

Published: October 3, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: October 3, 2011 04:21 IST MADURAI,
October 3, 2011

“Sustainable development must to conserve forests”

: Sustainable development combined with a moderate lifestyle and widespread environmental awareness is needed to conserve what was left of India's forests and wildlife.

At present, only 4.5 per cent of the country's land is covered by forests and protected as sanctuaries, according to Shekar Dattatri, a noted wild life film maker and conservationist.

Since liberalisation the watch word has been “development, at all cost.” The national obsession with 9 per cent growth is not a good thing and was only taking the country in a wrong direction, he said.

Learning session

Mr. Dattatri, who has won numerous recognitions besides produced award-winning wildlife documentaries for National Geographic and Discovery channels, was addressing a ‘learning session’ on wild life conservation and film making in India organised here on Friday by the Madurai Chapter of Young Indians (Yi), a forum of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

If the Taj Mahal were to be demolished, he said, numerous protests would erupt across the country and calls would be given to protect the monument saying it was part of the country's heritage. What people failed to realise was forests and wild life were also a part of the nation's heritage and needed to be conserved and passed on to the future generations.

Explaining the importance of the dwindling reserves of forests, he said that all of south India's rivers originated in the forests of Western Ghats.

Orissa was able to produce world-famous prawns because lakhs of Olive Ridley turtles hatched in its shores every year, upon which the marine life fed.

“In nature, there is no such thing as waste. In the forests, every thing right down to cow dung is recycled.”

Pointing to the examples of mining, he said if the incessant exploitation continued, the consequences might be harsh.

He showed several of his short films including clips of cobra laying eggs, the work of dung beetle, shore crabs feeding off the sand, the hatching of Olive Ridley turtles and Painted Storks taking care of their young at the marshlands of Bharatpur, Rajasthan.

Mr. Dattatri said that every one could care for the environment through small acts such as planting one tree sapling indigenous to the soil and taking care of it.

M. Raghu Ram, co-chairman, Yi Madurai Chapter, Ligi George, past chairman, CII Madurai Zone and Arun Arunachalam, chairman-learning session, Yi Madurai Chapter, spoke.

Published: October 3, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: October 3, 2011 04:05 IST COIMBATORE, October 3, 2011

SIMA CDRA plans to enter into Bt cotton seed production

Vision statement for cotton development in TN to be prepared

The Cotton Research and Development Association of Southern India Mills' Association (SIMA CDRA) plans to venture into production of Bt cotton seeds.

Meeting

Chairman of the association V. Selvapathy said at the annual general meeting of the association here recently that since use of Bt cotton was prevalent in the country now and farmers also preferred Bt cotton varieties, the association planned to embark on Bt cotton seeds production and distribution.

It was also exploring the possibilities of taking up production of pulses seeds, distribution of pesticides and leasing out its ginning facility at Ponneri to augment the revenue of the

association. It would also prepare a vision statement for cotton development in Tamil Nadu, aiming at increasing the production from five lakh bales a year now to 25 lakh bales by 2025.

The association took up frontline demonstrations of cotton production technology and conducted farmer field schools.

Area under cotton in the country had increased by 22 per cent for the 2011-2012 (October to September) season, with nearly 121 lakh hectares under cotton now as against 111 hectares in 2010-2011. In Tamil Nadu, 1.2 lakh hectares was covered under cotton during 2010-2011.

Cotton production in the country was expected to increase by nine per cent in 2011-2012.

Yarn production

However, yarn production was going up at six per cent annually as against average four per cent growth in cotton production, he said.

Ginning facility at Ponneri would be leased out to augment the revenue of the association

Published: October 3, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: October 3, 2011 04:21 IST TIRUCHI, October 3, 2011

Workshop on livestock breeding , management

The Centre for Pheromone Technology (CPT) attached to the Department of Animal Science of Bharathidasan University here has proposed to conduct one-day workshop on 'Livestock Breeding and Management' on the centre's premises in the Bharathidasan University's Palkaliperur campus here on October 15. Dr.Ramesh Saravanakumar and Dr.Sivakumar from the Veterinary College and Research Institute, Namakkal and Dr.Rajaram from Tamil Nadu Veterinary Research Institute, Tiruchi, will address the workshop. Interested persons can register their names for the workshop on or before October 7 at the CPT or contact G.Archunan, coordinator of the centre (Mobile: 9786921176), according to a communication received from the Registrar of Bharathidasan University on Sunday.

Published: October 3, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: October 3, 2011 04:06 IST Belgaum, October 3, 2011

Make manure using solid waste, farmers told

Launch of Swachata Utsav marks Gandhi Jayanti



New initiative: Agriculture Minister Umesh V. Katti distributed soaps and napkins to children at the launch of the Swachata Utsav in Belgaum on Sunday. Zilla Panchayat CEO Ajay Nagabhushan M.N., Sanjay Patil, MLA, and ZP president Eranna Kadadi are seen. — Photo: D.B. Patil

Agriculture Minister Umesh V. Katti has advised farmers to construct compost pits to prepare organic manure using solid waste instead of that being dumped in the open in villages thus becoming a health hazard. Mr. Katti was speaking at a function organised by the zilla panchayat to celebrate Gandhi Jayanti and launch the monthlong Swachata Utsav in the district here on Sunday.

The Minister underlined the need to create awareness among the village residents on the need to keep the environment clean and maintain personal hygiene. The Government, in order to encourage gram panchayats to take initiatives to make the Sampurna Swachchata Abhiyan, a government-sponsored sanitation scheme a success, was giving awards to gram panchayats that have converted village(s) into 'Nirmal Gram(s)', the concept which entails construction of toilets in every house of the village so as to avoid open defecation which dirties the surroundings thus posing health problems to the residents.

Financial aid

The Minister explained that the Government was providing Rs. 6,500 to each household for the construction of a toilet under the Centre's sanitation scheme. He added that it was for the people now to come forward and take advantage of the scheme.

To drive home the significance of maintaining personal hygiene, Mr. Katti distributed soaps and napkins to children. "It is most unfortunate that despite so much of advancement and progress in various spheres of life we are still talking about the need to keep the environment clean, and the Government is forced to implement a sanitation scheme."

Zilla panchayat Chief Executive Officer Ajay Nagabhushan M.N. claimed that the Belgaum district was far ahead of other districts in north Karnataka as far as the implementation of total sanitation programme was concerned. The fact that 31 of the 485 gram panchayats in the district had won Nirmal Gram Puraskars was evidence enough that the sanitation scheme was successfully implemented, however, more needs to be done to reach the benefits of other programmes to the deserving beneficiaries, he said.

During the monthlong Swachata Utsav, awareness campaigns, public meetings, workshops, seminars, gram sabhas, street plays, screening of short films and candle light processions will be held across the district.

The focus of the awareness campaigns would be to stop the practice of open defecation, construction of toilets in each household, and proper disposal of solid waste.

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- *Under the government-funded sanitation scheme, each household gets Rs. 6,500 to build a toilet*
 - *'31 of the 485 gram panchayats in Belgaum district have won Nirmal Gram Puraskar'*
-

Published: October 3, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: October 3, 2011 04:06 IST Belgaum, October 3, 2011

Last date extended for crop loan

The Union Ministry of Finance has extended the last date to avail agricultural or crop loans from banks and co-operative societies to October 15 for the benefit of all those farmers who have not yet availed themselves of any kind of agricultural loan.

According to Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Ajay Nagabhushan M.N. here, so far 29,085 farmers had been identified as uncovered farmers in the district. Of these, 13,625

farmers had been given fresh crop loans by various banks and co-operative societies while 15,460 farmers are yet to take advantage of the finance facility. Thus, all such farmers who have not availed themselves of crop loans can approach a bank or co-operative society before October 5, Mr. Nagabhushan added.

Published: October 3, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: October 3, 2011 04:20 IST MANGALORE, October 3, 2011

Training programme for women farmers

Starting from October 11, a five-day training programme is being organised for women farmers in sericulture in Koila village in Puttur.

Those interested may obtain the applications from taluk offices of the Department of Sericulture.

And submit them before October 8, according to an official release.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Rainy

Monday, Oct 3

Max Min

36.2° | 24.7°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Sunrise: 5:58

Humidity: 89%

Sunset: 17:58

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, Oct 4


Max Min

34° | 24°

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1009

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Oct 5	Oct 6	Oct 7	Oct 8	Oct 9
				
31° 26°	31° 25°	32° 24°	31° 26°	30° 26°
Rainy	Rainy	Partly Cloudy	Rainy	Rainy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Mon, Oct 03, 2011 | Updated 07.20AM IST

3 OCT, 2011, 04.00AM IST, NIDHI NATH SRINIVAS,ET BUREAU

Oilseed, rice & sugarcane harvests may surpass last year's production: Agriculture Ministry

NEW DELHI: The festive cheer could spread to the consumer wallets as futures market shows that prices of cereals, cooking oils and sugar are likely to drop on the back of abundant harvests that started trickling in from October 1. The end to the virtually continuous price spiral over last one year is important at a time when majority consumers spend half their income on food. According to initial agriculture ministry estimates, oilseed, rice, and sugarcane harvests are expected to be larger than last year's. The oilseed harvest is expected to be up almost 4%, thanks to soyabeans that could touch a record 11 million tonne this year. India's rice production too is expected to rise by 6 million tonne - enough to supply ration shops for three months, to touch 87 million tonne. This is mainly due to an increase of 3 million hectares in paddy acreage. Similarly, sugar production is slated to reach 26.50 million tonne, the highest in last three seasons, due to larger acreage of sugarcane.

Added to this new supply are ample unsold stocks from last year's harvest. The government's rice stocks are now a record 27 million tonne. About 5 million tonne unsold stocks are lying with sugar traders and mills across the country. Traders said during August, 1.56 million tonne vegetable oil was in the trading pipeline and lying at port, up 4% over the same month last year.

This abundance is weighing down on prices in the commodity market throughout September. Take the edible oils complex that has shed up to 7% in the wholesale markets of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra over last one month. The trend is mirrored in the futures market. On NCDEX, at the start of September, soyabean October futures were quoted at Rs 2,461/qtl but dropped to Rs 2,411 by month end.

Rapeseed October contract was quoted at Rs 2,992/qtl at start of the month but ended September at Rs 2,950. Soyabean October contract began September at Rs 665/10kg but dropped to Rs 661 by month end. Only palm oil showed an upward trend, reflecting international prices. At the start of the month, the October contract was quoted at Rs 471/10kg and it closed at Rs 482 at the month end.

Wheat futures too show that the market is heading down and expects no turbulence at all for next six months. On August 27, wheat was trading at Rs 1,163/quintal. It had dropped to Rs 1,119 by September 30. Traders have priced March 2012 wheat contract at Rs 1,176/qtl, according to NCDEX data.

"The market sentiment in rice is weak and traders are not interested in bulk buying," said a wholesaler in Delhi. Sugar futures have traded close to near contract lows for several weeks in August-September. "Prices will move up slightly now because of festival demand," said a trader. The dullness in food prices comes not a moment too soon for consumers. Latest food ministry data shows that families below poverty line are buying almost every grain of rice being sold through ration shops. "Obviously, open market prices are unaffordable for daily wagers and urban poor," said a trader in Mumbai. Moreover, in some commodities local supply remains far from adequate. The summer pulses harvest is expected to be down 10% despite the farm ministry's best efforts.



Compensation for crop damage raises eyebrows

Verification and evaluation of crop damages by the elephants in the Palamu Tiger Circle has always been in great soup. The farmers whose standing crop is damaged by the herd of elephants want more and more compensation while it does come less or not upto the estimate of the farmers.

Sources said it is very strange that the whole of palamu division suffered three consecutive spell of droughts 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. Spell of drought means no cropping or if there is, it is minimal.

However sources said there has been compensation paid for loss of crop by elephants in these three years also. The field director of the Palamu Tiger Circle SEH Kazmi conceded it too. He said the farmers did get compensation. However he could not say the exact amount of compensation so paid.

The field director added even in these three years of the alleged drought low lands had yield and had standing crops. He assured to provide all relevant information on this sensitive issue after the Puja holiday.

Kazmi has had a strong point saying that the owners of the farms here do not do farming. These land owners have share croppers. It is the share croppers who come for compensation which can not be given to them as khata, khatyan, kebala, rakba of land all stand in the name of the land owner who alone can receive or make a demand for compensation for damages done by elephants.

He also said some time the demand made is extravagant. If there is the loss of one acre of crop the demand is made for 10 acres. He agreed that crop damage in field be also video graphed. The verification, evaluation of crop damage is jointly done by revenue official of circle office and project tiger official, Kazmi added.

Ban on Endosulfan brings relief to tragedy-land Kasaragod

"I hope girls of the future generations will not have to terminate their pregnancies for fear of giving birth to babies with deformities and diseases," was how 25-year-old Sarala (name changed) of Bovikkanam in Kasaragod district responded to the news of other day's Supreme Court ratification of its own earlier order banning killer pesticide Endosulfan.

Sarala had got her second pregnancy terminated in 2007 at a Mangalore clinic afraid that the baby would have the same horrifying deformities her first child had had as a result of Endosulfan poisoning. "There are scores of such women in Kasaragod, the worst victim of the killer pesticide anywhere in the world," said Pradeep, an anti-Endosulfan crusader.

Sarala's Bovikkanam is one of the 11 panchayats in Kasaragod where aerial spraying of Endosulfan for over two decades in the cashew estates of the State-owned Plantations Corporation of Kerala, polluting the entire environment and the organisms in it and causing death of over 500 persons and unimaginable diseases and deformities to about 10,000.

"The court order promises a safer world for the future generations and they will be indebted to all those who lost their lives due to the poison and its living victims," according to Madhu Raj, the Press lensman who took perhaps the most telling but pain-inducing photographs of the Endosulfan victims of Kasaragod. "I feel relieved that it is banned now," he said.

The people of Kasaragod were active participants in the worldwide crusade against the killer pesticide. Reports, pictures and videos of victims of the pesticide and the environmental hazards it had caused in Kasaragod had worked as a great inspiration for those who had successfully campaigned for its ban at the Geneva meet on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in April last.

Kerala Assembly's Opposition leader VS Achuthanandan said the Supreme Court order was a blow to the arrogance of the Central Government which had argued for the pesticide manufacturers' lobby. His fast on April 29 in support of the efforts at the Geneva meet on POPs for a worldwide ban on Endosulfan had served as an inspiration to the campaigners.

However, people like Leelakumari Amma of Kasaragod, one of the pioneers in the campaign against Endosulfan, regretted the Supreme Court's decision to allow the export of 17 lakh kilos of the pesticide accumulated in India to other countries. "Isn't it equivalent to exporting death

to other countries?” she asked.

All the victims in Kasaragod shared the sentiment. “Our Supreme Court has banned it understanding its ability to kill. Do we have the right to export death to other societies?” asked a victim from the Chaklia colony in Chokamala estate. Senior Congress leader VM Sudheeran said India should not export the accumulated Endosulfan.

“Indeed I feel relieved at the Supreme Court decision but I will not call it a total ban as it has allowed export of 17 lakh kilos of the pesticide,” said Muhammad Asheel, a Keralite who had campaigned against the Indian Government’s pro-pesticide position at the POP Review Committee’s five-day meet in Geneva.

Kerala, which had a decade ago imposed a ban on the use of Endosulfan in the context of the tragic experience in Kasaragod, had demanded in unison a nation-wide ban on it as it was still being used in several plantations after being smuggled into the State from neighbouring states like Tamil Nadu.

The illegal and ill-advised aerial spraying of Endosulfan by the Plantation Corporation in its cashew estates for eradicating the bug, tea mosquito, over two decades starting 1978 had polluted the soil, water, flora and fauna and even the internal systems of all organisms including human beings.

As a result, babies are still being born with oversized heads and under-sized bodies. It also caused several mysterious diseases, cancers, infertility, early maturing in girls, late or no maturing in males and frequent deaths. Reports still come out that women are undergoing abortion fearing to bear a child with congenital deformities.

A minimum of 10,000 people in Kasaragod are living victims of the pesticide but scientists of the Indian Council of Medical Research and officials of the Union Agriculture Department are still unwilling to identify the pesticide as a killer and are arguing that the tragedy in Kasaragod was caused not by Endosulfan per se but due to its unauthorized aerial spraying.

SUNDAY, 02 OCTOBER 2011 22:27

Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal on Sunday said that the Central Government's announcement to setting up the Borlaug Institute for South Asia (BISA) at Ludhiana would give a much needed second push to the Green Revolution in the agriculture sector.

Thanking Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar for establishing the BISA, Badal said that traditional agriculture had already reached a point of saturation in the agrarian State of Punjab.

Badal, in a statement here, said: "The setting up of this prestigious institute would be a real tribute to the Noble laureate and father of the Green Revolution, Norman E Borlaug, who was intimately associated with Punjab especially the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU). People of the State still remember him with respect and affection."

BISA will be set up in Ludhiana, where the PAU is located, at a cost of over `500 crore.

Punjab, which alone contributes over 50 per cent of the total foodgrain to the national kitty, had led the country in bringing about the Green Revolution for greater food grain production in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Central Government has announced the setting up of BISA in Punjab with satellite centers in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

"This would contribute significantly in improving the agriculture in the country in general and food security in particular," Badal said here. Badal further noted

Agri schemes set to be rationalised in 12th Plan

MONDAY, 03 OCTOBER 2011 00:39

The Ministry of Agriculture, which is entrusted with the task to implement 50 odd Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), will have lesser schemes in the 12th Five Year Plan period (2012-17). The 50 odd schemes with a total outlay of Rs 15,034 crore in 2011-12 would be

reduced to 6-7 schemes in the 12th plan.

“The schemes would be re-structured in a way that no developmental scheme is dropped. The idea is to club small symmetrical schemes under few big schemes so that the States have more flexibility in terms of using funds. Since agriculture is highly “specific” which varies from district to district, it is unfair to dictate schemes to the States. In the 12th plan, one umbrella scheme Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) will absorb many small schemes relating to soil, seed and irrigation. Of course schemes like National Food Security Mission and National Horticulture Mission will also be retained along with RKVY,” a Planning Commission official said.

The move is a part of Government’s plan to remove redundancy and overlapping of CSS schemes in the 12th Plan to make the schemes more ‘flexible’ and ‘easily executable’. Lesser schemes will also translate into lesser administrative expenses to leave more money with the States.

In the regional meetings on approach paper discussion, a number of States had conveyed their displeasure on “inept-management” of these schemes and asked the Centre to restrict its role to providing funds and allowing them more flexibility in implementing these schemes. Chief Ministers of Bihar, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand spearheaded the campaign. However, some other States like Kerala and Andhra Pradesh also joined the chorus.

The panel has set up a committee chaired by Planning Commission member BK Chaturvedi to carry out the task. At present, the number of CSS is as high as 150. Chaturvedi has earmarked around 100 CSS which will either be axed or subsumed with other schemes. This means in the 12th Plan CSS will be reduced to around 50 schemes only. Maximum churn rate will happen in Agriculture, Labour and HRD Ministries.

Although the panel says that it is aimed to make schemes more flexible and executable, some skeptics see “fiscal prudence tactic” in the move and say that it comes at a time when the Government is battling a slowing economy and thereby dwindling revenues and a widening fiscal deficit.

Business Standard

Monday, Oct 03, 2011

Efforts on to increase palm oil production

BS Reporter / Chennai/ Hyderabad Oct 03, 2011, 00:42



Palm oil production in the country is expected to go up substantially with the Union government allocating Rs 300 crore in the 2011-12 Budget for stepping up its cultivation and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) gearing up to bring an additional 60,000 hectare annually for the next 15 years under oil palm plantations.

ICAR's Directorate of Oil Palm Research (DPR) has targeted to bring 1 million hectare in 14 states under palm oil plantations by 2025, as against an area of 164,000 hectare at present. Following this, palm oil production in the country is expected to go up to over 5 million tonne a year as against 600,000 tonne last year.

Currently, apart from oil palm, the nine oilseeds – groundnut, soybean, rapeseed, sunflower, sesamum, safflower, castor, niger and linseed – grown in over 36 million hectare in the country are unable to meet the demand for edible oil. Consequently, India is mainly dependent on imports to meet its requirement

According to DPR project director S Aluraj, the country had imported 7 million tonne of edible oil last year at a cost of Rs 17,000 crore to meet the domestic demand. The requirement for edible oil is expected to touch 21.3 million tonne by 2015 as the growth in demand is pegged at 6 per cent per year.

In order to bring down edible oil imports in future, the Centre had come forward to encourage oil palm cultivation in a large scale. It had identified large tracts of land in Gujarat, Orissa, Karnataka, Mizoram and Andhra Pradesh where oil palm plantations could be developed.

Aluraj told Business Standard that there were nearly 25 palm oil processing units in the country, which were currently working at less than 50 per cent capacity. Hence, processing would not be a problem if the production of palm kernels increased substantially.

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A colourful, multi-faceted personality

Santanu Sanyal

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Jayanta Borooah

A doyen of the tea community members in Assam, Mr Jayanta Kumar Borooah, who died recently in Guwahati at the age of 85, was a colourful and multifaceted personality. He belonged to a family of tea planters (his father, a Member of Parliament, had several tea gardens), was one of first batch of Indian tea tasters (he joined A W Figgis & Company as early as 1951), founded Assam's first tea broking firm, a freedom fighter (who participated in Quit India Movement and was awarded the Tamra Patra), a film actor (he was the last surviving actor of the first Assamese cinema "Joymati" released in 1934, in which his role was that of a child artist), producer of an award-winning Assamese TV serial ("Ritu Ahe Ritu Jai"), a documentary on tea plantation ("Verdant Rows Crimson Heart"), a publisher of classics, and above all, a philanthropist.

In 1951, four foreign tea broking firms , namely, J Thomas , Carritt Moran, W S Cresswell and A W Figgis, decided to recruit Indians for the first time to train them up for tea tasting and broking jobs. The legendary Dipak Roy joined J Thomas, the largest and oldest of the four, and Mr Borooah A W Figgis. He rose to become the director of A W Figgis but left it to set up his own broking firm, Eastern Tea Brokers, in Guwahati in 1970 when Guwahati Tea Auction Centre was launched.

Having born in a family owning tea gardens, he naturally possessed vast experience in tea trade, manufacturing, development and field practices, but more important, he had innovated a new concept of tea drying, after having manufactured a prototype model of tea drying and manufacturing in 1966. Acknowledged as an outstanding tea taster and tea producer in his time, Mr Borooah's tea gardens under the flagship Baruanagar Tea Estates were testimony to his experience and expertise.

Borooah was one of the founding member-directors of North East Development Finance Corporation Ltd and founder Chairman of International Hospital established in 1998. He donated his house which now is Sibsagar College and the college's library is in the name of his mother Hiranya Prabha Borooah. For Assam's Sahitya Sabha, which is devoted to the promotion of Assamese literature and culture, he contributed to the upgradation of the Lakshmiram Barua Sadan, established in the name of his grandfather.

Borooah belonged to the generation of people, almost extinct now, who had varied interests in life and sincerely believed that more than the creation of wealth, its sharing with the community at large was all that mattered most.

He will be missed by the country's tea community in general and Assam in particular.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 3, 2011)

92% tea at Coonoor tea sale sold

P.S. Sundar

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Coonoor, Oct. 2:

Nearly 92 per cent of the 12.44 lakh kg (at a four week high) offered at Sale No: 39 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions was sold with prices rising by Rs 2 a kg.

“Quality broken orthodox leaf gained Rs 4-5 a kg and others, Rs 1-2. High-priced CTC leaf grades fetched Rs 2-3 more, better mediums up Rs 4-5 and cleaner blacker sorts, up to Rs 5. Better medium CTC dusts got up to Rs 2 more and plainers, Rs 1-3. Orthodox dusts, however lost Rs 2-3,” an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

Among CTC teas, Homedale Estate, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped at Rs 142. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 140, Shanthi Supreme and Sree Tea Supreme Rs 135 each, Hittakkal Estate Rs 133, Kannavarai Estate Rs 132 and Professor Rs 130. In all, 78 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Orthodox teas

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 206, Curzon Rs 188, Highfield Estate Rs 165, Kairbetta Rs 163, Quinshola clonal Rs 144 and Prammas Rs 140. In all, 36 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Among green tea, Wood Bridge Estate, auctioned by Paramount Tea Marketing, fetched Rs 220.

Exports

On the export front, Pakistan bought in wide range – Rs 49-92 a kg and the CIS Rs 48-73.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 45-49 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 80-125 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 48-54 for plain dusts and Rs 85-140 for brighter liquoring dusts.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 3, 2011)

Pepper falls on bearish activities

G.K. Nair

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Kochi, Oct. 2:

Pepper market here does not seem to be driven by the market principles of demand and supply. It has been highly volatile consequent to a tug of war between the bull and bear operators and last week the latter had an upper hand and as a result the market fell during the week making the Indian pepper the cheapest in the world during the past few days.

It has happened at a time when all other origins were ruling firmer on a tight supply situation. On the spot market here also there was no selling pressure and a squeeze in availability of good quality material was visible. It is evident from the fact that spot prices did not fall in tandem with the downward trend in the futures market.

Pepper was available on the exchange platform. One of the reasons attributed to the bearish sentiments on the futures market was that Dubai-based operators who used to buy low bulk density farm grade pepper from Vietnam had bought the lower grade material from India and it was being traded on the spot market there at below \$7,000 a tonne. They also cater this pepper to the markets in the poor countries in Africa on credit. This phenomenon is claimed to have influenced the futures market.

However, on the spot there were no sellers as they were aware of the tight global supply situation and a possible rise in prices in the coming days. Incessant rains in recent weeks also created a negative impact on the next crop according to growers.

The market witnessed sharp fall in all the contracts during the week. Oct, Nov and Dec dropped by Rs 1,095, Rs 1,070 and Rs 915 respectively during the week to end at Rs 35,210, Rs 35,850 and Rs 36,450 a quintal on Saturday.

Total turnover moved up by 10,125 tonnes to close at 54,843 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by 394 tonnes to 11,853 tonnes during the week.

Spot prices, however, declined by Rs 200 only to close at Rs 32,800 (ungarbled) and Rs 34,300 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market at \$7,800 a tonne (Europe) and \$8,100 a tonne (c&f) for the US was the cheapest and hence orders were coming for MG 1, they said.

Overseas market trend

An overseas report Saturday said “the basic tightness of the market has not changed. Indonesia continues to watch the markets without much action as per previous weeks. Brazil quieted down but remains firm. Cash flow seems to be a major issue with many of the exporters.”

Prices quoted in the US markets in dollar per tonne were: India - MG1 eto'd 8275/8600 (c&f); Vietnam-Vasta 8525/8825 (c&f); Indonesia – Lasta 8525/8700 (c&f); Brasil - Basta \$8000/8200 (fob).

White Pepper: Indonesia - MWP \$11,500/11,900(c&f); Viet - DW\$ 11,600/11,800 CF

NY Spot MSLV treated were at \$8,750/\$8,925 a tonne ex-warehouse

NY Spot MLSV untreated were at \$8,600/\$8,700 a tonne ex-warehouse

The market was nervous as price levels were high due to shortage in supply situation, a report from the International Pepper Community (IPC) said.

In Vietnam and India, local prices reacted downward this week. In fob however, prices remained high.

In Lampung, the local price stood at IDR 63,000 per kg this week. However, the average price of the week has increased by 3 per cent from last week's average, with very limited activity. Average price of black pepper in Brazil increased by 2 per cent locally and 4 per cent fob. A marginal price increase of 1 per cent was recorded in Kuching, Malaysia, while in Sri Lanka significant increase of 13 per cent was recorded this week.

WHITE PEPPER

After witnessing a significant price increase for white pepper in Bangka during last week, local prices stood at IDR 90,500 per kg this week. On an average however, the price increased by 3 per cent from last week.

In Vietnam, local price of white pepper decreased marginally by 1 per cent, while for fob it was higher by 1 per cent. Stable prices of white pepper were recorded in Sarawak, both for local and fob. It was reported that white pepper prices in Europe increased significantly by 13 per cent.

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Tea Board asked to draw strategy for continuing e-auctions

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Fund-crunch: Tea sellers, buyers and brokers at an e-auction centre in Guwahati. Coimbatore, Oct. 2:

With the Tea Board withdrawing support from 2012, will the electronic auctions continue?

Though industry insiders prefer to dismiss this question by stating that it is still too early to arrive at a conclusion, they concede that nothing concrete emerged out of the meeting with Tea Board officials last week.

“We hope that things will be put in place by end-December. We have three months to go,” said a trade source, preferring anonymity.

But as things stand, it is reliably learnt that each of the regional associations will need money to run the e-auction and none of them have so far committed to collect money to meet the recurring cost.

The volume traded on the e-platform is roughly 500 million kg a year.

Trade sources say that equal quantities or may be slightly lower volumes are sold privately as well. “The electronic auction system is functioning smoothly; the initial hitches have been resolved to a large extent but the progress is slow.”

The e-auction volumes are said to be better in the north Indian auction centres compared with South.

Sources feel that the Tea Board should come up with some strategy for promoting e-auction and extending its funding support for a further period of one year. “Huge sums have been invested and in the last 8-9 months, things have almost settled. Support at this juncture would therefore ensure stability,” the source told *Business Line*.

When asked about the reason for huge volumes traded in private sale, trade sources said “we were told that in the electronic auction system, the buyers’ anonymity would be maintained, but this is not so. Apart from that, when there is a bulk order for exports, the trade uses the alternate channel for bulk purchase,’ the source said, justifying the reason for continuing with parallel trade channel.

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