

Published: July 6, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 6, 2011 04:09 IST NAGAYALANKA (Krishna dt.), July 6, 2011

From agriculture to aquaculture and back



Lush and green: A farmer at a paddy nursery in Krishna district. —Photo: Raju V

A decade-and-half ago, farmers cultivating paddy in Eelachettu Dibba, a sleepy village located 17 km from here, switched over to aquaculture. Now, it's big a turnaround. The farmers shifted to agriculture after suffering irrecoverable losses in shrimp cultivation. This U-turn has improved the fertility of the entire area.

More than 2,000 acres of rich island soil was dug to pave way for cultivation of shrimp at Eelachettu Dibba alone. Another eight surrounding villages, including Nachukunta, followed suit. In all, 5,000 acres of agriculture land was converted into shrimp ponds in these villages and farmers enjoyed profits anywhere between Rs.50,000 and Rs.1 lakh per acre.

Dwindling profits

The year 2000 changed the scenario with virus striking the shrimp ponds. The farmers braved the virus and continued aquaculture for another four years despite severe losses from 2002 to 2004. As the profit margins dwindled and losses began to rise, the farmers eked out a living

through fishing. Two years ago, they began shifting to agriculture, thanks to the advice and assistance of an NGO. Now, Eelachettu Dibba presents a picture of lush paddy fields. The agriculture fields in Nachukunta and other surrounding island villages have also been restored. Salinity in some soils close to creeks and the sea could not be converted. Now, the farmers feel more secure as the yield in paddy cultivation is assured unless natural calamities strike, says farmer K. Raja Rao.

“There were days when I used to invest money on behalf of farmers. I used to export shrimp to far-off places such as Chennai from my own export company at Nagayalanka. But the virus destroyed my business,” says Naidu Venkateswara Rao. The Agriculture Department has also encouraged them with proper seed and input subsidy.

Published: July 6, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 6, 2011 04:09 IST PUDUCHERRY, July 6, 2011

Probe into diversion of subsidised urea launched

The Food Cell has launched an investigation into a “massive” diversion of highly subsidised urea meant for agriculture to industrial use by ATC Chemicals Private Limited, a factory at Sederapet. A case had been registered against the owners, foreign nationals, and investigation is on, according to officials in the Food Cell.

The illegal use of urea came to light accidentally during a protest held by workers of the factory. During the protest held a few days ago, workers stopped a truck carrying goods to the factory.

On examination, it was found that the truck contained several bags of urea without valid papers, an official with Food Cell told *The Hindu*.

On suspicion, the workers referred the issue to the Sederapet Police station and subsequently the Food Cell took up the matter for investigation. Preliminary inquiries revealed that the truckload of urea was procured from a fertilizer outlet near Embalam by claiming that it was meant for agricultural purposes.

However, they could not prove the authenticity, the official said.

A case was registered under Sections of the Essential Services Act and Fertilizer Control Order 1985 against the fertilizer shop owner and as many as 100 bags each containing 50 kg of urea were seized from the truck. During a subsequent raid inside the factory, more than 100 bags of urea were seized, the official said.

Investigation so far revealed that the factory was procuring urea from these outlets at the price fixed for agricultural purpose from fertilizer shops and societies. The factory, which manufactures chemicals for leather industry, was in existence for the last several years, the official said, adding that the company could have been surreptitiously buying urea in a bid to extract a vital component at a cheaper price during the years. "We are investigating to find out whether there is a nexus in this massive diversion. Already, the middleman, who was dealing with the procurement, has been identified. He is on anticipatory bail," the official said.

Published: July 6, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 6, 2011 04:08 IST Kolhapur, July 6, 2011

Farmers demand medical aid for cattle

Farmers at Jat taluk in Sangli district have threatened that they would leave cattle in the Mantralaya in Mumbai if the vacant post of veterinary doctors and other staffs required in 153 veterinary dispensaries in the district are not filled immediately. In a statement, farmers said that despite the requirement of 189 veterinary dispensaries in the district, only 153 were started and were lacking the required number of staff. In Jat taluk in particular, there were no doctors and other staff making it difficult for farmers to access timely treatment for their livestock.

Published: July 6, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 6, 2011 04:08 IST JAIPUR, July 6, 2011

Farmers get certified seeds for kharif crops

The Rajasthan State Cooperative Marketing Federation (RAJFED) has supplied over 13,000 quintals of certified seeds for kharif crops to be distributed to farmers through the village cooperative societies across the State. It has set the target for supply of 23,000 quintals of seeds in this year's kharif season.

According to Registrar of Cooperative Societies P. S. Mehra, a major portion of the seed supply has been obtained from the Rajasthan Seeds Corporation, which in turn has got certified seeds from Andhra Pradesh and other States.

High demand

Mr. Mehra said the certified seeds of high quality were mainly of crops such as bajra, soybean, moong, moth, maize, gowar and chaula. There is a high demand for bajra seeds of Andhra Pradesh in Jodhpur division. The Registrar said the Tilam Sangh and Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO) had also joined RAJFED in getting certified seeds from various sources and supplying them to the village cooperative societies.

RAJFED has already simplified the procedure for procurement of agricultural produce and other farm commodities to provide relief and ensure remunerative prices to farmers in the State.

Published: July 6, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 6, 2011 04:09 IST NEW DELHI, July 6, 2011

EGoM to discuss Food Security Bill, grains' export

The Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) is meeting here on July 11 to consider the crucial Food Security Bill and allowing export of foodgrains.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reviewed the Food Security Bill last week along with Union Food Minister K.V. Thomas and Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia, ahead of the EGoM meeting which would finalise the coverage of food security.

NAC's suggestion

The National Advisory Council under AICC chief Sonia Gandhi too has made its suggestion on this vital issue. The EGoM will assess the implications of the recommendations made by the NAC and the one proposed by the Food Ministry and arrive at a suitable decision.

The larger the population to be bestowed with the legal right to food security, the higher will be the burden on the government and it will spell greater adversity to the general masses.

The government feels procurement of foodgrains would have to be increased from 55 million tonnes to 65 million tonnes if 75 per cent of the BPL population were to be covered, which would push up the subsidy burden to about Rs. 1 lakh crore.

However, the government regards export as a necessity to effectively use the high agricultural produce and solve the shortage of storage space. The forecast of a good monsoon only spells disaster for the foodgrains stored in the open. That is precisely the reason the Food Ministry has proposed exports of 2 million tonnes of wheat and one million tonnes of non-basmati rice. The EGoM will discuss this at its next meeting.

Pawar's clarification

Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Tuesday, however, made it clear that his Ministry was not pushing for exports of foodgrains without the government taking a decision on the Food Security Bill.

Published: July 6, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 6, 2011 04:09 IST TIRUCHI, July 6, 2011

End inter-state water disputes: farmers



green revolution:Farmers taking out a rally in the city on Tuesday.— Photo: R.M.Rajarithnam

A large number of farmers took part in a rally organised by Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam in the city demanding compensation for the martyrs among them since 1970, for the cause of

welfare of agriculturists, and construction of a 'manimandapam' by the government in memory of Narayanasamy Naidu at his native village, Vaiyampalayam in Coimbatore district.

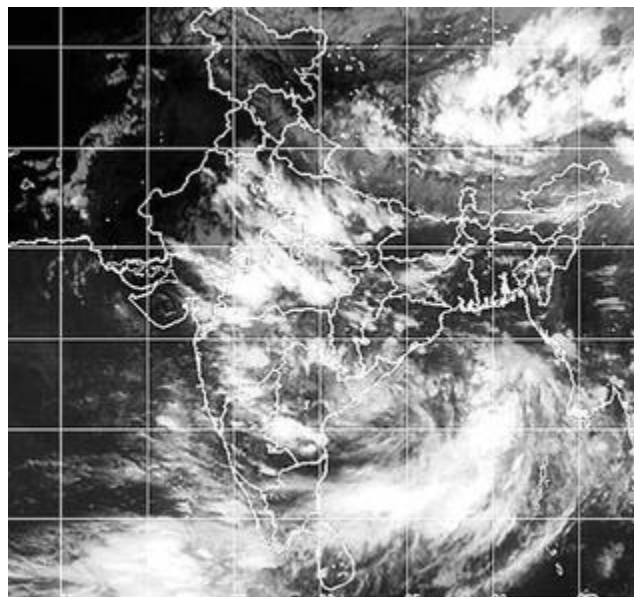
A resolution seeking permanent solution to the Inter-state river water sharing disputes pertaining to the Cauvery, Mulla Periyar and Palar, was adopted at their conference in Uzhavar Sandhai grounds, the culmination point of the rally from K.T. Junction. Sangam State president S.A.Chinnasamy presided over the rally that was addressed by top functionaries including K. Sundaram, State General Secretary; K.P.Velumani, State Treasurer; and R.Rajachidambaram, State Secretary. The speakers urged the State Government to ensure unfailing implementation of the Cauvery water supplied under the interim award.

While demanding procurement of sugarcane for Rs.2,000 per tonne, they also emphasised the need for similar procurement mechanism for other agricultural produces. Referring to the high cost of milch cows, escalating prices of cattle feed and expensive maintenance costs, the farmers emphasised that the Government should procure milk for a minimum of Rs.25 per litre.

Their other demands included grant of permission to extract soil from water bodies, subsidy-linked loans for de-silting individual wells, and pension for all farmers over 60 years of age.

Published: July 6, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 6, 2011 04:09 IST July 6, 2011

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs.Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on July 5.

ANDHRA PRADESH				
Anantapur	34	21	34	118
Arogyavaram	31	21	9	44
Bapatla	35	25	1	67
Calingapatnam	29	24	35	106
Gannavaram	33	25	1	159
Hanamkonda	35	23	6	56
Hyderabad A.P.	32	22	1	79
Kakinada	35	25	0	138
Khammam	33	22	0	78
Kavali	36	26	2	34
Kurnool	35	26	0	59
Mahabubnagar	32	23	7	74

Machilipatnam	34	25	3	114
Nandyal	35	25	0	29
Narsapur	33	23	17	71
Nellore	35	27	2	91
Nizamabad	31	24	11	118
Ongole	35	24	12	33
Ramagundam	34	23	14	125
Tirupathi AP	35	25	1	120
Tuni	35	23	4	139
Vizag AP	36	24	5	64
Vizag	30	25	26	79
KARNATAKA				
Agumbe	25	18	30	2043
Bangalore AP	29	19	2	105

Bangalore	29	20	5	82
Belgaum AP	28	20	2	178
Bellary	33	22	7	92
Bijapur	32	22	9	65
Chitradurga	30	21	3	63
Gadag	31	20	tr	94
Gulbarga	35	23	4	111
Hassan	25	18	0	184
Honavar	28	23	9	1331
Karwar	28	23	13	1180
Madikeri	20	19	20	839
Mangalore AP	29	23	22	1118
Mysore	30	20	1	43

Mandya	31	18	1	26
Panambur	29	24	23	1041
Raichur	32	21	0	167
Shirali	28	24	8	1275
KERALA				
Alappuzha	31	24	0	439
Kannur	30	22	34	1057
Kochi AP	32	23	12	782
Kottayam	33	23	2	726
Kozhikode	30	24	18	954
Punalur	33	23	1	406
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	32	24	tr	280
Thiruvanantha				

-puram City	33	25	0	272
Vellanikkara	30	23	3	822
TAMIL NADU				
Adiramapattinam	35	26	0	36
Coimbatore AP	31	22	0	65
Coonoor	23	16	2	137
Cuddalore	35	24	1	80
Chennai AP	33	25	19	157
Chennai	33	25	3	159
Dharmapuri	34	24	0	21
Kanyakumari	34	25	0	55
Karaikal	37	25	3	31
Kodaikanal	20	13	1	79
Madurai AP	39	27	0	43

Nagapattinam	37	24	21	32
Palayamkottai	39	28	0	16
Pamban	35	27	1	1
Parangipettai	35	25	0	55
Puducherry	36	25	8	63
Salem	33	23	3	77
Thanjavur	38	27	2	48
Tiruchi AP	38	27	tr	50
Tiruchi	34	27	0	10
Tirupattur	32	24	0	81
Tondi	34	27	0	42
Tuticorin	38	27	0	6
Ooty	18	12	4	150
Valparai	25	18	22	821

Vedharanyam	36	26	0	11
Vellore	34	24	11	88
LAKSHADWEEP				
Amini Divi	29	27	6	191
Minicoy	33	25	49	175
Kavarathi	30	24	6	181
OTHER STATIONS				
Kolkata (Alipore)	32	26	tr	421
Mumbai	31	25	23	487
New Delhi	38	30	0	91

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since June 01, 2011

Rain likely in Andhra Pradesh

CHENNAI: Rainfall occurred at most places over Coastal Karnataka and Lakshadweep, at many places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and interior Karnataka and at a few places over Tamil Nadu. Isolated rainfall occurred over Rayalaseema.

The following stations recorded heavy rainfall in cm:

Elamanchili (Visakhapatnam dt) 10, Ankola (Uttara Kannada dt) and Eturnagaram (Warangal dt) 7 each.

The other chief amounts of rainfall recorded in centimeters are: Bimavaram (West Godavari dt), Metpalli (Karimnagar dt) and Jalahalli (Raichur dt) 6 each, Srungavarapukota (Vizianagaram dt), Perur (Khammam dt), Thiruvaidaimarthur (Thanjavur dt), Manamadurai (Sivagangai dt), 5 each.

FORECAST (Valid until Thursday Morning): Rain or thundershowers would occur at most places over coastal Karnataka and Kerala, at many places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, interior Karnataka and Lakshadweep and at a few places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Rayalaseema.

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HT Correspondent, Hindustan Times

Email Author

New Delhi, July 05, 2011

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Last Updated: 22:31 IST(5/7/2011)

Subsidy shakeup: Cash transfer soon

Beneficiaries of kerosene, cooking gas (LPG) and fertiliser subsidies will soon be able to get direct cash transfers through banks, ATMs or even mobile banking, once the recommendations of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to plug leakages in the system are implemented.

UIDAI chairman Nandan Nilekani on Tuesday submitted a comprehensive 70-page interim report suggesting ways to plug leakages in the fuel and fertiliser, to finance minister Pranab Mukherjee. Pilot projects for transfer of a direct cash subsidy will be launched in seven states.

"The pilot project will take approximately six months and taking into account the experiences which they will gather, they will submit the final report by the end of this year," Mukherjee later told reporters.

A MEASURE THAT'S LONG PAST ITS SHELF LIFE?

The government spends about ₹73,637 cr a year on fuel and fertiliser subsidies, but much of it does not reach the beneficiary. The UIDAI suggests ways to plug loopholes.

WHY SUBSIDY IS A PROBLEM

- Subsidy introduces two or more prices for the same goods, creating incentive for pilferage and diversion.

NILEKANI'S PRESCRIPTION

- Empower beneficiaries, give them the choice of receiving subsidies as a price-benefit or as cash.
- Pilot projects for transfer of a direct cash subsidy to be launched in seven states – Tamil Nadu, Assam, Maharashtra, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan & Orissa – in Oct
- Create an IT-driven 'Core Subsidy

Management System (CSMS) to detect fraud and diversions

- Beneficiaries can report mal-practices to government directly
- Govt to transfer cash component of subsidy directly and in real-time into beneficiaries' bank accounts

WAY AHEAD

COOKING GAS

- Cap number of subsidised cylinders
- Identify and target segmented customers for subsidy

FERTILISER

- Complete information visibility of supply chain upto retailer level

Pilot project will take six months' time and taking into account the experiences which they will gather, they will submit the final report by the end of this year.

—PRANAB MUKHERJEE
Finance minister

Direct transfer of subsidy to the retailer's bank account

KEROSENE

- Cash transfer through state governments
- Wider consultation with states, as PDS reforms are being implemented by them.

HT GRAPHIC; SOURCE: HT BUREAU

The task force will oversee the implementation of the pilot projects to come out with an "implementable solution" for direct transfer of subsidies in its final report by December 2011.

The constitution of the task force was announced by Mukherjee in his Budget speech this year.

Direct transfer of subsidy for kerosene, LPG and fertilisers was mooted as a significant portion of the Rs 73,637 crore outgo did not reach beneficiaries.

The task force has proposed a three-phased strategy for tackling subsidies on cooking gas. In the first phase, it has proposed a cap on the number of subsidised cylinders, to be implemented as a policy decision, with a robust authentication framework.

In the second phase, it has recommended direct transfer of subsidy to customers' bank accounts, and in the third phase, segmentation and targeting of customers and direct transfer to these customers.

Also recommended is a transparency portal for all customers of LPG of the three oil marketing companies, with details of their consumption.

Separate proposals have been made for fertiliser and kerosene subsidy as well. The report suggested creation of an IT-driven core subsidy management system (CSMS), which will be able to detect fraud and diversions. The CSMS will also be used to transfer the cash component of the subsidy directly and in real-time into the bank account of the beneficiaries. Mukherjee said direct transfer of subsidies on cooking gas, fertilisers and kerosene will help curb pilferage and leakages.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/717703.aspx>

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Jul 6

Max Min
33.7° | 25.7°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 75%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:47

Sunset: 18:39

Barometer: 1003

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Thursday, Jul 7

Max Min
35° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Jul 8	Saturday Jul 9	Sunday Jul 10	Monday Jul 11	Tuesday Jul 12
34° 28° Rainy	33° 27° Rainy	33° 27° Rainy	31° 26° Rainy	30° 26° Cloudy

6 Jul, 2011, 02.05AM IST, P K Krishna kumar & Madhvi Sally,ET Bureau

Chicken cheaper on oversupply

KOCHI | AHMEDABAD: Chicken prices have plummeted to below Rs 60 per kg with oversupply in the market. The current prices have put poultry farmers under pressure given the rising prices of feed. Producers say the glut could remain for a few more months. Egg and poultry prices have been contributing to high food inflation for the last six months.

The entry of new players into the fray, following a shortage of broiler chicks last year, has raised production. This has impacted chicken prices which are hovering in the range Rs 50 to 60 per kg in the wholesale market. The prices were higher by Rs 5 last month and were ruling well above Rs 100 a few months ago.

"At present, the cost of production is around Rs 47 per kg. Taking into account the commission of middlemen, any price lower than Rs 67 to 68 will not be profitable for producers," said Shabir Ahmed , secretary of Poultry Federation of India .

With an addition of over 1 crore to 1.5 crore poultry layer birds across Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Haryana, where major investment have been made in the poultry industry, chicken prices have crashed in the past few months.

"The production of broiler chicken has gone up by as much as 25%. Normally the consumption rises 10% annually. But this time consumption has doubled and still the excess production has not been covered," said Venkateshwaran, director of Kohinoor Hatcheries in Hyderabad. While the prices are falling, input costs are likely to rise. Already the price of maize, the main ingredient of chicken feed, has shot up by Rs 200 to Rs 1,300 per quintal, he said.

The glut-like situation is likely to remain for the next few months. "There is excess supply of broiler chicks available in the country which has reduced the prices of live chicken to Rs 45 to Rs 50 a kg," said Rajpura-based poultry farm owner Sandeep Mehta. He added that demand from New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jammu & Kashmir have increased in the past few days. Dressed bird prices were in a range from Rs 80 to Rs 150 a kg depending on the location, said an National Egg Coordination Committee) official.



Govt encourages private participation in grain storage

July 06, 2011 12:25:13 AM

PNS | Ranchi

The Food Corporation of India, along with the Food Corporation of Jharkhand, is encouraging augmentation of storage capacity under the private entrepreneurs' godowns as part of the 2008 scheme through Public Private Partnership.

"The scheme was launched in the year 2008, but it didn't pick up. At present, the State is facing problems in storage of food grains. Hence we are promoting the scheme among the investors," said Food and Civil Supplies Minister Mathura Prasad Mahato at an investor's meet for the promotion of the scheme on Tuesday.

The scheme known as Private Entrepreneur Godown Scheme which was launched in the 2008, didn't become popular among the Jharkhand's investors. The scheme was launched by the FCI and unable to store the food grains produced in the State.

“It has been a decade since the State has been formed. However, the Government has failed to store the food grains. Therefore it will provide every kind of help so that the produced food grains could be stored,” said Mahato.

Executive Director of Eastern Zone of Food Corporation of India, Shushil Nagpal said, “At present FCI is directly doing the agreement with the investors. The step has been taken as per the feedback we received. The scheme is running in eighteen centers in the State. The present storage capacity of the State does not even store a month’s food grain.”

“If the National Food Security Act will be implemented, then the requirement will be even more which can not be afford by the State’s food storage godowns. The scheme can boost the storage capacity of the State up to 4 to 5 lakh tonne,” added Nagpal.

The tender for the scheme was published on June 9. The last date for submitting the tender is July 18. The land, for which an investor will bid, must be in the name of the bidder.

General Manager of NABARD JK Barman said, “The investors are provided with subsidy up to 33 per cent for women entrepreneurs, Schedule caste and Schedule Tribe, up to 26 per cent for farmers and up to 15 per cent for others. We are not getting investors. The subsidy is provided within 15 days of application.”

The minimum capacity for the godown must be 5,000 metric tonne with preferably within 8 kilometres from railway good shed. The investor can also avail IT benefit under Section 35 AD. FCI is also giving 10 years guarantee of the said godown and looking after the storage crunch in all over the State. Presently, the FCI is paying `5 per square feet per month approximately as godown rent.

Business Standard

Wednesday, Jul 06, 2011

DGFT to start cotton export allocation today

Anindita Dey / Mumbai July 6, 2011, 0:41 IST



The Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) may go ahead with the cotton export quota allocation from the proposed date of July 6.

The issue assumes significance since eight or nine exporters all over India have been seeking a stay in the matter, taking objection to the new eligibility criteria set by DGFT for allocation of the quota this time.

Specifically, objection has been raised on the criteria of past performance, which was not there when the quota was allotted by the textiles ministry. The Andhra Pradesh high court, in response to one of the petitions, has asked DGFT to consider the application of the exporter. Informed sources said while DGFT may consider the application, there is no reason to postpone the process since the order does not specify either a stay in the allocation process, or an interim relief or change of parameter. The petitioner was of the view that by putting past performance as a criterion, DGFT is prohibiting eligible entities which could have exported this time due to surplus availability and falling domestic prices.

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

The government on June 9 notified exports of 1 million bales, in addition to the 5.5 million bales that got exhausted by January 15. The export quota was fixed based on projections that production this season could be a record 32.9 million bales. The Cotton Advisory Board had in February cut the estimate to 31.2 million bales, still a record. While the textiles ministry sees

production still lower around 31 million bales, the agriculture ministry has projected 32.9 million bales.

While registration for the additional quota began on June 20 and ended on June 25, applications got processed till July 5 and allocation of quota will be announced tomorrow. Exporters will be given time to present their documents between July 7 and July 15, while shipments will have to be completed by September 15, according to the schedule.

Cotton is among the very few commodities facing stringent measures over and above the norms laid out in the general trade policy. Cotton exports were allowed after the fibre's prices dropped about 35 per cent since the first week of April to Rs 40,000-41,000 for a candy (356 kg) of the Sankar-6 variety. Though 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.

Sugar prices hit 15-month high

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai July 6, 2011, 0:40 IST



With the prices rising, narrowing the gap between ex-mill and retail levels, experts have started looking at it as a turnaround in the sugar industry. The government's active discussion on decontrolling the sector and possibility of a further export quota has raised favourable hopes for the industry.

"Five months of consistent decline in ex-mill prices was arrested with the government's decision of fresh allocation of exportable quota this year," said Abinash Verma, director general, Indian Sugar Mills Association (Isma).

Verma added the ex-mill price of sugar rose on lower than expected quota release by the government in July.

Between February and June, the ex-mill sugar price declined to Rs 2,600 a quintal in Uttar Pradesh. It recovered Rs 100-150 a quintal on positive news, to trade currently at Rs 2,750-2,800 a quintal. Similarly, in Maharashtra, the ex-factory sugar price recovered by Rs 150 to

trade at Rs 2,600 a quintal. In both the major producing states, the ex-mill price is still lower by Rs 100 than the cost production at Rs 2,900 a quintal and Rs 2,700 a quintal, respectively.

“From this level, the price is unlikely to come back. So, we can say the fate of the sugar industry is turning around. The current retail price, however, at Rs 3,200 a quintal is at a 15-month high,” said a senior official with a UP-based mill.

Both S-30 sugar and M-30 sugar for stockists surged by Rs 25 in Mumbai on Tuesday to trade at Rs 2,761.50 a quintal and Rs 2,888.50 a quintal respectively.

In Delhi, sugar prices improved similarly, on lifting by bulk consumers and retailers. A reduction in arrivals also supported the sweetener price in the Delhi market.

Spot medium and second-grade sugar moved up from Rs 2,950-3,050 and Rs 2,925-3,025 to Rs 2,950-3,100 and Rs 2,925-3,050 a quintal respectively. Mill delivery medium and second grade prices also went up from Rs 2,750-2,940 and Rs 2,725-2,915 to close at Rs 2,775-2,975 and Rs 2,750-2,950 a quintal, respectively.

“Sugar prices are rising, with fundamentals suddenly turning favourable. The government granted permission for 500,000 tonnes of sugar export which the industry is not satisfied with. Isma has been demanding another million tonnes of export quota during this sugar year amid guarantee that the quantity will not squeeze supply in the domestic market. A slight reduction in Brazil’s crop estimate has also helped appreciate the price which we believe will continue in the days to come. This is a turnaround for the industry, as the recovery in price is likely to remain long-lasting,” the official said.

Meanwhile, Isma has urged the government to take some more measures to raise ex-mill sugar prices to the level of the cost of production. In a letter to the secretary, department of food and public distribution, Isma said the government’s decision to allow export of 500,000 tonnes of sugar has ensured ex-mill sugar prices do not fall further.

Sageraj Baria, managing partner, Equatorial Industry Alternate, an equity research firm, said, “Industrial demand, which contributes nearly 70 per cent of sugar consumption in India, has been continuously rising. Sugar sector in Maharashtra is highly political as it determines the fate of the state government. Since the state contributes over one-third of India’s sweetener

production, the government will not let farmers' and mills' economic condition worsen next year. From a realisations point of view, the condition of both farmers and mills remains scary this year.”

Transporting apple boxes from Himachal to cost more

Baldev S Chauhan / New Delhi/ Shimla July 06, 2011, 0:00 IST

Transporting apple boxes from Himachal Pradesh to markets in the rest of the country, during the upcoming harvest will cost around 20 per cent more due to the recent hike in diesel prices.

This decision has been taken at a meeting between the state government officials and the state truck operators union in Shimla. The three month long harvest will start by the middle of July. Due to huge demands, trucks come from across northern India to transport fruits to markets all over India. It will now cost Rs 63 to transport a 22 kg apple box from Rohru, a well know apple growing area in Shimla to Delhi and Rs 53 from Kotkhai to Delhi, an official of the state government said. The apple crop in Himachal Pradesh is expected to be around a third of last year's record production. And even this standing crop has been damaged by frequent hailstorms resulting in reduced market value.

THE HINDU **Business Line**

Tata Coffee expects normal output this crop year



Arabica production to increase due to large scale replanting

Bangalore, July 5:

With good bush conditions and favourable showers in majority of the estates, Tata Coffee expects normal output this crop year (2011-12).

Tata Coffee Chairman, Mr R.K. Krishna Kumar, in a note to shareholders said: "This coffee crop year (2011-12) will be 'on' year with anticipated increase in the crop."

"With the good winter showers during October and November 2010, the bushes are looking healthy and the prospects for the coming year appear to be good and the crop estimates indicate a good crop in both the growing areas of Kodagu and Hassan," he added.

The company's arabica output is projected to increase substantially in short-term with large replanting/consolidation programme undertaken at estate level.

In 2010-11, Tata Coffee harvested 1,670 MT of arabica as against 2,171 MT in the previous year. Arabica production was poor across all the three planting districts of Karnataka (Kodagu, Hassan and Chikmagalur). The decline is mainly attributed to failure of rainfall during the crucial months and also unusual and continuous rains during October and November.

After a record robusta crop in the previous years, the company harvested 6,620 MT last year as against 7,285 MT in the earlier year. The estates in Hassan did extremely well to harvest a record crop during 2010-11.

Starbucks

The company is gearing up to facilitate global major Starbucks' entry into retail operations in India.

Mr Krishna Kumar said: "The company entered into a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Starbucks Coffee International (Starbucks) for a potential strategic collaboration in areas of sourcing of coffee beans, coffee roasting facilities relating to Starbucks entering retail operations in India initially and other Asian countries at a later date."

With thrust on quality at every stage of operation, the company expects an increase in its share in the specialty coffee market.

“On the domestic coffee front, according to current trends, coffee consumption is expected to grow at the rate of over 8 per cent in the next five years. Instant coffee is expected to grow further from the current levels to about 15 per cent in the next five years,” Mr Krishna Kumar said.

Punjab Milkfed to export lassi

Chandigarh, July 5:

Punjab State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Ltd (Punjab MilkFed) plans to export traditional beverage 'lassi' to a host of countries including US, UK, Dubai and Australia next year, even as it eyes total sales of Rs 1,750 crore in current fiscal.

“We have plans to introduce our popular product lassi (yogurt—based drink) in overseas markets such as UK, Middle East countries as it has huge potential there because of lot of Punjabi population living in these countries,” Milkfed, MD, JS Kahlon told PTI here.

“We have been receiving a lot of queries from these countries for export of milk products but currently we are focusing on lassi only under our brand Verka,” he said, adding, “We will start export from next year”.

Milkfed has also sought from Centre to declare its Chandigarh—based milk processing facility to give certification for export in order to expand its overseas business. It has tripled capacity of its state of the art Ultra Heat Temperature (UHT) milk processing plant.

Currently, Milkfed is selling 'lassi' in domestic market only with expected sales volume of over 40 lakh packets a year.

Milkfed at present exports only one product 'Ghee' (clarified butter) to various nations such as Dubai, Oman, Bahrain, Doha, Kuwait, Muscat, Australia, New Zealand and Bangladesh.

“We also want to expand overseas market of our most popular export item Ghee in other countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong,” an official associated with the Cooperative's international business said.

Milkfed on an average exports 500 tonne of Ghee to other countries with average export value of Rs 15 crore.

“With the launch of new product and expansion of Ghee market, we want our exports to go up to Rs 25 crore,” he said.

Milkfed has a milk processing facility in Ludhiana which is certified for export.

With the rising procurement of milk and expanding domestic market, Milkfed is eyeing total turnover of Rs 1,750 crore by end of current fiscal, up by 18 per cent.

Milkfed is also aggressively adding 1,500 new cooperative societies in this year which will further boost its efforts to source milk from small dairy farmers across Punjab. Presently, it has over 6,000 societies.

'Pride of cows' milk brand launched in South Mumbai

Mumbai, July 05:

After expensively packaged bottled drinking water, milk seems bent on acquiring the “luxury” tag. Govardhan, a private dairy, has targeted the niche luxury milk sector and has signed up a select group of South Mumbai families to avail Pride of Cows, its new milk delivery initiative.

The milk comes from a herd of specially-imported Jersey-Holstein cross-bred cows. The brand will be available in one-litre bottles priced at Rs. 75 per litre, a jump from the average price of Rs 28 per litre. These cows are being given a special diet that abounds in iron, vitamins and Omega-3 fatty acids.

Trained, uniformed delivery staff will transport the milk from Govardhan's Bhagyalaxmi Dairy Farm near Pune to the homes of South Mumbai in a refrigerated vehicle. The South Mumbai families were selected following a survey done by the company.

“People have become very health conscious and have shown a lot of interest. State-of-the-art technology and temperature controlled logistics make it the first of its kind in the category. Pride of Cows brand will ensure mil that is exceptionally clean and low in bacterial count making it a healthy alternative,” Mr Edmund Piper, Bhagyalaxmi Farm Manager, said. Bhagyalaxmi Dairy Farm is spread over 35 acres housing 3,800 Holstein Freisens breed of cow. It is located between Bheema River and The Western Ghats in Manchar near Pune. “The milk is instantly pasteurized, chilled and packaged in bottles with no human contact to ensure that the milk is hygienically procured. In fact, every cow goes through an electronic health check up every time it is milked, to ensure that it is at peak health for milking,” Mr Piper said.

Take action against Monsanto, NGOs urge Jairam

Hyderabad, July 5:

About 260 civil society organisations and intellectuals have asked Mr Jairam Ramesh, Union Minister for Environment and Forests, to take action against Monsanto India Ltd for its violation of bio-safety norms in Karnataka. They have also called for stoppage of all open air releases of GMOs (genetically modified organisms) in the research and development pipeline.

In a letter , they have asked the Minister to take measures, fixing liability on regulators for their lapses and ensure removal of conflict of interest, if any, in the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee.

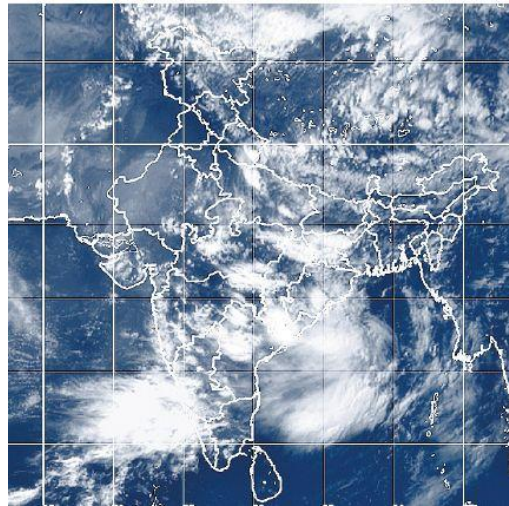
They have taken objection to GEAC clearing 25 acres of seed production of untested GM maize of Monsanto. “Even at an average yield of just 20 quintals an acre, the produce from these 25 acres will be adequate for 10,000 acres. This cannot be for research obviously and can only be for commercialisation,” they alleged.

On Monday, Greenpeace, the NGO, had claimed that Monsanto had violated bio-safety norms by leaving residues (GM corn cobs) on the field and refuge with farmers. The fields were not labelled, it alleged.

Monsanto, however, turned down the allegations as baseless. “We undertook limited seed production of biotech maize in Bijapur with the required permission and in compliance with guidelines in late rabi season last year. This information was proactively shared with State-level,

district-level and village-level authorities,” a Monsanto spokesperson said. “All necessary care has been taken from sowing to post harvest related to the seed production activity,” he said. The GEAC will meet in Delhi on July 6 to consider about 25 applications for tests and trials of biotech products.

Wet cover emerging over north peninsular India



Thiruvananthapuram, July 5:

The western end of the land-based monsoon trough too has shifted southwards signalling the possibility of rainfall spreading into central and adjoining north peninsular India. The eastern end had shifted to the south on Monday itself, and an upper air cyclonic circulation has since formed over west-central Bay of Bengal.

OFFSHORE TROUGH

The offshore trough along the west coast has extended overnight its reach from Gujarat coast to Kerala coast. A weather warning issued by India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday said that isolated heavy rainfall is likely over south Orissa and coastal Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday. But Telangana, Vidarbha and south Chhattisgarh are expected to receive isolated heavy rainfall on both Wednesday and Thursday. Subsequently, rainfall activity would scale up over northwest India. Maharashtra and Gujarat are also expected to make major gains from the emerging wet session.

MAJOR DEFICITS

Major deficit Met subdivisions in the peninsula (deficit in percentage figures) are Marathawada (50 per cent); Telangana (39); coastal Andhra Pradesh (24); Rayalaseema and Tamil Nadu (22 per cent each). Most of these are expected to receive precipitation in varying amounts during the current spell, although Tamil Nadu and Rayalaseema may possibly have wait until July 15 for the same. The two met subdivisions with scanty rainfall fall in Gujarat, where the western end of the northern limit of monsoon has been stuck for a long time now. But even here, some rains are expected during this current spell when these regions come under the footprint of a trough conjured up by the cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal in combination with the original land-based monsoon trough.

RAINS FORECAST

A short-term forecast valid until Friday said fairly widespread rain would lash Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Maharashtra, Marathawada, Lakshadweep Islands, Andaman and Nicobar and the west coast. But IMD sees Rajasthan getting only meagre rains during this round. Meanwhile, global models indicated that the southern peninsula might start getting its share of the second spell of monsoon from around July 15. These models do not see any low-pressure area/depression spinning up in the Bay of Bengal for this week and the week after. But the monsoon would need to brace itself for the possibility of a fresh tropical storm erupting over the northwest Pacific Ocean and tracking a north-northeast track for onward movement.

PACIFIC STORM

These away-moving storms are normally considered a drag on the monsoon flows directed towards the subcontinent but models see the monsoon system largely remaining in tact. If fact, it is during this very phase that southern peninsular India is shown to be benefiting from the second spell, post 'break-monsoon' phase.