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Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030862990800.htm>

Farmers suggest an alternative to textile industry

L. Renganathan

KARUR: The Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association has urged the textile industry to experiment with use of potassium chloride and potassium sulphate instead of sodium chloride for textile dyeing process to reduce damage to water sources, agricultural land and crops.

Dyers of textile related industries mostly use sodium chloride (common salt) for colouring and bleaching purposes. In the Tirupur and Karur belt that has more than a thousand dyeing and bleaching units around 800 tonnes of sodium chloride is being dumped and washed off in an estimated seven crore lakh litres of water that mostly finds its way to the water sources and bodies, including the Noyyal, Amaravathy and Cauvery rivers.

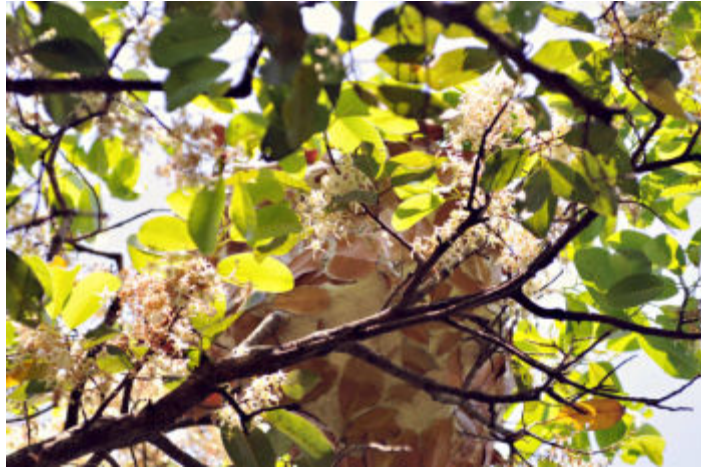
Even if they all were to be treated and then let out, the effluent mixed water spoils the ecology irreversibly altering the nature of the land, its users and water and its consumers, including human beings and livestock. Agriculture suffered at the hands of polluters and farmers were put to great hardship.

Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030852410200.htm>

This tree knows its bugs and bees

Staff Reporter

However, the ever-hungry metropolis could well spell the thalli mara's doom



HEADY BLOOMS: Apart from its role in shellac production, 'thalli mara' is a favourite of bees, lending the honey an excellent flavour.

BANGALORE: It is a depressingly familiar story: a much-loved species endangered by the pressures of an unplanned metropolis. The 'jalari' or 'thalli mara', once seen thriving in and around Bangalore, and which inspired a former ruler of Mysore to establish an industry, is now restricted to a few pockets due to rapid urbanisation.

Such as been the decline in the number of the Shorea talura that it has joined the International Union for Conservation of Nature's red list of endangered species.

Shellac production

The taloora lac tree, primarily found around Bangalore district, hosted the lac beetle whose female produces the resin shellac. The latter, a raw material in the production of paints, varnish and gramophone records, moved the then Mysore king Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar to establish the Mysore Lac and Paint Works in 1937.

This tree not only has economic value but also produces a heady fragrance, which can reach around a 2-km radius.

Natural seed bed

Explaining the tree's terminal decline, A.N. Yellappa Reddy told The Hindu that the Shorea talura requires a natural seed bed for germination in the natural regeneration process, as it is very difficult to regenerate artificially.

“The numbers dwindled in the absence of natural seed beds,” he said.

On Wednesday, the Institute for Natural Resources Conservation, Education, Research and Training (INCERT) and Bangalore Environment Trust showcased some heritage ‘thalli maras’ in full bloom with pure white flowers in Kalkere ex-site arboretum on Bannerghatta Road.

“During the colonial times, this tree was chosen as a host for the lac beetle (*Laccifer lacca*) to encourage lac production as a commercial activity,” Mr. Reddy said.

This was the only species that had the exceptional ability to support three extractions of shellac per year, according to the INCERT, which said nearly three lakh lac beetles are required to produce 1 kg of shellac.

For bees too

For the bees, this tree offers the first food of the season as it blossoms between February last week and first week of April. “Honey derived from the honeycomb of bees feasting on this blossom give an excellent flavour,” Mr. Reddy added.

The good news is that efforts are on to save this tree and improve the numbers. “We have given 80 saplings to the Horticulture Department and intend to plant about 200 saplings across the city this year.” Besides Swami Vishnumayananda of the Ramakrishna Ashram at Shivanahalli, adjoining the Bannerghatta National Park, is also making efforts to regenerate this endangered species by creating a Jalari Vana, he added.

Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030860630300.htm>

Seminar on rice milling

Staff Reporter

BHUBANESWAR: Food Supply and Consumer Welfare Secretary Ashok Meena here on Monday said a multi-department core group consisting of departments like agriculture, industry, IPICOL and cooperative should be set up to make a policy roadmap for the rice mill sector.

Addressing a seminar on “Rice Milling and Food Processing” organised as part of the Seventh Entrepreneurship Week, Mr. Meena said considering the huge potential of the rice mill sector, there should be a policy framework for its growth.

Districts like Sambalpur and Bargarh have the good number of rice mills, but in Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Dhenkanal, Angul, Keonjhar the number was meagre, Mr. Meena said.

Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030860990400.htm>

Inflation will decline this month, says Rangarajan

Special Correspondent

Chennai: Inflation will show sharp decline in March, following the downward trend in vegetable prices, C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, said on Monday.

Talking to reporters at the Madras School of Economics (MSE), Dr. Rangarajan, also the MSE chairman, said an important factor contributing to headline inflation and food grain prices was the rise in prices of vegetables. As the prices had started coming down from the middle of February, the inflation figures for February might not capture the decline in prices. “One can expect a much sharper decline in March.”

Oil prices

He said that the increase in crude oil prices due to the political crisis in the Middle East would be the primary concern for India. If crude oil prices remained above \$100, it would be a cause for concern.

“The import bill will go up. It will require some action on our part.” Unless there was some adjustment in petroleum prices domestically, the subsidy burden would enormously increase. Some adjustment in terms of raising prices of petroleum products would become inevitable if the crude prices continued to remain at this level, he said anticipating a clear picture in a few weeks' time. On the levy of service tax on healthcare in the budget, he said the idea was to widen the service tax base. Basically one should move to a situation where all services, except those which are to be excluded, must be taxed as part of the widening of the tax base.

Asked for his comments on the increase in Minimum Alternate Tax on Special Economic Zones, he said the idea behind it was that all companies should pay a certain minimum tax if they book certain profits.

Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030853660400.htm>

Sugarcane farmers to meet Yeddyurappa on payment of dues

Staff Reporter

— Photo: K. Murali Kumar



Seeking justice:Members of the Karnataka Sugarcane Farmers' Association taking out a protest rally in Bangalore on Monday.

BANGALORE: Sugarcane farmers, who staged a dharna here on Monday seeking cane price for 2010-2011 season and payment of dues from the last season, will be meeting Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa on Tuesday to sort out the issue.

“Farmers have been invited for a meeting with the Chief Minister on Tuesday to discuss our problems. We have been asking for cane price for 2011-2012 and enactment of State Advisory Price Act, which was promised by the Chief Minister last year,” said president of Karnataka Sugarcane Growers' Association Kurubur Shanthakumar.

He said: “Sugar factories across the State have not made payments to the farmers in the last three months, which is to a tune of Rs. 300 crore. Apart from this, the factories have also not paid to the farmers Rs. 200 a tonne that should come as part of second payment and this is to a tune of Rs. 250 crore.”

Procession

Meanwhile, on Monday morning, the farmers took out a procession from the city railway station and were stopped by the police at Freedom Park.

When the farmers sat on dharna, Minister for Sugar S.A. Ravindranath met them and promised to convene a meeting. “We received call from the Chief Minister's office informing us of the meeting on Tuesday,” Mr. Shanthkumar, said.

Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030853820400.htm>

No concrete policy to revive farm sector: Revanna

Special Correspondent

1,800 posts vacant in Horticulture Department Only funds released by the Centre spent



H.D. Revanna

Bangalore: Janata Dal (Secular) Legislature Party Leader H.D. Revanna on Monday said the State Government had failed to evolve a concrete policy to revive the agricultural sector.

Speaking on the State budget for 2011-12 in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Revanna alleged that the lack of political commitment, vacant posts and non-utilisation of funds and poor service delivery of the staff led to distress in the agricultural sector in the State. The Government had been spending only funds released by the Centre under various centrally sponsored schemes. The State Government's contribution to the revival of the farm sector was negligible, he said.

Under the National Horticultural Mission, the Centre had released Rs. 120 crore in 2010-11 while the State's contribution was just Rs. 20 crore. Nearly 1,800 posts have been remained vacant for the past several years in the Horticulture Department alone, the Janata Dal (Secular) leader said.

On account of the ineffective market intervention scheme, the area under potato crop declined from 45,000 hectares to 15,000 hectares in Hassan district. The Government has no genuine concern to the poor and this has been witnessed by sharp fall in the money spent on providing jobs to the unemployed youth under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee scheme, Mr. Revanna alleged.

The Water Resources Ministry had neglected irrigation projects coming under the Cauvery basin in the State and focussed on expediting works of the Krishna basin projects. The Ministry had failed to utilise funds given under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme of the Centre, Mr. Revanna alleged.

English medium

Mr. Revanna made a plea for a change over to English medium up to 4th standard in government schools in rural areas as there was an exodus of students to private English medium schools in the taluks. Or else, he demanded that all schools should follow Kannada as the medium of instruction. While the private schools were allowed to conduct classes in English medium, government schools were mandated to teach in mother tongue, affecting lakhs of poor children.

Intervening, Primary and Secondary Education Minister Vishveshwara Hegde Kageri said that the Government was committed to the policy of teaching in mother tongue, but had asked the schools to teach English as a subject. Even the Union Government had informed the Supreme Court that the primary education should be in mother tongue. Bandeppa Khashempur (JD-S) said how could the children learn English when there were lack of English teachers and that was why the result was low.

Mr. Revanna said that this had also led to mushrooming of English medium schools fleecing poor farmers, whose aspiration was to see their children speak in English and perform well in the job market.

Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030861810500.htm>

Fishermen urged to opt for cage fishing

Correspondent

New technologies are the only way forward, says DC

Karwar: The future of the fishermen who depend on the sea for the traditional fishing appears bleak.

To improve their lot, new technologies should be introduced and the cage fishing will give a new dimension to the fishing activity, said Deputy Commissioner B.N. Krishnaiah here on Monday.

Addressing the 10-day workshop on “open sea cage culture of marine finfish and shellfish” at the District Science Centre here on Monday, Mr. Krishnaiah said climate change and unscientific fishing was the main reason behind the “fish drought” in the region. Nearly 30 good

beaches were lost to Navy between Ankola and Karwar owing to the project Seabird and these beaches were out of reach of the fishermen, he said.

The traditional nets were disappearing.

In such conditions, cage fish culture and other fish culture would help the fishermen, Mr. Krishnaiah said.

P.M. Tandel, a member of national marine development board who presided over the meeting, said lack of resources and unemployment had affected the fishermen community and many fishermen in India were migrating to other places because of unemployment.

New and developed technologies should reach such fishermen, he said.

K.K. Phillipose said the Central Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) was introducing the floating fishing cage in 14 places in the coastal India.

CMFRI with the help of local fishermen in Karwar had taken up the project in Karwar. This new method of fish development had a good scope.

The CMFRI had arranged a seminar on cage fishing with the help of National Fish Development Corporation. In the coming days, it would help fishermen in the region he said.

Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030861870500.htm>

Areca growers protest in Sirsi

Correspondent

SIRSI: Thousands of areca growers held a protest march on the main roads of Sirsi demanding support price of Rs. 14,800 a quintal for red areca and Rs. 11,400 a quintal to white areca and to release Rs. 100 crore from agriculture revolving fund to co-operative societies to purchase areca under the leadership of Totgars Sale Society President Shantaram Hegde Shigehalli, Taluka Marketing Society President G.M. Hegde Hulgol, Yellapur Taluka Agriculture Produce Cooperative Marketing Society (TAPCMS) and Siddapur TAPCMS president R.M. Hegde

Balesar on Monday. They submitted a memorandum addressed to Chief Minister Yedyurappa through Assistant Commissioner G. Jagadish.

In the memorandum, there was a mention that 40 per cent of areca rate had crashed because of ban on the use plastic in packing Gutkha pouch and areca growers are in distress.

There was also a mention that the Centre was going to implement the direct taxes code (DTC) from 2012 and it would be a great blow to cooperative societies and to farmers indirectly.

The protesters had appealed to Chief Minister to take the initiative to convince the Prime Minister to drop DTC.

Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030862250500.htm>

Arecanut growers stop train in Davangere

Staff Correspondent

They want Centre to announce MSP for arecanut

'Arecanut prices have come down in recent times'Ask Supreme Court to review its order on gutka sale'



DEMANDING SOLUTION:Farmers staging a protest at the railway station in Davangere on Monday.

DAVANGERE: A large number of arecanut growers from over six districts on Monday stopped the Hubli-Bangalore passenger train and staged a dharna on the track at the railway station for some time demanding that the Union Government announce minimum support price (MSP) for arecanut.

They also wanted the Centre to appeal to the Supreme Court to review its order banning the sale of gutka and other arecanut products in plastic sachets.

Led by Kodihalli Chandrashekar of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, the former Chennagiri MLA Vadnal Rajanna and head of the Virakta Math at Pandomatti in Chennagiri taluk Huchavanahalli Manjunath, the protesters took out a rally from Jayadeva Circle to the level-crossing near Ashoka Cinema where they stopped the train. Later, they went to the Deputy Commissioner's office, staged a demonstration and submitted a memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister. In the memorandum, the protesters demanded an MSP of Rs. 16,000 a quintal for first quality arecanut and Rs. 12,000 for 'chali'.

Stating that they were facing hardship due to the sharp decline in the prices of arecanut, the protesters said that several of them had started selling their farmland to clear debts.

The price of arecanut had come down by Rs. 4,000 a quintal after the Supreme Court ruling as several companies had stopped buying arecanut, they said. They said the agitation would be intensified if the Government failed to address their problems immediately.

Date:08/03/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030850160300.htm>

Call to telecast farm achievements

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: District Collector K.N. Satheesh has stressed the need for highlighting the successful experiences of farmers on television to disseminate their innovations and research achievements.

Mr. Satheesh was speaking after inaugurating a seminar on coconut cultivation in Kerala, 'Kera Keralam,' hosted jointly by Doordarshan and the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) here on Monday.

George V. Thomas, Director of the institute, presided. C. Thamban, Senior Scientist, presented the topic of the seminar.

The panel of experts comprised R. Hali, retired Director of Agriculture; R. Chandramohanam; R.V. Nair; K. Muralidharan; A.C. Mathew, Senior Scientist; and P. Subramanian, Senior Scientist, CPCRI.

P.C. Balakrishnan of the College of Agriculture, Padannakkad; K.M. Sreekumar, Associate Professor at the college; K.P. Jayarajan, Assistant Director of Agriculture; the 'Karshakamithra' Kerakesari award-winning farmer C.M. Mohammed; and the Karshakasree award-winning farmer Kunhahammed were present.

Nearly 300 framers from the district participated. Doordarshan Kendra, Thiruvannathapuram, will telecast the proceedings of the seminar by March-end, a CPCRI release here said.

Date:08/03/2011 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/08/stories/2011030852990300.htm>

Farmers demand minimum support price

Staff Reporter

NELLORE: Hundreds of farmers who were on indefinite fast for the past two days organised a rally and staged a dharna in front of the Collectorate here on Monday, demanding the government to solve their problems.

The protestors criticised the government for not responding to the agrarian problems though the farmers under the aegis of 'Akhila Paksha Rythu Sangam', were observing fast seeking Minimum Support Price (MSP), procurement of stocks by the government and on other demands.

Mild tension prevailed for a while when the farmers insisted that the Collector take representation from the sangam leaders and address the agitators. Joint Collector Saurabh Gaur and District Revenue Officer G.V.Jayaramaiah came to the Akhila Paksha Rythu Sangam leaders and held talks with them. The Joint Collector said meetings would be held with farmers and Rythu Sangam leaders on every Tuesday and the farmers can raise the problems, if any, during the meeting. Following the assurance by the officials, the Rythu Sangam leaders called off the indefinite fast.

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 Tue, 08 Mar 2011

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Tuesday, Mar 8

Max Min

35.6° | 20.9°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 62%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 6:21

Sunset: 18:18

Barometer: 1012.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Wednesday, Mar 9

Max Min

33° | 20°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Mar 10

Friday

Mar 11

Saturday

Mar 12

Sunday

Mar 13

Monday

Mar 14



33° | 22°

Sunny



31° | 21°

Partly Cloudy



31° | 22°

Cloudy



31° | 24°

Cloudy



31° | 25°

Partly Cloudy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Tue, Mar 08, 2011 | Updated 10.31AM IST

8 Mar, 2011, 01.33AM IST, Bikash Singh,ET Bureau

North-east to be rubber producing hub

GUWAHATI: Farmers in the North East are taking to natural rubber cultivation in a big way. The seven states of the region, with 14% of the total rubber plantations in the country, together produce 38,600 tonne of rubber.

The Rubber Board has drawn up plans to make the region the next rubber-producing hub as the scope for further expansion in traditional rubber-growing states Kerala and Tamil Nadu is limited. Tripura is the second largest producer of the tree after Kerala. The Rubber Board is investing around `170 crore for the expansion of rubber cultivation during the 11th Five-Year Plan. At least 4.5 lakh hectare has been identified as suitable for the crop and around one lakh hectare has been brought under the rubber crop. By the end of the 12th Plan, an additional 60,000 hectare is likely to be brought under rubber cultivation.

There are around 88,000 farmers involved in rubber farming and most of them are tribals with holdings of one hectare and annual earnings of over `4 lakh. KG Mohanan, additional rubber production commissioner, Rubber Board, told ET, "There is a surge in the demand for rubber in both domestic and international markets. Of the land identified suitable for rubber, Assam alone has about 2 lakh hectares." He said rubber plantations help to arrest the practice of 'jhum' (shifting) cultivation, which affects environment. There are 240 dealers who procure rubber from

the producers. "The traders want one truck load (10 tonne) everyday. However, it is not possible to meet such volume," market sources said.

Rubber started gaining popularity in the mid-80s in North-East when the Rubber Board launched a scheme for accelerated rubber development in the region. The scheme provided incentives, subsidies and free extension support to encourage small growers in the region to take up rubber cultivation. Presently, clones like RRIM 600, RRIL 105, PB 235 and RRIL 414 & 430 are popular in the region. Mohanan added, "We are trying to develop new varieties keeping in mind the humid and cold climate of the region."

8 Mar, 2011, 01.29AM IST, PK Krishnakumar,ET Bureau

Turmeric prices remain firm on export demand

KOCHI: Turmeric prices have remained buoyant despite an increase in supplies due to the higher export demand. Supplies rose in the main markets of Erode and Nizamabad which opened on Monday after Shivaratri holidays.

The demand from the Gulf countries, the main export market, has picked up leading to a firm price trend in Indian markets, trader RK Vishwanathan said. The spot price touched `11,700 per quintal in Nizamabad market on Monday. In Erode, it was slightly lower at `11,200 per quintal. He said the supplies have increased to around 40,000 bags (each bag of 70-75 kg). Further, the carryover stock of 1 lakh bags is still remaining. "Farmers are holding on to the stock in expectation of higher prices," he said.

The near-month futures contract is also showing a firm trend with the contract for April delivery at `10,500 per quintal. "The April contract could rise further to touch `11,200 per quintal as farmers are not ready to sell at this price," said Nalini Rao, senior research analyst of Angel

Commodity Broking . But by May, supplies flooding the market may push the prices below `10,000 per quintal, she said.

Escalating prices affected turmeric exports which slid 13% for the ten months ended January 2011 at 38,000 tonne. But, there was a gain of 74% at `551 crore in value terms for the period thanks to the soaring prices. Now, there are increasing enquiries from the overseas market for Indian turmeric and this could take exports to the last year's level of 50,750 tonne.

Production is expected to be around 69 lakh bags in 2010-11, up by nearly 44 %. This will reflect on the prices in the long term. But the buoyant demand from local and overseas markets will arrest the fall in prices to a great extent, Nalini Rao said. The prices had touched a high of `16,000 per quintal last year before falling to the present levels.

Business Standard

Tuesday, Mar 08, 2011

High prices, poor quality hampers jeera exports from Gujarat

Rutam Vora / Mumbai/ Ahmedabad March 08, 2011, 0:08 IST

The exports of Jeera (cumin seed) from Gujarat are likely to take a hit as prices soar by over 40 per cent as compared to last year. The escalation in prices is on account of a delayed arrival and poor quality of the seed following untimely rains in the key growing regions, Gujarat and Rajasthan, over past couple of months.

The prices had shot up to Rs 18,000 per quintal in the spot market at Unjha recently on fears of a possible fall in demand due to poor quality and high prices. The jeera production is pegged at around 25 lakh bags (a bag = 55 kg) this season, almost stable in comparison of last year. The

total exports from Gujarat have been at around 8-9 lakh bags last year. But this year, the exports are feared to dip to less than five lakh bags.

"This year, jeera prices are up by around 40-45 per cent from the last year. This is driven by lower carryover stock, which is only 5 lakh bags this season against 15 lakh last year. This is causing prices to stay high, thereby affecting exports. But the exports are usually dependent on the crop situation in Turkey and Syria. So let's see what comes up from there after April. But this year, jeera exports will remain less than five lakh bags," said Arvindbhai Patel, former president, Chamber of Commerce Unjha APMC. According to market insiders, the exports of jeera during April 2010 - January 2011 has fallen by 36 per cent at 26,000 tonnes against 40,800 tonnes recorded in the corresponding period previous year.

According to market experts, there is a damage of around 10 per cent to the crop. "This year, we see a wastage level of about 20 per cent in the total crop, which was about 10 per cent more than last year. This is mainly because of untimely rains in past couple of months. Though the domestic demand is firm, there is a fall in exports due increased prices and poor quality. So far only 10 per cent of exports have taken place this year," said Gaurangbhai Patel, president, Unjha APMC, a largest jeera market in India. However, the lower quality seed is also exported to neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The arrivals have started pouring in the markets at Unjha APMC pushing the prices to go down. According to market sources, the prices are hovering anywhere between Rs 11,000 per quintal to Rs 16,500 per quintal at present. The arrivals at the Unjha APMC was recorded at around 15,000 to 17,000 bags (a bag = 55 kg) on Monday. Gujarat is the largest producer of the spice seed, with a total production exceeding 22 lakh bags. Saurashtra, Kutch and North Gujarat region are the key growing areas in the State. Last year, Rajasthan contributed about 5-7 lakh bags with cultivation mainly focused in southern part of the state.

UP to procure 3.9 MT wheat

Virendra Singh Rawat / New Delhi/ Lucknow March 08, 2011, 0:00 IST

Uttar Pradesh, India's leading wheat producer, is targeting to procure 3.9 million tonnes (MT) of wheat in the 2011-12 season beginning April 2011.

This comes in the backdrop of bumper wheat production estimates for the coming season. According to the state agriculture department, the state wheat production is likely to increase by 4.5 per cent to 28.83 MT compared to 27.5 MT last year. The wheat acreage is estimated at 9.61 million hectares.

The procurement season would start from June 30 and the government has directed food department officials to meet the target and ensure payment of minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 1,120 per quintal to farmers. A major portion of wheat produced is retained by farmers for personal consumption and only a portion of rabi crop gets to the market.

Food Corporation of India (FCI) will procure another 100,000 tonnes of wheat. Last year, the wheat procurement by government agencies was rather poor and only 50 per cent of the 4 MT target was met. MSP then stood at Rs 1,100, but the state farmers had received payments at Rs 1,056 per quintal due to shrivelled crop following excess heat. However, the market rate last year revolved around Rs 1,200 per quintal.

Meanwhile, Food Minister Ram Prasad Chaudhary directed the setting up of procurement centres for ensuring minimum commutation by farmers for selling wheat, and operationalise a 'single window' system towards that end for facilitating receipt, issue of coupon and acknowledgement are processed by one official at one place.

THE HINDU
Business Line

Export sop has 'instant' effect on robusta demand



Bangalore, March 7:

Exporters of instant coffee are making full use of the 5 per cent benefit recently announced under the Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana with effect from January 1 this year, by buying robustas in large quantities.

As a result, robusta cherry prices are still ruling at levels of Rs 2,500 for a 50-kg bag towards the end of the harvesting season, almost the same level as the price in December 2010. Last season, the price dropped from about Rs 2,500 in December 2009 to about Rs 1,800 in February and March 2010.

The export concession is expected to reverse the sluggish trend in soluble coffee exports since January 2011, conferring a competitive advantage on India at a time when world consumers are looking to cut costs, industry observers said.

Mr Ramesh Rajah, President, Coffee Exporters' Association, said: "Soluble coffee exports were high in 2010 (at over 80,000 tonnes) because of the availability of cheap robustas, but that situation has changed. The export concession has come at the right time."

NEW DESTINATIONS

Coffee Board officials said that nascent markets such as Turkey have emerged as large buyers of soluble coffee from India. The number of export destinations for soluble coffee increased from 45 countries in 2005-06, to 79 countries in 2010-11 (up to February 22).

Mr Rajah said: "India has emerged as a centre of instant coffee exports on account of lower overhead costs. White label manufacturers, or those who manufacture for major brands, operate out of India."

He said: "However, the world over, instant coffee is losing ground to roasted and ground (R&G) coffee. India has merely eaten into the market share of other exporters in Brazil, Ecuador and Europe."

Exports to Turkey have risen from 621 tonnes in 2005-06 to 2,038 tonnes in 2010-11 (up to February), or more than three times.

The major buyers from India are: Russia, Finland, Malaysia, Ukraine, Hungary, Taiwan, Singapore, Lithuania and Poland. Russia bought nearly 24,000 tonnes in 2005-06, accounting for almost 50 per cent of India's soluble coffee exports of 52,315 tonnes. In 2010-11 (up to February 22), exports to Russia were 26,660 tonnes, or 36 per cent of total soluble coffee exports of 74,557 tonnes.

"South Africa is another emerging market," Coffee Board officials said.

INSTALLED CAPACITY

Industry observers said unlike in the rest of the world, soluble coffee is a growing market in India. "There is a switch to soluble at the cost of R&G coffee in India," Mr Rajah said.

This divergence between the domestic and global market perhaps explains why leading players in soluble coffee such as Unilever and Nestle have not undertaken major capacity expansion over the last two years. "There is always the option of outsourcing the manufacture," industry sources said.

Industry sources said that the installed capacity for soluble coffee in India is 1.49 lakh tonnes, which includes recent additions in capacity by SLN Coffee Pvt Ltd in Kushalnagar and Vayhan Coffee Ltd in Hyderabad. Vayhan is a major exporter to Turkey.

DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION

Coffee Board officials estimate the domestic consumption of soluble coffee at about 60,000 tonnes (in green bean terms), whereas industry sources believe it is closer to 40,000 tonnes. Exports in 2010 (calendar year) were over 80,000 tonnes. "Therefore, the scenario we are looking at is that of a capacity of 1.4-1.5 lakh tonnes, about 1.2 lakh tonnes are put to use," industry observers said.

About half the soluble coffee exports (or about 40,000 tonnes in green bean terms in 2010) is sourced from Indian robustas, despite the fact that Vietnam prices are lower and the import is duty-free. Mr Rajah said: "The cost of freight and transport can make import unviable."

Mr Amit Pant, Business Manager, Olam Agro India, said: "Shipments take time to arrive, and besides they have to be contracted in container lots. Sourcing from domestic growers is often easier."

RISING PRICES

Export earnings from soluble coffee have doubled from Rs 401 crore in 2005-06 to Rs 841 crore in 2010-11 (up to February 22), pointing to a rise in prices from Rs 76.70 a kg to Rs 112.81 per kg.

Instant coffee prices have risen primarily on account of supply-side factors such as rising cost of raw coffee, higher diesel prices and packaging costs, particularly of polybags, which are linked to petroleum prices, industry sources said. Prices of corrugated cartons have also risen.

There has been some value-addition in India. While India was earlier producing only spray-dried coffee, freeze-dried coffee production, which requires higher investment, has been on the rise.

SBI Mangalore grows vegetables for customers



Give manure, take vegetables: A vegetable garden at State Bank of India in Mangalore.

Mangalore, March 7:

A State Bank of India branch in Mangalore has taken to an unconventional and “green” method of engaging with customers.

At the SBI's 'Bunder' branch in the city, account holders, many of whom are agriculturists with poultry farms, give manure to the bank, which, in turn, grows vegetables on its premises and gifts them to customers.

While the bank's premises are green, the bank is perceived as a more personalised place.

The manure that customers provide include the nutrient-rich 'koli gobra' (poultry output) that retails in the city at Rs 10 a kg. “Five to six customers give us manure and in return, we give them vegetables, all grown organically. Enthused by the exchange of manure and vegetables, there has been a good response from customers,” said Mr C.M.Tallur, Assistant General Manager (AGM), SBI Mangalore.

Mr Krishna Marla, a “layer” egg poultry farmer in Mangalore, who has 15,000 birds, said that he had given four bags of poultry manure last year to the bank after seeing the greenery around it. He says that it is an entirely personal relationship.

“It is not a bribe and has nothing to do with my loans. In fact, as the Port Road (SBI) branch is now congested, I find it difficult to drive and park there, and have changed to another branch,”

he said. About a month ago, Mr Marla and his wife visited the bank and returned with tomatoes grown around the bank.

Mr Marla has banked with SBI for 33 years. Every 10-12 days, the vegetables are picked with a maximum of 15 kg in one picking, said Mr Talluri. The area around the bank has short-term crops such as green, leafy vegetables and long-yield ones, much like investing money that bear fruit in the short and long term.

Other than customers, staff members also take the bank's produce. Ms Geetha Rani, a senior official in the bank, said that she appreciated the involvement of the bank officials in such green initiatives. She said medicinal herbs from the bank's gardens are much valued.

At a programme some months ago, the chief guest at a programme organised by the SBI was given, not the conventional box sweets, but a basket of vegetables. When former Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Dakshina Kannada district, Mr V. Ponnuraj left the city, a similar green basket was gifted at his farewell, said Mr Tallur.

Imported oils drop despite gain in Malaysia

Mumbai, March 7:

Prices of imported Palmolein and soya refined oils declined by Rs 3 and Rs 4 respectively on Monday despite higher closing in Malaysian market as a three-day palm oil conference began today.

Cotton refined oil declined by Rs 2 for 10 kg. Groundnut, sunflower and rapeseed oil ruled steady. Market sentiment was weak due to the less-than-expected retail demand.

Market sources said Indore NBOT soya oil futures closed lower on speculative selling. It affected the spot market sentiment with lower volume.

Volume was limited and need based. One refinery bought back 350-400 tonnes of palmolein for Rs 583-Rs 584. There was resale of 80-100 tonnes in the range of Rs 582-Rs 583.

There was no demand for other edible oils. Selling pressure from producing centres kept volume almost zero for groundnut oil, cotton, rapeseed, and soya refined oils.

Sentiments were weak. Malaysia's BMD CPO futures closed higher by 31, 41 and 35 ringgits a tonne. Most of the stockiest have covered their current months requirement of palmolein in February between Rs 615 and Rs 625; and the present market rates is far below that, this keeping fresh demand and volume arrested. This forces needy buyers to settle the contract with sellers, a source said.

At Liberty market, palmolein was quoted at Rs 587. Ruchi's rates for Palmolein was Rs 589, soya refined oil was Rs 625 and sunflower oil was Rs 701. Allana's rate of palmolein was Rs 600. Dhulia line producers were quoting cotton refined oil at Rs 610. In Rajkot market, groundnut oil ruled steady at Rs 1,155 (Rs 1,155) for Telia tin and Rs 755 (Rs 755) for loose 10 kg.

BMD CPO futures closed higher, buoyed by higher crude oil but India's Indore NBOT soya oil futures failed to track the foreign market.

Malaysia's BMD CPO futures March -11 closed at ringgit 3,740 (3,709), April-11 was at ringgit 3,730 (3,689), May-11 at ringgit 3,695 (3,660) a tonne. Indore NBOT soya oil March-11 futures was at Rs 630.40 (Rs 634.10) and April-11 was at Rs 642.00 (Rs 645.1).

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rate (price for 10 kg): Groundnut oil 750 (750), soya refined oil 618 (622), sunflower exp. refined 655 (655), sunflower refined 705 (710), rapeseed refined oil 636 (636), rapeseed expeller refined 606 (606), cotton refined oil 611 (613) and palmolein was 586 (589).

Sesame processing



Sesame being harvested at Ulloor village near Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district. (file photo)

Virgin and extra-virgin sesame oil (often produced with no chemicals) commands a price premium.

March 8, 2011:

Sesame seed, or sesamum, one of the nine major cultivated oilseeds in our country, has been known for its culinary and medicinal properties for centuries. It has religious significance too. Because the seed is rich in fat, protein, carbohydrate, fibre and some minerals and has a mild and delicious aroma and taste, it lends itself as an ingredient in foods. It is also used extensively in traditional or ayurvedic medicines preparation.

At about 6-7 lakh tonnes a year, India is the world's largest sesamum producer and consumer. White, brown and black sesame seeds are produced. White sesamum is of course the most preferred as an ingredient in foods and can be sourced from Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. Brown often goes for oil crushing. Sesame seed is processed in a variety of ways and is made suitable for a wide range of end-uses in food preparation. Apart from extracting oil from this premium oilseed (oil content nearly 50 per cent), this commodity can be processed in many ways to produce hulled sesame seed, hulled and roasted sesame seed, sesame butter and so on. It can be incorporated in food in whole, broken, crushed, shelled, powdered or paste form.

Oil

The production line covers the cleaning machine, huller, colour sorter and oil press machine (for oil extraction). Sesame oil is nutritious (contains vitamin E among others) and has a long shelf life. No wonder, the Japanese enjoy cooking *tempura* in sesame oil. Use of sesamum in the food industry has been rising worldwide because of its versatility. Virgin and extra-virgin sesame oil (often produced with no chemicals) commands a price premium and is popular in advanced economies with high purchasing power and refined tastes.

One of the important uses of white sesamum is as a topping on buns.

Dehulled sesamum is generally used to incorporate texture, taste and even aesthetic value to a variety of bakery products such as bread, bread sticks, cookies, bars and so on. It is also an additive in cereal mixes and crackers. *Halawa* (a sweet confectionary) and *tahini* (sesame butter) are two popular foods especially in the West Asia region.

Turmeric rules firm as arrivals belie hope



Business Line A file picture of turmeric being dried.

Erode, March 7:

Turmeric prices ruled steady on Monday, as arrivals remained below expectation at 16,000 bags.

“We expected the price of turmeric will fall on Monday, as after being closed for four days huge stocks would arrive. But arrivals were less than expected, as we hoped for more than 20,000 bags. In contrast, the prices of all varieties of turmeric were steady, and arrival was around 16,000 bags,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. Around 60 per cent of the arrivals were sold.

The growers said, “We expected the price to go up, as the demand for the commodity is high in North India, but the prices were not appreciated on Monday.”

Mr Ravishankar said, "The Nizamabad market assembled on Monday after a close of four days. Depending on the sales and prices there, the spot turmeric prices in Erode will react from Tuesday. The traders in Erode are getting reasonable orders from other parts of India, so the sales will go up in next few days."

On Monday, in the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales Yard, the finger variety fetched Rs 8,300-11,506 a quintal and the The root variety Rs 8,000-10,499 a quintal.

Salem Crop: The finger variety sold at Rs 11,750-12,700 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 10,989-11,609 a quintal. Out of the 4,376 bags that arrived, only 769 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety sold at Rs 10,289-12,510 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 9,559-11,000 a quintal. Out of the 305 bags that arrived, 260 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 9,999-12,245 a quintal and the root variety Rs 9,425-11,297 a quintal. All the 489 bags that arrived were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety sold at Rs 10,468-11,899 a quintal and the root variety Rs 9,590-11,061 a quintal. Out of the 1,755 bags that arrived, 1,389 were sold.

Sales in the Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard were low, but encouraging at the other three centres.

Dull demand turns bitter for sugar



Mumbai, March 7:

Spot sugar prices ruled weak on Monday at Vashi wholesale market on lack of demand and higher arrivals. In ready prices decline by Rs 4-5 a quintal in the evening. At naka level, price ruled firm by Rs 5-7 in the absence of eased selling at resale level. Mills kept their rates unchanged on usual fresh buying support from stockist and upcountry buyers.

Mr Roshan Murgai of Sugar Supply Co said, at spot level, need-based local demand and higher arrivals put pressure on price. Market is waiting for some reason for positive move as mills are not keen to sell at lower price.

Matters regarding to the value added tax (VAT) and export permission for sugar are the main issues traders are eagerly waiting for any announcement from the government. On the other hand, mills are also not keen to sell at lower rates. Market players are expecting sugar production between 242 lakh tonnes (lt) and 245 lt in the current season year 2010 -2011. Maharashtra is expected to produce 92-94 lt and Uttar Pradesh sugar output will be 62-64 lt. Indigenous demand will be around 225-230 lt. So there will be some surplus quantity available at the end of the season, he added.?

Arrivals in the market were higher. On Saturday, about 17-18 mills came forward with tender offer and sold about 2.25-2.50 lakh bags including two rail rake (about 54,000 bags) in the range of Rs 2,600-2,720 for S-grade and Rs 2,740-2,790 for M-grade. Arrival in the markets was about 55-56 truck loads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were at 43-45 truck loads.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association sugar rates: Spot rates: S-grade Rs 2,811-2,861 (Rs 2,811-2,861) and M-grade Rs 2,841-2,921 (Rs 2,841-2,921).?Naka delivery rates:?S-grade Rs 2,770-2,800 (Rs 2,760-2,800) and M-grade Rs 2,820-2,880 (Rs 2,810-2,875). ??

Hittakkal group tops in speciality tea auction

Coonoor, March 7:

Hittakkal group created a record, fetching the highest price in all five categories in which its teas were auctioned in the speciality Tea Auction for The Golden Leaf India Award teas conducted on Monday.

“Of the five, three were CTC, each of leaf, dust and fanning grades, manufactured by our Vigneshwar Estate Tea Factory and which had won the Golden Leaf India Award among all CTC teas in the entire Nilgiri region . Two were orthodox, each of leaf and fanning, manufactured by our Hittakkal Estate Tea Factory, of which, the fanning had won this award among bought-leaf factories in the entire South India,” group Chairman, Mr M. Bhojarajan told *Business Line*.

“Vigneshwar Super Red Dust (SRD) fetched the highest price among all grades of CTC teas when Jay Kay Enterprises, Coonoor, bought it for Rs 290 a kg. This was also the highest price fetched by any grade manufactured by our factory since its inception in 1987”, Vigneshwar Managing Partner, Mr B. Ramesh, said.

“Hittakkal orthodox Broken Orange Pekoe Fanning (BOPF) netted the highest price among orthodox fannings from bought-leaf factories when Commodities International, Kolkata, bought it for Rs 193. This was the highest price fetched by our factory since its inception in 1985,” Hittakkal Managing Partner, Mr Ramesh Chander, said.

Plan panel mulls rice intensification method

Coimbatore, March 7:

The Planning Commission is set to explore how the SRI (system of rice intensification) could be translated in the other water-starved regions across the country.

The Member, Planning Commission and former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Dr K. Kasturirangan, who was on a two-day visit here, told reporters that he was convinced that the SRI system would accelerate productivity even in water-starved regions.

He said his team visited Sriperumpudur in Tamil Nadu to study the SRI method adopted in that belt.

Hailing the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University's efforts in implementing the SRI project, he said 'such scientific methods of cultivation has helped enhance the growth and rice yield level by over ten per cent while conserving 40 per cent water'.

Explaining the idea behind his visit, he said 'I came here to understand how this institution has kept pace with the changing times and not just find out what was lacking here. This (referring to the TNAU) has managed to fight all odds, while many other agricultural research institutions in the country struggled to cope with the science and technological advancements. "This was either due to lack of planning or with the education system not being dynamic with changing times. No

Soya oil slips on lacklustre buying



Indore, March 7:

Notwithstanding firm global cues, soya oil edged marginally lower in the Indore market on dull demand. In the morning, soya refined prices opened at Rs 598-600, but lack of buying support at this level further dragged its prices. As a result, majority of trading in soya refined was done at Rs 596-597 for 10 kg.

On Saturday, soya refined notwithstanding subdued domestic demand had gained marginal strength at Rs 600-605 taking cues from firm overseas market. Scattered and weak demand also pulled down soya solvent prices on the spot on Monday to Rs 565, while in delivery soya solvent was quoted at Rs 560 for 10 kg and was procured by Ruchi Industries. Soya oil March contracts on the NBOT closed Rs 3.10 lower at Rs 630.90. Similarly on the NCEDX, soya oil March contract edged lower to Rs 633.60, while April contract closed slightly higher at Rs 646.30.

On the other hand, subdued demand and weak arrivals also pulled soya seeds prices in the spot by Rs 20-30 at Rs 2,270-2,320 a quintal, while in the Indore mandis, it was quoted at Rs 2,270-2,340-2,345 a quintal. Due to lack of buying support for soya DOC, which on the port on Monday remained firm at Rs 18,800, plant deliveries in soyabean saw a decline of Rs 10-20 and was quoted at Rs 2,400-2,450 a quintal.

According to industry sources, currently crushers are buying soyabeans at a very slow pace as they have bought enough quantity to meet crushing requirement. Arrival of soyabean in state mandis continues to be on lower side with about 35,000 bags being offloaded in state mandis on Monday, while arrival in Indore mandis was quoted at 2,000 bags. Soyabean futures, however, traded on a positive note on the emergence of fresh buying support.

Cotton may fall on waning demand



Rajkot, March 7:

As demand for cotton is waning, prices are ruling stable since last two days. According to brokers, cotton prices may come down this week.

At Rajkot, Gujarat Sankar-6 traded at Rs 58,000-58,500 for a candy of 356 kg. Prices, however, are stable on Monday but compared with Friday, it declined by Rs 1,000. About 30,000 bales (170 kg each) arrived in Gujarat and 75,000 bales arrives in the country.

Raw cotton price was unchanged at Rs 1,320-1,325 for a maund of 20 kg in Gujarat. According to a Rajkot-based cotton broker, at present mills are buying according to their requirements. Price is a matter for concern to everyone. Mills are waiting for some decline but right now it may not be possible as raw cotton price is still higher.

During the season, raw cotton price increased almost Rs 500 for 20 kg from Rs 900-950 at beginning to a record high of Rs 1,400-1,450 in February. As demand has been dropping since last week, traders expect some fall in the price this week. According to market sources, the price may decline by Rs 1000-1,200 a candy.

At present, mills are the only buyers and their consumption is limited. Therefore, market experts believe that price may decline in the coming days.

India has small share of world's vegetable export: Sharma



The Hindu India's share in the global vegetable trade is less than 1.5 per cent. File Photo: M. Karunakaran

New Delhi, March 7:

Despite accounting for 15 per cent of world's vegetable production, India has a relatively low, around 1.5 per cent, global share of export of veggies.

This is due to large domestic consumption, constrains of supply chain and marketing linkages, Commerce and Industry Minister Mr Anand Sharma said in a written reply.

Out of a global agricultural trade of \$1802 billion in 2009, India's share was 1.55 per cent at \$28 billion he said quoting figures from United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UNCOMTRADE). India is next only to China in production of vegetables.

The minister attributed the country's relatively small percentage of vegetables export to large domestic consumption, constrains of supply chain and marketing linkages.

Mr Sharma also pointed to lack of warehousing facilities and post harvest technology for processing in this regard.

The minister said that essential commodities including foodgrains are allowed to be exported only after meeting the buffer stock and strategic reserve norms.

Quoting from APEDA (The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority), under Commerce & Industry ministry, he said export of fresh onions went down by nearly 10 per cent to 16.64 million tonnes in 2009-10 as compared to 18.27 million tonnes a year ago.

Likewise, export of dried and preserved vegetables slid to 1.2 million tonnes in 2009-10 against 1.4 million tonnes in the previous year, Mr Sharma said.

The minister said the government was taking steps to encourage exports of agricultural products through various measures and incentives under plan schemes of the commodity boards and export promotion councils.

Bajra declines in thin trade



THE HINDU A bajra field in Ganjam district of Orissa. File Photo: Lingaraj Panda
New Delhi, March 7:

Bajra prices fell by Rs 5 a quintal on Monday, in an otherwise steady wholesale grains market, due to reduced industrial demand.

Traders said sluggish industrial demand against adequate stocks mainly led to decline in bajra prices. In the national capital, bajra declined by Rs 5 to Rs 840-850 a quintal.

Following are today's quotations in Rs a quintal: Wheat MP (deshi) 1,710-1,860, wheat dara (for mills) 1,320-1,325 chakki atta (delivery) 1,325-1,330, atta Rajdhani (10 kg) 175, Shakti bhog (10 kg) 175, Roller flour mill 680-700 (50 kg), Maida 790-820 (50 kg) and Sooji 820-840 (50 kg).

Basmati rice (Lal Quila) 9,500, Shri Lal Mahal 9,300, super basmati rice 9,000, Basmati common 5,500-5,600, rice Pusa-(1121) 4,200-5,200, Permal raw 1,875-1,925, Permal wand 2,075-2,175, Sela 2,100-2,200 and Rice IR-8 1,775-1,800, Bajra 840-850, Jowar yellow 900-1000, white 1,750-1,800, Maize 1,195-1,205, Barley (UP) 1,300-1,320 and Rajasthan 1,080-1,090.

Mustardseed futures down on weak spot cues



Business Line Mustard seeds being packed at a retail shop in Thrissur. File Picture: K. K. Mustafah.

New Delhi, March 7:

Mustardseed prices declined by Rs 39 to Rs 2,834 a quintal in futures trading on Monday following increased selling by traders, driven by weak spot market cues.

Market analysts said increased supply along with reduced offtake in the physical market mainly influenced the trading sentiment in the futures market here. Also, trading sentiments turned weak on reports of good crop production this year.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, mustardseed for delivery in April dropped by Rs 39, or 1.36 per cent, to Rs 2,834 a quintal, with an open interest of 67,390 lots.

Similarly, prices for delivery in May fell by Rs 36, or 1.24 per cent, to Rs 2,876 a quintal, with an open interest of 1,05,360 lots.

Traders miffed at non-basmati export without MEP



Business Line Different varieties of rice kept for sale at a shop in Kochi. File Picture: K. K. Mustafah.

New Delhi, March 7:

Rice exporters are miffed with the government's decision to allow export of superior non basmati rice varieties - Sona Masuri, Ponni Samba and Matta - without a minimum export price (MEP).

They contended this would encourage shipment of inferior varieties and would tarnish the image of the country.

In a representation to Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, the All India Rice Exporters Association has said a recent notification issued by Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) does not clearly reflect the decision of the empowered group of ministers (EGOM) on food, as it does not mention the MEP of \$850 a tonne for export of 3 non-basmati varieties.

"The EGOM had allowed export of Sona Masuri, Ponni Samba and Matta with an MEP of \$850 a tonne, but the DGFT notification issued on February 10 does not talk about the price," the Association's President Mr Vijay Sethia told PTI. The notification in its current form allows export of these three varieties at any price that the exporters want.

“These non-basmati rice exports without MEP will adversely affect domestic prices and will encourage hoarding, profiting and malpractices,” he said.

Seeking amendment to the notification, Mr Sethia said, “Without MEP, exporters can ship any rice in the name of these three varieties. There should be a “special price” if we are exporting “superior varieties” of non-basmati rice”.

They said this would compromise on the quality which would not bode well for the country’s exporters. An MEP helps to get better price for the grain in the global market and this will in turn benefit farmers, he said.

Mr Sethia observed the government’s export policy of providing adequate price - with MEP of \$900 a tonne on Basmati rice is a success with good offtake.

“Export of around 2 million tonnes of basmati rice is not affecting the domestic supplies. In a similar way, an MEP of \$850 a tonne for these three varieties will not put pressure on the domestic prices,” Mr Sethia noted.

Domestic prices will not increase as the government has enough foodgrains stock in its godowns, he added.

Oilmeal exports jump to 7.04 lakh t in Feb

New Delhi, March 7:

Export of oilmeal, used as cattle and poultry feed, more than doubled to 7.04 lakh tonnes in February, driven by recovery in soyabean meal shipments and better crushing margins.

The shipments stood at 3,29,448 tonnes in the same month last year, the Mumbai-based Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) said in a statement today.

“During the last five months, recovery in soyabean meal exports coupled with good crushing margins and better oil prices boosted the exports,” the SEA Executive Director, Mr B.V. Mehta, said.

Out of 7,03,400 tonnes of oilmeal exported from the country in February, the share of soyabean meal was maximum at 5,40,360 tonnes, followed by rape mustard seed meal at 1,47,655 tonnes, castor meal at 13,110 tonnes and groundnut extraction at 1,475 tonnes and rice bran at 800 tonnes.

Oilmeal shipments to South East Asia alone stood at 5.38 lakh tonnes, West Asia at 1.11 lakh tonnes and Europe at 53,605 tonnes last month, the SEA data showed.

Soybean meal exports rose to 5.4 lakh tonnes last month from 2.2 lakh tonnes in February 2010, it said, adding that shipment to the European market is expected to rise in the coming months.

The overall export of oilmeal till February this fiscal also reported a jump of 50 per cent to 44.91 lakh tonnes against 30 lakh tonnes in the same period last year, it said.

Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, China, Thailand and Indonesia are the major destinations where India exports oilmeal. It also ships the commodity to neighbouring Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh.