THE HINDU

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MADURAI, September 16, 2011

NABARD launches survey to document cattle breeds native to Tamil Nadu

: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has launched an initiative to document various cattle breeds native to Tamil Nadu and undertake conservation measures.

An amount of Rs. 4.16 lakh has been sanctioned under the Farmers Technology Transfer Fund of NABARD to an institution specialising in native cattle breeds conservation – SEVA (Sustainable agriculture and Environmental Voluntary Action) – to undertake a survey across the State. R. Shankar Narayan, NABARD Assistant General Manager, told *The Hindu* here on Wednesday that as part of the project, the NGO had been advised to document at least ten breeds. The survey would be completed in a year's time.

Most of the native breeds were vanishing and they lack documentation that would enable academic studies and research, he said citing the examples of ‘Toda' buffalo and ‘Malai Madu.'

“The NABARD has decided to support a series of intervention across Tamil Nadu towards rearing of native live stock breed. The farmers will also be guided on identifying various locally available herbs and their benefits to treat common ailment of their animals,” he said.

The native cattle breeders will be contacted by SEVA, which will do mapping, survey and provide useful technical information on rearing. The survey would also document availability of grass lands to ensure cattle had feeding grounds. In this regard, attempts will be made to involve other stake holders such as Forest Department and Revenue officials to solve issues such as grazing, he said. The final documentation would be shared with the policy makers, universities and other related departments so that these breeds could once again thrive.

A project managing committee under the NABARD AGM has been formed. It comprised the Lead District Manager, Joint Director of Animal Husbandry Department, the Head of Department of Veterinary University Training and Research Centre (VUTRC), Madurai and SEVA to monitor the project's progress.

The breeds which will be taken up for conservation include: ‘Tiruchendur Kulli' cattle breed in Villupuram, ‘Kanni Aadu' in Virudhunagar, ‘Umbalacheri' cattle from Thanjavur, ‘Pulikulam' cattle and ‘Katchakatti' black sheep in Madurai, ‘Bargur' cattle and ‘Bargur' buffalo from Erode, ‘Vembur' sheep from Tuticorin, ‘Malai Madu' from Tiruneveli and ‘Toda' buffalo breed in The Nilgiris.

Published: September 16, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 16, 2011 04:19 IST

HYDERABAD, September 16, 2011

Pulses, oilseed to be costlier

Production to drop drastically this kharif season

Pulses and oilseeds are likely to be dearer, particularly to the middle class and poor as their production is likely to go down drastically in the ongoing kharif season in the State. Scanty rainfall in the beginning of southwest monsoon season is the reason for lower coverage of various crops.

As per the first advance production estimates prepared by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics (BES) based on the coverage of different crops till August-end in the kharif-2011, the oilseeds production has been estimated to be about 9.58 lakh metric tonnes. It is 36.5 per cent less (15.08 lakh tonnes) compared to normal kharif production and 24 per cent down (12.67 lakh tonnes) compared to the production in the last kharif season (2010).

Cultivation of groundnut was 10.13 lakh hectares against 12.93 lakh ha in the kharif (normal) according to the Agriculture Department officials. Sunflower coverage is down to 0.14 lakh ha against 0.93 lakh ha normal area. But, the cultivation of castor and soyabean has gone up considerably. Accordingly, production of major oilseeds is likely to be lesser except castor and soyabean this season. The output of castor and soyabean has been estimated to be higher than normal as the two crops have been enjoying good demand in the futures market. However, the production of groundnut is likely to be low at 6.53 lakh tonnes (8.24 lakh tonnes normal).

Similarly, the pulses cultivation has been down at 6.45 lakh ha from 8.17 lakh ha normal for Kharif. Their production has been estimated to be 3 lakh tonnes (32 per cent less than last Kharif) against 3.61 lakh MT normal.

Paddy production

Production of paddy is likely to be 77 lakh tonnes against 71.71 lakh tonnes normal and 75.1 lakh tonnes in last kharif. The total production of foodgrains (pulses, cereals and millets) has been estimated to be about 97.44 lakh tonnes against 95.25 lakh tonnes normal. Cotton production is likely to be up to 42.8 lakh bales against 29.16 lakh bales as the cultivation is up from 13.51 lakh ha (normal) to 17.75 lakh ha. Higher quantity of onion and turmeric is likely to be available while the production of sugarcane and chillies could be less.

- *Area of cultivation reduced for oilseed and groundnut except for castor and soyabean*
- *Higher quantity of onion, turmeric likely to be available*

Published: September 16, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 16, 2011 04:04 IST CHENNAI, September 16, 2011

Forest Department to get marshland

It will get 421 acres from Chennai Corporation for restoration work

SET FOR MAKEOVER: The restoration of Pallikaranai marshland is expected to gain momentum following the Chennai Corporation's decision. — Photo: M. Karunakaran

The Forest Department, which plans to undertake restoration of the eco-sensitive Pallikaranai marshland, will soon get 421 acres for the purpose from the Chennai Corporation.

The civic body has initiated the process of handing over the marshland following a request from the Forest Department. According to sources in the Corporation, the area to be handed over is on the southern side of Radial Road near NIOT junction.

The area to be given is not being used by the civic body for dumping garbage. Corporation officials had conducted an inspection of the marshland recently with the Forest Department.

The land transfer would facilitate proper demarcation and hydro-ecological assessment. It would also establish the Forest Department as the single agency for better restoration and preservation of the area. The civic body is planning to use only around 200 acres elsewhere in the marshland for its solid waste management project in Perungudi.

The marshland has shrunk over the last four decades following the creation of residential areas around it, including Perungudi, Siruseri, Pallikaranai, Madipakkam, Taramani and Velachery.

Restoration of the marshland would ensure a freshwater source for the city.

Activists and local residents had also demanded that the Chennai Corporation hand over portion of the marsh to the Forest Department following a fire in the area.

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After rainwater harvesting, now it is recycling of grey water

The process of recycling grey water using canna plants is cost-effective and simple. A filtering system at a residential complex in T.Nagar. — Photo: K.V.Srinivasan

After its intensive campaign to popularise rainwater harvesting, Rain Centre is now promoting recycling of grey water in residential complexes using a natural and economical method.

For the past eight months, the voluntary organisation has been helping residents across the city recycle the water used for washing and bathing purposes or recharge groundwater. A simple treatment process using canna plants (‘Kalvazhai' in Tamil) was implemented in many residential complexes to filter the waste water.

The grey water is passed through the canna bed, which is created over layers of blue metal and soil. The canna plants help in decomposition of the suspended solids. The soil layer beneath filters the water. A collection pit is constructed to prevent percolation of the filtered water, which, in turn, is pumped to the overhead tank. A separate partition is made in the overhead tank for storing the water. A.Sanjeevi, resident of Sarvamangala Nagar, Nanganallur, said: “We have adopted the method to both recharge groundwater and re-use part of the treated waste water for flushing and gardening purposes. We recover about 500 litres of water from the process daily. A minimum of 60 square feet of area and moderate sunlight are required for the treatment.”

V.S. Sukumar, a resident of Gandhi Nagar, Adyar, said water level in the shallow well on the premises has not gone dry after the treatment process was implemented for recharging groundwater a year ago. Rain Centre director Sekhar Raghavan said besides rainwater harvesting, recycling waste water is also important for efficient water management. Adopting this low-cost method would recycle at least 50 per cent of the water discharged in to sewerage network. “There are plans to conduct awareness programmes for builders. We are planning to approach Chennai Metrowater to conduct seminars for consumers to create awareness of grey water recycling as was done for RWH,” he said. The Centre also has a team to help residents implement the treatment process. Indukanth Ragade, an organic expert, has been providing expertise to the centre to implement waste water recycling in residential complexes. “There is no mosquito breeding or stench from the canna beds as water is absorbed quickly. However, it needs periodical maintenance. The plants must be removed once it flowers to allow fresh plants to grow,” he said.

Published: September 16, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 16, 2011 04:16 IST CHENNAI, September 16, 2011

Water release

Chief Minister Jayalalithaa has ordered release of water from Vaigai Dam in Theni district from Friday to benefit farmers in Madurai, Dindigul, and Sivaganga districts.

In a release, Ms. Jayalalithaa added that the order had been given in response to demands made by farmers in the areas. The water thus released would help irrigate 45,041 acres of second crop, and 85,563 acres of first crop, and 19,439 acres of first crop coming under the Tirumangalam Main Canal.

Published: September 16, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 16, 2011 04:18 IST Bangalore, September 16, 2011

State to increase oil palm area by 5,000 hectares

Government has prepared an action plan for the purpose

The Union Government has identified Karnataka for increasing palm oil production. — File Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

The State Government has prepared an action plan to increase the area under oil palm plantation by 5,000 hectares in this fiscal. Officials of the Horticulture Department told *The*

Hindu on Monday that oil palm is being cultivated on 11,500 hectares across 19 districts of the State.

Karnataka is one of the States that the Union Government has identified for increasing palm oil production. For the purpose, the Union Government has allocated to the State Rs. 33.60 crore under the Oil Palm Area Expansion (OPAE) programme, and Rs. 5.39 crore under the Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) for 2011-12. So far, Rs. 16.80 crore has been released.

Among the States that have large area of land under oil palm plantation, Andhra Pradesh tops the list with 90,000 hectares followed by Karnataka (11,500 hectares) and Tamil Nadu (8,000 hectares).

To motivate farmers to bring more land under oil palm plantation, the Government grants subsidy to them. And, several industrial houses are working with farmers and procuring oil palm fresh fruit bunch (FFB). As far as the price of oil palm FFB is concerned, it is taken care of by a committee headed by the Principal Secretary of the Horticulture Department. At present, prices are fluctuating depending on the market. However, in July, oil palm cultivators were paid Rs. 5,800 per tonne of oil palm FFB. On an average, a farmer earns Rs. 60,000 per hectare.

The State produces 9,000 tonnes of oil palm FFB and 1,530 tonnes of crude palm oil annually. The Oil Palm Area Expansion (OPAE) programme was launched under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana for increasing oil palm in the country. As much as 10.71 lakh hectares of land has been identified in 14 States as suitable for oil palm cultivation to meet the expected demand of 21.3 million tonnes by 2015.

Under the OPAE programme in 2011-12, the Union Government has allocated Rs. 192 crore for Andhra Pradesh, Rs. 48 lakh for Chhattisgarh, Rs. 4.80 crore for Gujarat, Rs. 96 lakh for Maharashtra, Rs. 14.80 crore for Mizoram, Rs. 11.76 crore for Orissa and Rs. 33.60 crore for Tamil Nadu.

According to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) officials, nine edible oilseeds — groundnut, soybean, mustard, sunflower, sesamum, safflower, niger, castor and linseed — are grown on 36 million hectares in the country. However, the demand for edible oil is so high that the country is not able to meet it. If one lakh hectares of land is brought under oil palm plantation, then it would be possible to reduce the import requirement of 0.4 million tonnes of edible oil, according to officials.

The ICAR officials said, “Palm oil is a good raw material for manufacturing soaps and candles.”

Published: September 16, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 16, 2011 04:05 IST Bidar, September 16, 2011

Advisory to farmers on mosaic disease

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra has released an advisory for farmers whose red gram crop have been affected by the sterility mosaic disease.

The disease can have a devastating effect on the yield with the loss being anywhere between 10 per cent and 90 per cent.

The disease, locally known as ‘goddu roga', ‘lakki roga', ‘soddu roga' or ‘banje roga', has been plaguing the district for two years now, said the release.

It can be identified by looking at the leaves that turn pale yellow and curl inward. The plants don't bear flowers or fruits.

The mite is the carrier insect for this air-borne viral disease. Infection can spread to crops within a radius of up to 2 km.

Control

The disease is contagious and farmers should act as a group to control it effectively, the advisory said.

Affected plants should be uprooted and destroyed immediately after the infection is detected. A mixture of 25 ml of pesticide Dicophal-20 EC in a litre of water should be sprayed.

After every harvest, the plants should be uprooted and the field cleaned. Farmers must not attempt to get harvest from ratoon crops that grow on the stumps of harvested crops. All red gram plants that grow on farm bunds, water canals and compost pits must be uprooted and destroyed.

Alternative crops should be cultivated. Disease resistant varieties such as ICPL -87119 Asha or BSMR-736 should be sown, avoiding the disease-prone varieties such as Maruti.

Details can be had from plant pathologist Sunil Kulkarni, according to the release.

- *Sterility mosaic disease affects red gram crop*
- *It can cut yield by up to 90 per cent*

Published: September 16, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 16, 2011 04:19 IST
VIJAYAWADA, September 16, 2011

Price rise forces farmers to cut down use of fertilizers

While some farmers afraid of breaking even are preferring to declare ‘crop holiday' the farmers, who have taken a different initiative, are trying ways and means to reduce production cost.

Several farmers are seriously considering not applying the second ‘quota' of fertilizers. The fertilizer is applied at the time of transplantation and the second time it is applied at the tilling stage.

“The recent hike in fertilizer cost has added to the burden of farmers. But many are worried that they will not be able to recover what they have invested. So many of them are not applying the second quota of fertilizers,” said paddy farmer Y. Ramachandra Rao of Manikonda village. Farmers have set aside Rs. 2,000 for application of fertilizers in the kharif. One bag of DAP, one bag of urea and complex fertilizers were used by farmers.

hey usually vie with one another over use fertilisers, but this year the tread has reversed with farmers vying with one another to use less fertilizer, Mr Rao said.

Kisan Service Organisation district general secretary P.S.R. Das said his organisation had been trying to educate farmers not to overuse fertilizers. The overuse of fertilizers affected soil fertility in the long run, he said.

A study by the Agricultural University had shown that farmers need not use fertilizers with phosphorus as there was an ample amount of it in the soil already. But farmers never stopped applying fertilizers with phosphorus, he said. The yield of land where excess fertilizers have been used was also gradually coming down, Mr Das said. The Agricultural Department extension officers always told farmers not to use excess fertilizers, he said.

Published: September 16, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 16, 2011 04:18 IST
KOTTAYAM, September 16, 2011

Caution against use of agrochemicals

Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, Minister for Revenue, has advised farmers caution while using agrochemicals and other plant protection materials.

Inaugurating the seminar and exhibition at the Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII) in connection with ‘Phytophthora 2011', Mr. Radhakrishnan however, pointed out the board had been effective in developing control measures to almost all maladies affecting natural rubber.

He asked the board to come forward to enhance awareness among the growers on the ill-effects of unscientific and indiscriminate use of plant protection materials.

In her presidential address, board chairperson Shiela Thomas, said the use of agrochemicals could not be completely avoided, especially in plantation crops. The important thing was to use them in a scientific manner.

Y.R. Sarma, former director of the Indian Institute of Spices Research and FAO consultant, was honoured on the occasion. Thomas Mathew, chief coconut development officer, Coconut Development Board; J. Thomas, Rubber Production Commissioner; R .Chandramohanan, Principal Scientist and head of the Crop Protection Division CPCRI, Kasaragod; and Babu P. Idikkula, Joint Director, RRII; spoke on the occasion. James Jacob, director, RRII, welcomed the gathering. The seminar will continue on Friday.

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hindustantimes

Press Trust Of India
New Delhi, September 15, 2011
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Inflation will now moderate gradually: Pranab

Finance minister Pranab Mukherjee on Thursday said inflation has already peaked and would now moderate gradually.

"We may have seen the peak as far as monthly inflation rates are concerned with the release of figures for August 2011 yesterday. Here onwards we should see a gradual moderation in monthly headline inflation," Mukherjee said in a statement released on the social networking site Facebook.

The comments came after headline inflation touched a 13-month high of 9.78% in August on account of high prices of food and manufactured items.

Headline inflation has been hovering over the 9% mark since December 2010.

Earlier in the day, Mukherjee told reporters that it will take "some time" before prices of the kitchen staples like onion and potato decline.

"Inflation in certain commodities like onion and potato are still a concern. The steps that we have taken will have some moderating influence but it is taking time and it will continue to... for some time," Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee told reporters here.

Food inflation fell marginally to 9.47% for the week ended September 3 from 9.55% in the previous week, even as prices of almost all items continued to rise.

Onions were dearer by 43% on an annual basis, while potato prices were up 21%, as per the latest food inflation data.

http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/746022.aspx

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Partly Cloudy

Friday, Sep 16

Max Min

34° | 25.5°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Sunrise: 5:58

Humidity: 67%

Sunset: 18:10

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1001

Tomorrow's Forecast

Rainy

Saturday, Sep 17

Max Min

33° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Sep 18	**Sep 19**	**Sep 20**	**Sep 21**	**Sep 22**
30° | 26°	32° | 26°	32° | 26°	32° | 27°	32° | 27°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

express buzz

By PTI

15 Sep 2011 01:14:08 PM IST

Food inflation eases to 9.47%

NEW DELHI: Food inflation in India declined marginally but was still high at 9.47 per cent for the week ended September 3, with prices of all items, barring pulses and wheat, rising on an annual basis.

Food inflation, as measured on the basis of the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), stood at 9.55 per cent in the previous week. The rate of price rise of food items was 15.16 per cent in the corresponding week of 2010.

As per data released by the government Thursday, prices of pulses fell by 2.45 per cent year-on-year, while wheat became cheaper by 2.03 per cent during the week ended September 3. However, other food items became more expensive during the week under review.

Onions grew dearer by 42.98 per cent on an annual basis, while potato prices were up 21.16 per cent.

Furthermore, fruits became 22.64 per cent more expensive during the week ended September 3 and overall, prices of vegetables shot up by 17.47 per cent.

In addition, milk became 10.02 per cent costlier, while the rates for cereals were up by 5.02 per cent during the seven-day period under review.

The fall in food inflation could be attributed to a moderation in the rate of price rise of some of the items on a week-on-week basis, even though they remained higher on an annual basis.

The decline could also be attributed to the high inflation of over 15 per cent in the corresponding year-ago period, a phenomenon dubbed the 'high base effect' in economic parlance.

Overall, inflation in primary articles was recorded at 13.04 per cent during the week ended September 3, down from 13.34 per cent in the previous week. Primary articles account for over 20 per cent of wholesale price index inflation.

Inflation in non-food articles, which include fibres, oilseeds and minerals, stood at 18.49 per cent during the week under review, compared to 19.88 per cent in the previous week.

Meanwhile, fuel and power inflation went up to 13.01 per cent from 12.55 per cent in the previous week.

Food inflation has been hovering near the double-digit mark since July-end and even went

above 10 per cent for a week in mid-August.
Earlier this month, the government banned onion exports to curb rising prices of the product, which have shot up from Rs 15 per kilo to Rs 25 per kilo in the national capital during the past few weeks.
Experts are of the view that despite the latest fall, pressure on the food price front will continue to keep the government and the Reserve Bank on their toes.
Headline inflation, which factors in manufactured items, fuels and non-food primary items, in addition to food commodities, stood at a 13-month high of 9.78 per cent in August.
The Reserve Bank has already hiked policy rates 11 times since March, 2010, to tame demand and curb inflation.
However, inflation continues to remain high and in addition, the country's economic growth has seen a drastic slowdown, which some have attributed to the rising cost of credit.
Industrial production fell to a 21-month low of 3.3 per cent in July. Economic growth in the April-June period stood at 7.7 per cent, the lowest in six quarters.
This has put the central bank, which is scheduled to conduct its mid-quarterly review of the monetary policy tomorrow, in a dilemma over whether to continue with its hawkish policy stance to tackle inflation, or pause on its monetary tightening strategy with a view to get the country's growth back on track.

DECCAN Chronicle
Published on *Deccan Chronicle* (http://www.deccanchronicle.com)

Overall inflation soars to 9.78% in August

Headline inflation inched closer to the double-digit mark in August, rising to 9.78 per cent on the back of soaring prices of food and manufactured products, which may prompt the RBI to continue with its monetary tightening policy. Overall inflation, as measured by the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), stood at 9.22 per cent in July. The rate of price rise stood at 8.87 per cent in August, 2010. As per data released by the government on Wednesday, the overall inflation figure for June this year has been revised upward to 9.51 per cent from the provisional estimate of 9.44 per cent. On an annual basis, food items became 9.62 per cent more expensive during the month under review. Onions grew 45.29 per cent costlier, while fruit prices were up 22.82 per cent and the rates for potatoes rose by 12.53 per cent. Overall, vegetable prices witnessed 11.80 per cent inflation during August, 2011. Inflation in overall primary articles, which have a share of over 20 per cent in the WPI basket, stood at 12.58 per cent in the month under review. Non-food primary articles, which include fibres, oil seeds and minerals, became dearer by 17.75 per cent. Prices of manufactured products, which have a weight of around 65 per cent in the WPI basket, went up by 7.79 per cent year-on-year in August.

Inflation in manufactured products has been steadily rising since February this year, when it crossed the 6 per cent-mark. Among manufactured items, edible oil became dearer by 12.94 per cent, tobacco product prices rose by 13.17 per cent, cotton textiles grew 16.86 per cent more expensive and wood and wood products were 9.72 per cent costlier year-on-year. In addition, iron and semis grew dearer by over 20 per cent, while prices of basic metal alloys rose by 11.56 per cent during August, 2011. Inflation in the fuel and power segment stood at 12.84 per cent year-on-year in the month under review, as per the index. This is the ninth consecutive month when headline inflation has been above the 9 per cent-mark. The jump in inflation to close to double digits is likely to put pressure on the Reserve Bank to continue with its policy of monetary tightening, according to experts.

The apex bank has already hiked key policy rates 11 times since March, 2010, to tame inflation. The bank's next mid-quarterly policy review is scheduled for September 16. India Inc has said the string of rate hikes, which have raised the cost of borrowing, have acted as a dampener to fresh investment and hindered growth.

Industrial production plunged to a 21-month low of 3.3 per cent in July. Meanwhile, economic growth during the April-June period stood at 7.7 per cent, the slowest expansion rate in the past six quarters. Both the government and the RBI have projected headline inflation to remain elevated till the third half of the current fiscal, mainly on account of pressure from international commodity prices.

Source URL: http://www.deccanchronicle.com/channels/business/market/overall-inflation-soars-978-august-698

Business Standard

Friday, Sep 16, 2011

Food inflation eases marginally to 9.47%

BS Reporter / New Delhi September 16, 2011, 0:40 IST

Food inflation eased to a four-week low but was still high at 9.47 per cent for the week ended September 3. Though there was a marginal decline in inflation, it may not ease pressure on the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which is facing a tough choice between controlling inflation and boosting growth in its monetary review tomorrow.

Except potatoes, onions, fruits and milk, inflation in almost all food products declined in the reported week. Food inflation, as measured on the basis of the Wholesale Price Index, stood at 9.55 per cent in the previous week and 15.16 per cent during the corresponding week of the last year.

However, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee was not amused by the fall, but exuded confidence that monthly overall inflation would start moderating.

“As I have maintained, we should not see much in the weekly fluctuations. I would, however, add that we may have seen the peak as far as monthly inflation rates are concerned (in August). Here onwards, we should see a gradual moderation in monthly headline inflation,” he said in a statement posted on the finance ministry’s page on social networking site Facebook, for the first time. The overall inflation rose to a 13-month high of 9.78 per cent in August, according to an official data released yesterday.

Inflation in onions, seen as a major worry for many weeks, rose marginally to 42.98 per cent for the week ended September 3 from 42.03 per cent a week ago. The rate of price rise in potato, however, leaped to 21.16 per cent from 13.38 per cent during the period. Inflation in fruits rose considerably to 22.64 per cent after easing last week at 16.57 per cent.

The rate of inflation in milk rose to 10.02 per cent from 9.12 per cent.

Non-food inflation in primary articles (unprocessed ones) also moderated to 18.49 per cent during the period.

“Initially, I had expected this (food inflation) number to fall substantially but looking at the build-up of the inflation from March 2011, I do not expect the numbers to fall sharply after three months,” said Siddharth Shankar, director of financial services firm KASSA.

RBI is slated to come out with its monetary review tomorrow. It has already raised policy rates eleven times, but overall inflation has been over 9 per cent for the ninth month in a row till August, while economic growth numbers have been coming down due to rising interest rates.

Veg oil imports decline on higher domestic supply

BS Reporter / Mumbai September 16, 2011, 0:11 IST

After three months of rise, vegetable oil import plunged 23.2 per cent in August, due to excessive availability from domestic sources.

Data compiled by the apex trade body, Solvent Extractors’ Association of India (SEA), show that an overall import of vegetable oil in the country slumped to 81,7440 tonnes in August, as compared to 1,065,641 tonnes in the corresponding month of the previous year. However, the decline stood at 10.5 per cent when compared with the previous month.

Overall vegetable oil imports between November and August also recorded a decline of 7.9 per cent at 6,860,843 tonnes, as compared to 7,447,955 tonnes during the same period of last year. SEA clarified that vegetable oil import in the second quarter of the oil year was lower due to higher crushing of oilseeds and production of oil. Import of vegetable oils in the third quarter increased by 15.4 per cent.

The decline was in sharp contrast with the general trend across the oil year (November - October). Generally, vegetable oil imports decline in the first half ending April, due to revival in domestic rabi oilseed crushing. On the other hand, import rises in the second half due to non-availability of oilseed for crushing, in the domestic market. April to October is generally considered a lean season for the domestic oilseed crushing industry, in which refining activity increases with imported crude vegetable oil.

Current stock of edible oils as on September 1 at various ports is estimated at 570,000 tonnes (crude palm oil at 330,000 tonnes, refined, bleached and diodized (RBD) palmolein at 90,000 tonnes, degummed soybean oil at 80,000 tonnes and crude sunflower oil at 70,000 tonnes) and about 820,000 tonnes in the pipeline. The total stock, was down by 170,000 tonnes to 1,390,000 tonnes, mainly due to lower domestic production as well as import during the month.

During November - August, import of RBD palmolein was down by 17 per cent at 818,640 tonnes, as compared to 987,959 tonnes during the same period of last year. The share of refined oil was 12 per cent, while crude oil stood at 88 per cent and reported at 5,796,151 tonnes as compared to 6,112,581 tonnes during corresponding period of year.

Import of non-edible oils, used largely for soap making, was recorded at 31,922 tonnes in August, as compared to 64,699 tonnes during the same period last year. The overall import of non-edible oil during the first 10 months was reported at 246,052 tonnes, as compared to 347,415 tonnes during the same period last year, a decline of 29 per cent.

Refined soya oil futures rise on spot demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 15, 2011, 15:16 IST

Refined soya oil prices rose by Rs 2.70 to Rs 666.80 per 10 kg in futures trade today as traders enlarged their positions, driven by a pick up in demand in the spot market.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, September refined soya oil rose by Rs 2.70, or 0.41% to Rs 666.80 per 10 kg in a single lot.

Marketmen said pick up in demand in the spot market mainly helped refined soya oil futures prices to scale up.

Maize shoots up on speculative buying

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 15, 2011, 15:03 IST

Maize prices strengthened by Rs 35.50 to Rs 1,208 per quintal in futures trade today owing to speculative buying by traders, guided by firm spot market cues.

Marketmen said heavy buying in line with restricted supply and pick up in demand in physical markets, influenced trading sentiments here in future markets.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, maize for far contract January month shot up by Rs 35.50, or 3.03% to Rs 1,208 per quintal clocking an open interest of 290 lots.

Most active near October month contract flared up by Rs 29, or 2.60% to Rs 1,146 per quintal in an open interest of 17,750 lots, while current September contract surged by Rs 23, or 2.07% to Rs 1,133 per quintal, having an open interest of 9,200 lots.

Potato futures gain 2.5% on spot demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 15, 2011, 14:34 IST

Potato prices shot up by Rs 10.70 to Rs 510 per quintal in futures trade today on speculators buying influenced by rising demand in the spot market against less arrivals from producing region.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, October potato shot up by Rs 10.70, or 2.55% to Rs 510 per quintal in business turnover of 702 lots.

The September contract moved up by Rs 7, or 1.74% to Rs 410 per quintal in 8 lots.

Market analysts said besides increased demand in the spot market, less arrivals from producing region mainly pushed up potato futures prices.

Branding natural rubber pays off

George Joseph / Chennai/ Kochi September 16, 2011, 0:58 IST

The efforts of branding of Indian natural rubber by the Rubber Board has paid off, with 3000 tonnes of branded rubber being exported since its inception in this February. This is aroiund 35 per cent of the total rubber exported during February - August period this year. According to the board, the response from the overseas market is encouraging as major rubber producing countries like Malaysia and China, world's largest consumers of NR are interested in importing from India.

The board is also providing financial incentive to the logo users (as reimbursement) to offset the incidental expenses incurred for grading, packing and labeling of the branded rubber.

The board officials said the maximum assistance per exporter per year (financial year basis) will be Rs 200,000. It has also launched a website, www.indiannaturalrubber.com exclusively for the promotion of branded rubber.

Already 12 companies, inlcluding rubber marketing co-operative societies have signed MoU with the Rubber Board for using the logo.

The Rubber Board had registered the brand ‘Indian Natural Rubber’, under Intellectual Property Rights Act as Certification Trade Mark and covered under Copyrights Act.

Rain dampens cotton harvest prospects in Punjab, Haryana

Vijay C Roy & Vikas Sharma / New Delhi/ Chandigarh September 16, 2011, 0:26 IST

Rainy weather has affected the cotton crop in Punjab and Haryana, with the border state alone facing dampened hopes of harvest in as many as 90,000 hectares. As for Haryana, the government is yet to compile data on the extent of damage even as traders peg it at 10 per cent of the crop area in their state.

What’s more, as analysts note, rain would also affect the quality of the crop.

Rains in end-August and early September has damaged the crop both in Punjab and Haryana. Continued bouts of showers would also lead to a delay in the picking operations, resulting in late arrival of cotton in the markets.

Scientists maintain rains can damage the crop once bolls on the lower side start rotting. In varieties sown earlier, where bolls have started opening, it affects the quality of the crop. Agriculture officials say rain in the next few days can bring the yield for the crop under stress.

All this, when Punjab and Haryana are eyeing a bumper cotton harvest this year, after areas of cultivating the crop had surged in both states owing to better returns. Punjab and Haryana are eying production of around 50 lakh bales (1 bale is 170 kg) of cotton this season, as against last year’s 39 lakh bales cotton — an increase of 30 per cent.

Cotton sowing in Punjab is reported to be over an area of 5.50 lakh hectare, as against 4.83 lakh hectares last year. In Haryana, cotton cultivation this year saw a surge to around 6.05 lakh hectares as against 4.92 lakh hectare last year.

The Haryana Cotton Ginner Association maintains that cotton prices in the last few days have climbed up due to delayed crop and, probably, owing to anticipation of bad cotton crop this year. Prices of cotton are hovering around Rs 4,200 per quintal (J34 variety) as against Rs 3,200 last month, said association president Sushil Mittal. This reflects a 30 per cent rise.

In Haryana, cotton arrivals is yet to pick up. Reasons Mittal: a delay in the picking operations, again, because of inclement weather besides ginners sitting on a strike. (The ginners in Haryana are on an agitation in protest against higher market fee.)

Last year, by this time, around 50,000 quintal bales of cotton had arrived in various markets of Haryana. This year, no arrival has been reported.

Punjab — uptil yesterday — saw around 500 quintals of cotton arriving in different mandis of the state; it also shows sharp decline compared to last year.

Delayed arrival pushes cotton prices up 26-28%

Vijay C Roy / Chandigarh September 16, 2011, 0:12 IST

Delayed arrival of cotton in the domestic market due to rain, coupled with random export enquiry, has led to a sharp increase in cotton prices in one-and-a-half months. This has resulted in windfall gains of 26-28 per cent for traders who purchased the crop in July/August, when the price was hovering between Rs 30,000 and Rs 32,000 per candy(356kg) for MECH 1 variety(long staple), as against the current price of Rs 38,000-41,000 per candy.

Speaking to Business Standard, the joint secretary (honorary) of the South India Cotton Association, A Ramani, said, “There are a few reasons behind the rise in price of cotton — delayed arrival of cotton due to rain in many parts of the country, export enquiry from overseas buyers and hoarding of the crop by ginners and investors, who bought the crop for Rs 61,000 per candy in January, and expect further price rise.”

Echoing similar sentiments, Rentu K Pandaya, managing partner of Siddhi Sales Corporation ,added: “The delayed arrival of cotton has pushed up prices. Besides other factors, improvement in dollar prices is also responsible for the price rise. Also, under OGL(Open General Licence) around 80 lakh bales of cotton has been registered, the deadline for which expires on September 30.”

Protesting against the high cotton prices and terming the Centre's decision to allow cotton exports under OGL during the current cotton season (October-September) a serious blow to the industry, textile mills have urged the government to allow shipments from January. They are of the opinion if cotton is shipped early in the season, availability in the domestic market would be hit and and prices would be pushed up.

On being asked if the projected cotton production would be affected by rain in some parts of the country, Ramani said: “As per the estimates of the Cotton Advisory Board of India, the total cotton production in the country during this season would be 35.5 million bales, as compared to 32.5 million bales during the previous year. The cotton advisory board has projected the production after taking these things into consideration. However exact data could only be obtained, after surveying the field.”

the pioneer

Gaur instructs officials to increase revenue

Urban Administration and Development (UAD) Minister Babulal Gaur on Thursday has given instructions to the officials of Municipal Corporations to come up with ways to increase the revenue of corporations. He further said that officials should work to recover taxes strictly. "Officers should propose changes in rules for regularisation of illegal colonies in cities," he further stressed.

He was reviewing the developmental works of Municipal Corporations of Ratlam, Khandwa, Dewas and Singrauli. Ratlam Mayor Shailendra Daga, Khandwa Mayor Bhavna Shah, Dewas Mayor Rekha Verma, departmental Principal Secretary SPS Parihar and Commissioner Sanjay Shukla were present on the occasion.

Gaur instructed Mayors and Municipal Commissioners to ensure people's participation in special sanitation campaigns to be launched in the State from September 25 to October 2 to October 25 and November 5, 2011. He said that cooperation of other departments should be sought for implementing city development plans of various cities. He asked the officers to make cities and wards dustbin-free and ensure sanitation arrangements by taking morning visits.

Gaur said that Ratlam Municipal Corporation is doing good work. Pending cases of Subhash Complex and Rajiv Gandhi Civil Centre of this city should be disposed of rapidly. He also gave instructions to implement Ram Roti Yojna in all the night shelters for the poor.

Principal Secretary Urban Administration informed that according to directives of Supreme Court, arrangements for Rain Baseras (Night Shelters) have to be completed by October 31, 2011 in all the civic bodies. The civic bodies should make temporary arrangements for night shelter if construction of Rain Baseras is delayed.

In the meeting it was informed that initiative has been undertaken by Municipal Corporation for beautification of Ratlam city's ancient buildings and tourist spots. India Gate has been constructed like Delhi in Ratlam, which has become centre of attraction.

Identity cards have been issued for identifying poor senior citizens. Schemes have been proposed for developing Subhash Complex and Rajiv Gandhi Civil Centre, which aim at increasing Ratlam Municipal Corporation's income and are pending for a long time. Schemes have also been chalked out for bus stand in Ratlam and solid waste management under public-private participation (PPP) mode. Necessary arrangements are being made for regularisation of illegal colonies and relocation of kiosks.

Wild beasts pose big threat to apple farming in HP

Wild animals and birds like bears, monkeys, parakeets, bats and crows are now posing great threat to the high value apple crop in the State, triggering concerns.

The apple belt of Himachal in areas like Narkanda, Kothgarh, Jubbal-Kotkhai and Chopal are under a thick cover of Deodar trees with an abundant presence of wild bears which are not only a threat to apple orchards but also to human life. Wild bears are carnivorous and villagers find it difficult to chase away these bulky and scary beasts.

The bears easily climb onto apple trees and destroy the fruit in large amount. Also the fruit laden branches are lowered to such an extent that they become easily accessible to other animals moving in the area. Apple growers in villages like Reog, Takoon, Jadoon, Dhala have faced the brunt of this growing menace.

Talking to The Pioneer, Kamal Chauhan, apple farmer from Dasholi hamlet described how four trees in her orchard were destroyed by bears in a single day. She lamented that not only the trees got damaged but there was also a huge loss to the high quality crop too. Moreover, an apple tree usually has a gestation period of about 4-5 years before it starts bearing fruits. The loss therefore is manifold. One tree amounts to an average loss between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15,000 in a single season. The loss for its entire life span is very difficult to assess, she pointed out.

Bhupinder Singh, another farmer from Ruhil, village had a similar story to tell. Bears had destroyed almost half a dozen trees in his orchard. Similar concerns were voiced by many other farmers who were expecting good returns from their orchards thus taking away the shimmer from this golden business offering high rate of returns otherwise. The areas situated in higher apple growing belts are suffering from this bear menace in such a way that high quality apple worth lakhs of rupees are being destroyed by this bulky animal.

Normally, the damage caused by this animal is not only to the fruit it destroys but also the apple trees by uprooting or breaking in such a way that the trees die. Forest department is not able to check this menace as animal killing is totally banned in the State. In such a situation, apple growers are left to the mercy of the animals.

Parakeet has emerged as another threat to the ripe fruit which has not been picked from the trees. The birds leave the fruit inedible for human consumption by rupturing the skin using their beaks.

According to Horticulture department, about 25 per cent crop is destroyed by wild animals or is rendered inedible during transportation. The farmers have to bear the brunt of the situation along with high packaging and transportation cost of each apple box. All reduces their profit margin. Farmers say that the problem needs immediate attention so that apple farming does not lose its sheen as a profitable venture.

THE HINDU Business Line

Food inflation eases marginally

New Delhi, Sept. 15:

Both food and non-food inflation eased marginally in early September, while inflation in the fuel group surged.

Cereals, pulses, vegetables and poultry products among food products, along with non-food items such as fibres and oilseeds, contributed to the downward trend.

The base effect of the previous year, when food inflation clocked in well above 15 per cent, also contributed to the dip seen in the latest reported week.

According to the data released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry, the annual inflation in the Food Articles group, based on the Wholesale Price Index, rose 9.47 per cent in the week ended September 3, slightly lower than the 9.55 per cent year-on-year rise in the previous week.

The fuel index climbed 13.01 per cent, higher than the 12.55 per cent annual rise in the previous reported week.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 16, 2011)

Raising paddy yield, the unconventional way

Syngenta's pilot Tegra project could mechanise farming

New solutions: A worker of Syngenta rolls the media on which paddy seedlings have been grown in a tray before transplantation at the company's trial farm at Vandavasi in Tiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu. — M.R. Subramani

Chennai, Sept. 15:

Until last year, Mr V. Shankar, a farmer of Vandavasi taluk in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvannamalai district was growing paddy through the conventional method on the 10 acres of land that he owned. That yielded him about 2.4 tonnes of paddy an acre.

Driven by curiosity on seeing the model farm of Syngenta, the Swiss crop protection major, next to his farm, he opted to go in for the company's Tegra seedling technology. That helped him to record a yield of 3.3 tonnes of paddy.

“The new seedling technology has helped me reap a higher yield,” says Mr Shankar.

“There are about 500 farmers in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu who have adopted this new Tegra technology,” says Mr R. Suresh Babu, head of rice research in India for Syngenta.

Under the Tegra technology, paddy seedlings are grown in a special media comprising straw, soil, nutrients, chemicals and other such things in a tray.

The seedlings are developed in a nursery and then replanted after 15 days with a special transplant machinery. The media is a Syngenta finding and it enjoys a patent for it.

Once transplanted, the seedlings take root and begin to grow.

Syngenta offers the technology at Rs 75 a tray and an acre requires 70 trays. “If farmers from a particular village approach us and opt for this as a group, the cost could come down,” says Mr Suresh Babu.

“The cost came to Rs 67 a tray for me,” says Mr Shankar.

Syngenta, at this cost, grows the paddy seedlings that is chosen by the farmer or considered apt for the agro-climatic conditions, transplants them in the farmer's field with its special machinery and offers counsel until harvest.

“It is an end-to-end solution that we offer to farmers through the Tegra technology,” says Mr Suresh Babu. “Farmers will first have to prepare their field as specified by us,” he said.

“It is about Rs 1,000 more than what we do conventionally. But that extra cost is more than compensated by the higher yield,” says Mr Shankar.

Syngenta sees playing a major role in offering Tegra as finding farm labour is becoming difficult and labour costs are shooting up.

What Syngenta is doing now is seen as pilot projects. “We have potential to adopt this technology in Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana.

This will happen in 3-5 years time,” says Dr K.C. Ravi, Syngenta's Head of Corporate Affairs in South Asia.

Japan is the leading exponent of this method of cultivation, helping it to increase its productivity tremendously. South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and China, too, have adopted this technology.

This system is not comparable with the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) that has become popular in Tami Nadu, say Syngenta officials.

“SRI is done manually while ours is mechanical,” said Mr Suresh Babu.

Syngenta is also looking into aspects of how much water could be saved through the Tegra technology since paddy is a water-intensive crop.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 16, 2011)

Spot pepper zooms to new peak of Rs 326/kg on aggressive buying

Kochi, Sept. 15:

Pepper futures witnessed high volatility on Wednesday and closed mixed following liquidation and switching over of contracts, while aggressive buying interest was seen in the spot market which pushed the MG1 price to the historic Rs 326 a kg level.

The market opened on a uptrend and hit the highest price of the day before starting to slide to hit the lowest price of the day in the forenoon.

After that, it again moved up and fell and fluctuated wildly before the September contract ended marginally above the previous day closing. October and November contracts declined slightly.

As the spot prices have been ruling above Rs 300 a kg, national and State-level cooperatives and dealers were showing interest to sell.

September contract on the NCDEX moved up by Rs 38 to Rs 33,969 a quintal while October and November declined by Rs 61 and Rs 93 respectively to Rs 34,856 and Rs 35,350 a quintal.Total turnover fell by over 40 per cent (4,095 tonnes) to close at 5,455 tonnes.

Total open interest dropped by 288 tonnes to end at 11,824 tonnes.

In the spot ungarbled price ruled steady at Rs 31,100 a quintal while MG 1 price was raised to Rs 32,600 a quintal

Indian parity in the international market was at $7,600-7,650 a tonne (c&f). Vietnam was Thursday offering 500GL at $7,350 fob HCMC NETT to shippers and 550GL at $7,750 a tonne.

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Soya flat on scattered buying

Indore, Sept. 15:

Soya oil ruled firm on scattered buying in the local market. In the spot market, soya refined ruled flat at Rs 634-637 for 10 kg (Rs 635-638), while it fetched Rs 634-635 in the resale market. Soya oil futures traded marginally lower on National Board of Trade (NBOT) on weak buying. Its October contract closed at Rs 656.70 after opening at Rs 657 in the morning. NBOT witnessed last cut of the month at Rs 668.27, while the final cut was recorded at Rs 667.

Trading in soya oil on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange also remained subdued. Its September contract closed marginally higher at Rs 667.90 for 20 kg after opening at Rs 667 in the morning, while its October contract closed lower at Rs 656.50 for 10 kg after opening at Rs 657.10.

Soya seeds remained sluggish on weak demand. In mandis across Madhya Pradesh soyabean ruled at Rs 2,280-2,340 a quintal, while plant deliveries were quoted at Rs 2,390-2,400 a quintal. New crop of soyabean has also slowly started arriving in local mandis. Indore mandis on Thursday witnessed arrival of 20 bags of new soyabean with 25-30 per cent moisture content.

New soyabean was sold at Rs 1,970-1,980 a quintal. Nearby Dewas also witnessed arrivals of 80 bags of new soyabean with 30 per cent moisture content that were sold at Rs 1,950 a quintal.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 16, 2011)

TN farm varsity introduces flood-resistant rice

Coimbatore, Sept. 15:

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) has introduced 'Swarna Sub1', a flood resistant rice variety.

(Swarna Sub1 is a cross of Swarna, a popular rice variety in Eastern States with FR13A, a local variety of Orissa).

Researchers say that all features of the Swarna variety are present in the newly-introduced Swarna Sub1 except submergence tolerance. The yield level of Swarna Sub1 was found to be higher over Swarna even under prolonged flood conditions.

"Swarna Sub1 can tolerate 14-17 days of water stagnation during floods," Dr K. Thiyagarajan, Director, Centre for Plant Breeding & Genetics, TNAU said.

He said that scientists at International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines worked on the genetics of flood resistance in FR13A, identified a genetic locus called 'Sub1' and using DNA markers as selection tools developed and introduced Swarna Sub1 for cultivation in 2009.

Swarna is cultivated in around six million hectares in the eastern States, which normally report huge losses due to submergence.

The Varsity Vice-Chancellor, Dr P Murugesa Boopathi, said that rice was being cultivated in around 15 lakh hectares in the State every year during the Samba/thaladi season of which close to a third (3-5 lakh hectares) of the area was affected due to floods during the North-East monsoon.

The flood-prone tail-end areas of delta districts and some of the coastal districts like Thiruvarur and Nagapattinam are the worst-affected belts. “Most of the present day high yielding varieties are unable to tolerate flood water that remains for more than a week. Swarna Sub1 can resist floods and therefore, will be a boon to these areas,” he said.

Dr S. Robin, Professor and Head, Department of Rice, TNAU said that the university undertook extensive research to study the efficiency of Swarna Sub1 in mitigating the effect of floods during 2010-11 samba season. Demonstrations conducted at several locations proved its suitability.

He said that a consignment of 10 quintals of Swarna Sub1 seed was received from Uttar Pradesh and seed distribution campaigns were organised through the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) of Thanjavur (Needamangalam) and Namakkal (Sikkal) districts.

The seed was distributed to around 100 farmers who were advised to raise Swarna Sub1 using SRI (System of Rice Intensification) technology, to get higher yields.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 16, 2011)

Buyer resistance caps gains in spot rubber

Kottayam, Sept. 15:

Spot rubber improved on Thursday. The market continued to experience short supplies following widespread rain all over the plantation areas. But gains were still limited on buyer resistance as major consuming industries stayed either inactive or kept a low profile.

Sheet rubber increased marginally to Rs 216.50 from Rs 216 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The trend was mixed.

The September series for RSS 4 expired at Rs 216.50 (217.94) while the October series improved to Rs 218.18 (214.65), November to Rs 217.19 (213.68), December to Rs 218 (215), January to Rs 219.25 (216.02) and February to Rs 220.22 (217.70) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) firmed up to Rs 223.95 (221.16) a kg at Bangkok. The September futures for the grade dropped to ¥348.2 (Rs 216.50) from ¥349.1 a kg during the day session but then recovered to ¥350.5 (Rs 217.93) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 216.50 (216); RSS-5: 208 (207); ungraded: 203 (202); ISNR 20: 210 (210) and latex 60 per cent: 133.50 (133.50).

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‘Sugar industry willing to top up rural job scheme wages'

New Delhi, Sept. 15:

In a bid to curb the rising farm labour shortage, the Confederation of Indian Industry has called for integration of farming with the rural job scheme – Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA).

“Farm labour should be included in MNREGA and the Government should subsidise mechanisation of sugarcane farming,” said Ms Rajshree Pathy, Vice-Chairperson, CII National

Committee on Sugar. Ms Pathy was delivering the keynote address at the CII National Seminar on Sugar Machinery Industry.

Stating that labour shortage was becoming acute, Ms Pathy said the industry was willing to pay farm workers in addition to the MNREGA wages.

In an interview to *Business Line* in May this year, Dr Ashok Gulati, Chairman of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices had stated that there was a need to extend MNREGA to work on private farms.

Unable to deal with the labour shortage and rising wages, sugarcane farmers are switching to crops such as coconut, Ms Pathy said.

She reiterated the demand for de-control of the sugar sector.

Farm labour shortage is more pronounced in southern States such as Tamil Nadu that are more industrialised. Farm wages in key sugarcane growing States have seen an increase from about 15 per cent in Uttar Pradesh to as high as 43.35 per cent in Punjab in the past year.

Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have seen a farm wage increase of 36, 35 and 22 per cent respectively in the past year.

Mr Arvind Mehta, Joint Secretary, Commerce Ministry, said the Government could look at bringing in a export tariff on sugar as in the case of iron ore exports rather than restricting them completely.

He asked the sugar machinery industry to tap the growing markets in Africa and Latin America.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 16, 2011)

Prices of poultry items remain unchanged

Chennai, Sept. 15:

For the third consecutive week, prices of poultry products ruled flat due to seasonal uncertainties and a slowdown in consumption.

The Namakkal-based National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) has maintained egg prices at last week's level of Rs 2.52 a piece and rate for its layer birds at Rs 40 a kg for the past two weeks. Lower domestic offtake, slack export demand and a dip in consumption in Karnataka and Maharashtra, major markets for Tamil Nadu's shell egg and broiler trade, have led to the slowdown.

“Prices are more likely to rule at this level till the end of *Navaratri* season,” observed a source. Dr P. Selvaraj, Zonal Chairman, NECC, said: “Layer rates remain unchanged as our main consumers — Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh — observe *Dasara*, the period of abstinence. We expect a rise in offtake and prices to perk up during next month.

” The poultry industry usually experiences a temporary lull during August-October due to the austere months. Meanwhile, the Palladam-based Broiler Coordination Committee, too, has retained live-chicken prices at last week's Rs 63 a kg.

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Malaysian cues keep edible oils firm

Mumbai, Sept. 15:

Edible oils ruled firm on Thursday, in line with Malaysian palm oil futures that extended gains in the afternoon session despite palm oil exports dipping 30 per cent during September 1-15.

Groundnut oil remained unchanged while palmolein gained Rs 3, cotton oil Rs 2, sunflower refined oil Rs 5 and rapeseed oil Re 1 for 10 kg. Soya oil lost Rs 2.

New crop arrivals of nuts in the South is increasing pressure on groundnut oil, a wholesaler said. Sixty to 80 tonnes of palmolein were traded at Rs 562-564. Resellers quoted palmolein at Rs 563-564. Crude palm oil (CPO) futures on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) remained unchanged.

Liberty offered palmolein at Rs 567 and soya oil at Rs 650 while Ruchi offered the former at Rs 566 and the latter at Rs 650. Allana quoted palmolein at Rs 565 for delivery during September 20-30. In Rajkot and Saurashtra, groundnut oil remained unchanged at Rs 1,520 for a *telia* tin and at Rs 985 for loose (10 kg).

Malaysia's BMD CPO October contracts closed unchanged at MYR3,099, November rose to MYR3,078 (MYR3,065) and December was up at MYR3,070 (MYR3,044) a tonne. Soya oil for October delivery was at Rs 656.70 (Rs 658.90) on National Board of Trade in Indore.

Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rate (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 995 (995), soya refined oil 645 (647), sunflower exp. ref. 655 (660), sunflower ref. 720 (715), rapeseed ref. oil 706(705), rapeseed expeller ref. 676 (675), cotton ref. oil 658 (656) and palmolein 562 (559).

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Fewer export orders pull down jeera

Rajkot, Sept. 15:

Lower demand and higher arrivals pulled down jeera futures by over Rs 200 a quintal, while lower export demand brought down prices of the spice in the spot market.

Jeera for October delivery dropped by Rs 225 to Rs 15,400 a quintal on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, with an open interest of 21,048 lots. November contract declined by Rs 187 to Rs 15,859, with an open interest of 10,047 lots.

Jeera was down Rs 25-30 to Rs 1,900-2,750 for 20 kg at agricultural produce marketing committee (APMC) in Rajkot while in Unjha APMC it dropped by Rs 30-40 to Rs 2,150-3,195 for 20 kg. Arrivals increased to about 7,000 bags while trades of about 5,000 bags were reported at Unjha market.

Latest estimates from the Spice Board of India show exports of spices during April-June have fallen by 26 per cent to 1,16,900 million tonnes in 2011 from 1,57,850 million tonnes in 2010.

Jeera exports fell by 46 per cent to 5,750 million tonnes from 10,600 million tonnes during that period.

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Sugar trade looks to Navaratri demand

Mumbai, Sept. 15:

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market witnessed a mixed trend on Thursday. In the physical market,

S–grade ruled unchanged, while M-grade lost Rs 10 per quintal as demand eased for quality sugar. In naka business, S-grade increased by Rs 10, while M-grade declined by Rs 10 on selling pressure. The volume was need-based and at regular level, while at mill level, fresh buying by neighbouring States keep the sentiment firm. Arrivals and despatches were at usual level.

A wholesaler said sugar prices stayed firm due to need-based local demand and amply supply from mills. At mill level, there was limited fresh buying but sentiment stayed positive ahead of Navaratri festival.

Sugar futures were down by Rs 25-30 a quintal till noon on speculative selling pressure. Most mills were not keen to sell at lower price, while a few managed to sell at market rates.

Mill tender rates stayed unchanged despite poor buyer response. Out of one lakh bags, producers sold about 27,000 bags to neighbouring States and the rest to local traders at prevailing rates. Demand from West Bengal is expected to improve sharply for Durga Puja. Arrivals and local despatches remained unchanged. Freight rates were unchanged. Arrivals stood at around 49-50 truckloads (each of 100 bags), while 47-48 truckloads were lifted.

On Wednesday, nearly 17–18 mills sold about 60,000–65,000 bags to local stockists at Rs 2,650–2,710 (Rs 2,650–2,710) for S-grade, and Rs 2,725–2,800 (Rs 2,725–2,800) for M-Grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants' Association rates: Spot: S-grade Rs 2,761-2,851 (Rs 2,761-2,851) and M-grade Rs 2,820-2,981 (Rs 2,831-2,981).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 2,720-2,775 (Rs 2,710-2,750) and M grade Rs 2,795-2,900 (Rs 2,800-2,910).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 16, 2011)

Turmeric loses colour on higher arrivals

Erode, Sept. 15:

Spot turmeric prices dropped on heavy arrivals on Thursday.

“Even experienced turmeric traders are unable to predict the price fluctuations. But certainly there is no possibility of prices improving in near future, unless upcountry orders flood,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President of Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, on Thursday.

He said that the price of the spot turmeric decreased by Rs 200 a quintal on Thursday; in the Regulated Marketing Committee, the price decreased by Rs 500 a quintal; the hybrid variety decreased by Rs 408 a quintal. The decrease in hybrid variety was due to poor quality. But the dip in other varieties was due to drop in the futures market by four per cent in a day. It quoted at Rs 4,680 a quintal. This reflected in the local market. Turmeric growers still hope the price of the yellow spice will go up suddenly as they did last year, two months before the closure of the season, the prices improved and touched Rs 17,000 a quintal. Similarly, it may touch at least Rs 7,500 a quintal.

On Thursday, 8,120 bags arrived for sale and 60 per cent of the goods were sold.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,889-4,761 a quintal, the root variety at Rs 3,666-4,302.

Salem Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 4,495-5,281, the root variety Rs 4,014-4,584. Totally, out of 1,711 bags kept for sales, 340 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,010-4,910, the root variety Rs 3,799-4,410. All the 266 bags kept for sales were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,999-4,806, the root variety Rs 3,879-4,306. Out of arrival of 1,079 bags, 1,039 were sold.

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Dara eases; desi wheat rules steady

Karnal, Sept. 15:

The wheat market witnessed a mixed trend on Thursday. Dara witnessed some correction after prices rose earlier this week, while *desi* varieties managed to maintain their previous levels amid slack trading.

Dara prices eased by Rs 10-20 and settled at Rs1,080-1,090 a quintal against around Rs 1,100 quoted earlier this week.

Incessant rain since Thursday morning coupled with sluggish domestic demand of flour pulled wheat prices down, said Mr Subhash Chander, a wheat trader. There is a sharp decline in the demand for flour, following which flour mills have kept out of the market, he added.

Due to bad weather, only around 20 tonnes of dara variety arrived from the Uttar Pradesh.

On the other hand, with slack trading in the market, desi wheat varieties managed to maintain their previous level. Tohfa variety quoted at Rs 2,150 a quintal, Raj Bhog at Rs 1,800 a quintal., Lal Quila at Rs 1,910 and Kangan at Rs 1,930.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange wheat for September delivery increased by Rs 5 to Rs 1,163.40 a quintal after touching a low at Rs 1,145 on Thursday.

Flour Prices

With a fall in wheat prices and demand fo flour, prices went fell by Rs 30 to Rs1,130 for a 90 kg bag. Traders expect that prices may decrease further. On the other hand, Chokar prices witnessed a good rally; which went up by Rs 50 and sold at Rs 540-550 for a 49-kg bag. Low availability of green fodder pushed Chokar prices upwards.

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