

Farmers asked to sell gingelly after harvest

Staff Reporter

There is no scope for increase in price, says analysis

COIMBATORE: The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has recommended the farmers to sell the harvested gingelly stocks immediately through regulated markets as there is no scope for increase in price.

Analysis done by the DEMIC reveals the price of gingelly seed will range between Rs.44 to Rs.49 a kg in May and June.

According to a release from the university, the analysis was based on the price of gingelly that prevailed for past 11 years in Kodumudi market. The yield this season has reduced to 240-300 kg an acre from the normal yield of 340-400 kg an acre.

The reason for drop in yield as spotted by the DEMIC is due to non-availability of quality seeds, pest attack and labour shortage.

In Tamil Nadu, the area under gingelly cultivation is nearly 0.63 hectares.

The average yield is 506 kg an hectare and 0.31 lakh tonnes is the annual production.

The major districts producing gingelly are Erode, Villipuram, Thanjavur, Karur, Cuddalore, Tuticorin and Salem.

In India, gingelly seed production in the last Kharif season was 4.40 lakh tonnes.

The major gingelly producing areas in the country are Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Orissa.

The black and red varieties are grown in the eastern region and the white variety in western region and Maharashtra.

The Thaipattam sown crop is under harvest and the arrivals in the market have started.

Milk procurement rises but not sales

R. Sairam

MADURAI: Despite milk procurement having increased by over 50,000 litres a day in the recent months, sales at Madurai Aavin have not increased.

Even though Madurai region is facing a shortage and decreased levels of sales compared to last year, the quantum of milk being diverted to Chennai has increased by 20,000 litres since April.

Official sources told The Hindu here on Thursday that the procurement had increased to 1.80 lakh litres a day during the second week of May from 1.30 lakh litres in January. However, the sales was stable at 1.25 lakh litres from January to second week of May. Last year during this period it was 1.90 lakh litres.

The Madurai Aavin Union, which also covers Theni District, has been sending 30,000 litres a day to Chennai for the past few months.



Surplus

All the 17 Aavin Unions in the State were ordered to send their surplus milk to Chennai during the strike by Tamil Nadu Milk Producers' Welfare Association from February 7 to 15.

However, even after the strike ended, the practice continued, despite Madurai region facing a shortage. Since April, when procurement went up here, quantum of milk being sent was raised to 50,000 litres.

Production of all Aavin milk products such as sweets, ghee and butter in Madurai had been suspended owing to the shortage.

The milk parlour near Aavin Junction in the city, constructed at a cost of Rs. 9 lakh to provide milk round the clock to serve the several hospitals in the vicinity, was also downing shutters frequently.

Senior officials said that a decision on halting the diversion to Chennai would be taken next week.

Farmer bags award

L. Srikrishna

MADURAI: His name is Maduraisami. He is aged about 60 years. He has not studied much, but the drive and inspiration to achieve in his life have made him bring laurels to his village Porusupatti near Agricultural College here. He has bagged the second prize of Rs.15,000 in the State for achieving a yield of 14,577 kilograms per hectare in paddy crop in the just-ended season. Mr. Maduraisami and his family have been carrying out farming in the belt for several decades.

Speaking to The Hindu, he said, "Two years ago, when a handful of officials from the Agriculture Department visited our village and explained the use of mechanisation in raising paddy crops, not many showed interest. But, something hit upon my mind. I did not hesitate. I decided to make an attempt and ventured into the use of machines in my lands," he recalled.

Crop area may go up this kharif

Staff Reporter

Agricultural officials gear up

SANGAREDDY: The district wing of the Agriculture Department is expecting increase in agriculture operations during the kharif 2011. Estimates are being prepared accordingly and the administration is gearing up to meet the demand.

While the normal area during the kharif is 3.72 lakh hectares, the department was projecting that it would touch about 4.6 lakh hectares, an increase in about 90,000 hectares.

The cultivation area that may witness increase is paddy, maize, black gram, red gram, cotton and other crops.

According to S. Gulam Mahaboob, Deputy Director (Agriculture), seed requirement for kharif was expected to be around 88,156 quintals in which subsidy would be around 58,000 quintals.

Fertilizer requirement would be around 1.71 metric tonnes between April and September with peak demand touching 53,000 metric tonnes in July.

As part of preparing farmers for Kharif, the department has been taking up Rytu Chitanya Yatralu (Farmers' awareness rallies) beginning from May 17 to June 2 followed by farmers meets from June 7 to 11.

Mr. Mahaboob also suggested farmers against excessive use of chemical fertilizers stating that it was affecting soil fertility.

Farmers get TDR as compensation

Staff Reporter

BANGALORE: The cash-strapped Bangalore Development Authority, which plans to acquire large tracts of land for road widening works as part of the Revised Master Plan 2015, is offering compensation in Transferable Development Rights (TDR) instead of money or land, said BDA Commissioner Bharat Lal Meena.

This will allow farmers to sell their TDRs to other developers.

Meaning, if a real estate developer has permission to build a structure with limited floors, he can build more floors by purchasing the TDR from these farmers.

A first

Lakhs of farmers are expected to lose land to these widening works on 1,500 kilometres of roads. Claiming that this is the first time farmers are being offered TDR, Mr. Meena said the BDA is in the process of intimating them. “Those contacted have reacted favourably,” he claimed.

He also said that work on the 15 flyovers for the signal-free corridor between Silk Board Junction and Mysore Road will be completed in three to four months.

On the pending compensation for those who lost land to the Peripheral Ring Road project, he said the process will be completed in a week's time. Land losers here will get more compensation than what was decided at the time the project was in its initial stages.

Their present compensation is being calculated by taking the 2007 guidance value set by the Department of Stamps and Registration. “The difference will be paid as ex-gratia within a week,” he said.

Work on this project will speed up once these compensations are paid. “We should be able to complete the project by the end of this year,” he said.

Precision farming boosts sugarcane yield

M.Balaganessin



lucrative method:A sugarcane grower using 'fertigation' technique as part of precision farming in Perambalur district

ARIYALUR: A large number of farmers in Ariyalur and Perambalur districts have registered an increase in the yield in sugarcane after adopting precision farming technique.

This season, about 16,100 hectares were brought under sugarcane cultivation – 11,000 in Ariyalur and 5,100 in Perambalur. Most of the farmers had raised Co 86032 variety. Of it, precision farming was applied in 500 hectares - 240 in Ariyalur and 260 in Perambalur. A total of 521 farmers adopted the technique in these districts. B. Rajeswari and her husband Balasubramanian of Guruvalappur village near here, registered a maximum yield of 78 tonnes per acre.

The average yield in these districts using the precision farming and conventional practices ranged around 35 tonnes an acre. The average yield in the precision farming stood at 65 tonnes an acre.

“Apart from the rise in the yield, the quality of the cane in terms of its size and its recovery percentage has increased to a great extent,” says S.Sivakumar, Joint Director of Agriculture, Perambalur.

He said the formation of clusters for promoting precision farming technique; exposure visit to places such as Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri where the precision farming had proved successful in horticultural crops; and a sustained follow-up on crop protection methods paid the dividends.

The 'fertigation' method - an integrated programme of supplying fertilisers with irrigation waters - was the most important component of the precision farming. “We supplied fertilisers such as 'All 19', soluble in water, which proved its efficacy,” he says. He appreciated the cooperation extended by the banks and sugar factories for the implementation of this subsidy-based programme.

Paddy procurement centre brings cheer to farmers

R. Arivanantham

KRISHNAGIRI: The government-controlled paddy procurement centre that was opened without any publicity during the middle of last week in Kaveripattinam, has brought cheer to the farmers of the region. The need for the centre was a long-pending demand of the farming community who wanted it to be on a par with that of the Cauvery delta farmers'centre.

K.M. Ramagounder, state general secretary, Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, told The Hindu that the centre would help the farmers get a remunerative price for their produce and safeguard them against exploitation from private procurement agencies. Mr. Ramagounder said over 1,500 bags of paddy were procured from farmers around Kaveripattinam in the last one week. The procured paddy was moved to the nearby godowns of the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation.

VC urges use of tissue culture to enhance groundnut productivity

Staff Reporter

COIMBATORE: Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University P. Murugesu Boopathi urged scientists to explore possibilities for developing tissue culture seedlings and taking up fertigation studies in groundnut using biotechnology tools to improve the productivity in groundnut.

Inaugurating a two-day Annual Research Workshop on Oilseeds and Biofuels at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, he said the area, production and productivity increase of groundnut in the State were hampered since nearly 70 per cent of the area was under

rainfed conditions. “Seed Replacement Rate, which is quite less, also needs to be addressed. This is because of the high seed rate of 60 – 70 kg an acre and high cost of seeds which ranges between Rs. 4,000 and Rs. 5,000,” the Vice-Chancellor said.

Mechanising farming operations right from ploughing, seeding, weeding and harvesting would give an impetus to rainfed groundnut cultivation.

Realising this, TNAU would lay demonstration plots with 100 per cent mechanisation of ploughing to harvest operations, which would influence area expansion under groundnut. Mr. Boopathi added that the productivity of sunflower was the highest in Tamil Nadu compared to the national and world average. The reason was due to release of good hybrids and irrigation of the cultivation area. The production of oilpalm had to be increased through biotechnological approaches and farm mechanisation. This would help in reduction of import of palmoil for the Public Distribution System, he said.

The Director of research of TNAU, M. Paramathma, said that the achievements of the ‘participatory seed production’ and ‘seed village concept’ were not to the desired extent.

“TNAU has released 69 varieties of oilseed crops. Groundnut, sunflower, gingelly and castor will continue to give thrust to oilseed research,” he said.

Farmers become eager students

Special Correspondent

MADURAI: Twenty-nine farmers from Madurai and neighbouring districts have turned students in a process of value addition.

They have enrolled for the Bachelor of Farm Technology course offered by the Directorate of Open and Distance Learning of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

The innovative three-year degree programme, being offered at the Agricultural College and Research Institute here for the past six months for farmers above 35 years of age, provides study material in Agronomy, Horticulture, Soil Science and Seed Science technologies.

Contact programmes are conducted during the first weekend of every month.

The course, according to a press release from K. Vairavan, Dean, Agricultural College and Research Institute, is TNAU's answer to new training demands in agriculture and competitive challenges in increasing food production.

The TNAU, he said, had now enlarged its extension and education activities to farmers from institutional training to distance education programme. The new course is intended to facilitate capacity building among farmers.

An evaluation programme, with examination, was inaugurated at the Agricultural College and Research Institute by Dr. Vairavan on May 7.

The farmers, in their interaction, said that the course helped them in learning new farm technologies.

They also enjoyed the pride of becoming graduates in agriculture.

The Dean felt that retired government officials could join the course to learn new farm practices and apply them in the field to improve productivity and sustain agriculture.

He was happy about the participation of farm women in the course. With the knowledge gained in the course the farmers would be in a position to manage farm inputs in the required quantity with concern for soil health.

This would enhance sustainable agricultural production, he said.

Good response to vegetable show

D. Radhakrishnan

Udhagamandalam: Having made both the organisers and the visitors happy, the two-day Fourth Vegetable Show, which was held at the Nehru Park in Kotagiri, concluded on Sunday. It attracted about 19,700 people from various parts of the country.

District Revenue Officer, S. Kuppusamy, said that it also highlighted the importance of vegetables.

E. Krishnappa, a farmer of Upper Kodapamund in Ooty, walked away with the prize for the best collection of temperate vegetables.



Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Monday, May 16

Max Min

37.1° | 26°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Sunrise: 5:43

Humidity: 75%

Sunset: 18:27

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1005.0

Tomorrow's Forecast








Cloudy

Tuesday, May 17

Max Min

38° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday May 18	Thursday May 19	Friday May 20	Saturday May 21	Sunday May 22
				
35° 27° Sunny	35° 26° Partly Cloudy	36° 27° Partly Cloudy	37° 28° Partly Cloudy	38° 29° Partly Cloudy

DECCAN Chronicle

Monday, May 16, 2011 Last Update: 09:49 AM IST

Price of scarce lemons shoots up to Rs 7 apiece



Lemonade, the best thirst quencher, is likely to get costlier even as the blistering summer sun bears down on Chennai.

One lemon now costs Rs 7 in Chennai due to a huge shortage of the fruit.

The Koyambedu fruit market now gets only 35 tonnes of lemons a day from Andhra Pradesh against a daily demand of 150 tonnes. "There is a huge shortage," says Koyambedu Fruit Market secretary Murugan.

"Traders in Andhra Pradesh told us that they have received huge orders from other states also this summer," Mr Murugan said. "Since lemon production in Tamil Nadu is low this year, we are forced to depend on other states for the fruit."

He said tiny lemons are now priced at Rs 2 a piece.

Jaganath, a retailer at Ashok Pillar, says his stock of lemons goes waste as the high price deters people from buying the fruit. "Fifty small lemons cost me Rs 200. Big varieties of lemons are sold for Rs 6 a piece by wholesalers. But I have to sell them for Rs 7. People are not ready to buy one lemon for Rs 7," he said.

B. Vahuni, an engineering college student, has decided to switch over to watermelons this summer. "Instead of buying three lemons, I can get an entire watermelon for Rs 20. Other fruits like mangoes and grapes are available for rs 30 per kg. This summer I'll do without lemons," she said.

Endosulfan ban may affect vegetable production

The ban on pesticides would cause the Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council, Kerala, (VFPC) dearly. Since farmers use a number of pesticides on crops, their ban would affect the production of vegetables and fruits in the state, say experts of the council. Around 1.35 lakh farmers in the state are affiliated to VFPC. In 2010-11, these farmers

cultivated over 3.53 lakh tonnes of vegetables and 5.1 lakh tonnes of fruits, helping the VFPCCK record a turnover of Rs 157 crore. “The ban will have its effect in the production of vegetables and fruits since the farmers use them widely. However, we will try to find alternative solutions like organic fertilisers,” said N. Vijayan, director, VFPCCK. The Experts feel that the government should have identified alternative measures before taking the decision on the ban. “It is difficult to find an alternative to chemical fertilisers in Kerala. For several years farmers have been using them, and organic fertilisers cannot replace the highly effective chemical ones. “This will affect the production,” said M. James, former deputy director, Department of Agriculture, and president, Kerala state banana growers association. But Balakrishnan Nair, chairman of Sangamaithri, an organisation of farmers, differs. “If effectively applied, organic substitutes like neem oil, neem leaves, garlic water, lime, chilly and urine of cows can substitute chemical fertilisers. We have been practising this for many years,” he says. Experts agree that the real problem is with the sale of the produce. If the locally cultivated vegetables and fruits have more takers in Kerala, the farmers won’t face any problem, they say.

express[™]
buzz

*By Shyam Balasubramanian
16 May 2011 10:06:00 PM IST*

[Increase fishing ban period, say fishermen](#)

CHENNAI: The 45-day ban on trawl fishing had assumed political colours in the recent election, with political parties promising increased allowances for fishermen during the season.

The general understanding had been that the entire fishing community was suffering without livelihood during the ban period. On the contrary, fishermen have unanimously welcomed the ban.

There is widespread understanding that the ban period will give enough time for many varieties of fish to breed without falling prey to destructive fishing practices that are

widely employed along the Chennai coast.

“The trawlers are solely responsible for the current dip in availability of fish. They catch fish that have just hatched. This has caused a huge fall in the amount of fish close to our shores,” says Elumalai, a fisherman from the Injambakkam village.

He says their catch has seen diminishing over the past decade leading to lower returns to the extent that most young men of the community are forced to opt for odd jobs outside.

“The fishing ban period should be extended as only good comes out of it,” he says. Pugalarasan of the nearby Periya Neelangarai village agrees and adds, “Scientific research should be carried out and another ban period can be put in place at a different time of the year.”

But even as small fishermen attack trawl fishing, its practitioners put forth similar demands.

“Another ban period between October and January would be ideal. Usually, our catch yields grow around 10 percent after the ban period,” says S Venugopal, coordinator of the TN Mechanised Boat Owners’ Association.

It is not a sheer business motive that is behind his association’s support of the ban, he says.

“We understand and agree with what the small fishermen say. They are talking about the trawl nets, which are very closely woven. These nets end up even picking up eggs, and cause real harm to the marine ecosystem,” he concedes.

Not just small fishermen, but a majority of trawl boat operators themselves have been affected by this trend, says Venugopal.

“Most of us use gill nets, which will catch only fairly big fish. But there are some who use trawl nets, which are very finely woven. India is the only country that still allows the use of trawl nets,” he says.

Trawl fishing bans are the only way to rein in the trawl net-users and allow the fish populations to recuperate, he says.

Business Standard

Monday, May 16, 2011

Groundnut production to rise this summer

Vimukt Dave / Mumbai/ Rajkot May 16, 2011, 0:18 IST

The Indian Oilseeds and Produce Export Promotion Council (IOPEPC) has estimated the summer groundnut production in Gujarat to be at around 2.71 lakh tonne as against 1.29 lakh tonne last year, which is higher by 110 percent.

In addition to this, the production of sesame this season is also likely to surge by 37.5 percent to 55,000 tones.

In association Junagadh Agriculture University (JAU), the council had conducted a crop survey in various parts of Gujarat during May 7 to May 13.

As per the survey, groundnut sowing area during the ongoing season has increased from 68000 hectares to 1.21 lakh hectares in Gujarat due to sufficient availability of irrigation water. As a result, production is likely to increase by 110 percent to 2.71 lakh tonnes.

However some local traders disagree with the estimate. According to them groundnut production will be around 3.5 to 4 lakh tonnes. They believe that farmers took more groundnut crops to fulfill the need of cattle feed. During Kharif season high rains also damaged the groundnut crop due to which the farmers faced a shortage of cattle feed.

The survey also mentions that the yield of the groundnut has increased to 2430 kg per hectares which was 1900 kg last year.

Similarly the sesame production is also projected to rise upto 55,000 tonnes in Gujarat during the same period, which would be higher by 37.50 percent as compared to last year's 40,000 tonnes.

The survey says that the area under sesame seed sowing has increased from 32,500 hectares to 34,600 hectares. Farmers preferred sesame crop as the crop has lower production costs, good availability of water and sufficient return.

Veg oil imports decline 12.5% in April on high domestic output

BS Reporter / Mumbai May 14, 2011, 0:39 IST

Vegetable oil imports dipped 12.5 per cent in April compared to the corresponding period last year.

The decline was on the back of higher production of oilseeds during kharif and rabi seasons, increased crushing activity which boosted local availability, good crushing parity due to high price of oil and export demand for oilmeals and negative margin in import and high prices of edible oil. According to the data compiled by the Solvent Extractors Association of India, the import of vegetable oils in April was 475,000 tonnes compared to 543,000 tonnes in April 2010.

The overall import of vegetable oils during the oil year 2010-11 (oil year is from November to April) was 3.6 million tonnes compared to 4.3 million tonnes during the same period last year, falling 16 per cent. The current stock of edible oils as on May 1 at various ports and in pipelines was estimated at 1.2 million tonnes compared to 1.3 million tonnes as on April 1.

During November 2010 to April 2011, import of RBD Palmolein was down by 28 per cent. Palm oil imports were 2.7 million tonnes compared to 3.2 million tonnes during the same period last year. However, import of sunflower oil increased to 412,000 tonnes from 300,000 tonnes as domestic supply was weak.

The rupee appreciation in last few months supported the import of vegetable oils to some extent.

But on a month-on-month basis, the country's vegetable oil imports in April rose 9 per cent from 435,735 tonnes in March as the local oilseeds harvest season ended .

Wheat figures surpass last year's total procurement

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi May 14, 2011, 0:36 IST

FCI, state agencies purchase 22.81 mt compared to 22.51 mt last season



India's annual wheat procurement in the first five weeks of 2011-12 season, which surpassed last year's total procurement, has two interesting changes from the previous seasons.

This year, procurements from Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, which are traditionally not big grain contributors to the central pool, have seen a quantum jump. Moreover, Madhya Pradesh has emerged as the third major state, after Punjab and Haryana, in terms of contribution.

Official data shows Food Corporation of India (FCI) and state agencies have procured 46,310 tonnes in Gujarat till Wednesday. This is a huge rise on the 624 tonnes purchased in 2010-2011.

Procurement in Madhya Pradesh was 3.60 million tonnes (mt), marginally up from last year's 3.53 mt. In Rajasthan, procurement at 0.79 mt was almost 68% more than last year. Across the country, FCI and state agencies have purchased 22.81 mt of wheat while purchases during entire 2010-2011 procurement season was around 22.51 mt.

Officials said a bumper wheat harvest, tipped to top the agriculture ministry's third advanced estimate of 84.27 mt and a bonus of Rs 50 per quintal has pushed up procurement across the country. The government announced the bonus last month over and above the minimum support price of Rs 1,120 per quintal to incentivise purchases.

FCI's procurement this year is also very close to the target fixed for this year which is 26 mt by state agencies. Last year, purchases were 21.36 mt during the same time, almost 1.44 mt less than this year.

In Punjab, 10.54 mt wheat was purchased, almost 3.33 per cent more than last year. Procurement in Haryana was 6.59 million tonnes, up 3.94 per cent from last year.

Punjab and Haryana contribute almost 80 per cent of wheat to the central pool. A big let-down has been decentralised procurement, wherein the state governments purchase grain on behalf of FCI and distribute it through fair price shops. Officials said poor storage facilities in these states along with inefficient state administration has led to a slowdown in purchases.

In Uttar Pradesh, one of the biggest wheat producing states, procurement of 1.14 mt wheat is 30.48 per cent less than last year. In Bihar, state agencies procured 29,470 tonnes of wheat, down almost 84 per cent from the same period last year.

THE HINDU Business Line

The other side of food inflation: Farm labour costs rise 50% in two years



New Delhi, May 15:

Everyone knows how much food prices have risen in the last few years. Not everyone, however, knows how much costs have spiralled for those who produce the food you and I eat.

Data on daily wage rates for agricultural operations, compiled by the Labour Bureau at Shimla, show huge increases to have taken place in most States during 2009 and 2010.

Andhra Pradesh, for instance, has seen farm wage rates – the average taken for ploughing, sowing, weeding, transplanting and harvesting operations – going up 40.3 per cent in 2009 and 27.8 per cent in 2010.

It is no different in other States, where, in the last year alone, the price of agricultural labour surged 15 to 20 per cent in Haryana, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam, 32 per cent in Punjab, and 43 per cent in Orissa.

MSP policy implications

“The Labour Bureau figures are an eye-opener, though they conform to what farmers themselves say. And if you add soaring energy costs as well, protecting the margins of farmers becomes a real challenge,” noted Dr Ashok Gulati, Chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, which advises the Centre on fixing minimum support prices (MSP) for various crops.

The Labour Bureau's data, compiled on a monthly basis, are based on primary information collected from 600 sample villages over 20 States. They cover wage payments both in cash as well as kind, with the latter valued at the prevailing local retail prices.

Dr Gulati admitted that incorporating the entire increases in labour and energy costs in official MSP computations is not easy, “more so in a scenario of already high food inflation”.

Tweaking NREGA

According to him, the time has come to re-orient schemes such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), where “you get Rs 125 or so for two-three work”. That makes a scheme with 70-80 per cent welfare and 20-30 per cent productive component.

There is a case to extend NREGA to work on private farms.

“Why cannot we have a system, where rural labourers are paid Rs 250 for working eight hours on farmers' fields? Out of the Rs 250, Rs 125 can be underwritten by NREGA, with the balance coming from farmers. We are, then, able to dovetail welfare schemes with productive activity and raise the latter component to 70-80 per cent,” Dr Gulati added.

Coonoor tea sale percentage improves

Coonoor, May 15:

Improvement was seen in the sale percentage at Sale No: 19 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions this week with 19.5 per cent remaining unsold against 35.5 per cent last week.

The volume of 15.30 lakh kg offered was the highest so far in 2011.

Teas worth about Rs 1.85 crore were withdrawn for want of buyers despite shedding Rs 3 a kg.

“Orthodox leaf lost Rs 2-3 a kg. High-priced CTC leaf lost up to Rs 7, better mediums up to Rs 3 while plainers up to Rs 5. Some cleaner blacker grades, however, fetched Rs 2-3 more. Orthodox dusts were irregular.

Among CTC dusts, Better mediums and plainers lost Rs 2-3 while high-priced ones gained up to Rs 3", an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped CTC market when Shreeji Traders bought for Rs 151 a kg. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 140, Hittakkal Estate Rs 138 and Shanthi Supreme Rs 135. In all, 71 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Orthodox teas

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 193, Quinshola Clonal Rs 142, Prammas Rs 140, Coonoor Tea Rs 134, Highfield Estate Rs 132, Sutton Rs 131 and Curzon Rs 130. In all, 20 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Exports

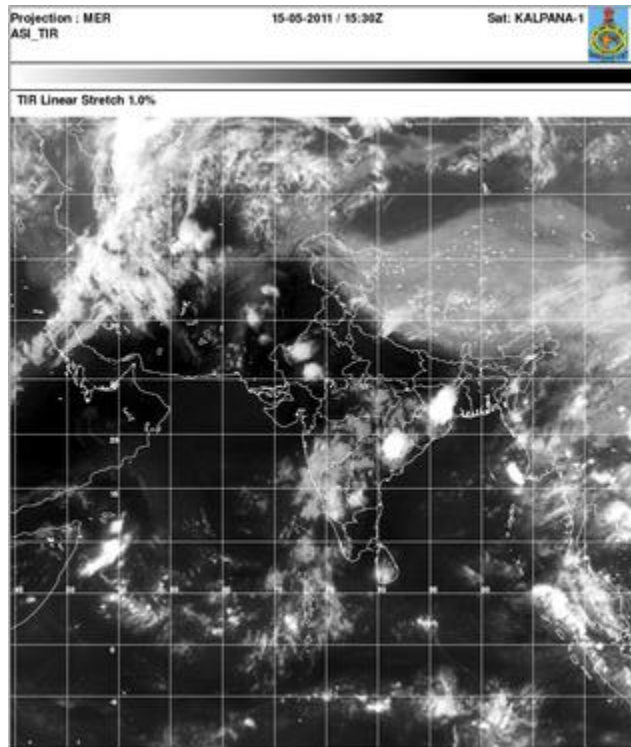
On the export front, Pakistan gave strong support for select grades in a wide range of Rs 41-68 a kg. The CIS bought for Rs 41-50 a kg. There was some buying for Egypt.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 42-44 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 80-128 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 46-48 for plain dusts and Rs 85-135 for brighter liquoring dusts.

Scattered rains for south peninsula from weekend

Thiruvananthapuram, May 15:

Fairly widespread rain or thundershowers unfold over the Northeastern States and scattered over adjoining east India, south Karnataka, Kerala and Lakshadweep from late this week.



This is as per the outlook given in an extended forecast issued by India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday evening and valid until Friday.

MERCURY TRENDS

Meanwhile, maximum temperatures have continued to rise by 2 to 3 deg Celsius over parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh through Saturday.

They were above normal by 2 to 4 deg Celsius over part of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab as sustained heating from across the border in Pakistan touched off on local weather.

The maxima were above normal by 2 to 3 deg Celsius over parts of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, north Madhya Pradesh, north Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, the Northeastern States, north Orissa, north interior Andhra Pradesh and north Karnataka.

FRESH WESTERLY

Thus, heating has become widespread from northwest to the interior with Brahmapuri in Maharashtra recording the highest maximum of 45.1 deg Celsius on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the IMD has said that a fresh western disturbance would impact northwest India from Thursday.

Isolated dust storms or thunderstorms may occur over Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh until Tuesday.

The IMD also expected maximum temperatures to rise by 2 to 3 deg Celsius over northwest and adjoining central India until Thursday.

WEATHER FEATURES

On Sunday, however, an upper air trough ran down east-southeast from north Rajasthan to Gangetic West Bengal across Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, southwest Bihar and culminating in an upper air cyclonic circulation over Jharkhand.

Another upper air trough looked down to the south from southwest Madhya Pradesh and extended ended up in another cyclonic circulation over extreme south Tamil Nadu.

A third upper air cyclonic circulation hung over Assam, completing the rollout of pre-monsoon weather formations across the country.

CONVECTIVE CLOUDS

Satellite pictures on Sunday evening showed the presence of convective (rain-bearing) clouds over Andaman Sea and south Arabian Sea.

Low to medium clouds were seen over parts of northwest India, and west, central, east and south peninsular India.

A weather warning said that isolated thunder squalls would occur over Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Sikkim and Orissa until Tuesday. Isolated dust storms or thunderstorms may occur over Rajasthan, and west Uttar Pradesh.

FAIRLY WIDESPREAD

A short-term outlook until Wednesday said that fairly widespread rain or thundershowers would unfold over the Northeastern States, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim.

It would be scattered over Gangetic West Bengal and isolated over rest east India, Chhattisgarh and west Maharashtra.

Scattered rain or thundershowers would break over south Karnataka and Kerala and isolated over the rest of south peninsular India.

India joins global research on animal diseases

London, May 15:

India has joined a global network of scientific research on measures to be better protected against animal diseases like avian flu and foot and mouth, that adversely hit the economy of several countries and affect millions of people directly or indirectly.

The network, led by Britain's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), is backed by €1 million funding by the European Union.

Experts say that increasingly globalised movements of animals, people and food have raised the risk of animal diseases spreading to the UK, which could have serious economic, environmental and health consequences.

The network of thousands of scientists across the world will allow them to exchange research, establish common goals and collaborate on developing future controls.

It will also underpin early warning systems by identifying what emerging diseases are being picked up abroad.

Britain's Agriculture and Food Minister Mr Jim Paice said, "In this modern age of globalised trade and travel the risk of animal disease entering the UK is greater than ever.

Countries acting on their own just don't have the resources to research every disease, all of the time, so sharing resources like this will get us maximum protection and value for money."

The network includes Canada, the US, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, Denmark and the UK.
