

Published: September 23, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 23, 2011 04:17 IST
COIMBATORE, September 23, 2011

Agriculture Leadership award for TNAU



'Agriculture Today', a national agricultural journal has presented the 'Agriculture Leadership' award to Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU).

P. Murugesu Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, received the award at the Fourth Agriculture Leadership Summit 2011 held in New Delhi. Given in recognition of the contributions of various stakeholders in agriculture, TNAU received it for achieving high standards of academic development and excellence in the field of agriculture.

According to the citation, TNAU has reached the position of one of the best agricultural universities in India due to its high quality of agricultural education. In accordance with the global and national level changes happening in the agricultural sector, the educational system in TNAU is regularly examined and systematically redesigned.

It further adds that the university plays a significant role in conducting need-based agricultural research on crop improvement, crop management, crop protection and post-harvest technologies, agricultural marketing, agricultural finance, rural management, climate change, processing, farm implements and machinery, water use efficiency and water management technologies.

Keeping pace with the global education system, TNAU provides students a very good learning environment with well-furnished facilities. With its extensive programmes and innovative models, TNAU deserves to be appreciated for its leadership role in academic development.

Published: September 23, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 23, 2011 04:22 IST NEW DELHI, September 23, 2011

Food inflation eases to 8.84%

Even as food inflation eased to 8.84 per cent for the week ended September 10 from 9.47 per cent a week ago, the much needed respite from spiralling prices remained only on paper as items like onions, potatoes and milk continued to rule at higher levels. The only solace that the WPI provided to the common man was that food inflation during the like week in 2010 was way higher at 16.30 per cent. In other words, it is again the statistical anomaly of a “high base effect” that has come into play to show a decline.

As per the WPI data, barring wheat prices which slipped by 2.72 per cent, all other edibles were more expensive on a year-on-year basis. Prices of onions, for instance, were higher by 29 per cent while potatoes were 13.78 per cent dearer and vegetables, as a whole, were 12.13 per cent costlier. To add to the consumers' misery, milk prices were up again by 10.38 per cent.

Published: September 23, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 23, 2011 04:16 IST ERODE, September 23, 2011

Stop use of fertilizers: Nammazhvar



Nature's friend: Scientist G. Nammazhvar speaking at a workshop in Erode Sengunthar Engineering College on Thursday. -PHOTO:M.GOVARTHAN

Farming community should stop the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and other chemical applications for cultivation of crops, as the practice poisons food and poses serious threat to food security in the country, Nature scientist G. Nammazhvar has said.

The extensive use of chemicals has poisoned the soil and the food, besides affecting human health.

Organic farming

“We should take to organic farming and ensure that the agriculture is location-based. We should advocate for the production and consumption of food locally and the food should be fresh,” he said, addressing a gathering of farmers, students and faculty members at the workshop on Green Technology at Erode Sengunthar Engineering College here on Thursday.

The workshop was organised by the Department of Chemical Engineering of the college in association with the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India.

Mr. Nammazhvar said the practice of applying chemical fertilisers and pesticides was promoted in the developing nations by the multinational companies primarily to make more profit.

Scientists around the world, he said, had proved beyond doubt that agriculture did not require chemical fertilisers.

“Nature has everything. It is possible to get higher crop yield without applying any inorganic materials,” he said.

Over one lakh tonnes of pesticides were being used in the country, which had poisoned food and caused huge damage to environment.

“But we can still protect our environment, if we stop the use of chemical materials for food production,” he said.

Mr. Nammazhvar appealed to the farmers to adopt organic farming practices. He also wanted the proper utilisation of waste generated in the urban areas.

“The waste should be segregated at source and people should start using it to grow plants,” he stressed.

Earlier, he released the souvenir of workshop. College president M. Balusamy received its first copy. Correspondent R. Mohanraj, Secretary S. Sivananthan and Principal Arun V. Parwate also spoke.

Published: September 23, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 23, 2011 04:17 IST HUBLI, September 23, 2011

'More awareness needed on rainwater harvesting'

Speakers at a panel discussion on 'Future water efficiency' held here on Thursday felt there was a need for creating more awareness on harvesting rainwater by adopting efficient systems so as to recharge groundwater.

Sankalpa Rural Development Society had organised the discussion in association with Deshpande Foundation, Hubli.

Inaugurating the event, S. Vishwanath of Rainwater Harvesting Club, Bangalore, said the groundwater table was depleting fast as the country had nearly 30 million borewells.

The former Mayor of Hubli-Dharwad Pandurang Patil said no constructive efforts were being made for conserving rainwater.

Hubli-Dharwad Mayor Poorna Patil assured that Hubli-Dharwad Municipal Corporation would extend all support to the foundation and the society for creating awareness on harvesting rainwater in the twin cities.

Virabhadrapa Halaharavi, MLA, stressed the need for taking up pilot projects on rainwater harvesting system. Establishing demonstration zones would go a long way in creating awareness among the public.

He said people should come forward to join hands with government agencies in this regard.

Chief Executive Officer of the foundation Naveen Jha, members of various organisations, students and public participated in the discussion.

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September 23, 2011

NABARD organises regional workshop

The NABARD organised a regional workshop on the central sector subsidy schemes on Thursday at Hotel Ilapuram. Indian Bank Deputy General Manager G.G. Raghu was the chief guest. The workshop covered agri clinics, agri business centres, and installation of solar off-grid. Mr. Koteswara Rao from the National Institute of Agriculture Extension and Management (MANAGE) was the main resource person. NABARD AGM N. Madhumurthy and Agriculture Department JD K.S.V. Prasad were present.

Published: September 23, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 23, 2011 04:22 IST KOCHI,
September 23, 2011

Freshwater fishes, plants struggle to survive in Western Ghats

Pollution, commercial development and modification of natural systems are posing serious threats to a large number of freshwater fishes, mollusc and odonates, including dragonflies and damselflies, of the Western Ghats, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

It was also found that the highest number of threatened species is located within the southern Western Ghats hotspot in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and southern Karnataka.

The risks faced by these species were highlighted in the assessment of the freshwater biodiversity of the region carried out by the IUCN Global Species Programme's Freshwater Biodiversity Unit, in association with the Zoo Outreach Organisation (ZOO), Coimbatore.

The global conservation status and distribution of 1,146 freshwater species were assessed using the IUCN red list of threatened categories and criteria. Commercial fisheries, aquarium trade, construction of dams and alien invasive species too were found mounting pressure on the species.

It was also found that 180 taxa were threatened with extinction. However, no species was assessed as extinct or extinct in the wild, the report said.

River systems of the Tapi, the Krishna, the Cauvery and the Godavari and species endemic to Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu were reviewed. Andhra Pradesh and western and southern portions of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Chhattisgarh were also included in the assessment as the drainages of the rivers originating in the Western Ghats flowed through these States.

The species introduced to the region prior to 1500 AD were assessed and subsequent introductions were treated as non-native ones.

The southern Western Ghats region with catchments, including the Pamba, Meenachil, Muvattupuzha, Periyar, Karuvannur, Bharatapuzha, Chaliyar, Kuttyadi, and Valappattanam of Kerala; the Netravati, upper Kabini and Cauvery of Karnataka; the upper Vaipar, Amaravati, Bhavani and Moyar of Tamil Nadu has the highest richness (260–312 species) and endemism (103–129 species) of freshwater species.

“The analysis informs the status of the freshwater systems in the Western Ghats on which more than 400 million people are dependent across peninsular India,” said Sanjay Molur, Executive Director of ZOO.

A. Gopalakrishnan, scientist in-charge of the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources, Kochi, who participated in the evaluation, called for stock-specific rehabilitation of fishes in the river systems to overcome the risks. Protection of key habitats, prevention of flow modifications, and conservation of specialised ecosystems such as Myristica swamps, high altitude peat bogs, and lateritic plateaus and prevention of use of pesticide in upper catchments and regulation of tourism in critical habitats have been suggested by the agency.

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- *Six fishes from Kerala evaluated as critically endangered ones*
 - *Report says 180 taxa are threatened with extinction*
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New Delhi, September 22, 2011

First Published: 13:30 IST(22/9/2011)

Last Updated: 13:33 IST(22/9/2011)

Food inflation slips to 8.84%, but no relief for common man

Food inflation fell to 8.84 % in the week ended September 10 from 9.47 % in the previous week, but provided no relief to the common man as prices of key commodities continued to rule high.

Prices of most commodities, barring wheat, continued to remain firm on an annual basis, as per Wholesale Price Index (WPI) data released by the government on Thursday.

According to experts, the fall in inflation on a weekly basis is on account of statistical reasons, called as "high base effect". Food inflation was above 16 % in the corresponding period last year.

As per the data, wheat prices during the week were down 2.72 % year-on-year.

However, onions became more expensive by 29 % and potatoes 13.78 %. Overall, vegetables became 12.13 % dearer.

Milk prices, too, were up by 10.38 %, while fruits grew dearer by 17.67 % and eggs, meat and fish prices rose by 9.28 % year-on-year.

Prices of cereals also went up, by 4.13 %, during the week under review. Even the prices of pulses, which had exhibited a declining trend during recent months, rose by 1.49 % during the week ended September 10.

Overall, inflation in primary articles stood at 12.17 % for the week ending September 10, compared to 13.04 % in the previous week. Primary articles constitute over 20 % of the WPI basket.

Non-food articles, which include fibres, oil seeds and minerals, recorded 17.42 % inflation during the week ended September 10, up from 18.49 % in the previous week, ended September 3.

Meanwhile, inflation in the fuel and power segment went up to 13.96 % during the week ended September 10 from 13.01 % in the previous seven-day period.

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 % in August.

The Reserve Bank has already hiked policy rates 12 times since March, 2010, to tame demand and curb inflation.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/748782.aspx>

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Friday, Sep 23

Max Min

35.4° | 25.5°

Rain: Trace

Sunrise: 5:58

Humidity: 59%

Sunset: 18:05

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1006

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Saturday, Sep 24

Max Min

36° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Sep 25

Sep 26

Sep 27

Sep 28

Sep 29



32° | 26°

Rainy



32° | 25°

Rainy



33° | 25°

Rainy



34° | 26°

Rainy



34° | 26°

Rainy

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Food inflation drops to 8.84%

IANIS | Sep 22, 2011, 12.27PM IST

NEW DELHI: India's food inflation dropped to 8.84% for the week ended September 10 as compared to 9.47% in the previous week as rise in the prices of onions, fruits and vegetables eased, official data showed Thursday.

Rise in the price of vegetables declined to 12.13% year-on-year during the week under review as compared to 17.47% in the previous week, while the rise in price of onions declined to 28.92% from 42.98%.

The primary articles index, which has a 20.12% weight in the wholesale price index, rose by 12.17 in the week under review as compared to 13.04% in the previous week, according to data released by the commerce and industry ministry.

The index for non-food articles rose 17.42% during the week ended Sep 10 as compared to 18.49% in the previous week.

However, the rise in the index of fuel and power accelerated to 13.96% during the week under review as compared to 13.01% in the previous week.

Decline in food price inflation would give some relief but it is not enough to end the trouble of policymakers, who have been struggling for almost the last two years to control inflationary pressure.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its latest monetary policy review last week hiked key rates by 25 basis points in the 12th such exercise since January 2010 to tame stubborn inflation.

Despite the aggressive monetary tightening by the central bank, inflation has remained stubbornly high. Latest data showed annual inflation rate for August, based on the wholesale price index, inching closer towards double digits at 9.78%.

The following are the yearly rise and fall in prices under review of some main commodities that form the sub-index for food articles:

Onions: 28.92%

Vegetables: 12.13%

Fruits: 17.67.64%

Potatoes: 13.78%

Eggs, meat, fish: 9.28%

Cereals: 4.13%

Rice: 4.02%

Wheat: (-) 2.72%

Pulses: 1.49%

Vegetable prices shoot up

HYDERABAD: The RTC strike has had its impact on prices of vegetables too. In the twin cities, the supply of vegetables to the Rythu Bazars has come down by about 20 per cent. "Farmers, who bring vegetables everyday to the Rythu Bazars, are finding it difficult to come due to the strike. Several have stopped coming," said KV Vijay Kumar, estate officer of the Erragadda Rythu Bazar.

He said the number of visitors to the Rythu Bazars has also dropped by 20 per cent. He explained that prices have gone up because the farmers are forced to shell out more for transport. Komaraiah, a farmer and vegetable vendor at Nagireddygudem village, Ranga Reddy district, said, "I used to get the vegetables on a bus generally, but for the past two days, I had to hire small lorries or trolleys. When I bring the vegetables by trolley, I have to pay 75 per cent extra." He said he would charge a bit extra than the normal price to make up for the additional burden.

PS Padmavathi, owner of a seed fertiliser stall at the Bazar, said, "Our general collection is about `2,000 per day, but for the last two weeks due to general strike, the collection has come down to `300 per day. During the last two days, the collection was just `150 per day."

23 Sep 2011 02:30:57 AM IST

Two lakh hectares of forest razed in four years

CHENNAI: The Environment Ministry has allowed more than two lakh hectares of forest to be chopped down in the past four years for industrialisation and other developmental activities, according to a study by the Centre for Science and Environment. From 2007, the extent of forest land diverted for developmental projects accounts for about 25 per cent of the total area of wooded area given up since 1981. The study also notes that Tamil Nadu obtained the maximum number of environmental clearances for setting up thermal power plants, compared to

any other state.

“In the period between 2007 and August 2011, 8,284 projects were granted forest clearance and 2,03,576 hectares of forest land was diverted,” the study noted. “The area of forest land diverted is equal to the average area of two tiger reserves and about four times the area of a Panna or a Tadoba tiger reserve,” it said. The rejection rates for clearances were extremely low—only six per between 1980 and July 2011.

“Clearly, the present system of forest clearance is not working for the environment and needs to be stopped until a transparent and effective system is put into place,” says Chandra Bhushan, Deputy Director of Centre for Science and Environment. “MoEF (Ministry of Environment and Forests) must impose a moratorium on forest clearance and use the time period to strengthen its regulatory mechanisms,” he said.

Significantly, a large proportion of these lands, about 50,000 hectares, was allotted for mining and power projects. And Tamil Nadu got clearances for 37 thermal power plants in the state. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra follow with clearance for 31 plants.

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'Food Security Bill not enough to eradicate hunger in India'

Even as the Government has released draft of the National Food Security Bill, experts from world's largest humanitarian organisation have said that the proposed legislation alone will not be sufficient to wipe out hunger from India and more needs to be done for ensuring food to poor families.

Noting that world across over one billion people go hungry to bed including in India, they have suggested a holistic approach to secure livelihood for poor and sufficient food grains production for achieving the goal of the Food Security Bill.

“Food alone will not be the answer.... government needs to plan for providing livelihood to poor families and produce more food in sustainable manner,” Mihoko Tamamura, World Food Programme director (India), said at a function on Thursday in Delhi.

On the occasion, World Disasters Report-2011 was released by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which comes close on the heels of the draft of the Food security Bill.

Under the Bill, the Government has proposed that 46 per cent and 28 per cent of people in rural and urban areas respectively will get 7 kg of food grains monthly. It also says another 29 per cent and 22 per cent in rural and urban India respectively will be provided 3 kg of food grain per month.

Jagan Chapagain, IFRC director for Asia-Pacific, said that given that millions of Indians spend more than 50 per cent of their household income on food, a steep rise in the price of basic food stuffs is extremely detrimental to their health and welfare.

He said around 800 million Indians or 71 per cent of the population live in rural areas where agriculture is a major source of livelihood. But “its not just food that is becoming expensive, the price of new technologies, seeds, fertilisers and fuel needed to transport food is also going up. More can be done to boost the agriculture sector as a way of protecting people who find themselves at the mercy of inflation and the global stock markets.”

However, it's not only malnutrition, but the number of obese is increasing in India and China, home to nearly half the world's hungry people, other south east Asian countries. One of the reasons is increasing FDI and over-dependency on ready made or fast food, Chapagain said but maintained that there is no country specific data on the issue.

“At least one billion people are undernourished while a staggering 1.5 billion people are overweight, including an increasing number in low and middle income countries,” said the report even as Chapagain maintained that “Excess nutrition kills 2.4 million annually, more than hunger.”

Food inflation eases

Food inflation dipped to a seven-week low of 8.84 per cent for the week ending September 10, but pricier kitchen staples onions, potatoes and milk continued to pinch the common man.

Food inflation, as measured by the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), stood at 9.47 per cent in the previous week. It was 16.30 per cent in the corresponding week of 2010.

As per the Commerce Department's data, except for wheat, prices of all other food items were up year-on-year during the week under review. Wheat prices slumped by 2.72 per cent on an annual basis during the week ended September 10.

Onions became 29 per cent more expensive and potatoes 13.78 per cent costlier. On an average, the vegetables basket became 12.13 per cent dearer, while the price of milk shot up by 10.38 per cent.

Fruit prices went up by 17.67 per cent year-on-year. Similarly, prices of protein-rich egg, meat and fish were up 9.28 per cent. Even the prices of pulses, which were on the decline in recent weeks, firmed up by 1.49 per cent.

The fall in inflation numbers on a weekly basis despite a rise in prices of most commodities, experts said, is due to the "high base effect", as food inflation was over 16 per cent in the same period last year.

"The high base has a big role to play in the moderation. However, it is also true that during recent weeks, there has been lot of volatility in the food inflation numbers," Crisil Chief Economist D K Joshi said.

Overall inflation in primary articles stood at 12.17 per cent for the week ended September 10, as against 13.04 per cent in the previous week.

Non-food articles, like fibres, minerals and oil seeds, recorded 17.42 per cent inflation during the seven-day period under review, down from 18.49 per cent in the previous week.

Haryana expects 48 lakh MT paddy

Haryana Food and Supplies Minister, Mahender Partap Singh, said about 48 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of paddy and about 2.50 lakh MT of bajra are likely to arrive in the mandis of the State this year.

He said the State Government had made all arrangements for smooth procurement of paddy and bajra during the ensuing Kharif marketing season 2011-12, which will commence from October 1.

"The State Government is committed to make the payments to the farmers within 48-72 hours of the sale of their produce. Sufficient cash credit limit for the purchase of paddy and bajra is being arranged from Reserve Bank of India in this regard," said he.

The Minister said that the minimum support price (MSP) for common variety of paddy had been fixed as `1,080 per quintal and for grade 'A' paddy as `1,110 per quintal. Similarly, MSP for coarse grains like bajra, maize and jowar had been fixed at ` 980 per quintal, he added.

He said that the procurement agencies would ensure that the farmers in any way get price lower than the MSP and that they do not resort to any distress sale of their produce.

Mahender Partap Singh said 182 mandis or purchase centres had been made functional for the procurement of paddy, whereas 53 mandis had been set up for the purchase of bajra in the State. It will be ensured that mandis were equipped with all basic amenities, such as drinking water, electricity, pucca platform, sheds and parking places, he added.

Singh said that the district administrations and the heads of procurement agencies would ensure that the stocks purchased by them are sold off and the mandis are cleared the same day to avoid glut. It would also be ensured that paddy and bajra purchased by the agencies were stored properly and kept under safe custody, he added.

The Minister said that six procurement agencies, namely Food and Supplies Department, HAFED, FCI, Haryana Warehousing Corporation, Haryana Agro Industries Corporation and CONFED would purchase paddy and bajra.

The Minister said that the Food & Supplies Department and other procurement agencies will set up control rooms at the State headquarters and at district headquarters well before the commencement of the season.

Singh also pointed out that the procurement agencies would communicate information about the procurement to the control rooms of the Food and Supplies Department on a day-to-day basis.

Ananda Marga plans to open agri coops in flood-hit areas

Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT), a leading social arm of the Ananda Marga, plans to launch agriculture co-operative forums in the flood-hit pockets of the State. The proposed forums would serve as platform to provide minimum support to the affected farmers to resume their activity, according to AMURT central coordinator Acharya Lokatitananda Avadhut.

Speaking to reporters here on Thursday, Acharya said the peasants would be supplied with seeds, manure and technical know-how to undertake cultivation. "They need support to resume the Ravi crop and we are planning to support them in the best possible way," Acharya said. The seer also said that AMURT was planning to launch Adarsh Jagaran Pathshala, a special programme for the all-round development of children of weaker sections. "Besides, AMURT is also planning to start yoga classes and spiritual programmes for the villagers. Special skill development training programmes are being chalked out for the socio-economic empowerment and self-reliance of the village youth and women," Acharya added. AMURT activists undertook massive relief and rescue operations, sanitation and healthcare drive in the flood-affected areas such as Marsaghai, Mahakalapara and Garadpur in Kendrapada district, Gop, Delang and Kanas in Puri district; Banki and Tigiria blocks in Cuttack district.

AMURT Odisha chapter coordinator Er Kanhu Charan Behura said, "AMURT has decided to adopt at least one village each from worst-hit pocket in Cuttack, Puri and Kendrapada district to ensure education to all and skill upgradation of the youth to address the unemployment problem."

Business Standard

Friday, Sep 23, 2011

Sugar industry, Maha govt fresh plea to Centre

Sanjay Jog / Mumbai September 23, 2011, 0:24 IST

The sugar industry and Maharashtra government on Thursday made a fresh appeal to the Centre for the abolition of levy sugar, especially when the sugar manufacturing scenario in the country has undergone considerable change and the country is now having superfluous sugar

production and barring exception exporting it consistently.

This apart, they have also urged the Centre for an early settlement of levy sugar price differential claims, revision of levy sugar prices and levy sugar transportation cost. In an interactive meeting with Minister for Food KV Thomas, state Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan argued the Centre might purchase the sugar required for public distribution scheme from the open market.

The state government said it was obligatory on the party of sugar factories to provide levy sugar as per ratio fixed by the Government of India under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

A senior government official, who did not want to be identified, told Business Standard, "At the time of enactment of the Act, it was necessary for the imposition of levy. However, the situation has changed dramatically. Moreover, the nominee states are not lifting the sugar within the stipulated time as such the levy sugar stocks are piling up with the factories and their funds are locked up and factories are facing financial liquidity crunch and are unable to pay the cane price to the farmers. They are incurring huge losses on account of the supply of levy sugar well below the cost of production."

Further, the state government brought to the minister's notice that non-lifting of levy quantities of sugar by Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Bihar and Chhattisgarh has worsened the situation this year.

Although the present sugar season is over, yet huge levy stocks of 2010-11 are still lying with the factories and it was causing huge financial burden and storage problem.

"The government on behalf of the sugar industry requested to give specific period of two months for the nominee states for lifting the stock in absence of which the unlifted levy sugar be allowed to convert into free sale quota without continuation of the levy obligation and without obtaining the certificate from the respective nominee states that they are not lifting the allotted levy quantity," the official said. He added the minister was urged to issue necessary orders at the earliest to facilitate the factories to liquidate their stocks.

The unanimous appeal by the state government and the sugar industry comes at a time when

Maharashtra is expected to have a record output of 9.3 million tonnes in 2011-12 against 9 million tonnes in 2010-11.

Moreover, the state government also called on the food minister to revise the levy sugar prices for five seasons, including 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09. This was necessary in view of the increased cost of inputs, including water and electricity charges, fertiliser prices, wages, cost of cultivation and production.

A senior office-bearer of the Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories in Maharashtra, a representative body of 170 units, said, "Although the Government of India has completed the cost study of the sugar and have revised upward the statutory minimum price/fair and remunerative price for the sugar seasons mentioned above, levy sugar prices based on the cost of production have not been announced despite the factories have delivered the levy sugar to the nominee states at old rate of 2003-04 season.

There is an urgent need to revise levy sugar prices as the factories have incurred huge financial loss and they are unable to pay remunerative prices to the sugarcane farmers. The federation official said the Centre needs to repeal the Sugar (Packing & Marketing) Order, 1970 and thereby it should not be made mandatory for the sugar industry to use jute bags for sugar packing.

Pawar, Thomas differ on sugar output estimates for next year

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 22, 2011, 18:48 IST



Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar and Food Minister K V Thomas have differed on sugar production estimates, with former pegging it at 25.5-26 million tonnes as against 24.6 million tonnes projected by the Food

Ministry— a development that may have implications on exports.

"My impression is that there is some mistake in the calculation. I will collect the proper figure by Monday and then give it to the Food Minister," Pawar told reporters when asked about his views on the latest sugar production data released by the Food Ministry.

Thomas had said yesterday that sugar output is estimated to rise by only 1.2% to 24.6 million tonnes in 2011-12 marketing year which starts next month. The data was based on the reports of cane commissioners of 10 big producing states.

The Food Ministry's projection is much lower than the estimates of Indian Sugar Mills Association, which has pegged output for 2011-12 (October-September) at 26 million tonnes.

Asked whether the lower output estimate by the Food Ministry would delay exports, Pawar said: "Global prices will become unfavourable if there will be a delay. The government had to provide about Rs 1,500 crore to mills as export assistance a few years ago. We do not want that situation."

"I think production will be between 25.5 and 26 million tonnes. This year, monsoon has been good and reservoir position is good. So, the withdrawal (recovery rate) of sugar from cane will be higher than the current season," he said.

Pawar and Thomas not only have different views on production data, they differ on timing of allowing sugar exports during next season as well.

Earlier this week, Pawar had said that the government should announce the export policy by October second week to give a clear-cut message to millers. But yesterday, Thomas had said exports would be considered after the festival season.

Pawar and Thomas have had differences on many occasions over allowing export of food items such as wheat, rice and sugar after Thomas took an independent charge of the food and consumer affairs ministry in mid-January this year.

While Pawar had favoured exports of wheat and non-basmati rice on account of surplus production and lack of storage space, the Food Minister was of the view that cautious approach should be adopted as allowing exports might lead to increase in retail prices.

During the current marketing year, the government has allowed exports of 2.6 million tonnes of sugar. Industry is expecting that the Centre would permit larger quantity next year on higher

production.

Sugar production of India, the world's second-largest producer and biggest consumer, have risen to 24.3 million tonnes in the current marketing year against 18.9 million tonnes in the previous year. The annual demand stands at 21.5 million tonnes.

Barley recovers on speculative buying

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 22, 2011, 15:36 IST

Barley prices strengthened by Rs 44 to Rs 1,215 per quintal in the future trade today following low levels buying in line with firm spot market cues.

Marketmen said traders building up new positions at prevailing lower levels mainly pushed up barley prices.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, November barley climbed by Rs 44, or 3.76% to Rs 1,215 per quintal, with an open interest of 460 lots.

The October contract too remained in demand and improved by Rs 12.40 or 1.05% to Rs 1,190 per quintal, with an open interest of 4,390 lots.

Maize falls on selling by traders

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 22, 2011, 15:33 IST

Maize prices dropped by Rs 23 to Rs 1,147 per quintal in future trade today following increased selling by traders, guided by weak global cues. Marketmen said traders indulged in off-loading their positions sparked by weak overseas sentiment. Increased supply and reduced offtake in spot market also influenced the trading sentiment, they added.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, January maize slipped by Rs 23, or 1.97% to Rs 1,147 per quintal, depicting an open interest of 560 lots.

Current contract October month also eased by Rs 14 or 1.29% to Rs 1,072.50 per quintal, showing an open interest of 22,990 lots.

Now, architecture to ensure uniform crop growth

Hyderabad, Sept. 22:

Forget about architecture for buildings. It is time for crops architecture. Agricultural scientists now believe that it is important for plants to grow uniformly – as uniform as soldiers stand in order. Scientists at the Indian Institute of Pulses Research (Kanpur) have made headway in this regard. ICAR (Indian Council of Agriculture Research) has asked the institute to identify markers that govern architecture so that it could be deployed in pulses.

“This is very important to let plants grow to a common height with leaves elevated well above the ground level (in case of legumes in which ICAR began research) so that leaves do not droop on to the ground. This generally leads to infections. Architecture also ensures leaves face the sun with the best possible angle so that plant gets the best photosynthesis,” Dr Swapan K Datta, Deputy Director General of ICAR, told *Business Line*.

This would not only provide a solution to post-harvest losses by encouraging mechanisation, but also address the acute shortage of agricultural labour. “We have a model ready. If the crop is uniform, a harvester fitted to even a bicycle could do the harvesting in small fields,” he said. Dr Datta was here to take part in the five-day General Research meeting of GCP (Generation Challenge Programme).

Dr Datta had felt that restrictions on India to use Golden Rice events should be done away with. “It should be the prerogative of the Indian Government on how to go about it,” he said, replying to a question on how long it would take for farmers to get access to the much publicised Golden Rice. He said agriculture research firm Syngenta gave the go-ahead but it was the Golden Rice Humanitarian Board that was not coming up with a decision to allow India to grow the genetically modified rice studded with Vitamin A.

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Spot rubber rules steady

Kottayam, Sept. 22:

Physical rubber prices finished almost unchanged on Thursday. Though the domestic futures declined following the heavy losses in trend-setting international markets, physical prices were mostly steady during the day. The benchmark January contract in Shanghai rubber futures shed around 6.9 per cent, while TOCOM rubber crashed to a six month low tracking the declines in oil and other commodities.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 216.50 (217.50) a kg, as quoted by the trades. The grade finished unchanged at Rs 217 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board.

The October series declined to Rs 215.85 (218.85), November to Rs 213.65 (217.08), December to Rs 214.50 (217.68) and January to Rs 215.70 (219.21) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) weakened to Rs 221.88 (222.66) a kg at Bangkok. The September futures for the grade nosedived to ¥330 (Rs 211.99) from ¥343 a kg during the day session and then to ¥327 (Rs 210.07) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 216.50 (217.50); RSS-5: 210 (210); ungraded: 205 (205); ISNR 20: 210 (210) and latex 60 per cent: 134.50 (134.50).

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Delay in Jay Shree Tea's acquisition plans in Africa

Kolkata, Sept. 22:

Jay Shree Tea and Industries Ltd's proposed acquisition of tea estates in Africa might take a bit longer on account of procedural delay on the part of local government there, according to its Managing Director, Mr D.P. Maheshwari.

“Our acquisition plan in the east African country, which was likely to happen within a couple of months, is likely to get delayed due to procedural issues involving local government in those

countries,” Mr Maheshwari said, talking to newsmen on the sidelines of the company's 65th annual general meeting here on Thursday. The B.K. Birla Group-owned Jay Shree Tea had acquired three tea gardens in East Africa — two in Rwanda and one in Uganda last year and was scouting for another acquisition to boost its output. The company's total tea production grew over three per cent to 24.14 million kg in 2010-11. The company expects to produce around 26 million kg of tea this year. Backed by a higher availability of sugarcane, Jay Shree Tea aims to achieve 16 per cent growth in its sugar production this year.

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Seed sector wants early decision on Bt cottonseed pricing



Choices aplenty: Seeds on display at the 16th Annual General Meeting of the Seedsmen Association in Hyderabad on Thursday. — P.V. Sivakumar
Hyderabad, Sept. 22:

The Rs 8,000-crore seed industry has asked the Andhra Pradesh Government to finalise prices of Bt cotton seeds by February-end every year. “It is important for us to have the price tags by that time in order to prepare the packets and send them to dealers well before the season starts in mid-May,” Dr P Sateesh Kumar, President of Seedsmen Association of Andhra Pradesh, said.

Addressing the 16th annual general meeting of the association here on Thursday, he pointed out how hard it was for the industry because of the inordinate delay in finalising the Bt cottonseed price. “We need enough time to print maximum retail price before despatching seed packets to different parts of the country,” he said.

Industry woes

Meanwhile, the industry expressed serious concern over shortage of labour.

“This could impact the industry adversely. We need farm mechanisation to face this problem,” Dr Sateesh said, talking to reporters later.

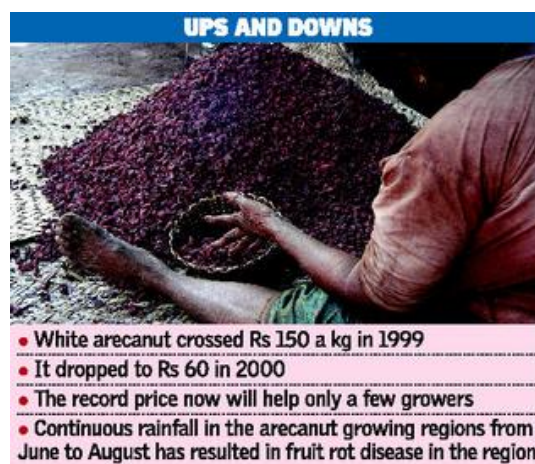
The industry, which was growing at an annual rate of 10-12 per cent, expected a normal production this year. “There was a let up of 10 days from incessant rains. Barring Prakasam, all other districts reported normal season for all seed farmers,” he said.

He also asked the State Government to clear subsidy dues for 2009 and 2010. “We request the Government to rationalise testing fee for evaluating findings of trials,” he said. Responding to the industry's plea, Mr C. Damodar Raja Narasimha, Deputy Chief Minister, asked the industry to come forward with proposals early so that it could begin talks in February-March to finalise pricing. He said the university (Acharya N G Ranga Agriculture University) should be more vibrant.

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Old white arecanut tops record price of Rs 200/kg

Growers have already sold 65-70% of stocks



Mangalore, Sept. 22:

For the first time in white arecanut market, growers are now getting a record Rs 200 a kg for old stocks of the commodity.

While private traders are offering a price of Rs 200 a kg to growers, cooperatives are offering around Rs 190-192 a kg for old stocks.

Mr Ramesh Kaintaje, a grower from Bantwal taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, told *Business Line* that private traders bought old stocks of white arecanut at Rs 200 a kg in the major white arecanut growing areas such as Puttur, Vittal and Adyanadka regions on Wednesday. "This is the lifetime high price for white arecanut," he said.

Stating that some of the growers whom he knew sold old stocks at Rs 200 a kg, he said around 3,000 kg of old stocks were bought by private traders on Wednesday.

Thin arrivals

The arrival was very thin in the Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) of major white arecanut growing regions.

On Wednesday, Bantwal APMC and Puttur APMC registered arrivals of 1,000 kg and 300 kg, respectively.

The price has seen over 100 per cent jump in the past one year. In September 2010, most of APMCs in the white arecanut growing areas quoted Rs 80-96 a kg of old stocks.

Mr A.S. Bhat, Managing Director of Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco) Ltd, said that continuous rainfall in the arecanut growing regions from June to August has resulted in fruit rot disease in the region.

This disease has led to a production loss of around 30 per cent, he said.

Mr Kaintaje said that growers have already sold 65-70 per cent of the stocks whenever the price reached new highs in the recent months.

Though the commodity commands a good price now, it will help only a few growers and not all, he said.

It may be mentioned here that the price of white arecanut had crossed Rs 150 a kg in 1999.

This price came down to nearly Rs 60 in April 2000. The market could not sustain that price in the subsequent years.

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Monsoon depression springs a surprise in east

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept. 22:

The South-West monsoon is now playing out to starkly contrasting styles to the west and east of the country.

While seasonal rains are apparently readying to exit the west and north-west, an overnight low-pressure area over north-west Bay of Bengal intensified into a depression on Thursday.

ANTI-CYCLONE FORMS

With a week to go and maintaining a four-per cent surplus streak, global models see rains lingering over entire southern half of the country and entire east and extreme northeast through the month-end.

On Thursday, India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in an update that a seasonal anti-cyclonic circulation has developed over Rajasthan and neighbourhood in the lower levels of the atmosphere.

This is clearest-yet indication that the withdrawal of monsoon from the area is now a matter of time. The IMD indicated that this could happen as early as within the next two days.

Mainly dry weather has prevailed over Punjab, Haryana, west Rajasthan, Saurashtra and Kutch over the last three days.

DEPRESSION LANDFALL

Analysis of satellite imageries shows prevalence of dry air over Punjab, Haryana and west Rajasthan during this period. .

Interpretation of current meteorological conditions indicates that dry weather would continue to prevail over these regions during the next five days.

Meanwhile, the monsoon depression over north-west Bay of Bengal about 25 km east-south-east of Balasore was likely to cross coast by Thursday evening.

A weather warning by the IMD said that scattered heavy to very heavy rainfall would occur over north Orissa on Friday and Saturday.

It would be isolated heavy over south Orissa, Jharkhand, north Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Gangetic West Bengal during this period.

WEATHER WARNING

An extended outlook valid until Tuesday said that fairly widespread rain or thundershowers would occur over parts of east India and adjoining east Uttar Pradesh and scattered over the North-Eastern States.

Weather would continue to remain mainly dry over many parts of north-west India during this period.

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New enquiries keep sugar firm



Mumbai, Sept. 22:

Spot sugar prices remained steady on Thursday as demand for quality sugar at higher prices encouraged mills to increase tender rates by Rs 4-5 a quintal.

New enquiries from eastern States buoyed market sentiment. Higher tender rates kept prices firm in naka and spot markets even as local demand remained need-based. Sources said demand may rise after Navaratri begins next week.

Demand for M-grade fair quality was higher as sweet sand confectionary makers have started stocking up before Navaratri starts, which lifted it by Rs 20 a quintal, while good quality M-grade lost Rs 5 because of lower demand.

Arrivals were at 50-52 truckloads of 100 bags each, while local despatches were at 50-51 truckloads.

According to market sources on Wednesday evening, 22-23 mills offered tenders and sold about 75,000-80,000 bags to local and State-level stockists. Demand from neighbouring States eased as prices in other producing centres ruled on par with Maharashtra. Demand from West Bengal, Gujarat and Rajasthan is expected to rise next week onwards.

Mills sold S-grade at Rs 2,650-2,725 (Rs 2,650-2,720) and M-grade at Rs 2,750-2,820 (Rs 2,745-2,820).

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 2,766-2,851 (Rs 2,768-2,851) and M-grade Rs 2,846-2,981 (Rs 2,826-2,986). **Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 2,720-2,770 (Rs 2,720-2,770) and M-grade Rs 2,800-2,910 (Rs 2,800-2,910).

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Jeera falls on higher arrivals



Rajkot, Sept. 22:

Jeera dropped on Thursday as arrivals went up, demand fell in the spot market and investors booked profits in the futures market.

The October contract on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange decreased by Rs 252 or 1.58 per cent to Rs 15,740 a quintal, with an open interest of 19,269 lots while November contract declined by Rs 256 to Rs 16,152, with an open interest of 14652 lots.

Jeera fell by Rs 25-30 to Rs 2,065-2,790 for 20 kg at the agricultural produce marketing committee in Rajkot where 1,200-1,500 bags arrived.

volatility expected

The market could become volatile in the short term, though hopes of better export demand could check the fall in prices, said a report from Kedia Commodity.

Latest estimates from the Spice Board of India indicates spices exports have fallen by 26 per cent in April-June to 116,900 tonnes from 157,850 tonnes in 2010.

Jeera exports fell by 46 per cent to 5,750 tonnes from 10,600 tonnes during the period. Farmers expect a good crop next season because of sufficient rainfall in major growing areas like Gujarat. However, rainfall has also raised concern about the quality of the produce.

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Slack local demand drags soya oil



Indore, Sept. 22:

Soya oil remained sluggish on weak foreign markets and slack local demand.

Soya refined ruled at Rs 628-630 for 10 kg against Rs 630-635 on Wednesday. Demand remained slack even the current price. Soya refined fetched Rs 628-629 in the resale market. Demand for soya solvent, quoted at Rs 593-594 (Rs 595-99), remained poor, too.

Weak global cues and projections from Chicago Board of Trade dragged soya oil futures on National Board Trade. The October contracts closed at Rs 650.20 (Rs 653). On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), October contracts closed at Rs 648.75 (Rs 651.80) while November closed at Rs 638.65 (Rs 635.50).

Traders expect demand to increase during *Dasara* even as they rule out any long-term rise in soya oil prices.

Soyabean slid on increased arrivals of new soyabean in mandis. Mandis across Madhya Pradesh witnessed arrivals of about 50,000-55,000 bags of soyabean, including 15,000 bags of new soyabean. Old soyabean quoted at Rs 2,200-2,250 a quintal, while new soyabean was at Rs 1,700-1,900 a quintal.

Soyabean futures traded lower, with its October contract on the NCEDX closing at Rs 2,242, Rs 9 down. Plant deliveries of soyabean dropped to Rs 2,270-2,300 a quintal. Export demand for soya de-oiled cake remained weak, with the cake selling at Rs 18,100-18,200 a quintal in the port.

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Bulk buyers spice up turmeric market



Erode, Sept. 22:

Bulk buying at higher prices pushed up spot turmeric prices, especially those of the hybrid variety in Erode markets on Thursday.

“Because of the interest shown by the bulk buyers, prices increased by Rs 120-250 a quintal. Bulk buyers have received fresh orders, especially for hybrid varieties,” said a turmeric trader at Erode.

They said that usually a fortnight before the Ayudha Pooja (Durga Pooja) traders in West Bengal, Gujarat, parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra place fresh orders. This year, they have received such orders, but not heavy ones, . So the upward trend will remain only for another few days. Despite a 4 per cent reduction in price quoted in the futures, traders quoted increased price for the commodity to fulfil the north Indian orders.

On Thursday 6,700 bags arrived for sales and 60 per cent of the stocks was sold. The minimum price fetched for the turmeric has decreased by Rs 300/quintal in Erode Cooperative Marketing Society due to quality. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,811-4,789, the root variety Rs 3,506-4,299 a quintal. **Salem Crop:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 4,066-5,929 , root variety at Rs 3,966-4589. Totally 1,419 bags of turmeric arrived for sales, and 412 were sold. At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,829-4,869, the root variety Rs 3,269-4,460. All the 100 bags kept for sales were sold. At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,777-4,831, the root variety at Rs 3,700-4,399.

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Flour mills' buying lifts Dara wheat



Karnal, Sept. 22:

After witnessing an uptrend earlier this week, the wheat market witnessed a mixed trend. Prices of dara wheat rose further, while desi wheat varieties managed to maintain their previous levels on Thursday.

Dara wheat prices continued to witness uptrend, it rose further by Rs 10 and quoted at Rs 1,125 a quintal.

Fresh buying from the flour mills helped dara prices to move upwards, said Mr Subhash Chander, a wheat trader. Wheat prices had dropped to two-year low this season due to slack demand and bad weather conditions; but now the market is seeing a good recovery.

Dara prices have increased by Rs 45 a quintal over the last four days. Around 50 tonnes of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh and the stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,120 a quintal.

On the other hand, desi wheat varieties remained almost unchanged after a price rise earlier this week. Tohfa variety quoted at Rs 2,175 a quintal, Raj Bhog ruled at Rs 1,805-1,810 a quintal, Lal Quila sold at Rs 1,925 while Kangan was at Rs 1,925-1,940 a quintal. On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for October delivery decreased by Rs 4.80 to Rs 1,139 a quintal, it had touched a low at Rs 1,136.2 a quintal earlier on Thursday.

Flour prices

With a price rise in wheat, flour prices rose further by Rs 5 and quoted at Rs 1,140 for a 90 kg bag. Chokar prices maintained its highest level of this season and quoted at Rs 550 for a 49-kg bag.

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Global sell-off weakens edible oils



Mumbai, Sept. 22:

Edible oils weakened as the Malaysian palm-oil market declined and a broad-based sell-off began in world commodity markets on Thursday.

Groundnut oil dropped for the second consecutive day by Rs 15 for 10 kg, a drop of Rs 60 in the last 12 days. Sunflower expeller refined oil was down Rs 10, rapeseed oil by Rs 2 and palmolein by Rs 4 on limited demand despite *Dasara* beginning next week.

Soya refined oil gained Re 1 and sunflower refined oil Rs 5 as selling by producers reduced. Cotton refined oil remained unchanged. Volumes continued to be need-based. Crude palm oil (CPO) futures on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) extended losse following a sell-off across commodities and equities.

Resellers sold only 101 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 557-560. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 562 and soya oil at Rs 645. Ruchi offered palmolein at Rs 562 and soya refined oil at Rs 645for delivery on October 15. Allana quoted palmolein at Rs 562 for delivery between September 25 and October 5.

In Rajkot and Saurashtra, a telia tin of groundnut oil extended losses by Rs 30 at Rs 1,445 while loose (10 kg) lost Rs 20 at Rs 935 on increased selling by millers and arrivals of new crops.

Malaysia's BMD CPO October contracts settled lower at MYR3,023 (MYR3,077), November at MYR3,011 (MYR3,066) and December at MYR3,009 (MYR3,066) a tonne. sOctober contracts of soya oil on National Board of Trade in Indore declined to Rs 650.20 (Rs 653) and November to Rs 636.30 (Rs 638.50).

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 960 (975), soya refined oil 646 (645), sunflower exp. ref. 660 (670), sunflower ref. 745 (740), rapeseed ref. oil 698 (700), rapeseed expeller ref. 668 (670), cotton ref. oil 660 (660) and palmolein 558 (562).

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