THE HINDU

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Transplanting redgram under rainfed farming

Crops grow and yield well

Redgram or pigeon pea (*cajanus cajan*) is one of the important pulse crops of Tamil Nadu, the productivity of which is very low. The main reason for this is difficulty in maintaining the plant population.

Transplanting is a new tool by which healthy and vigorous seedlings can be raised in nursery, screened and transplanted in the main field so that optimum plant population could be maintained in rainfed situation which leads to higher productivity.

Research efforts

With the aim of increasing the area under redgram in dryland condition, research efforts were done at Regional Research Station (TNAU), Aruppukottai in which early maturity during pre monsoon pigeonpea cultivars like APK1, Vamban 2, Vamban 3(RG) of 110 days duration were raised in protrays nurseries during pre-monsoon period and 21 days old seedling were transplanted on receipt of soaking rain by augur hole pit method.

In this method seedlings were transplanted and pits were filled with well composted coirpith formed by the augur hole digger. In this technology, main field duration of the crop is reduced to 90 days coupled with land management technique for effective moisture conservation and foliar nutrition during peak flowering stage can sustain the yield in rainfed conditions. The early stage weed competition is avoided by transplanting. Hence, plant growth and yield parameters are favourable for higher assured average yield of 870 kg/ha.

The same technology of transplanting redgram under irrigated condition is in progress at Department of Agronomy, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai in which early maturity variety APK1 of 110 days duration were raised in protrays nursery and 21 old seedling were transplanted in the main field.

The results of the study revealed that transplanting 21 days old seedlings at 45 x 20 cm spacing with split application of recommended dose of fertilizer combined with foliar application 1 per cent polyfed and 1 per cent multi ‘ K' at peak flowering stage recorded 12 per cent increased grain yield.

Dr.V.K.Paulpandi,N.Rajesh,& Dr.R.Duraisingh,*Department of Agronomy,Agricultural College and Research Institute,Madurai*

Tamil Nadu

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Good harvests do not always translate into money in the bank

M.J. Prabu

Minimum support price that is announced is never paid in full

Active voice: Suman Sahai, convenor, Gene Campaign. -Photo:S. Gopakumar

Tilhar lies about 300 km east of Delhi in the fertile plains of northern India. Here, acres of wheat stand sturdily in the fields, slowly changing colour from green to yellow.

“If all goes well the farmer can get a good harvest, but whether it will bring prosperity to their lives or not is a big question. Will the crop in the field translate into money in the bank? Unlikely,” says Dr. Suman Sahai, Convener, Gene campaign, New Delhi.

Important centres

Western and Central Uttar Pradesh produce surplus grain like Punjab and Haryana, and since the days of the Green Revolution, these have been important centres where rice and wheat are procured for the central pool.

In areas blessed by nature like the Indo-Gangetic belt where Tilhar lies, farmers know how to harvest good crops.

In the early days this worked well for farmers but in the last few years, procurement has become an exercise to torment farmers rather than support them. First, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) that is announced, is never paid in full, always less.

Real price

If the price announced for wheat is Rs. 1.120 per quintal, as it is this year, the real price that the farmer would get could be anything from Rs. 750 to Rs. 950 per quintal.

“Corruption locks the farmers in a vice like grip because they lack storage facilities and must sell their produce immediately after harvest,” she says.

Both procurement agencies and the market are aware of this and turn the screw on price as they know the farmer is left with no choice but to sell. Other strategies that are used to pull prices down is to tell the farmer that his grain has not been dried sufficiently and cannot be bought.

Trade tricks

“But as soon as palms get greased, the grain gets sold miraculously. Other tricks are to declare the grain as being ‘light' in weight, not fulfilling the standards set by the Food Corporation of India (FCI). The FCI's exacting standards are equally miraculously met once the farmers' pockets have become correspondingly lighter,” explains Dr. Sahai.

Often there exists an unholy nexus between the FCI agents and private companies. The deal is that the procurement agency will reject much of the grain on one pretext or another, she mentions in her blog.

Farmers travel to different procurement centres with their grain, for it to be inspected, weighed and lifted. If they do not own their own bullock carts, they hire or rent trucks or tractors to bring their grain to the centre. Every day, causes delay and bleeds the farmer.

"It is like the way ports charge demurrage if you do not lift your goods. Each day the port holds your goods, it charges you a fee.

"Bullock cart, tractor-trolley and truck owners do the same. So if they need to wait around till the farmer can negotiate the deal, the cost of hiring goes up every day. This eats into the farmer's profit," she adds.

Becoming desperate

When the farmer's grain is held up and he is desperate to sell, the private companies step in and buy the grain at low prices.

In this way the backbreaking effort put in by the farmer and the little subsidy he gets on fertilizer and diesel to irrigate goes to benefit the private companies.

"Despite a good harvest the farmer may not make a profit. Sometimes he cannot even recover the input cost and gets poorer. This makes many farmers desperate and forces them to abandon agriculture.

"This is not my version. The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) discovered this in its survey in 2007 when almost half the country's farmers said they would abandon farming if they could find another occupation," she says.

This should set the alarm bells ringing in the corridors of power. "If the farmer does not grow food what will we eat? Import food?

"But there is nothing available on the international market to buy! Droughts in Australia and Russia, floods in New Zealand and turbulent weather everywhere have ensured that the guaranteed food surpluses cannot be counted on." she says.

Short supply

The biofuel drive in the U.S has drawn away the American corn into ethanol production so that wheat is being diverted to animal feed and both corn and wheat are now in short supply.

It is not like understanding rocket science to realise that we need to make agriculture work if we as a nation are to get anywhere, seems to be her strong conviction.

“The Prime Minister says internal security is the country's largest crisis. Fixing agriculture and putting money in the farmers' pocket is a dead sure way of finding our way out of this crisis. When will we achieve that?” she enquires.

Contact Dr. Suman Sahai, blog: sumansahai-blog.blogspot.com, email: mail@genecampaign.org, J-235/A, Lane W-15C, Sainik farms, New Delhi- 110-062, phone:011-29556248 and 29555961.

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Farm query

Eliminating hunger

Can you kindly help me get the contact details of an NGO called Society for Hunger Elimination (SHE) in Tirupati?

Kotteswara Rao

Andhra Pradesh

The society solicits membership from several citizens in large numbers for a noble cause such as caring for the poor, underfed and those wallowing in poverty. For details contact Dr.V.Rajagopal, President, SHE, Flat 102 Sri Kataaksham, 18-4-60 Railway colony, TIRUPATI - 517 501 A.P. e mail id rajvel44@mail.com, Phone 0877-2287083, mobile 094412 00217.

Published: October 20, 2011 01:24 IST | Updated: October 20, 2011 01:24 IST

I am a farmer, I do not understand economy: Pawar

Agriculture Minister was besieged with questions on food inflation

“I am a farmer, I do not understand economy,” Agriculture Sharad Pawar said when besieged with questions on food inflation at the Economic Editors' Conference here on Wednesday.

“My job is to produce and provide good minimum support price to farmers for their produce,” he said when asked to comment on Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee's observations on food inflation.

In a lighter vein he said that he gave up the Department of Consumer Affairs because there was “conflict of interest” between giving higher MSP to farmers and protecting consumers' interest.

At the same time he expressed the view that giving highly subsidised foodgrains under the public distribution system to Above Poverty Line population “will have an effect on the country's economy, which should be looked at.”

The Minister said the draft of the National Food Security Bill (formulated by the Food Ministry earlier held by him) was not before him but “the government must meet its social obligation and provide nutritional subsidy to the poor through subsidised foodgrains.”

Saying that the Central issue price of foodgrains sold through the PDS had not been revised in the last eight years or so, he said: “If the government buys wheat at Rs. 16 per kg and sells it for Rs. 4 or so then the long-term effect it will have on the economy needs to be looked at.”

He said he was all for providing subsidised foodgrains to the below poverty line population but “it should not be generalised.”

The Food Ministry has put out on its website the draft food security bill that provides for subsidised foodgrains to 75 per cent of the rural population with at least 46 per cent population belonging to priority households and to 50 per cent urban population with at least 28 per cent of priority households.

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KPRS demands increase in fertilizer production

Special Correspondent

The Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha (KPRS) on Wednesday urged the Union Government to increase the production of fertilizer using cost-effective technology.

At a meeting of farmers' representatives here, the KPRS asked the State Government to regularise the supply of fertilizers.

Addressing farmers, K. Varadarajan, general secretary, All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), said liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation had badly hit the agricultural sector.

The Government did not have control over the sector and private companies had been exploiting farmers. The domestic fertilizer market was being controlled by multinational companies, he said.

Blaming the State and Union governments for the plight of farmers, Bayya Reddy, general secretary, KPRS, said that while the Centre handed over the responsibility of fixing the price of fertilizer to private companies, the Bharatiya Janata Party Government was not taking action against illegal hoarding.

According to Mr. Reddy, while the total demand for fertilizer for kharif and rabi seasons in 2009-10 was 40,48,000 tonnes, the supply was only 39,77,094 tonnes. The demand in 2010-11 was 41,49,000 tonnes and the supply was 41,21,968 tonnes.

The Centre de-regulated the prices of di-ammonium phosphate and urea in the past two years, resulting in the rise in prices.

"The price of 50 kg of urea went up from Rs. 281.10 to Rs. 594 and that of DAP from Rs.564.38 to Rs.956," he added.

- *'Government has no control over fertilizer prices'*
- *Deregulation led to rice in prices of fertilizer, says KPRS*

Published: October 20, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: October 20, 2011 04:03 IST

SHGs urged to maintain quality of their products

Staff Correspondent

'Good publicity will bring more visitors to exhibition'

Zilla panchayat Chief Executive Officer N. Jayaram on Wednesday appealed to non-governmental organisations to work for the betterment of the people.

He was speaking here after inaugurating a three-day exhibition-cum-sale of products manufactured by the Stree Shakti Self-Help Groups (SHGs), jointly organised by the National

Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development and Sri Anjanadevi Mahila Graminabhivruddhi Samaj at the Gayatri Kalyana Mantapa.

"The NGOs should be as enthusiastic about holding such events as they are about seeking funds from the Government," he said.

Mr. Jayaram said that good publicity would result in more customers coming to the exhibition.

"If more customers visit the exhibition, it will not only result in more sales for the SHGs

He said there was a need to give priority to local products and added that there was scope in Chitradurga for the women to use local raw material to popularise their products.

Mr. Jayaram said that as arecanut was a major crop in the district, women could set up units to manufacture disposable plates using arecanut leaves.

"These plates are in great demand within and outside the district as many people prefer to use them during functions and festivals. Thus, the SHGs could make earn substantial revenue from this product," he said.

Deputy Director of the Department of Women and Child Welfare M.S. Jaiswamy said the SHGs should not buy finished products from the market and urged them to manufacture their own products. "SHGs should maintain the quality of their products as this and the attractive packaging were the key to popularity," he said.

He said SHGs should prepare ready-made products like spices as there was significant demand for them, especially in urban areas.

Municipal president Sunita Mallikarjun also spoke.

- *'Self-help groups should not buy finished products from the market'*
- *Need for giving priority to local products stressed*

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Tumbling price of turmeric leaves farmers anxious

After last year's lucrative fetch, area under the crop had increased

Double trouble: After last year's lucrative fetch, the area under the turmeric crop has increased. — file photo

Buoyed by the increase in demand for turmeric and the lucrative price it fetched last year, farmers in many parts of the State had switched over to the crop. However, these farmers are now in distress because of a steep fall in its price.

According to farmers' organisations, the crop had been grown on nearly two lakh acres in the State.

Turmeric fetched a record Rs. 17,000 a quintal last year. With standard practices in its cultivation, the yield of turmeric per acre would be at least 20 quintals.

Kurubur Shanthkumar, president, State Federation of Farmers' Organisations, who has taken up the cause of turmeric farmers, told *The Hindu* that the price of turmeric had fallen from Rs. 17,000 a quintal to Rs. 4,000.

The cost of cultivating a quintal of turmeric was around Rs. 10,000. “Imagine the plight of growers if they do not get the investment made on the crop,” he said.

Turmeric is predominantly grown in Mysore, Chamarajanagar, Hassan, Chikmagalur, Belgaum, Dharwad, Bagalkot, Shimoga and parts of Ramanagaram districts, according to Mr. Shanthkumar.

The scenario has changed from last year and turmeric growers are in trouble due to plummeting prices. “With the crop nearing harvest (November-end or early December), growers are wondering if the Government would intervene and help them get a good price for their produce,” he said.

In fact, a few farmers had not sold their produce last year because the prices had started falling by the time it hit the market, he said.

No MSP

In the absence of a minimum support price (MSP) for the crop, farmers have been anxious.

“We have been demanding MSP for the crop, but the Government has not responded favourably. We were promised that a meeting would be convened shortly by the Minister for Horticulture to find a solution,” Mr. Shanthkumar said. Growers are demanding an MSP of Rs. 15,000 a quintal, he said.

Meeting

Mr. Shanthkumar said the Government had been requested to convene a meeting of representatives from farmers' organisations, Spices Board, and officials from the Department of Horticulture and the National Horticulture Board to come up with measures to ensure a stable price for commodities such as turmeric. In spite of an increase in turmeric production, the State has no market yard for the produce.

Turmeric growers in the State have been demanding setting up of purchase points and warehouses.

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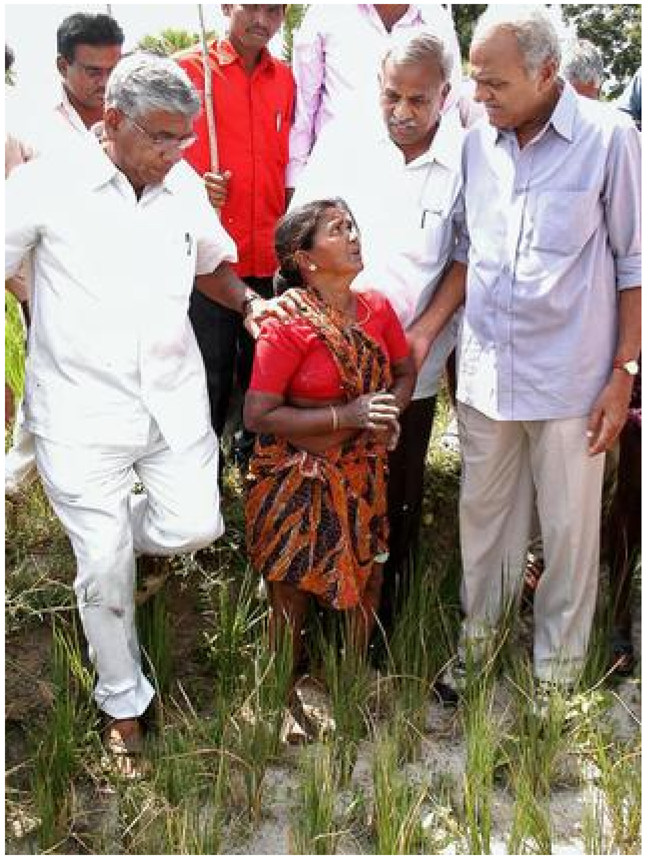
CPI seeks compensation for crop loss



Woes continue: State CPI secretary K. Narayana at the paddy fields consoling farmers. —- PHOTO: SINGAM VENKATARAMANA

State CPI secretary K. Narayana on Wednesday demanded payment of compensation of Rs.10,000 per acre of crop damage sustained by farmers in the district due to recent power cuts and inadequate water supply.

Talking to press persons after undertaking a tour of drought-hit areas in Nampally and Chandur mandals, he wanted the State government to pay an ex-gratia of Rs.5 lakh each to the kin of farmers who have committed suicide on account of crop loss.

The CPI leader called upon the government to take measures on a war-footing to counter the drought.

He said a party delegation would call on Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy on Thursday and submit a report on the drought situation in Nalgonda and Mahabubnagar districts that he and other party leaders had toured extnsively on Tuesday and Wednesday.

CPI leader calls upon government to take measures on a war-footing to counter drought

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CACP's move to bail out paddy farmers

Staff Reporter

Chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) Ashok Gulati has said that the Commission will recommend increasing the minimum support price for paddy keeping in mind the remunerative price and input cost.

Mr. Gulati, who visited East Godavari district on Wednesday, said he would ask the Food Corporation of India and the Ministry of Agriculture to open more paddy purchase centres and also give permission in time for exports. Addressing crop holiday farmers in Uppalaguptam mandal headquarters along with Congress MP Kavuri Sambasiva Rao, MP, and a team of agriculture scientists from Delhi, and Joint Collector K. Babu, he said issues worrying the farmers such as variation between input cost and MSP, delay in export permission, increase in prices of fertilizers, labour and other expenditure would be discussed. Mr. Gulati assured the farmers observing crop holiday that he would get a package from the Central Government. NREGP would be linked with agriculture in East Godavari and work would be provided to the farm labourers in the coming season. Mr. Kavuri Sambasiva Rao was also present.

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hindustantimes

HT Correspondent, Hindustan Times
Email Author
New Delhi, October 19, 2011
First Published: 23:25 IST(19/10/2011)
Last Updated: 01:44 IST(20/10/2011)

GDP will slow, inflation will ease: Pranab

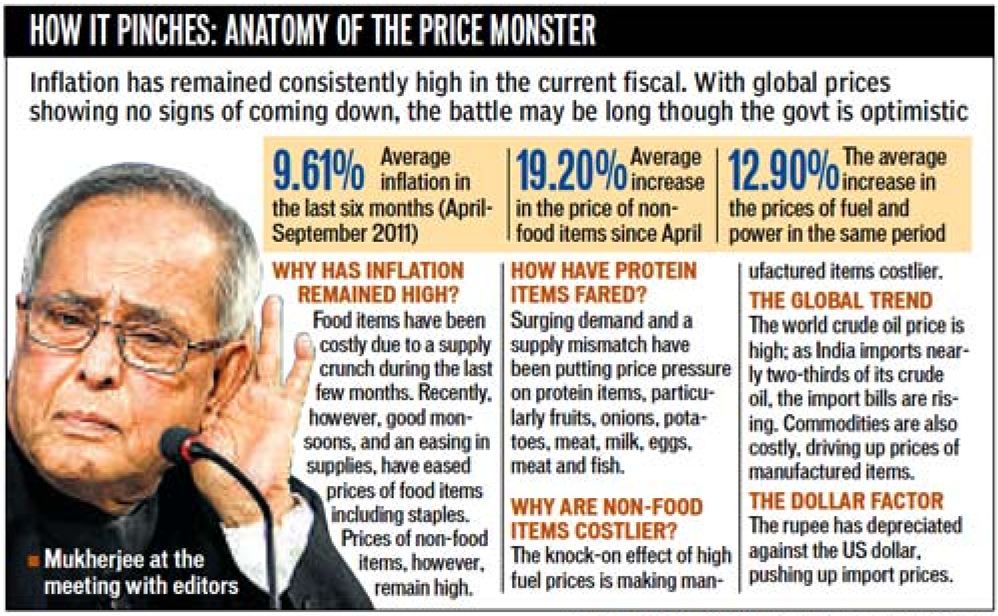
India's inflation rate will ease from December but GDP growth in the current fiscal year would be less than expected due to an uncertain global economy and some local factors, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Wednesday.

Bridging revenue shortfalls is a challenge in a slowing economy, but long-term fundamentals for sound growth are intact, the minister told the annual conference of economic editors here.

"The monetary policy tightening and the increase in interest rates along with the global uncertainty have not helped the industry to go in for fresh investments," he said.

"Most observers are expecting India's growth to go down to below 8%. This is disappointing, but at the same time we must not lose perspective of the global situation," Mukherjee said.

The monthly benchmark inflation, which is currently just below the double-digit figure, will start to moderate by December and could come down to 7% by the end of 2011-12, he said, but added that supply side constraints need to be addressed.



HT GRAPHIC; PHOTO: MOHD ZAKIR/HT; TEXT: HT BUREAU

Mukherjee said though the fiscal deficit target of 4.6% of the GDP for the current fiscal was unlikely to be met the government would make "strenuous attempts" to keep it close to the projected figure. "With crude prices remaining where they are, it will be a great challenge to maintain the fiscal deficit numbers at 4.6% this year."

The government would be closely monitoring the revenue and expenditure trends to take necessary steps, he said.

On disinvestment, he said that it was too early to make any commitment on the final amount the Centre expected to get this year. He said the government was monitoring the markets and stake sales would depend on market conditions and sentiments.

He said that the proposed Direct Tax Code was expected to see the light of the day in the forthcoming budget session.

http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/759239.aspx

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather	
Clear	Thursday, Oct 20
	Max Min
	33.2° | 23.7°
Rain: 12.0 mm in 24hrs	**Sunrise:** 5:59
Humidity: 74%	**Sunset:** 17:48
Wind: Normal	**Barometer:** 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast	
Rainy	Friday, Oct 21
	Max Min
	34° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Oct 22	Oct 23	Oct 24	Oct 25	Oct 26
31° | 25°	30° | 25°	30° | 25°	30° | 25°	30° | 27°
Partly Cloudy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Cloudy

the pioneer

Pawar war within UPA on Food Bill

THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2011 01:05

Sonia's dream project will distort country's economy, says Agriculture Minister

A day after he claimed that the UPA-II had been weakened due to a series of scandals, NCP chief and Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar flexed his muscles again — this time hitting out at Congress president Sonia Gandhi's dream scheme, the National Food Security Bill.

Speaking out at the Economic Editors' conference on Wednesday, Pawar said that the proposed Bill would distort the country's economy and suggested that that the issue price of food grain needed a re-look to reduce the subsidy burden.

"The Bill gives coarse cereals at Rs 1 a kg when it sells in open market at Rs 30 a kg. With such a huge price gap, obviously it will have an impact on the economy," he said.

Warning of repercussions of such measures, he said while the need to address the food security issue was understood, it should not be generalised to the extent that it distorted the economy. "We should also think of its repercussions," he said.

The proposed Bill gives legal entitlements to 75 per cent of the rural households of which 46 per cent are on priority list and 50 per cent urban households of which 28 per cent are priority. The Bill provides legal entitlement to 7 kg of grains a person a month to priority sector households, with rice at Rs 3/kg, wheat at Rs 2/kg and coarse cereals at Rs 1/kg. The general-category households will get 3-4 kg of grains per person per month as per the scheme.

On Tuesday, Pawar had said, "The performance of UPA (Government) improved in the 2009 election due to the Prime Minister's good image. UPA-II started with controversies surrounding decisions taken earlier. The scenario changed after the CAG report (on the 2G scam) was tabled and it cited a (loss) figure of Rs 1.76 lakh crore."

“There was a loss of public opinion due to this 2G scam and the public questioned why the Prime Minister was not intervening... At such a time, it is important to have a strong Central Government. But it does not seem to be the case. Because of this, the judiciary and other forces have come to the fore... People’s representatives or democracy should be strong. If others try to fill in for them, it becomes worrisome for the democratic process,” Pawar said.

NCP chief’s attack on the UPA comes a day after his party lost the Khadakwasla Assembly seat to NDA. It is well-known that the Maharashtra strongman does not see eye to eye with the Congress on several issues. The timing of his criticism of the UPA is cause of serious worry for the UPA, whose growing weakness is making it vulnerable to arm-twisting by the allies. Already, Trinamool Congress (TC) is giving sleepless night to the UPA leadership. TC chief and Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s decision to keep out of Prime Minister’s recent Bangladesh visit was a clear indication that allies were acting independently within the UPA.

The BJP has been quick to take a pot shot at the UPA over Pawar’s salvo. The party on Wednesday said Pawar’s admission on weakening authority of UPA-II signaled the growing fear among UPA allies about the future of the Government.

“Either the Congress is feeling the heat of its allies or the allies are feeling that they are sailing on a sinking boat,” BJP spokesman Rajiv Pratap Rudy said. Asked if these comments of Pawar indicated that he wanted to join the BJP-led NDA, Rudy shot back saying, “It looks like he is planning to leave the UPA.”

On its part, the Congress played down Pawar’s comment with party spokesman Abhishek Manu Singhvi saying that they were the NCP chief’s personal views and did not reflect the views of other constituents of the UPA Government. He also said that Pawar’s comments were being wrongly construed.

“We have always made it clear that every constituent of the coalition has the democratic right to explain his views. It does not mean that it is shared by all of us,” Singhvi said while replying to a question on whether the Congress agreed with the senior Minister's views about the UPA-II Government.

However, a senior Congress leader on condition of anonymity admitted that even the Congressmen felt that due to various scams, the Government was being perceived as weak and when such things happened then judiciary and media became stronger than the Government.

He said that Pawar was not holding anyone in the Congress guilty of the situation and only made honest and candid admission of the fact that from 2010 many scams had emerged which made psychological impact on the people who perceived the Government to be weak. Denying that the intention behind making such remark was either to attack the PM or the Congress president, the leader said that his comment was directed against the system.

Agriculture dept soughts help to ensure about fertilizers

WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2011 20:57

Anticipating scarcity of fertilizers during Rabi sowing, which was about to start with beginning of next month, Agriculture department has sought help from administration in districts to ensure that available fertilizers were not reaching in black market.

Since the centre has allocated less quota of fertilisers in comparison to needs of the state, there might be scarcity of fertlizers during Rabi sowing season and some 'seasonal traders' taking benefit of situation might try selling fertlizers on higher prices in black market, a senior official in Agriculture directorate, said.

In view of limited availability of fertlizers the department has urged administration in districts to ascertain the identity of genuine farmers purchasing fertlizers through revenue documents and kisan credit cards, he said.

Pointing at the looming crisis, he said, for October month the state government had demanded for 4 lakh metric ton (LMT) of Urea against which only 2.24 LMT was allocated.

Following assessment of the situation which was likley affect farmers in coming days, he said, the field officials in eastern districts sharing border with Nepal has been especially instructed to take help of local police to prevent trafficking of fertilizers to Nepal where they are easily sold on higher prices.

It may be recalled here, the Chief Minister have written twice to Prime Minister for allocation of fertilizer quota in accordance with needs of UP and state Agriculture Minister, Lachchmi Narayan was holding meetings with offcials in central government in this regard.

The state had demanded for 67 LMT of fertlizers for Rabi sowing responding to which the centre allocated about 53 LMT only.

Maintaining that efforts at high level were going for hike in quota and other means to ensure availability of needed amount of fertlizers, the Agriculture directorate official said, the paucity of fertlizers might hit grain production in state.

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express buzz

By ENS Economic Bureau
20 Oct 2011 03:25:17 AM IST

Foodgrain output at record 241.6 million tonne

NEW DELHI: Agriculture and Food Processing Industries Minister, Sharad Pawar, on Wednesday expressed the hope that with record production in kharif and rabi seasons this year, the food production will exceed the target in 2011-12 and the targeted 4 per cent growth in agriculture sector would be achieved.

Addressing the Economic Editors' Conference here, he said foodgrain production has reached a record level of 241.6 million tonne in 2010-11. India has also achieved highest ever production of wheat, pulses, oil seeds and cotton. Overall farm output has also achieved an impressive growth rate of 7.5 per cent during the last quarter of 2010-11 thus helping agriculture GDP to register a growth of 6.6 per cent during the year.

"This also makes average growth rate in current plan to be 3.2 per cent, which we could achieve under some of the worst climatic conditions like drought, unseasonal rains, flood, frost etc. in recent past," said Pawar.

Pawar said the Government, over the last few years, has been able to ensure higher investments both private and public. Gross Capital Formation (GCF) as percentage of agricultural GDP clocked 18.7 per cent during first three years of current Plan, which is significantly higher compared to 12.5 per cent during whole of 10th Plan.

Simultaneously, the Plan outlay has also been hiked substantially to reach `21,530 crore in 2011-12. The National Food Security Mission (NFSM) has already accomplished its target of producing additional production of 20 million tons within 4 years of its implementation.

"During the current Plan, we are giving special emphasis on developing infrastructure for food processing. So far projects for 15 Mega Food Parks, 49 Cold Chain and 10 Abattoir are approved by the Ministry," said Pawar.

'Growth to dip, but still be a reason for celebration'

ENS Economic Bureau Posted online: Thu Oct 20 2011, 01:27 hrs

New Delhi : Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee today said that the uncertain global economic situation will impact India's growth in the current fiscal. The growth may be lower than the earlier estimation of 9 per cent but "it will still be a reason for celebrations", he said.

"Most observers are expecting India's growth to go down to below 8 per cent. This is disappointing but at the same time we must not lose perspective of the global situation..." Mukherjee said while addressing the economic editors' conference here.

"A number of policy measures are being taken and the long-run indicators look robust ... In this climate, even if India's growth rate this year goes down to below our earlier expectation, we will still be among the 10 or so fastest growing nations in the world," he said.

The economy recorded a growth of 7.7 per cent during April-June, 2011-12 — the lowest in 18 months. "Let me not hide the fact that I have been disappointed by growth performance over the last few months. It is evident that India's growth rate in 2011-12 will be less than what we were expecting in February when I presented the Budget," he said.

Attributing the slippage to "the dark clouds which have gathered in the global skies yet again", the finance minister said that the persisting euro zone crisis and a much-slower recovery in advanced economies coupled with high inflation in the country will impact the economy. And “the monetary policy tightening and the increase in interest rates along with the global uncertainty have not helped the industry to go in for fresh investments,” the Finance Minister said.

Despite the Reserve Bank of India raising key rates 12 times since March 2010, headline inflation has remained stubbornly close to the double-digit mark. It was 9.78 per cent in August. The next policy review by the RBI is scheduled for October 25.

The hawkish stance by the central bank has adversely impacted growth during 2011-12 and industrial production has been hit due to rising cost of credit and fall in demand. The index of industrial production stood at 4.1 per cent for the month of August as against 4.5 per cent during the same period a year ago.

However, making a prediction in line with the central bank’s, Mukherjee said that overall inflation would decline from December and hopefully, fall to 7 per cent by March.

As regard fiscal deficit, the minister said due to volatile crude prices it would be tough to adhere to the budgeted fiscal deficit target of 4.6 per cent.

“We will make strenuous attempts to keep the fiscal deficit at around these numbers. We would be closely monitoring the revenue and expenditure trends and take steps as deemed appropriate,” he said. Fiscal deficit stood at 4.7 per cent in the previous fiscal. The government finances have come under stress due to lower than expected revenue realisation.

Trying to chase away the shadow of “so-called popular perception about policy paralysis”, he also listed out the initiatives taken by the government to facilitate augur investment in the country. A new draft telecom policy, issuance of infrastructure debt fund norms, debate on new manufacturing policy, the proposed mining bill point towards the measure the Centre has taken, he said.

Business Standard

Thursday, Oct 20, 2011

Cotton exports pick up pace on fresh arrivals

Rajesh Bhayani / Mumbai October 20, 2011, 0:02 IST

Cotton exports seem to be gaining momentum with the new crop arriving in the market. In the months to come, exports are likely to pick up.

At present, industry expects, 2.5 million bales (1 bale=170 kg) would be exported by December.

“It is learnt that an export commitment of 2.5 million bales of cotton has already been made. This has been done at international price of 108-112 cents per pound CIF China port,” said S V Arumugam, chairman, Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (Citi). He estimates 7 million bales as surplus that can be exported. But many traders estimate higher exports due to bumper crop.

“As arrivals increase prices could fall and exporters are likely to be more aggressive to export as mush as possible before competitors enter market. Cotton exporters from India are very active in selling Indian cotton in China, Brazil, Bangladesh and other countries,” said Arun Dalal, an Ahmedabad-based trader.

Another Mumbai-based exporter said that so far export registration with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) is around 600,000 bales. Cotton exports have been under the open general license since October. As arrivals of new cotton increase, prices will come under pressure as mills’ demand may be less this time. Exporters demand may continue even at lower prices.

Arrival calendar is such that October will see 6-7 million bales of arrivals while in November and December arrivals would be 8-9 million bales. Cotton prices are around Rs 39,000 a candy (356 kg) in Gujarat mandis while Rs 38,000 in Maharashtra.

Kharif oilseed output may slide 4-5% on crop damage: Industry

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai October 20, 2011, 0:58 IST

The country's total oilseed production this kharif harvesting season is likely to decline by four-five per cent season due to severe crop damage, especially of soybean, in major areas of Madhya Pradesh, India's largest producing state. Against the first advanced estimate of 20.89 million tonnes (mt), given by the ministry of agriculture, the industry has pegged the total output at around 20 mt. The total oilseed output has stood at 20.85 mt last kharif season.

"We are certainly considering to lower the soybean crop estimates, though marginally, by 100,000-150,000 tonnes from the earlier estimates of 11.65 mt released on September 30, as the crop damage has been larger than expected," said Rajesh Agrawal, spokesperson of the Soybean Processors Association of India (Sopa), an Indore-based trade body.

At major centres around Bhopal and Disa, soybean crop was severely affected due to waterlogging in fields. As a result, the yield in this region was likely to fall at least 33 per cent to 750 kg per hectare from 1,000-1,100 kg last year. Considering these, the earlier production forecast was unlikely to be met, especially for soybean, despite an increase of 1 million hectares in acreage, said Agrawal.

GRIM OUTLOOK
• Waterlogging hit soybean crop in major Madhya Pradesh pockets • Yield to decline by nearly 33 per cent to 750 kg per hectare • Groundnut output also fell on unfavourable October weather • Traders term government's figure of 20.89 million tonnes unrealistic

- Sesameseed and sunflowerseed output to also decline

Not only the government, but industry trade bodies, along with other stakeholders, had earlier forecast India's oilseed output to be bumper, setting new record this year. Traders hoped the import of vegetable oil would decline this year due to higher domestic output. But, with oilseed output estimated lower, India's reliance on overseas import may continue, even widen, due to a sustained increase in per-capita consumption.

India imports crude palm oil from Indonesia. But, as the Indonesian government raised export duty on crude palm oil, Indian traders have increased the import of refined edible oils not only from Indonesia but also from other major destinations like Malaysia and Argentina. India imports 8.5-9 mt of vegetable oil to meet its domestic annual need of 15.5 mt.

Industry veteran Gobindbhai Patel, however, has already factored in the crop damage across all oilseed segments and forecast soybean output even lower than the industry's estimates to 10.5-10.7 mt, against the last year's output at 9.8 mt.

The case is somewhat similar for groundnut. Against the government estimate of 410,000 tonnes, the Mumbai-based Indian Oilseeds and Produce Export Promotion Council expects groundnut output to be 407,000 tonnes, almost the same as last year. The agency, however, estimated a 22 per cent fall in sesameseed output to 311,000 tonnes, which may be revised.

The rapidly falling acreage is set to bring down the sunflower seed output to 130,000 tonnes this summer-sown season from 140,000 tonnes last year.

"The government's oilseed figures have always been unrealistic which vary with the figures from the trade with a wide margin. Therefore, the government's production figures can not be relied upon. Trades always assess individual oilseed crops after visiting the field and considering all factors including post harvest management," said Patel.

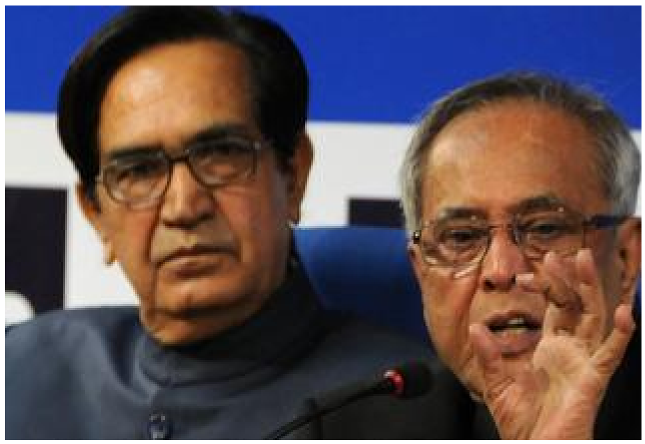
According to Naveen Mathur, associate director of Angel Broking, the oilseed output during the current kharif harvesting season beginning October may fall even below 20 mt due to crop damage in groundnut and soybean following unseasonal rainfall in the crop maturing period.

THE HINDU Business Line

Maintaining fiscal deficit at 4.6%, a great challenge: Pranab

Our Bureau

Inflation to come down from December



The Finance Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee (right), and the Minister of State for Finance, Mr Namo Narain Meena, at the inaugural session of the Economic Editors' Conference, in the Capital on Wednesday. — Kamal Narang

New Delhi, Oct. 19:

The Finance Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, on Wednesday admitted that it would be a great challenge to maintain the fiscal deficit within the Budget targets. At the same time, he assured that the inflation would start coming down from December.

Addressing the annual Economic Editors' Conference, Mr Mukherjee said, “With the crude prices remaining where they are, it will be a great challenge to maintain the fiscal deficit numbers at 4.6 per cent this year.” He said he would make strenuous attempts to keep the fiscal deficit at around these numbers. Revenue and expenditure trends would be closely monitored and that steps would be taken as deemed appropriate.

Growth story

On inflation, Mr Mukherjee estimated that this fiscal year will end with headline whole sale price index (WPI) around 7 per cent. “Food inflation has significantly dropped from a peak of 20 per cent in February 2010 to about 8 per cent in June-July 2011. However, the sources of inflation have now switched to non-food; much of it, as I just mentioned, was due to imported global commodity inflation," he explained.

Although he was little uncertain about the overall economic growth, he said India's growth story will still be among the 10 fastest growing nations in the world. "The fact that we feel disappointed that India may grow by around 8 per cent this year shows more than anything else how our yardstick for evaluating India has changed. This to me is good news," Mr Mukherjee added.

Winter session

The Government will revise the growth target in the mid-term economic review which will be tabled in Parliament during the winter session. An earlier government estimate said that the economy is likely to grow between 8.75 per cent and 9.25 per cent during 2011-12.

In an order to allay the perception of policy paralysis, the Minister listed various decisions ranging from new the Draft Telecom Policy to the guidelines for Infrastructure Debt Fund.

He also mentioned that the new Manufacturing Policy by the Group of Ministers while the mining policy is ready for introduction in Parliament.

The Land Acquisition Bill has already been introduced in the last session of the Parliament

At the same time, the Group of Ministers is working earnestly to solve the issues related to coal. Many other legislations or amendments are at various stages in an active mode.

The RBI is actively engaged in the process of grant of new banking licences, he added.

Shishir.s@thehindu.co.in

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MSP for wheat in a week or two

Our Bureau
New Delhi, Oct. 19:

The Cabinet is likely to decide on the minimum support price (MSP) for wheat in a week or two, Mr Pawar said.

Sowing of wheat has already started and farmers should know the MSP for wheat at the beginning of the season, Mr Pawar said.

The Government is targeting wheat output of 86 million tonnes in the ensuing Rabi season, up from the 85.93 million tonnes produced last year.

The Agriculture Ministry, along with the Commission for Agriculture Cost and Prices, has already submitted its recommendation to the Cabinet.

Last year, the Government had procured wheat at a support price of Rs 1,170 a quintal including a bonus of Rs 50.

Ruling out region-specific MSP for different crops, Mr Pawar said the Government has been raising the MSP of major crops such as paddy, wheat and pulses at regular intervals to provide incentives to farmers to produce more.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 20, 2011)

Volume hits 3-week low at Coonoor tea auction

P.S. Sundar
Coonoor, Oct. 19:

A volume of 13.32 lakh kg will be offered at Sale No 42 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions to be held on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of brokers' listing.

This is the lowest volume of the last three weeks.

It is some 50,000 kg less than last week's offer but as much as 1.37 lakh kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 13.32 lakh kg on offer, 9.15 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 4.17 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades.

As much as 12.60 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.72 lakh kg, orthodox variety.

Orthodox teas

The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades.

In the leaf counter, only 0.40 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 8.75 lakh kg, CTC.

Among the dusts, only 0.32 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 3.85 lakh kg, CTC.

In the 13.32 lakh kg, fresh teas account for 11.02 lakh kg. As much as 1.30 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions.

Unsold stocks

Nearly 20 per cent of the offer last week remained unsold and those sold fetched Rs 2 a kg lower on the average because of festival holidays in upcountry markets restricting the demand.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 201, Curzon Rs 170, Corsely Rs 161, Highfield Estate Rs 158, Kairbetta Rs 156 and Havukal Rs 155.

In all, 40 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 45-53 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 80-130 for brighter liquoring sorts.

They ranged Rs 47-54 for plain dusts and Rs 85-139 for brighter liquoring dusts.

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Govt may allow sugar exports in tranches

Ministers panel may discuss export policy, foodgrain prices today

Caution is the watchword: The Union Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar (right), with the Union Agriculture Secretary, Mr P.K. Basu, addressing the Economic Editors' conference in the Capital on Wednesday. — Shanker Chakravarty

New Delhi, Oct. 19:

The Government is likely to allow fresh sugar exports, but in limited quantities at regular intervals. The Empowered Group of Ministers on Food is scheduled to meet on Thursday

(October 20) to discuss export policy and prices of foodgrains, said Union Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar.

Speaking at the Economic Editors conference, Mr Pawar favoured exports of sugar in limited quantities either on monthly or weekly basis as bulk exports could depress international prices. “Our decision to allow sugar exports should not impact global prices,” he said.

Mr Pawar said that whenever India decides to export sugar, the global prices fall and when the country decides to import, the prices rise. The Government, Mr Pawar said, was cautious on allowing exports so as to ensure domestic availability to keep prices under check.

The sugar industry has sought further export permits in anticipation of bumper output in sugar year 2011-12 that began this month. In 2010-11, the sugar industry was permitted to export 1.5 million tonnes.

Bumper output

Sugar production is seen at 26 million tonnes in the current sugar year, while consumption is likely to be around 22 million tonnes, according to industry estimates. By the end of current year, India is likely to have a sugar surplus of 9.8 million tonnes.

In a bid to overcome the farm sector labour shortage, the Government proposes to introduce a plan for agricultural mechanisation in the 12th plan period starting 2012.

Anti-poverty programmes

The implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) and other anti-poverty programmes has put pressure on availability of farm labour. “While we are attempting to innovatively utilise MNREGA for augmenting activities that directly add to farm productivity; for compensating scarcity of labour, I am proposing a large programme for agriculture mechanisation during 12 {+t} {+h} Plan,” Mr Pawar said.

The strategies for rejuvenating the agriculture sector have been working well. “We will now be able to achieve the targeted 4 per cent growth,” Mr Pawar said.

Foodgrain production reached a record high of 241.6 million tonnes in 2010-11. “The overall farm output achieved an impressive growth of 7.5 per cent in the last quarter of 2010-11 thus helping achieve agriculture GDP to register a growth of 6.6 per cent during the year,” Mr Pawar said. The monsoon this year has been very encouraging and so also the crop outlook. “We are confident that we will be able to surpass our own production record set last year,” Mr Pawar said.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 20, 2011)

Assam, W. Bengal growers feel the pinch of falling tea prices

Santanu Sanyal
Kolkata, Oct. 19:

Nearly one lakh small tea growers in Assam and West Bengal have been put to difficulty due to the sudden drop in the price of the green leaf, according to the Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association (CISTA).

For the last 10 days , green leaves in these two States have been selling at Rs 3-4/kg on an average when the production cost is more than Rs 10/kg, says Mr B. G. Chakraborty, President, CISTA.

The situation is worse in lower Assam, particularly Bodoland, where there being no Bought Leaf Factory (BLF), growers are being forced to allow their produce go waste.

Mr Chakraborty attributed the crisis to bumper crop as well as virtual “monopoly stranglehold” of the existing BLFs taking advantage of the excess leaf production. He, therefore, demanded the setting up of more BLFs in these two States.

Also, there should be implementation and proper monitoring of the price sharing formula under the Tea Marketing Control Order.

The CISTA President said that steps should be initiated immediately to set up at least 50 new BLFs each in these two States. At present, there are 89 BLFs in West Bengal and another 150 in Assam.

New licences

He pointed out that between 2004 and 2009, the West Bengal Government did not issue any licence for setting up new BLFs.

In 2010, the joint committee of the West Bengal Government and Tea board sanctioned 12 new licences for setting up BLFs. But these are clearly insufficient compared to the needs. In Assam, the joint committee of the State Government and Tea Board did not issue any licence in the last four years.

Meanwhile, the United Forum of Small Tea Growers Association, West Bengal, and All Assam Small Tea Growers Association, both affiliated to CISTA, have informed the local Tea Board offices of the present situation and have sought intervention. At several places in these two States, the small tea growers are staging agitation, it is learnt.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 20, 2011)

Lack of buying saps chana; chickpea firm

Our Correspondent

Indore, Oct. 19:

Spot chana declined to Rs 3,250-3,300 a quintal against Rs 3,300-3,325 on Wednesday on lack of buying interest. Chana (desi) ruled firm at Rs 3,200.

Decline in demand for spot chana dragged chana dal in the spot market, too, with chana dal (bold) slipping to Rs 4,300-4,325 (Rs 4,350-4,375) on Wednesday. Similarly, chana dal (medium) declined to Rs 4,200-4,225 (Rs 4,250-4,275), while while chana dal (average) sold at Rs 4,100-4,125 (Rs 4,150-4,175). Dollar chana or chickpea ruled firm at Rs 7,200-7,800 on improved buying support. Arrivals of dollar chana in local mandis soared to 1,000-1,200 bags against 600-700 on Wednesday.

Masoor and its dal gained marginally on improved demand, with masoor (bold) selling at Rs 2,875-2,900 and masoor (medium) at Rs 2,600-2,650. Masoor dal (average) sold at Rs 3,275-3,300 (Rs 3,250-3,275), masoor dal (medium) at Rs 3,375-3,400 (Rs 3,400-3,425) and masoor dal (bold) at Rs 3,500-3,525 (Rs 3,500). Steady demand kept tur and its dal firm, with tur (Maharashtra) selling at Rs 3,300-3,350 and tur (Nimari) at Rs 2,300-2,600.Tur (marka) sold marginally higher at Rs 6,200-6,250.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 20, 2011)

Most edible oils remain bearish

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Oct. 19:

Barring rapeseed oil that rose by Rs 7 for 10 kg on firm reports from North India, edible oils remained bearish on Wednesday despite a sudden spurt in Malaysian palm oil futures.

Palmolein declined by Rs 4 and soya refined oil lost Rs 3. Groundnut oil shaved off Rs 20 and cotton refined oil dropped by Rs 5 on increased selling and higher arrivals at producing centres. Sunflower oil remained unchanged. Ruchi sold 500-600 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 522-523. Allana sold 150-200 tonnes at Rs 521 for delivery between November 1 and 10. Resellers sold 140-150 tonnes at Rs 525-526.

Crude palm oil (CPO) futures on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) jumped amid short-covering and bargain-hunting on hopes that higher exports will bring down the level of stocks. Liberty offered palmolein at Rs 531-532, soya oil at Rs 632 and super palmolein at Rs 566. Ruchi quoted soya refined oil at Rs 627.

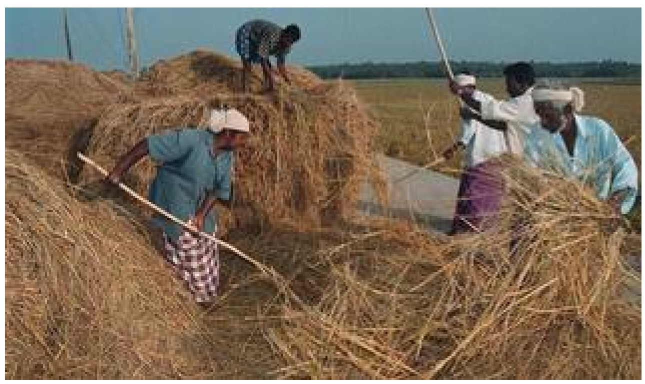
Malaysia's BMD CPO's November contracts settled at MYR2,880 (MYR2,819), December at MYR2,886 (MYR2,827) and January at MYR2,892 (MYR2,835) a tonne. Soya oil for November delivery was at Rs 612.80 (Rs 606.50) and at Rs 616 (Rs 610) for Decmeber delivery on National Board of Trade in Indore.

Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 840 (860), soya refined oil 625 (628), sunflower exp. ref. 655 (655), sunflower ref. 725 (725), rapeseed ref. oil 695 (688), rapeseed expeller ref. 665 (658), cotton ref. oil 645 (650) and palmolein 526 (530).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 20, 2011)

Paddy prices decline to season's low

Our Correspondent



Karnal, Oct. 19:

Paddy arrivals of the PR variety dropped drastically to around 60,000 bags at the Karnal grain market terminal against more than 1.1 lakh bags earlier this week, while a marginal increase in arrivals of Pusa-1121, Sharbati and DB varieties pulled their prices down to the lowest levels of the season on Wednesday.

About the low arrivals, Mr Tara Chand Sharma, proprietor of Tara Chand and Sons, told *Business Line* that arrivals of PR varieties are drying up while farmers of other paddy varieties are waiting for prices to rise.

The rice market witnessed a steady trend, with prices of aromatic and non-basmati varieties ruling around their previous levels.

Pusa-1121 (steam) quoted at Rs 4,900 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) was ruling around Rs 3,950 a quintal.

Pure basmati (raw) sold at Rs 5,500 a quintal, while basmati (sela) sold at Rs 3,800 a quintal. Duplicate basmati was at Rs 3,100 a quintal.

Sharbati (steam) ruled at Rs 2,900-2,980, while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 2,800 a quintal. PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,100-2,190 a quintal, while PR-11 (raw) quoted at Rs 1,900-2,100 a quintal. PR Silky was at Rs 2,250-2,300 a quintal.

Permal (sela) sold at Rs 1,800-1,960 a quintal, Permal (steam) was at Rs 2,030 a quintal and Permal (raw) was at Rs 1,825-1,910 a quintal.

Around 1.1 lakh bags of paddy varieties arrived. PR sold at Rs 1,050-1,135. Around 10,000 bags of Sugandha-999 arrived that was lifted at Rs 1,400-1,480 a quintal. The 10,000 bags of Sharbati variety that arrived quoted at Rs 1,350-1,450. Ten thousand bags of DB that arrived sold at Rs 1,450-1,625. Around 18,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and sold at Rs 1,600-1,850 a quintal.

According to reports, since lifting of the ban on non-basmati exports, rice shipments have touched almost 1.75 lakh tonnes (lt) so far, and the same quantity is said to be finalised for shipments in weeks ahead.

Almost 2 lt is expected to be shipped out in October, while almost 3 lt each is expected to be shipped out during November and December.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 20, 2011)

Spot sugar falls on poor offtake

Mumbai, Oct. 19:

Lower demand ahead of Diwali pulled down sugar by Rs 4-5 a quintal in the spot market on Wednesday.

Naka rates remained unchanged for the fourth day. Mill tender rates dropped by Rs 5-10 a quintal as selling rose at higher prices because of less-than-expected demand. Arrivals were higher than local dispatches.Freight rates were steady at the higher level. Stockists covered according to their needs, said a wholesaler.An Empowered Group of Ministers may meet this week to review limits for stockholding and exports as a record crop is expected in the current season. While local consumption is 225-230 lakh tonnes, output is likely at 260-265 lakh tonnes in 2011-2012 against 245-250 lakh tonnes last year.

Arrivals in the Vashi market were at 52-53 truckloads while local dispatches were at 47-48 truckloads. On Tuesday, about 12-13 mills offered tenders and sold about 45,000-50,000 bags to local traders at Rs 2,695-2,770 (Rs 2,695-2,780) for S-grade and at Rs 2,790-2,900 (Rs 2,795-2,910) for M-grade. Fine-quality M-grade fetched Rs 10-15 higher.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association spot rates: S-grade — Rs 2,812-2,900 (Rs 2,816-2,900); M-grade — Rs 2,911-3,062 (Rs 2,914-3,062).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade — Rs 2,770-2,820 (Rs 2,770-2,820); M-grade — Rs 2,875-3,020 (Rs 2,875-3,020).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 20, 2011)

Higher supply hopes drag spot castor

Rajkot, Oct. 19:

The castor market witnessed a mixed trend on Wednesday.

The October contract declined by Rs 104 at Rs 4,106 a quintal, with an open interest of 180 lots, on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, while the November contract gained Rs 53.50 at Rs 4,095.50, with an open interest of 21,850 lots.

While castorseed for December delivery rose by Rs 30 to Rs 3,812 on the Rajkot Commodity Exchange, it remained unchanged at Rs 3,902.50 in the spot market.

While the 9,000-10,000 bags that arrived in Gujarat sold at Rs 770-790 for 20 kg, 700-800 bags arrived in Saurashtra and fetched Rs 740-781.

The October contract fell as traders sold on hopes of higher supplies in the spot market, said marketmen.

acreage

According to the Agriculture Department of Gujarat, area under castor rose to 8.11 lakh hectares in this kharif season against 5.18 lakh hectares last year.

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