THE HINDU

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Wednesday, March 16, 2011

Date:16/03/2011 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/16/stories/2011031664690900.htm

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Higher exportable surplus limit for cotton yarn sought

Special Correspondent

COIMBATORE: The Southern India Mills' Association has appealed to the Union Textile Minister to increase the exportable quantity of cotton yarn for 2011-2012.

Association chairman J. Thulasidharan has stated in a release that the Cotton Yarn Advisory Board that met on March 12 under the chairmanship of the Textile Commissioner earmarked 845 million kg as the exportable surplus for the next fiscal. The industry was permitted to export only 720 million kg in 2010-2011.

Mr. Thulasidharan said since cotton textiles were not covered under the Essential Commodities Act, it was not mandatory for all the spinning mills to furnish the monthly production details to the Textile Commissioner. Hence, the statistics available with the Commissioner was at least 15 per cent lower than the actual. Even with the data available with the government, the board could have permitted export of 870 million kg for 2010-2011.

Yarn stocks had increased in several mills for the last two months because of the restrictions on export.

Mr. Thulasidharan said the board had over estimated the yarn requirements for the domestic powerloom and hosiery sectors. The exportable surplus for 2011-2012 should have been 1120 million kg. He appealed to the Union Textile Minister to enhance the export limit to at least 1200 million kg and this could be reviewed later.

Date:16/03/2011 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/16/stories/2011031650560200.htm

Free training to set up agri-businesses

Staff Reporter

It will be held in Madurai, Puducherry

Trained graduates can get loans of up to Rs. 20 lakh

COIMBATORE: The Agri-Clinics and Agri-Businesses Training Centre of the Voluntary Association for People Service (VAPS), Madurai, will organise a 60-day free residential training programme for those interested in setting up agri-clinics and agri-businesses in rural areas.

A release from the association's nodal officer S.A. Arul says the programme will be conducted for unemployed farm and allied subjects' graduates to enable them set up clinics and businesses in rural areas. They can belong to veterinary, fisheries, forestry, agricultural engineering, horticulture, home science, rural science and agri-related vocational subjects.

The programme is expected to provide quality extension services to farmers in addition to providing self-employment. It will begin from the first week of April in Madurai and Puducherry and will include agri-business aspects, market survey and bankable project preparations.

Trained graduates can get loans of up to Rs. 20 lakh from nationalised and State co-operative rural banks. Credit linked subsidy at 36 per cent of the cost of the loan will be made eligible for general category candidates.

The subsidy will be 44 per cent for SC / ST candidates, women and disadvantaged sections of society from North East and hilly areas. Repayment waiver of up to six months is available.

Candidates from Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andaman and Nicobar islands, are eligible to attend the training.

Those interested can contact nodal officer at ACABC Training Centre, 39, Besant Road, Chokkikulam, Madurai – 625002; or call 0452-2538642 / 4361903 or 98942-46874 / 97874-09195; or e-mail to vaps_india@rediffmail.com; or contact the training centre at No. 72, Nallavadu Road, Thavalakuppam, Abisegapakkam Post, Puducherry – 605007, or call 0413-2618713 or 94435-69401 / 98437-76210.

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Chilli farmers stage protest

Staff Reporter

They demand remunerative price for their produce

— PHOTO: G.N. Rao

On the warpath: Chilli farmers staging a dharna in front of Agriculture Market Committee Chairman's office in Khammam on Tuesday.

KHAMMAM: Chilli farmers staged a demonstration in front of the agriculture market yard here on Tuesday resenting the alleged denial of remunerative price to their produce at the local market yard.

The farmers raised slogans alleging that they were not being paid remunerative prices though chilli was commanding a good price in the market.

They demanded that the authorities concerned should ensure a remunerative price of Rs. 8,600 per quintal of chilli to them on a par with the price being offered to their counterparts in Guntur and Warangal market yards.

A section of the agitated farmers locked the entrance of the chilli market yard in a symbolic protest.

They called off the stir following the intervention of the officials and representatives of various farmers' organisations who promised to ensure them remunerative price .

Telugu Rythu district president M. Sudhakar and others participated in the discussions with officials of the market yard .

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Sugarcane farmers stage protest

Special Correspondent

VUYYURU (Krishna district): Sugarcane farmers staged a dharna in front of KCP Sugars here on Tuesday resenting the Rs.1,900-a-tonne price offered by the management for this season and demanding Rs.2,500-a-tonne, in addition to charges for cutting and transportation.

The agitation was spearheaded by an all-party committee, and a meeting organised on the occasion was addressed among others by former Agriculture Minister Vadde Sobhanadreeswara Rao, Cane Growers Association state secretary N.V.S. Sarma, Cane Farmers' Association state vice-president Y. Kesava Rao, Rythu Coolie Sangham state secretary Koppula Kotaiah and Lok Satta party leader Chennupati Vazeer.

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Samiti demands pension for dryland farmers

Special Correspondent

'All aged farmers in the region should get Rs. 5,000'

GULBARGA: The Gulbarga District Raitha Horata Samiti today asked the State Government to provide Rs. 5,000 each as pension to all dryland farmers in the Hyderabad Karnataka region as a special gesture.

President of the samiti Kedarlingaiah Hiremath said here on Tuesday that the situation in the Hyderabad Karnataka region was different from that in other regions of the State, and the plight of farmers, particularly those who were totally dependent on rain for cultivation, was very bad.

Uncertain weather

Speaking to presspersons here, Mr. Hiremath said that the situation in the villages in the Hyderabad Karnataka region was pitiable, with aged farmers finding it difficult even to get one square meal a day because of extreme poverty. Due to uncertain weather conditions and the recurring failure of rains, the farmers, particularly those in the dry belt, were giving up agriculture and migrating to urban areas in search of employment.

The announcement of a special pension scheme for aged farmers would stop the migration, Mr. Hiremath said.

Mr. Hiremath said that the samiti, with the support of other like-minded organisations and the heads of religious maths, would take up an awareness campaign throughout the Hyderabad Karnataka region and organise youth in all the 1,500 gram panchayats to put pressure on the Union and State governments to amend Article 371 of the Constitution to provide special reservations in employment and educational opportunities to the people of the backward region.

Date:16/03/2011 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/16/stories/2011031654300500.htm

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Panel chief moots law on farmland

Special Correspondent

Ramakant Khalap says orchid lands can be converted into settlement lands

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Farmers urged to utilise water available through irrigation projects

Digambar Kamat says farming should be made economically viable

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PANAJI: The Chairman of Goa State Law Commission and the former Union Law Minister Ramakant Khalap on Tuesday mooted a legislation in Goa on the lines of Maharashtra and some other States where agricultural lands cannot be purchased by non-agriculturists.

Mr. Khalap was speaking at a high-level meeting convened by Speaker Pratapsingh Rane at the International Centre Goa to discuss strategies for agricultural development in the State.

He said that orchid lands in the State could be easily converted into settlement and industrial lands.

There was a need to review this system.

Referring to Mr. Rane's earlier observation that the tenants could not avail of even agricultural loans on their land because the tenancy lands in their favour were pending legal formalities, Law Commission Chairman advocated the need for a sunset clause in the Tenancy Act under which the tenants had to apply within two years for declaration of tenancy. He proposed a parallel revenue code wherein within a stipulated period ownership could be given to tenants.

He said there was need for farmers should use the water available to them through different irrigation projects and therefore there was a need to implement laws such as the Command Area Development Authority Act making it mandatory for the people to use the available water for the agricultural purpose.Chief Minister Digambar Kamat laid stress on the need to make farming economically viable for the farmers by enabling them to reap the fruits by bringing in use of better and cost-effective technologies.

The meeting was attended by MLAs, farmers, representatives of financial institutions, government officers and representatives of other institutions involved in agriculture development.

Mr. Rane laid stress on contract farming and better use of agricultural science to improve production and make it cost effective.

Date:16/03/2011 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/16/stories/2011031663810500.htm

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KDP meet favours Kerala policy to promote paddy cultivation

Staff Correspondent

It is mandatory for schools to take students to fields of farmers from 2011-12

On the decline:A paddy field at Kadri Kambala in Mangalore.

MANGALORE: The Karnataka Development Programme Reviewing Committee, Dakshina Kannada, at its monthly meeting here on Tuesday resolved to recommend to the State Government to emulate Kerala's policy to promote paddy cultivation in the district.

The meeting decided that from the academic year of 2011-12 all schools in the district should compulsorily take students on a field visit to educate them on the importance of agriculture. Schools should take students to the fields of progressive farmers to promote interest among them in agriculture.

President of the Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat K.T. Shailaja Bhat, who is also the chairperson of the committee, presided over the meeting.

Joint Director of Agriculture A. Padmaiah Naik said that the area under paddy cultivation in the district was dwindling. The youth were not keen on taking up agriculture. Many of them migrated to urban areas in search of jobs. If paddy fields were lost, the water-table in the district would be hit. He expressed concern over the decline in growing food crops in the district.

S.D. Sampath Samrajya, president of the Dakshina Kannada District Krishik Samaj, who is also a member of the committee, said that the Kerala Government gave monetary incentives to farmers who switched over to paddy cultivation. In addition, it had constituted a paddy task force. This task force comprised workers trained in paddy cultivation. It was a mechanised workforce. As there was a shortage of farm workers, those interested in paddy cultivation could contact the task force. The task force would cultivate paddy for such farmers for the cost agreed upon. This could be emulated in Dakshina Kannada, provided the State Government took a policy decision on it.

Mr. Samrajya said that schools should take students to the fields of progressive farmers instead of organising annual tours to places of worship. This would help in encouraging students to take up agriculture and become successful agriculturists in the future.

P. Shivashankar, Chief Executive Officer of the panchayat and secretary of the committee, said that farmers in Dakshina Kannada and Kerala followed similar agriculture methods.

Mr. Shivashankar said that the Department of Public Instruction under the panchayat would direct schools to take students to fields of farmers compulsorily from the next academic year.

Date:16/03/2011 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/16/stories/2011031660090500.htm

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Tobacco growers protest hike in cess

Staff Correspondent

Mysore: Tobacco growers from the regions of Mysore, Hunsur, Periyapatna, H.D. Kote, K.R. Nagar and surrounding areas will protest outside the Regional Marketing Office (RMO) of the Tobacco Board at Vijayanagar on Wednesday to press for their demands, which includes reduction of the additional cess imposed on tobacco sale.

Office-bearers of the Karnataka Rajya Tambaku Belegarara Hitarakshana Samiti said in a press release here on Tuesday that the late Chief Minister D. Devaraj Urs was instrumental in establishing the Tobacco Board to ensure the welfare of growers in the mid-70's.

However, certain vested interests had succeeded in dividing the farmers into two categories following which, unlicensed farmers faced hardships in selling their produce.

Increased

Following protests against this discrimination, the board imposed a cess of 5 per cent on the sale of tobacco. But this year, the cess was hiked to 15 per cent with a penal clause of 2 per cent and this had put a lot of tobacco farmers in trouble.The farmers demanded that the previous cess and penal structure be restored.The board should also make way for immediate sale of tobacco in the market, the samiti members demanded.

Date:16/03/2011 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/16/stories/2011031660040500.htm

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MLC candidate vows to focus on farmers' problems

NELLORE: Congress candidate for local bodies constituency Vakati Narayana Reddy said that he will try to solve farmers' problems in the district. He expressed confidence of winning the election as he provided many facilities for ryots during his tenure as Nellore District Cooperative Central Bank (NDCCB) chairman.

Addressing newsmen here on Tuesday, Mr. Reddy said that as he came from an agriculture family, he introduced short-term loan system and disbursed loans to the farmers for buying tractors. The bank also extended loans for purchasing seed, fertilizer and pesticides.

NDCCB has also proposed for issuing credit cards for farmers in the district.The bank which has only Rs.10 crore deposits has set a target to increase the deposits to Rs.100 crore. Opening of new branches is also under proposal, said Mr.Reddy.

The Congress candidate assured to fight for the rights of MPTC and ZPTCs and focus on providing medical, education, drinking water, roads, electricity and other facilities in rural areas in the district.

Date:16/03/2011 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/16/stories/2011031664320600.htm

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TDP demands interest waiver on crop loans for farmers

Staff Reporter

VIJAYAWADA: TDP district president and Mylavaram MLA Devineni Umamaheswara Rao has demanded that the government waive interest on the crop loans disbursed to the farmers from January to March last year in order to provide solace to them from the crop damages they had suffered.In a representation submitted to Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy by a TDP delegation in Hyderabad on Tuesday, copies of which were made available here, Mr. Rao said the farmers needed support in view of the losses they sustained during untimely heavy rain and ‘Jal' cyclone. The farmers also suffered heavily on account of lack of remunerative prices for the produce.Mr. Rao said the Chief Minister had promised to positively consider the demand for waiver of interest on crop loans. The delegation also stressed the need to make available new crop loans to the farmers in the coming season.Mr. Rao demanded that interest waiver should be offered to the farmersregardless of the loan component and the status of payments. The government should also take immediate steps and provide “Pavala Vaddi” to the farmers through the Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS).He said the government had promised to provide input subsidy to the farmers in view of the damage sustained during the

December 2010 cyclone and floods, but it had not reached the farmers so far. “Immediate steps should be taken to pass on input subsidy to the farmers. This would enable them to get ready for next crop,” he said.There was space for creating a network of godowns with a capacity of 2 lakh tonnes of paddy in the district and measures should be initiated to increase the godown capacity by the end of the Rabi, he said.

hindustantimes

Wed,16 Mar 2011

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Wednesday, Mar 16

Clear

Max	Min
33.2°	23.5°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 84%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 6:16

Sunset: 18:19

Barometer: 1007.0

Tomorrow's Forecast

Thursday, Mar 17

Cloudy

Max	Min
34°	24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20	Mar 21	Mar 22
28° | 23°	28° | 24°	27° | 25°	31° | 24°	31° | 24°
Cloudy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Partly Cloudy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES
Wed, Mar 16, 2011 | Updated 11.23AM IST

16 Mar, 2011, 05.01AM IST, Parul Bhatnagar,ET Bureau

Fertilisers: Higher subsidy to help cos maintain margins

The government's recent decision to substantially increase subsidy for complex fertilisers has made fertiliser makers key gainers on bourses in the past few days. Companies such as Coromandel International and Gujarat State Fertilisers surged at 9-20 % within the past couple of weeks. However, urea makers continue to languish waiting for clarity on subsidies. The government revised upwards the subsidy rates for FY12 on the back of rising raw material costs internationally.

The increase was substantial at around 30-45 % compared with the earlier announced numbers from November 2010 for complex fertilisers . This has put the revised subsidy for complex fertilisers for FY12 around 10-15 % higher from the FY11 level. Also, according to the new policy , the subsidy per tonne for the nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphate, and potash will increase by 18.3%, 11.9% and 0.6%, respectively, against the FY11 level. However, for sulfur, the subsidy will be 5.2% lower against the current year.

The stock market had reacted negatively to the government's announcement last November about cutting the subsidy rate for FY12. Lower grants were likely to decline the profitability of the fertiliser manufacturers significantly . Also, companies, which draw a major chunk of their revenue from complex fertilisers, were expected to witness a major hit on their profitability margins. Due to lower subsidy, these companies were under pressure to negotiate for lower raw material prices from global suppliers.

Also, pressure to maintain profitability was likely to result in sharp price increase to farmers by complex fertiliser players from April 1, 2011 onwards, as they had done after the implementation of the NBS policy in FY11. Revised subsidy rates are now likely to enable complex fertiliser manufacturers to maintain profitability margins, going forward. Furthermore, the revised rates are likely to benefit farmers as well since they will now avert the need to hike retail prices for producers.

According to a latest Crisil report, producers with strong supplier relationships will now be better placed to negotiate raw material prices, benefiting the industry at large. Therefore, the profitability of complex fertiliser manufacturers , which has improved in the first year (2010-11) of the NBS regime, is likely to remain healthy in 2011-12 as well.

Wed, Mar 16, 2011 | Updated 06.37AM IST

15 Mar, 2011, 11.21PM IST, Prabha Jagannathan,ET Bureau

Sugar price may shoot up once again

NEW DELHI: The price of sugar could shoot up once again, this time on account of the government, with the Finance Bill proposing to omit the commodity from the Schedule of Additional Duties of excise (goods and Special Importance) Act, 1957.

The change, which will come into effect on enactment of the Finance Bill, will empower state governments to impose VAT on sugar at a maximum 5% rate, in addition to the existing excise duty. Currently, that stands at Rs 38/qtl for levy sugar and Rs 71/qtl for free sale sugar, the level at which it has remained since 2006.

An exercised sugar industry has now written to food minister Thomas and the finance ministry urging that the provision be withdrawn at the earliest. "We'll have to pass on the hike in price on account of the VAT, which is different for different states, to the consumer at a time when the market price is already much lower than the production price," Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) director general A Verma told ET.

According to ISMA , if states choose to levy the maximum of 5% VAT on sugar in addition to the existing excise duty, the total levy (excise plus VAT) on free sale sugar (on an assumed price of Rs 3000/qtl) could be as high as Rs 221/qtl. Of this, VAT alone could total up to Rs 150/qtl.

Verma contends that in case state governments do decide to impose maximum VAT rate on sugar (5%), it would be tantamount to doubling taxes on sugar, a development that could impact retail price for sugar in the home market by Rs 1.50/kg if the Finance Bill is passed without addressing the issue.

Ironically, this comes at a time when the Centre has yet to allow free export (under OGL) of sugar, ostensibly for fear of sugar prices shooting up at home on account of a potential short supply A decision is expected to be taken on March 17, when a meeting of the empowered group of ministes (EGoM) on food is expected here. Yet, inexplicably, close to 11 lakh tonnes of sugar has been allowed for export under the Advanced License Scheme (ALS))..

The platform of private sugar mills has aleady taken this up with the food minister besides shooting off a letter to the Revenue secretary. "Since the addtiional excise duty has already been merged with the basic excise duty, VAT on sugar, if levied, will totally be in addition to the existing excise duty of Rs 38/qtl and Rs 71/qtl for levy and free sale sugar resepctively, " the sugar industry letter has emphasized.

Under the provisions of the existimg Additional Duties of excise (goods and Special Importance) Act, 1957, additional excise duty on sugar was payable at Rs 17/qtl on levy sugar and Rs 37/qtl on free sale sugar. However, after the government came out with Notification No. 7/2006-Central Excise dated March 1, 2006 under which the additional excise duty on levy and free sale sugar was merged with the basic excise duty and the total rate of excise was fixed at Rs 38/qtl for levy sugar and Rs 71/qtl for free sale sugar.

Crores spent but no succour for hill farmers

March 16, 2011 11:33:51 AM

GP Semwal | Pauri

The Uttarakhand Government has not yet taken any major step for increasing the quantity and improving the quality of agriculture production in the mountainous areas of the State. Though the State Government spent crores on the agricultural sector in Uttarakhand, no discernible improvement has been recorded on the ground.

Former Chief Minister Major General (Rtd) BC Khanduri had constituted a committee of eight members in February 2009 for framing the outlines of land consolidation in mountainous areas. The founder of the land consolidation movement and member of the committee of land consolidation policy, Ganesh Singh Garib, stated that land consolidation could not be achieved only on the cooperative basis until vital initiatives are allowed to achieve their logical consequences.

There is a vast difference in the agriculture production in the mountainous region and that in the plains of Uttarakhand. While farmers achieve a high yield on the fertile plains, the quantity of agricultural production in the mountainous regions is low. The condition of the farmers of the mountainous areas is so bad that the farmers are unable to grow sufficient food grains for their personal needs.

The farmers in the mountainous areas and the villages situated in remote locations have started to quit farming. Observers state that the main reason behind this is inadequate returns for the effort by the people in agriculture.

The Government has undertaken various efforts for the betterment of farmers. The department has established communication with the farmers in villages to provide them technical inputs, better seeds, fertiliser and manure.

For the last three years, a Government initiative titled Rath Yatra tried its best to help the farmers at the gram panchayat level, but despite spending lakhs only in one district, not much change took place.

The agricultural fields are scattered and comparatively smaller in size which prevents farmers from achieving satisfactory yield from the rabi and kharif crops. The only remedy to help the farmers and increase the production of the crops is through land consolidation and by facilitating irrigation. The step-farming system used in the mountainous regions is causing problems to the farmers, especially due to lack of adequate irrigation facility. Even ten years after creation of Uttarakhand State, successive State Governments have failed to facilitate development possible by land consolidation. The former Congress Government had started the initiative for the land consolidation and framed the Bhumi Sudhar Parishad Uttarakhand in the year 2004 but the Parishad limited its efforts to office work.

Minister's statement upsets wildlife activists

March 16, 2011   11:31:36 AM

The Forest Minister however invited wildlife conservationists' wrath by announcing that the State Government would consider allowing hunting of neelgais and wild boars for preventing crop damage any these animals.

The Minister in response to a query in the Assembly told that affected areas would be identified first and then selected persons would be authorised for this.

The statement however has not gone well with the wildlife activists. Volunteer activist Navnit Maheshwari on the matter said that it was unfortunate to allow hunting, as the State Government cannot sustain the same in controlled manner. He added that similar demands could be raised for other wild animals as well. Another activist Shehela Masood reacting sharply to this statement, criticised the move. She also has written a letter to the Chief Minister by claiming that the move would have considerable environmental impact in future. She further claimed that this will hamper the prey base of tigers in the State.

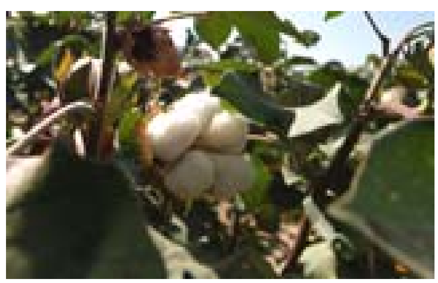
Business Standard

Wednesday, Mar 16, 2011

Cotton prices may prompt farmers to plant record crop

Bloomberg / Dubai March 16, 2011, 0:36 IST

Output may reach 40 million bales in 2011-12.Cotton output in India, the world's second-largest producer, may rise to a record for a second straight year as a rally in prices spurs farmers to boost planting, traders said.



Output could reach 40 million bales in the 2011-2012 season, said Parth Mehta, joint managing director of Bhadresh Trading Corp, the nation's top cotton exporter. India will produce its biggest ever crop in the current season that began October 1, according to a Cotton Advisory Board estimate.

Cotton in New York, a global benchmark, has more than doubled in the past year, peaking at an all-time high of $2.1 a pound on March 7, as global supplies shrank. Supplies and consumption will reach a record in the 2011-2012 season, industry researcher Cotlook Ltd said last month. “Price is by far the biggest incentive for the farmer to go ahead and plant more cotton,” said Mohit Shah, director of Mumbai-based Gill & Co, which has been trading cotton for more than a century. “It will come at the cost of soybeans, it could come at the cost of rice up in the north and chilis and tobacco down south.” Shah forecast next season’s crop at 35 million to 36 million bales.

Cotton futures surged 92 per cent in 2010, the biggest gain since 1973. The fibre is the top-performing commodity on the S&P GSCI Commodity Index in the past 12 months, ahead of silver and coffee. Prices slumped by the exchange limit of seven cents to $1.9 yesterday on signs demand from China may ease.

‘Huge crop’

Production in India is forecast to rise to 31.2 million bales in the current season, the Cotton Advisory Board predicted in February. That compares with 29.5 million bales last year and the record 30.7 million bales set in the 2007-2008 season. Farmers sowed 11.16 million hectares of cotton this season, the biggest ever crop.

“We expect a crop easily of 40 million bales, which is huge,” in 2011-2012, said Bhadresh’s Mehta. A bale in India weighs 375 pounds, or 170 kg.

Farmers may boost crop area by 15 per cent to 20 per cent in the 2011-2012 season because of higher prices, said Dhiren Sheth, president of the Cotton Association of India. The area planted with cotton in Pakistan, the fourth-biggest grower, may widen 10 per cent in the new season, Muhammad Atif Dada, chairman of the Karachi Cotton Association, said at a conference in Dubai on Tuesday.

“Cotton has performed much better in comparison with other commodities or other agri-products,” he said in an interview in Dubai. Farmers “are excited about cotton for sure,” Sheth said.

Commodities, stocks fall amid Japan disaster

Bloomberg / London March 16, 2011, 0:39 IST

Stocks and US futures sank, with the Nikkei 225 index posting its biggest two-day drop since 1987, while commodities slid and Treasuries jumped on concern a nuclear disaster is unfolding in Japan. Bahrain credit risk soared after Saudi troops entered the nation.

The MSCI World Index fell 2.3 per cent, while the Nikkei dropped 10.6 per cent to the lowest since April 2009 and Standard & Poor's 500 Index futures tumbled 2.7 per cent. Ten-year Treasury yields slid 12 basis points to 3.23 per cent and the two-year German note yield fell 15 basis points, adding to its longest run of declines since November 2009. The Swiss franc strengthened against its 16 most-traded peers, reaching a record versus the dollar. Oil lost 3.7 per cent to $97.41 a barrel.

Credit-default swaps insuring Japanese debt climbed to a record as Tokyo Electric Power Co's damaged nuclear power plant was rocked by two explosions on Tuesday as workers struggled to avert a meltdown that may lead to more radiation leaks in the wake of last week's earthquake. Saudi Arabian troops moved into Bahrain with a regional force in the first cross-border intervention since uprisings swept through parts of West Asia. "In addition to the tragic events in Japan, the market had to contend with a potential escalation of the West Asia situation," Gary Jenkins, head of fixed-income at Evolution Securities in London, said. "It would not be a surprise if the significant price moves of the last couple of days did not lead to problems elsewhere in the financial system."

Govt raises cane buy price by 4.2%

Reuters / New Delhi March 16, 2011, 0:25 IST

India has raised the price sugar mills must pay to cane growers from the next season starting October, government sources said on Tuesday, boosting sugar output prospects in the world's biggest consumer of the sweetener.

The possibility of higher output is also likely to boost the government's confidence about stocks and prompt it to allow unrestricted exports of 500,000 tonnes of sugar which has been awaiting clearance for about two months. Higher supplies from India will ease global prices which rose by about a fifth this year on supply worries from Australia.

In the current season to September, the minimum cane purchase price had been fixed at Rs 139.12 ($3) a quintal. The new price is about 4.2 per cent higher at Rs 145 a quintal.

"This is a welcome step even though mills have been paying much higher than the minimum price," said Vinay Kumar, managing director of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories, a producers' body of 250 mills.

He said this higher minimum price would encourage growers to plant cane in higher area and would result in higher production in 2011-12.

Kumar said mills have paid an average price of Rs 200 a quintal to growers in the current sugar season.

Last week, producers' body Indian Sugar Mills Association (isma) estimated the country's sugar output at 25 million tonnes for 2010-11, slightly higher than the government estimates of 24.5 million tonnes.

India produced 18.8 million tonnes in 2009-10, after a bad monsoon hit cane production in 2009.

Isma president Narendra Murkumbi said allowing more exports would help trim huge opening stocks for the next season which was also poised to be a year of higher output.

Trade and industry bodies have been seeking more quantity for exports under Open General Licence (OGL) to exploit high global prices and pass on the benefit to cane growers as local prices have fallen about a third in past one year amid improved supply prospects.

As a fallout of falling local prices, Indian mills' outstanding payments to cane growers rose to Rs 4,000 crore ($886 million) until December 31.

On Tuesday, London's May white sugar futures fell $7.7 or 1.1 per cent at $699.10 a tonne, while New York's raw sugar futures traded down 0.43 cent or 1.7 per cent at 27.32 cents a lb.

THE HINDU Business Line

Bear-grip on pepper continues

Kochi, March 15:

Pepper futures continued their southward move on bearish activities despite no change in the fundamentals.

It is totally in grip of bear operators who are pressurising those who took delivery of 2,500 tonnes from the exchange earlier to liquidate, market sources told *Business Line*.

March contract on the NCDEX dropped by Rs 244 to close at Rs 21,906 a quintal. April and May were down by Rs 212 and Rs 150 respectively to close at Rs 22,381 and Rs 22,688 a quintal.

Total turnover dropped by 233 tonnes to 7,275 tonnes. Total open interest fell by 195 tonnes indicating liquidation.

March open interest fell by 577 tonnes to 4,309 tonnes while April and May moved up by 357 tonnes and 13 tonnes respectively to close at 8,260 tonnes and 787 tonnes showing switching over and liquidation, they said.

The additional margin of 6 per cent today on both buyers and sellers over and above the 10 per cent mark compelled some traders to liquidate. The days left for the March cutting is also limited, three days. Therefore, small and medium operators who cannot afford to hold and pay the additional margin would either liquidate or switch over, they said. This scenario has been projected to pull the market down through panicky sale. But, spot sellers stayed away saying they do not want to sell at the current levels.

At the same time, availability of spot farm-grade pepper is very thin as sellers are not forthcoming. In fact, spot price is above the March delivery price and yet they alleged that there were no takers for exchange delivered pepper.

However, some of the exporters having pending commitments were opting to take delivery, they said.

Indian parity in the international market has come down to $5,050 a tonne (c&f) and there were buyers at this rate as the MG 1 is competitive in the market, they said.

Domestic buyers are keeping away from the declining market. Anyway, farm-grade pepper was not available in the market, they said.

As the Indian parity remained very much in line with other origins, there is every likelihood that some orders would come at the current rates. However, if the market moved up tomorrow then the situation might change, they added.

Fresh demand pushes up castorseed

Rajkot, March 15:

Castorseed prices on Tuesday increased slightly as fresh demand was seen in the market. However, spot market rates remained unchanged.

On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange (RCX), castor March contract increased Rs 19 to Rs 4,708 a quintal. RCX June contract gained by Rs 10 to Rs 4,612 a quintal. On the Ahmedabad Commodity Exchange (ACE) castor March came up by Rs 28 to Rs 5,086. However, the ACE April contract decreased Rs 26 to Rs 4,732.50 per 100 kg.

On National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, castor for March delivery increased Rs 66 to Rs 5,115 a quintal with an open interest of 4,500 lots. April contract reduced by Rs 8.50 to Rs 4,744.50 with an open interest of 9,850 lots.

Spot price remained unchanged at Rs 4,690 on the RCX. About 65,000-70,000 bags of 55 kg arrived in Gujarat and the price was Rs 940-970 for 20 kg. In Saurashtra, around 3,500 bags arrived and price was Rs 925-976 for 20 kg.

Market analysts said lower stocks position against a pick in demand at prevailing lower levels amid firm global trends, mainly pushed up castor seed futures.

An RCX trader, Mr Harilal Patel, said, “Today the market increased as traders were buying at a lower level. But as Holi festival is coming, there will not be a huge demand.”

Rubber pares losses on covering buys

Kottayam, March 15:

Domestic rubber prices improved on Tuesday. On the spot, the market moved up marginally on covering purchases at lower levels, following sharp gains on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE) and a late recovery on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM). Traders were mostly hesitant to enlarge their commitments as the impact of the global turmoil has not yet been completely analysed. According to observers, certain tyre companies were in the buyers queue but they kept a low profile.

Sheet rubber increased to Rs 187.50 (184) after hitting an intra-day low of Rs 180 a kg as quoted by the traders. The grade firmed up to Rs 187 (185) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to Rubber Board.

In futures, the March series improved to Rs 198.68 (191.04), April to Rs 205.70 (197.79), May to Rs 210.72 (202.62), June to Rs 216.50 (208.26) and July to Rs 218.02 (209.64) a kg for RSS 4 on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) declined further to Rs 201.38 (223.74) a kg at Bangkok. The March futures for the grade nosedived to ¥361 (Rs 200.84) from ¥405 a kg during the day session but then recovered partially to ¥375.7 (Rs 209.04) in the night session on the TOCOM.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 187.50 (184); RSS-5: 184 (180); ungraded: 180 (175); ISNR 20: 183 (183) and latex 60 per cent: 115 (115).

Govt claims to monitor GM crop quality

Business Line The new hybrid ELS Bt.cotton released by Mahyco Seed Ltd this year for commercial cultivation. (file photo): S Siva Saravanan
New Delhi, March 15:

The Centre today said it has adequate regulatory provisions to check the quality of genetically modified (GM) seeds such as Bt Cotton introduced by companies in the country. “The government has adequate regulatory provisions under the Seed Act, 1966, Seed Rules, 1968 and Seed Control Order, 1983, to check the quality of seeds introduced by companies in India,” the Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr Harish Rawat, said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. The Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) looks into the bio-safety aspects of GM crops prior to environmental release, he said. Besides, the Ministry of Environment and

Forests (MoEF) and Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) also have mandate to regulate the bio-safety of a GM products, he added.

Cashew up a tad on limited buying

Business Line Cashew nuts. File Photo: P. V. Sivakumar

Kochi, March 15:

Cashew prices moved up a few cents last week and business was done for W240 at around $4.35; W320 $3.95; W450 .o.b.); WS at around $3.40; LP at around $3.20 (f.o.b.). Even at the higher levels, selling interest was limited. Activity in the Indian market picked up – specially for brokens, trade sources said.

Raw cashew nut (RCN) arrivals continued to be slow. Clearer picture of RCN price trend will be available in April, but it certainly seems that RCN supply in India and Vietnam will be tight for a couple of months, may be more if a viable alternate route for movement of Ivory Coast RCN is not found quickly, Mr Pankaj N. Sampat, a major Mumbai-based dealer told *Business Line*. “Until shellers have covered a reasonable quantity of RCN physically they will be reluctant to make any large kernel sales because of the uncertainty of supply despite the high prices," he said.

Kernel buyers, he said, seem to be content to buy small volumes at regular intervals on hand to mouth basis. They are probably waiting for prices to come down before making any large purchases to replenish depleted inventories. For now, it does not seem whether supply will become comfortable soon. Till then, the continued buying for nearbys will support the market.

Even if the RCN flow picks up in April/May, initial prices will be high as most sellers are running out of stock. "We might see a softening of RCN prices in June/July, but that may not have immediate impact on kernel prices unless kernel offtake in the next two to three months is very low and buyers are able to extend their limited inventories for a few more weeks," he said.

A significant downward move in prices is possible only if during the second quarter, the RCN flow is normal and the kernel demand is very low. If supplies picked up in the third quarter it might not lead to lower prices as the third quarter is the peak buying period for all markets, including the largest consuming region, Asia, he said.

Outlook for the second half of the year continues to be hazy, traders said, adding that "everything points to a tight supply and firm market for next 2-3 months which might continue into third quarter if the RCN flow does not pick up in second quarter."

Lukewarm demand pulls wheat lower

Business Line A trader checking quality of wheat. File Photo: Shiv Kumar Pushpakar

Karnal, March 15:

Lukewarm demand in the domestic market has brought down wheat prices by Rs 10-20 a quintal in the last two days. Dara wheat prices ruled at Rs 1,225-1,235 a quintal against the levels of Rs 1,240-1,245 a quintal last weekend. For the finer quality, it was around Rs 1,240 a quintal. Mill delivery was quoted at Rs 1,225-1,235, while it traded at Rs 1,245-1,250 a quintal in the retail market on Tuesday.

Around 18 tonnes of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh. Following the stable demand and supply, prices of *Desi* wheat continued to rule flat. Around 15 tonnes of Desi wheat arrived at the Karnal grain market terminal and ruled at Rs 2,350-2,400 a quintal.

There is not much buying in the market as traders await the new crop. It is expected to arrive in the market from the first week of April, said Mr Mohan Lal, GG Agro Foods. As the harvesting is likely to start, tenders have been called by the Haryana administration to manage all the procurement, labour and transportation activities for the rabi and kharif season 2011-2012.

Flour Prices

With a downtrend in wheat prices, flour dropped by Rs 20 and ruled at Rs 1,220 for a 90-kg bag against the levels of Rs 1,240 quoted last weekend. Sluggish domestic demand pulled the prices down, said Mr Mohan Lal. Branded flour such as Lal quila was at Rs 150 for a 10-kg bag while Ashirwad and Rajdhani were quoted at Rs 210 and Rs 190 for a 10-kg bag, respectively. On the other hand, some buying lifted Chokar prices by Rs 20 from their previous levels and it was quoted at Rs 550 for a 49-kg bag.

Coconut oil slips below Rs 90 a kg

HIGH AND DRY: The prices of coconut and coconut oil have dipped owing to increased arrivals. Photo: S.Gopakumar

Kochi, March 15:

Much to the relief of millions of consumers, coconut oil prices have fallen below the Rs 90-a-kg-mark. Prices were quoting at Rs 89 a kg in the Kerala market, while it had plunged to Rs 84 in Tamil Nadu, said Mr Prakash B. Rao, Member of the Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA).

Although coconut oil prices in the retail market have begun to fall, consumption has not increased correspondingly. This is because most edible oils are price sensitive and prices of substitutes such as palm oil continue to rule almost 35 per cent lower than coconut oil, sources in the market said. Palm oil was quoting at Rs 58 a kg, while palm kernel oil was quoted at Rs 96. The sharp fall in the price of palm kernel oil which was ruling over Rs 110 a kg last month has also triggered the fall in coconut oil process.

As the prices continue to drift lower, traders have begun unwinding their stocks and arrivals have been increasing in the markets. As the falling price trend persists, no trader is willing to build inventories. All fresh arrivals find their way to the the market directly.

Peak production

Although late by a fortnight, the peak coconut production season has set in over Kerala and increased arrivals are noticed in local markets. Reports also indicate that peak production season is just round the corner in Tamil Nadu, which is ahead of schedule by a couple of weeks. In this backdrop of increasing arrivals and falling off take, trade sources said, prices would soon drop to Rs 80/kg levels. Industrial buyers have also been keeping away from the market waiting for prices to dip further.

Although Kerala production can be fully absorbed by local retail demand, much of the Tamil Nadu production goes for industrial demand for production of coconut oil-based hair oils, shampoos and other cosmetic products. Exports have ceased and they are not expected to prop up prices. As the industrial demand has almost been absent in the last couple of weeks, traders expected further price falls to be precipitated from the Tamil Nadu markets, which would have a cascading impact on Kerala prices.

Edible oils pare losses on global cues

Business Line Refined edible oils sold at a shop.File Photo: D. B. Patil
Mumbai, March 15:

The sentiment on the edible oils market improved as losses were pared after the Malaysian market closed higher on Tuesday. Crude palm oil (CPO) futures on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) rebounded in afternoon trade, rising on speculative buying interest and short-covering. Local refineries have increased the rates for palmolein, as fresh buying improved sharply. In the ready market, volume was thin, but in the forward market for deliveries up to May over 2,500 tonnes of palmolein were traded.

Indore soya futures also witnessed sharp volatility but closed higher.

In Mumbai, fresh retail demand on the spot was absent. About 50-60 tonnes was traded at Rs 558-560 in resale. Traders bet for forward trade and bought more than 2,500 tonnes of palmolein for future delivery. Resalers were quoting Rs 560-562, taking cues from firm foreign markets. Refineries also increased their rates. Liberty was quoting palmolein for Rs 570. Ruchi was quoting palmolein for Rs 557-559, soya refined oil for Rs 605 and sunflower oil for Rs 675. Allana quoted palmolein at Rs 570. In Rajkot, groundnut oil ruled unchanged at Rs 1,145 for *telia* tin and Rs 745 (Rs 740) for loose 10 kg.

Malaysia's BMD CPO March contracts closed lower at MYR 3,300 (MYR3,375), April at MYR3,428 (MYR3,363) and May MYR3,385 (MYR3,335) a tonne. Indore NBOT soya oil April contracts closed higher at Rs 605.40 (Rs.604.40).

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rates (Rs/10kg): Groundnut oil 740 (745), soya refined oil 595 (597), sunflower exp. ref. 635 (635), sunflower ref. 685 (690), rapeseed ref. oil 617 (610), rapeseed expeller ref. 587 (580), cotton ref. oil 592 (595) and palmolein was 560 (564).

Turmeric drops as arrivals swamp markets

Turmeric powder. - File Photo: K. K. Mustafah.

Erode, March 15:

Spot turmeric prices decreased Rs 300 a quintal on Tuesday on heavy arrivals of over 17,000 bags in Erode markets.

“We are having only five more market working days during the month of March and the buyers are very ‘cautiously' buying the product . Buyers are expecting further drop in the price of spot turmeric,” said Mr R.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, on Tuesday.

Sales low

He said: “The Nizamabad market opened on Tuesday and over 20,000 bags arrived there, so the prices in Erode market may come down in the next few days. Sales will improve in Nizamabad within a couple of days. Because of this trend, local buyers are quoting lower price.”

Mr Ravishankar said due to heavy production, the growers have been bringing huge stocks, but sales are very low. On Tuesday only 55 per cent of the stocks were sold. Farmers expect a minimum price of Rs 12,000 but as prices are declining they are not willing to sell. Traders are expecting the prices to go drop further.

In the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety fetched Rs 7,899 to Rs 10,469 a quintal, and root variety, Rs 7,500 to Rs 9,999.

Salem Crop

The finger variety was sold at Rs 10,219 to Rs 11,870 a quintal, root variety, Rs 10,000 to Rs 11,650 a quintal. Out of the 7,089 bags that arrived, only 715 bags were sold.

In the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 8,610 to Rs 10,629 a quintal, root variety, Rs 8,110 to Rs 9,896 a quintal. Out of the total 214 bags kept for sale, 199 bags were sold.

In the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 9,149 to Rs 10,729 a quintal, root variety, Rs 9,356 to Rs 10,099, a quintal. Out of the 702 bags that arrived for sale, 674 were sold.

In the Regulated marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 9,586 to Rs 10,609 a quintal, root variety, Rs 9,560 to Rs 10,109 a quintal. Out of the 1,483 bags kept for sale, 1,355 were sold.

Sugar steady as mills desist from selling

Business Line A teaspoon of sugar. File Photo: P. V. Sivakumar
Mumbai, March 15:

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market ruled steady on Tuesday, after a fortnight of bearish mood in the market. At present, price-level mills are unwilling to sell to avoid losses. On the other hand, better demand for *Holi* and summer supported the market. Local demand is need-based though. prices may move up once buying by stockists improves, said traders.

On Tuesday, spot rates declined by Rs 3-4 for normal and quality sugar. *Naka* and tender rates were steady. Traders are expecting good demand for sugar in the coming days. Traders in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal will increase buying in Maharashtra for summer. Low prices are giving the mills a hard time.In the last three months, tender rates for S-grade fell to Rs 2,620-2,630.

Local dispatches were 50-52 truck loads (100 bags each) and arrivals 48-50 truckloads. About 11-12 mills offered tenders and sold about 65,000-70,000 bags (of a quintal each) at Rs 2,645-2,690 for S-grade and Rs 2,700-2,745 for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 2,790-2,831 (Rs 2,786-2,835) and M-grade Rs 2,820-2,901 (Rs 2,826-2,901).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 2,750-2,770 (Rs 2,750-2,770) and M-grade Rs 2,800-2,840 (Rs 2,800-2,840).

Export enquiries boost chickpea

Business Line
Indore, March 15:

Pulses saw a mixed trend amid subdued demand in Indore *mandis*. Some demand and poor arrivals kept chana prices firm with chana (kanta) quoting Rs 2,370-2,375, chana (desi) Rs 2,325 and chana (mausmi) Rs 2,600-2,700 a quintal. Arrivals of chana in Indore *mandis* was comparatively weak on Tuesday with merely 3,000 bags being offloaded as against 6,000-7,000 bags on Monday. Chana dal also ruled steady with chana dal (bold) quoting Rs 3,050-3,075, chana dal (medium) Rs 2,925-2,950 and chana dal (average) Rs 2,800 a quintal.

Dollar chana or chickpea, which had crashed in Indore *mandis* on Monday, by about Rs 300 a quintal on record arrivals of 16,000-18,000 bags, gained Rs 100 at Rs 4,400-4600 a quintal with good inquiries from domestic and export markets and weak arrivals, with about 12,000 bags being offloaded in local *mandis* on Tuesday. Masoor also gained Rs 25 on improved demand from millers. In the spot, masoor (bold) quoted Rs 3,300-3,325, masoor (medium) quoted Rs 2,900-3,000 a quintal. Its dal also saw a corresponding gain with masoor dal (bold) in the spot quoting Rs 3,875-3,900, masoor dal (medium) Rs 3,750-3,775 and masoor dal (average) Rs 3,700-3,725 a quintal.

Tur and its dal, which saw a gain on Monday on improved demand from millers, declined by Rs 75 on Tuesday on slack demand with tur (white, Maharashtra quality) quoting Rs 3,925 a quintal, tur (red) Rs 3,900 and tur (Nimari) Rs 3,600 a quintal. Tur dal, however, ruled firm with tur dal (marka) quoting Rs 6,600, tur dal (full) Rs 6,000-6,100 and tur dal (sawa no.) Rs 5,200-5,400 a quintal.

Urad also declined by Rs 50-100 on weak demand. Urad (bold) in the spot quoted Rs 4,000-4,100 a quintal, while urad (average) quoted at Rs 3,400-3,600 a quintal. Urad dal on the other hand remained steady with urad (mongar) quoting Rs 6,600-6,800 a quintal, urad dal (bold) Rs 5,850 a quintal and urad dal (average) Rs 4,800-4,850 a quintal. Restricted demand and weak arrivals also kept moong firm. Moong (best quality) in the spot quoted Rs 5,000-5,100, while moong (medium) quoted Rs 4,200-4,400 a quintal. Moong dal also remained steady with moong mongar quoting Rs 6,200-6,300 a quintal, moong dal (bold) Rs 6,000 and moong dal (chilka) Rs 5,500-5,600 a quintal.

According to traders, tur and chana are likely to gain in the coming days on improved demand.

Coonoor tea turnover falls 3.92%

Business Line Tea pickers working in an estate in Munnar in Kerala. File Photo: K. K. Mustafah

Coonoor, March 14:

Producers who sold their teas through the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association (CTTA) in the first two months of current calendar earned Rs 2.07 crore less than in the corresponding months of 2010, reveals an analysis of the Market Reports.

This is because of lower volume being sold despite prices rising marginally.

In all, eight auctions had been conducted in January and February. Totally, 7.01 million kg (mkg) was sold against 7.34 mkg in 2010. On an average, every kg fetched Rs 72.41 against Rs 71.97 last year.

This increase of 44 paise a kg was inadequate to help producers net more revenue as they sold 33 lakh kg less. Consequently, the overall turnover dropped to Rs 50.76 crore from Rs 52.83 crore. This reduction of Rs 2.07 crore marked a decline of 3.92 per cent over last year.

Orthodox

In the case of orthodox teas which are mostly exported, higher volume was sold at higher prices. The volume sold increased to 5.41 lakh kg from 5.22 lakh kg and the price fetched rose to Rs 82.09 a kg from Rs 80.78.

Ctc

In the case of CTC teas, which are mostly consumed within the country, the volume sold was less but the prices fetched were marginally more. The volume sold dropped to 6.47 mkg from 6.82 mkg. The prices increased to Rs 71.60 a kg from Rs 71.29.

Export purchases

Export purchases had been weak in the last few weeks. Purchase has practically come to a standstill for Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Bahrain, Jordan, Syria, Morocco, Algeria and Oman due to internal unrest in West Asian and North African countries.

This is affecting exports despite opening India Trade Promotion Centre in Cairo last year. Prolonged severe winter in Europe, the CIS, especially Russia, and parts of the USA has frozen waterways hindering tea movement. Some shippers to Pakistan are complaining of delayed payment.

Talks on to finalise dairy plan

New Delhi, March 15:

The Centre on Tuesday said consultation with State governments is in progress for finalising the National Dairy Plan (NDP), which aims to achieve 180 million tonnes of milk production by 2021-22.

“Consultation with State governments is in progress for finalisation of NDP-Phase 1,” the Minister of state for Agriculture and Food Processing, Mr Arun Yadav, said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

The NDP phase-1, prepared by National Dairy Development Board, is a multi-State initiative to increase productivity of milch animals and thereby increase milk production to meet the growing demand, he said.

The minister said the government envisages to increase the share of organised sector in milk from the current 30 per cent to about 65 per cent of total marketable surplus of milk by year 2021-22.

20 MoUs signed in farm sector over 3 years

New Delhi, March 15:

India has inked 20 MoUs in the field of agriculture with the US, Russia, Italy and others in the last three years for cooperation in research and development and capacity building, Parliament was informed today.

Besides fostering bilateral partnership, India also entered into agreement in the farm sector in multilateral format.

Broad-based and inclusive multilateral cooperation is pursued through international organisations such as Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP) etc, the Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.