THE HINDU
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“Priority to farmers opting for horticulture crops”

Staff Reporter

District consultative committee meeting held

Total deposits of all banks is Rs. 5,513 crore

Rs. 128.77 crore disbursed to self-help group members

Nagercoil: The district consultative committee meeting (under Lead Bank scheme) chaired by the Collector, Ashish Kumar, was held here on Tuesday.

The DLRC meeting for March 2011 was not convened as the election code of conduct was in force. The total deposits of all banks was Rs. 5,513 crore, total advance of the banks being Rs. 6038 crore.

The total priority sector advances was Rs. 4,985 crore, agricultural advances was Rs. 3,341 crore, total weaker section advances Rs. 1,762 crore, advances to SC/ST was put at Rs. 282 crore, total advance to women beneficiaries was Rs. 1,696 crore, advance to minority communities was Rs. 1,745 crore and the total advance under DRI scheme was Rs. 5 crore as on March 31, 2011.

As there were quite a large number of lessees, who were involved in agriculture operations, necessary steps would be taken to form self-help groups for their benefit in order to extend financial assistance to them. Hence the Collector made an appeal to the bankers to give loans to them.

The Government had earmarked Rs. 185 crore to provide loans to the members of self help groups to undertake economic activities as well as for the revolving fund.

In the year 2010-11, a sum of Rs. 2,281 crore had been allotted for agriculture, Rs. 97 crore for service sector and Rs. 431 crore for promotion of industrial activities.

Exceeding target

Even as the sum of Rs. 107 crore has been earmarked to be distributed as financial assistance to various self help groups as a target, Rs. 128.77 crore had been disbursed to them exceeding the target.

Steps would be taken to give priority to those farmers who wanted to take up cultivation of horticulture crops, dairy development, fisheries and its allied products, and solar power plants.

Senior Regional Manager of Indian Overseas Bank G. Krishnamoorthy, A. H. Sudendra of Reserve Bank of India (Chennai), Sundarraj, Project Officer of Mahalir Thittam participated the meeting.

TANUVAS organises veterinarians sensitisation programme in Ariyalur

Special Correspondent

CHANGING TIMES:Dr. Napolean, Co-Investigator demonstrating oestrous synchronisation technique by Controlled Internal Drug Release (CIDR) device on a dairy cow.

TIRUCHI: The Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS) Training and Research Centre here and the State Department of Animal Husbandry jointly organised a field veterinarians sensitization programme in Ariyalur recently under the National Agricultural Development Project (NADP) on “Genetic upgradation of cattle and buffaloes in Tamil Nadu: Adoption of oestrous synchronization technique to improve productive and reproductive potential”.

The project implemented by the TANUVAS with technical collaboration of Department of Animal Husbandry and Tamil Nadu Co operative Milk producers' Federation (Aavin) in five districts, including Ariyalur district, is funded by the State government.

The objective of the project is upgrading genetic potential by the adoption of oestrous synchronization technique. A total of 3,750 animals, including 750 animals in Ariyalur district, will be covered.

C. Veerapandian, Professor and Head, Madras Veterinary College, is the principal investigator of the scheme. Cecilia, Professor, Madras Veterinary College, Napolean, Professor, Veterinary College and Research Institute, Namakkal, are co- investigators.

The technology of oestrous synchronization by a Controlled Internal Drug Release (CIDR) device with progesterone hormone to bring a specific number of animals into oestrous signs so that artificial insemination could be done and the animals would deliver calves at the same time saving labour, money and sustained milk production and making the animals to express their full genetic potential was demonstrated on the occasion by veterinary experts.

T. Lurthu Reetha and Clement Ebenezer Henry, both of Veterinary University Training and Research Centre, Tiruchi and Mohanarangam, Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry, Ariyalur were present.

Of the 750 animals to be covered in Ariyalur district, the Department of Animal Husbandry will cover 650 animals and the Aavin 100 animals. The Veterinary University Training and Research Centre, Tiruchi will coordinate the implementation of the project in Ariyalur district.

Sugar prices to be held till November

K. Balchand

Minister promises efforts to keep food grain rates affordable

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Discrimination in the export of rice and wheat denied

Mill owners warned against raising sugar prices before allowing export

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NEW DELHI: The Union government on Wednesday admitted that the hike in diesel prices would adversely impact food grain prices in the open market but promised to hold sugar prices till November, when the festival season comes to a close.

Addressing a press conference here, Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution K.V. Thomas said the decision to allow the export of the second 5 lakh tranche of sugar would not impact prices. He denied that there was any pressure from Cabinet Ministers. Union Water Resources Development Minister Salman Khurshid was also present.

Prof. Thomas said his Ministry had sought to hold off export till November but the EGoM, after assessing several factors, had approved it. He said his Ministry had an alternative mechanism in place should prices rise.

He said the government would intervene in the market and not allow the prices to hit the roof, as had happened last year. He said the mill owners had been warned against raising prices of sugar and an assurance had been drawn from them before the various recommendations for allowing the export were accepted.

While declining to answer a question whether export would be stopped if the prices rose sharply again, the Minister said the entire allocated quantity would not be allowed for transhipment at one go.

Denying that there was any discrimination in the export of rice and wheat, he said the matter would be discussed at the next meeting of the EGoM on Food. The good production and procurement would be kept in view, he said.

Prof. Thomas said the government had to assess the burden and requirement in the light of the proposed food security law, the climate forecast and the buffer stock before it decided whether to release wheat and rice from the Central pool or not.

But he admitted that the rise in diesel prices would impact the open market prices of food grains, which, he pointed out, were also impacted by the minimum support prices, which had been doubled in recent times. The attempt would be to keep food prices affordable.

As for the proposed Food Security Bill, Prof. Thomas said the EGoM would take the decision on whether to extend the security to a part of the Above Poverty Line families, which the NAC has recommended, as it was likely to impact the open market prices.

While stressing that the promises made by the Congress would be kept in mind while formulating the law, Prof. Thomas evaded questions whether the Bill would be introduced in Parliament during the monsoon session.

Under the proposed Bill, the first lady of the family will be treated, as part of the move to empower them, as the head of the family.

Referring to the instruction of the Supreme Court, he said the government would release 50 lakh tonnes of food grains to be distributed among the Below Poverty Line families of the 150 most backward districts as and when the court identified the districts to be benefited.

hindustantimes

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather		Tomorrow's Forecast	
Clear	Friday, Jul 1 Max Min 39.3° | 27.6°	Rainy	Saturday, Jul 2 Max Min 39° | 28°
Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs	Sunrise: 5:45		
Humidity: 66%	Sunset: 18:39		
Wind: Normal	Barometer: 1004		

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Jul 3	Jul 4	Jul 5	Jul 6	Jul 7
33° | 28°	31° | 27°	33° | 27°	32° | 27°	31° | 27°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

Airport Weather

Delhi Delhi

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs	Sunrise: 5:26
Humidity: 63%	Sunset: 19:23
Wind: Normal	Barometer: 0998

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Oilseeds, soyoil steady; eyes USDA data

MUMBAI: Oilseeds and soyoil futures were steady on Thursday afternoon as market awaited key soybean sowing data in the U.S. later in the day; though progress of soybean sowing in India weighed on sentiment, analysts said.

* At 12:49 p.m., the most-active soybean for July delivery on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) was 0.15 percent lower at 2,302 rupees per 100 kg.

* July soyoil was 0.17 percent down at 638 rupees per 10 kg, while July rapeseed eased 0.03 percent to 2,868 rupees per 100 kg.

* At 12:51 p.m., Malaysian palm oil futures were up 0.61 percent at 3,128 ringgit per tonne, while U.S. soybean was up 0.62 percent at $13.42-1/2 per bushel.

* "Market is likely to remain range-bound through the day. It is waiting for the USDA data, which will provide direction," said Tushar Rathod, a senior research analyst at ADMISI Commodities.

"In India soybeans sowing is progressing well. Madhya Pradesh is getting sufficient rainfall."

* On Thursday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 1230 GMT will release its June acreage report for key crops like soybean, corn and wheat.

* In the Indore spot market, soyoil rose 0.85 rupee to 638.95 rupees per 10 kg, while soybean rose by 8 rupees to 2,295 rupees per 100 kg. At Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan, rapeseed dropped 20 rupees to 2,743 rupees per 100 kg.

* Soybean sowing in India's central Madhya Pradesh state, the biggest producer in the country, is likely to accelerate in a week, although it has picked up in the second biggest producer Maharashtra after both states received good rainfall in the past two days, officials said on Tuesday.

Monthly food prices tracked by the FAO have surged nine times in the past 11 months

SINGAPORE: The global agriculture supply situation has worsened and a failure to boost food production fast enough to meet demand may lead to shortages, said investor Jim Rogers , chairman of Rogers Holdings . "We've got to do something or we're going to have no food at any price at times in the next few years," Rogers said in a Bloomberg Television interview with Rishaad Salamat on Wednesday in Singapore.

"I still own agriculture. If I found something to buy, I would buy it." Rogers joins former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan , the UN Food & Agriculture Organization and the World Bank, in highlighting the need to boost global food production and address issues pushing prices higher. Group of 20 farm ministers agreed last week to increase agriculture output, set up a crop database and limit export bans to tackle what French President Nicolas Sarkozy calls the "plague" of rising food prices.

Monthly food prices tracked by the FAO have surged nine times in the past 11 months and last month stayed near a record reached in February, as global demand for corn and wheat outstripped production and drought and flooding ravaged harvests. The World Bank estimates higher food prices have pushed 44 million more people into poverty. China, the world's largest consumer of grains, energy and metals, has raised interest rates four times since October and increased bank reserve requirements nine times to tame above-target inflation. Its food price inflation was at 11.7% in May, matching levels in March and November when they were at the highest since July 2008, the year of the global food-price crisis.

CORN STOCKPILES

Global stockpiles of corn, the most-consumed grain, are forecast to drop to 47 days of use, the fewest since 1974, data from the US Department of Agriculture show. Inventories are declining as demand continues to outstrip production that's forecast to rise to a fifth consecutive year of record. The Standard & Poor's GSCI Agriculture Index fell 9.6% this quarter, the first and worst loss since the first three months of 2010.

While corn has lost 4.7% this quarter, the grain is still 92% costlier than it was a year ago, making it the best performer in the index in the past 12 months. Inventories of wheat, used in making pasta, noodles, bread and feed for hogs and poultry, will drop to a three-year low of 184.26 million metric tonne before next year's Northern Hemisphere harvest, as output misses demand for a second year, the USDA said.

'NEW DEMAND'

"Production just hasn't been able to respond to new demand," Michael Creed , an agribusiness economist at National Australia Bank , said in a phone interview from Melbourne on Wednesday. Demand continues to outstrip global harvests because of rising ethanol production in the US and China's surging demand for meat, Creed said. "Grain is a solid input into all those food sectors and so there's really no way to go to avoid grainbased inflation," John Bryant, chief executive officer of Battle Creek, Michigan-based Kellogg, the largest US maker of breakfast cereal, said in a June 2 conference.

Unless governments come together to successfully address the issue of food security, "hopes for wider international cooperation looked doomed," Annan, who served as UN Secretary General from 1996 to 2007, said last week. "We have serious problems in inventories" of farm products, Rogers said.

Cottonseed oil cake prices soar as supplies decline

AHMEDABAD/KOCHI: Cottonseed oil cake prices have strengthened in the past few days as cotton arrivals are all but over in the mandis. Ginners in Gujarat and Maharashtra who are currently holding huge cotton stock are demanding that the government further allow export of 10 lakh bales (one bale weighs 170 kg) this season. On Wednesday, cottonseed oil cake for delivery in September increased by 0.08% to Rs 1,243 per quintal with an open interest of 3270 lots on the NCDEX.

Oil cake for delivery in July stabilised by 0.17% to Rs 1,160 per quintal with a business turnover of 43,220 lots. Devendra Sonulakar of Lakshmipati Trading Company at Kola tehsil in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra said the availability of cotton and cottonseeds was negligible in the past few days ensuring prices to be stable and slightly higher at some places. "Most of the stock is with traders who are not releasing it," he said.

On the spot market, cottonseed prices were ruling at Rs 1,450 per quintal with arrival in Akola mandi being 1,000-1,500 bags of 50 kg each. Market analysts said the restricted supply leading to low inventories on the spot market was ensuring an uptrend movement in cottonseed prices. The trend is likely to continue in the short run. However, the south Indian milling industry fears a tight supply situation in the market with the government decision to export 10 lakh bales.

Millers said such a step will pull down the carryover stock and raise the prices as festival demand picks up by August and will not benefit farmers as they have liquidated almost their entire stock by March. The additional exports will deplete cotton stocks. "Now only 25 to 30 lakh bales may be left, which is sufficient for just a month's consumption," said BK Patodia, chairman and MD of GTN Textiles. As demand gathers momentum by August after the current lean months, supply will be under pressure.

"Cotton export was suspended for three months early this year when there was a robust demand. And now as it is revived, the demand has become weak and output is down," said The Southern India Mills' Association secretary general Dr K Selvaraju.

Maharashtra mills owe Sugarcane arrears to farmers, payments unlikely soon

PUNE: The sugar cane crushing season is about to get over in Maharashtra and there are arrears of over a month to be paid to cane farmers. But the payments seem unlikely soon. Almost all the cashstrapped sugar cooperatives have huge bank loans due to selling sugar below the cost of production.

It is mandatory for mills to pay farmers within 14 days of the delivery of cane. However, most of the mills have not been able to fulfil this obligation. The sugar commissioner has issued revenue recovery notices to three sugar mills which have very high dues to farmers. The current sugar year -- October 2010-September 2011 -- was a year of record cane crushing for Maharashtra.

In the previous year, sugar prices were at record high levels and cane prices too shot up to all-time high levels ranging between Rs 2,200/tonne and Rs 2,700/tonne. Before the beginning of this year's crushing season, farmer organisations launched demonstrations demanding high cane prices.

While the state suggested aminimum fair price of about Rs 1,400/tonne, farmers forced mills in the Kolhapur belt to pay a first instalment of Rs 2,000/tonne. Mills in Pune and

Marathwada, Khandesh belts agreed to pay Rs 1,800/tonne and Rs 1,750/tonne respectively.

Due to a glut in production, sugar prices have crashed below Rs 2,400/quintal and mills have been selling sugar below the cost of production. The mills that have other sources of revenue such as ethanol and co-generation of electricity could sustain financial losses.

Most of the sugar cooperatives now have short margins with banks. Which means that mills have more dues towards cane payment than the lending available from banks for this purpose. "Most of the sugar co-operatives have accumulated cane arrears," said an official from the state sugar commissionerate on condition of anonymity.

Business Standard

Exports of black pepper may rise on low prices

George Joseph / Kochi July 1, 2011, 0:43 IST

Black pepper exporters are likely to benefit in the coming days, as local prices of the commodity are on par with the international ones. Domestic prices softened by $350-400 a tonne and were at $6,350 a tonne. This has attracted overseas buyers and is likely to increase exports.

Vietnam offers Asta grade pepper at $6,250 a tonne, since a majority of its crop (around 72,000 tonnes) has been shipped. So, India might have the chance to fill in. According to exporters, India is now having a ‘reasonable price’ compared with pepper from other origins. For July shipments, Indonesia quotes $6,650 and the indicative price of Brazil is $6,300 a tonne.

Futures counters, which were trading at a hefty premium, crashed 10 per cent in the last four trading sessions. India was no way near the Vietnam counters till last week. Although futures crashed by $700 a tonne, the fall in spot was only $250. India, which was cut off from the rest of the origins, is slowly coming in line but exporters are not sure for how long it will last.

The Indian Mg-1 Asta quality on FoB-basis Kochi for June-July shipments is available at $6,350 a tonne and this looks interesting for overseas buyers, who have been neglecting India for the last three-four months.

There have been rumours about the rejection of Indian and Vietnamese pepper in many countries, especially in the US. These were used by some speculators to pull down Indian futures.

The crop in Indonesia this year will be low, according to various reports, and their Asta grade is the most expensive pepper, with a price tag of $6,650 a tonne.

Low rainfall hits sowing in Maharashtra

Sanjay Jog / Mumbai July 01, 2011, 0:42 IST

Less than a tenth of the cultivable area in Maharashtra has been sowed till date, due to low rainfall.

It has been completed on 1.23 million hectares (mha), of a total area of 13.23 mha, excluding sugarcane cultivation. This is about nine per cent. Last year at this time, it was over in 28 per cent of the area.

Sowing for paddy is on just six per cent. It's three per cent for jowar, four per cent for maize, eight per cent for tur, three per cent for both moong and urad, 18 per cent for cotton, 15 per cent for groundnut and 15 per cent for soybean.

However, it is quite different in the case of sugarcane. Against the normal average cultivation of 708,000 hectares, plantation has taken place on 976,000 ha. The state government is hopeful that sowing would pick up after the middle of July, when rainfall is expected to spread across the state. As of now, rain has been 120 per cent of the average in Konkan, Pune, Satara, Kolhapur, Nashik and Nandurbar. It has been between 80 and 120 per cent in 15 districts. In another 13 districts, it is below 60 per cent.

Chief minister Prithviraj Chavan said the state cabinet had taken took a comprehensive review of the situation. "A contingency crop plan has been prepared in view of the low level of sowing," he said.

Officials of the agriculture department said agriculture universities have indicated the sowing of soybean, bajra, sunflower and maize should be complete by July 15 and in the case of jowar, grown up in black soil-rich Vidarbha, by July 10. It was too early to project actual kharif production.

In the case of fertiliser, the central government has approved 4.3 million tonnes against the demand of 4.6 mt. Against the seed requirement of 1.83 mt, availability is 2.06 mt. Of the genetically modified cotton seed packets of 18 million asked for, nearly 84 per cent had been supplied.

Gujarat ginner moves court seeking cotton-export quota

Cotton prices are on a downswing as spinning mills have yarn inventories, even as the textile sector is going through a rough patch.

DGFT to file reply in Bombay High Court today

Chennai, June 30:

A writ petition has been filed in the Bombay High Court against procedures announced by the Directorate-General of Foreign Trade for export of cotton.

The petition has been filed by a ginner, Mr Anil Somani, from Gujarat. The petitioner has pleaded for a separate export quota for ginners. After admitting the petition on June 26, the court has asked the DGFT to file its reply by Friday. The DGFT is expected to file its reply when hearing resumes on Friday.

The Centre had on June 9 notified exports of 10 lakh bales of cotton in addition to the 55 lakh bales that got exhausted by January 15. The export quota was fixed based on projections that cotton production this season could be a record 329 lakh bales.

Registration for the additional quota began on June 20 and ended on June 25.

Applications will be processed till July 5 and allocation of quota will be announced on July 6. Exporters will be given time to submit their documents between July 7 and July 15, while shipments will have to be completed by September 15, according the schedule drawn by the DGFT.

The DGFT, in fixing conditions and modalities, has said those seeking to export should have exported during 2008-9 and 2009-10 seasons (October-September).

Allocation are to be made on a pro-rata basis, but an exporter will not get to export more than 25,000 bales (170 kg each). Applicants can seek to export a quantity that is higher than the previous year, subject to the 25,000-bales limit.

Ahmedabad meeting

Meanwhile, the All-India Ginners Association met at Ahmedabad on Wednesday and decided to meet the Union Textile Minister, Mr Dayanidhi Maran, and other Ministry officials to demand that an additional 20 lakh bales of cotton be allowed for export.

“We have sought appointment from the Minister and are waiting for it,” said Mr Anand Poppat, Vice-President of Saurashtra Ginners Association.

Penalty

Over 100 ginners from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Haryana took part in the meeting.

“Farmers are having stocks of over 20 lakh bales with them. In Gujarat alone, growers should be holding some 12 lakh bales,” Mr Poppat said.

The DGFT, on its part, has come up with a few other conditions, too. The notice said failure to export the allocated quantity within the stipulated time could invite penal action.

The exporter could be debarred from further allocation, while a fine that could be over Rs 10,000 and up to four times the value of goods could be levied.

Cotton exports were allowed after the fibre's prices dropped by about 35 per cent since the first week of April to Rs 40,000-41,000 for a candy (356 kg) of Sankar-6 variety. Though cotton prices increased by 10 per cent after the additional export quota was announced, they have dropped to the previous levels again on lack of demand. Currently, prices are ruling at Rs 39,500-40,000 a candy.

Bordeaux mixture spraying is not harmful, says Rubber Board

Kottayam, June 30:

The Rubber Board has confirmed in a press note issued here that spraying of Bordeaux mixture and Copper Oxy Chloride (COC) in rubber plantations to manage monsoon diseases is not harmful.

The Board issued this statement as there have been widespread apprehensions raised against the spraying of even Bordeaux mixture and sulphur dust, which are eco-friendly and are included in the organic recommendations.

Bordeaux mixture and sulphur dust are common fungicides used in rubber plantations to manage plant diseases. These two and COC (Phytolan), which is used as an alternative for Bordeaux mixture, are eco-friendly.

Fungicides such as Carbendazim (Bavistin), Mancozeb (Indofil/Dithane M-45) used against Corynespora disease and Tridemorph (Calyxin), Propiconazole (tilt) used against root diseases can be used as per the recommendation of Agricultural Officers.

Sulphur dusting against powdery mildew disease is recommended to be carried out early in the morning as the presence of dewdrops on the leaves enhance the effectiveness of dusting. Spraying of COC mixed with spray oil should also be done in the early morning hours, when the velocity of wind is minimum, to prevent the loss of fungicide due to wind.

Fungicides, insecticides and weedicides bear red, yellow, blue or green labels on their packet, as a rule to indicate their toxicity.

The chemicals with the highest toxicity are given red, the next ones in the order of their toxicity are given yellow, those which can be handled with much precaution are given blue and the ones which can be safely used are provided green symbols on their packets.

Sulphur dust, Mancozeb and Carbendzim are green whereas Copper-Oxy-Chloride, Thiram, Tridemorph, Calyxin and Propiconazol have blue labels on their packets.

No fungicide recommended by the Board is included in the list of banned chemicals.

The most commonly used stimulant, Ethephone is a plant hormone and is not harmful to organisms or the ecosystem when used at recommended dosage.

However, it is to be noted that Phorate (Thimmet), an insecticide and Paraquat (Gramaxone), a weedicide are among the banned chemicals. 2,4-D (Fernoxone) and Glyphosate (Roundup/Glycel/Weedoff) are weedicides recommended for restricted use.

It is expected that users themselves can assess the toxicity of the chemicals they use from the colour of the labels on the packets.

Life insurance scheme for rubber tappers

Kottayam, June 30:

The Rubber Board will implement a ‘Group Life Insurance Cum Terminal Benefit Scheme' in collaboration with the Life Insurance Corporation of India, for the benefit of the rubber tappers working in the smallholding sector. The members of this scheme are eligible for benefits that include insurance cover (both for natural and accidental death), compensation for disabilities due to accidents, terminal benefits and scholarship to the children of members studying from class 9-12.

Nodal agency

The Rubber Board is the nodal agency of the scheme. Life Insurance Corporation would issue a single master policy to the nodal agency. The tappers have to renew their membership every year, failing which they will not be eligible for insurance benefits. The minimum contribution for membership in the scheme is Rs 300 a year. Those who want additional terminal benefits can contribute more. The employer can also contribute an additional amount for his tapper, along with his tapper's contribution. It will be added together with the contribution of the tapper and be listed separately.

The application forms for the first phase of the scheme for the current fiscal will be issued from the regional offices of the Board. The application should contain permit number of the holdings and signature of the employer. In the absence of the above, the presidents of the Rubber Producers' Societies/ Field Officers of the Board can certify the holding and employment details. A self-attested certificate on white paper showing the health status of the applicant should also be attached.

Tappers should submit the applications along with the contributions at the concerned regional offices before July 20 . The payment for the contribution to this scheme may be made either by cash or by Demand Draft / Postal Order drawn in favour of the Dy. Rubber Production Commissioner or Development Officer in charge of the regional offices concerned. Details of the scheme are available at the regional offices.