gained on Tuesday on improved buying support.

Chana (kanta) rose to Rs 3,350-3,375 a quintal (Rs 3,300-3,350) on improved buying support. Chana (desi) gained Rs 50 at Rs 3,275-3,300 a quintal (Rs 3,200-3,225). Similarly, chana dal gained on buying support to spot chana, with chana dal (average) being quoted at Rs 3,950-3,975 a quintal, chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,050-4,075 a quintal and chana dal (bold) at Rs 4,250-4,275.

Weak arrival and improved demand perked up masoor and its dal. Masoor (bold) rose to Rs 3,000-3,025 a quintal (Rs 2,950) and masoor (medium) to Rs 2,750-2,800. Masoor dal (average) quoted Rs 25 up at Rs 3,375-3,400 a quintal, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 3,450-3,475 and masoor dal (bold) at Rs 3,550-3,375 a quintal (up Rs 50).

Tur and its dal were unchanged despite subdued demand. Tur (Maharashtra) was unchanged at Rs 3,350 a quintal, while tur (Nimari) sold at Rs 2,300-2,500 a quintal. New tur that arrived in local *mandis* quoted at Rs 4,000-4,100 a quintal. Tur dal (full) quoted at Rs 5,350-5,400, tur dal (*sawa* no.) at Rs 4,400-4,450 and tur dal (marka) sold at Rs 5,800-6,000 a quintal. Urad and its dal were unchanged despite slack demand, with urad (bold) being quoted at Rs 3,500-3,550 and urad (medium) at Rs 2,800-3,100 a quintal. Urad dal (medium) sold at Rs 3,950-4,000, urad dal (medium) at Rs 4,600-4,700 and urad (mongar) at Rs 5,600-6,000.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 28, 2011)

Sugar trade awaits Jan free-sale quota



Mumbai, Dec. 27:

Sugar prices in the physical market ruled flat on Tuesday on pressure of ample supply from producing centres.

Local demand improved marginally, but higher supply from mills kept prices steady at tenders and naka delivery level. Fine quality S-grade increased by Rs 2-5 a quintal in the spot market. The trade is now waiting for the announcement of January free sale quota that is expected to be lower than last three months. The sentiment was steady with routine arrivals and local dispatches. Mr Jagdish Rawal, a wholesaler of Vashi market, told *Business Line*: "The market is currently passing through routine demand and ample supply position. There is no buying from neighbouring States in Maharashtra and a weak trend in export keep domestic market under pressure. In the absence of upcountry buying, sugar prices dropped by over Rs 200-250 a quintal in Maharashtra this month". At the Vashi market, about 18-20 mills offered tender and sold about 75,000 – 80,000 bags in the range of Rs 2,770-2,830 (Rs 2,770-2,830) for S-grade and Rs 2,850-2,950 (Rs 2,850-2,950) for M-grade. Arrivals in Vashi market were at 48-50 truckloads and local dispatches were around 45-46 truckloads. Freight rates were steady.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 2,922-3,000 (Rs 2,921-2,991) and M-grade Rs 3,001-3,102 (Rs 3,001-3,100). **Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 2,860-2,910 (Rs 2,860-2,910) and M-grade Rs 2,970-3,020 (Rs 2,970-3,020).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 28, 2011)

Spot turmeric sparkles on Delhi bulk orders



Erode, Dec. 27:

Spot turmeric prices increased on Tuesday following bulk orders from Delhi, especially for the fine hybrid variety. "The price of spot turmeric improved by Rs 200 a quintal on Tuesday on fresh orders. Very fine variety of hybrid crop arrived for sales, so traders who obtained orders from Delhi purchased," said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants

Association. He said that some bulk buyers quoted higher price for hybrid variety on new demand and purchased over 500 bags. The hybrid variety increased by Rs 700 a quintal. Over 9,000 turmeric bags arrived for sale and 60 per cent was sold. Traders said that they have received some orders and are expecting that they may get more orders within a couple of days. But they are buying only limited quantity. Traders are expecting heavy arrivals on Wednesday as for the past couple of days prices have been encouraging for the farmers. They said prices may drop if the arrivals top 15,000 bags. Prices increased around Rs 80 in futures. Meanwhile, traders have urged the Erode District Collector to convene an urgent tri-partite meeting of traders, farmers and the Regulated Marketing Committee to discuss the Monday's controversy over quoting a wrong lot and solve it immediately. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety sold at Rs 3,609-4,239, the root variety Rs 3,509-4,034.

Salem Crop

The finger variety was sold at Rs 3,864-5,529, the root variety Rs 3,709-4,594. Out of a total of 2,298 bags arrived for sales, 690 were sold. Of this 500 bags were Salem hybrid variety.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 28, 2011)

Lower arrivals boost dara wheat



Karnal, Dec. 27:

Fresh buying, coupled with low arrivals on Tuesday, pushed dara wheat prices up, while desi wheat remained almost unchanged on lack of buying interest.

Following an increase in demand, dara prices increased marginally by Rs 5 a quintal and traders expect prices to rule firm around the current levels this week, said Mr Sewa Ram, a wheat trader. Arrivals have been low in the market and dara prices may increase further by Rs

10-15 a quintal in near future, as there are no other stocks available except the arrivals from Uttar Pradesh, he added.

In the physical market, around 60 tonnes of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,165-1,175 a quintal, while delivery at chakki was at Rs 1,180 a quintal.

Dara wheat prices have increased by Rs 40 a quintal over the last two weeks.

On the other hand, desi wheat varieties continued to rule firm on previous levels. Samrat was quoted at Rs 1,880-1,885, Tohfa at 2,040-2,050/ quintal, while Red Rose was trading at Rs 2,200/ quintal. On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for January delivery decreased by Rs 2 to Rs 1,186/; it had touched a high at Rs 1,190/ earlier on Tuesday. On the MCX, wheat spot prices increased by Rs 1.2 to Rs 1,209.20/ quintal.

Flour prices were unchanged at Rs 1,165-1,175 for a 90-kg bag. *Chokar* prices were up Rs 5 at Rs 650-660 for a 49-kg bag.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 28, 2011)

Few enquiries, holiday mood cool coconut oil

C.J. Punnathara



Kochi, Dec. 27:

Coconut oil market opened after a long Christmas weekend and the sentiment remained weak. There were very few enquiries and transactions were muted over last week and the holiday mood seems to have spilled over into the current trading week as well.

With inter-State road and goods traffic inching back to action between Tamil Nadu and Kerala, a relative normalcy is expected in the coconut oil markets in the immediate future. This will be in the best interest of the coconut producers of Tamil Nadu and consumers of Kerala, sources said.

Even as there was a slight easing of coconut oil prices in both Kerala and Tamil Nadu markets, the highlight was a sharp rise in palm kernel oil prices that now rule above coconut oil, sources in the trade said. The sentiment is expected to remain weak as the coconut arrivals from Sabarimala which will be converted into copra and coconut oil is expected hit the market shortly. Tamil Nadu markets have already taken cognisance of the impending arrivals and are quoting Rs 4-5 lower than Kerala.

But the sentiment is expected to improve after couple of weeks. This is reflected in the futures where February contracts are quoting over Rs 8,000 a quintal. While the January contracts are quoting higher than current spot prices, February contract are quoting progressively higher.

Price impacts from Sabarimala arrivals might be transitory as the low production season has set in over Kerala and is poised to continue into the coming couple of months, sources said. Also, firm trends in edible oil prices, the falling value of the rupee impacting edible oil import prices and weaker coconut arrivals in the coming months are expected to improve coconut oil prices.

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