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BANGALORE, September 24, 2011

Israel chooses UAS-B students to train in high-tech farming

It is a dream come true for five students from the University of Agricultural Sciences-Bangalore as they leave on Saturday for Israel to learn cutting-edge agricultural practices.

Under the yearlong diploma course, offered by the International Centre for Agricultural studies there, the students will work along with Israeli farmers on their fields in addition to regular classes.

The fact that their study programme includes frontal studies and tours one day a week and agricultural practical work for five days, is an indication of the importance being given to on-field learning from Israel.

According to UAS-B's course coordinator Ramanjini Gowda, this is the first time that Israeli authorities are having Indians for the work-cum-study course. The students, who will study agriculture, horticulture and livestock farming, will be paid for their farm work. UAS-B Vice-Chancellor K. Narayana Gowda said the students can expect to become agri-entrepreneurs themselves or be hired for their high value in the job market. The university will send 10 students to Israel next year.

The students — T. Shilpashree, P. Shilpa, S.K. Naveen Kumar, B. Anil Kumar and B.M. Vijay Kumar — selected by the Israeli authorities from among 13 shortlisted, will start their course on September 25.

Published: September 24, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 24, 2011 04:21 IST CHENNAI,
September 24, 2011

Hopes of plentiful paddy float, thanks to bountiful rain

CROP COVERAGE		
	(up to September 20)	
	2010	2011
Paddy	3.73 lakh	4.71 lakh
Sugarcane	1.94 lakh	2.36 lakh
Cotton	54,300	57,200
Millets	3.47 lakh	2.83 lakh
Pulses	2.41 lakh	1.67 lakh
Oil seeds	3.07 lakh	2.7 lakh

Figures in hectares

With bountiful, uniform rain throughout the State during the past one month and the 'kuruvai' coverage exceeding expectations, the Agriculture Department is confident of surpassing the paddy coverage of last year.

According to a senior officer, the State has recorded a jump of more than one lakh hectares in kuruvai (short term paddy crop) coverage alone. "The opening of the Mettur Dam for delta irrigation six days ahead of the scheduled date of June 12 has proved extremely beneficial and the storage continues to be good in Mettur. While the south-west monsoon has been more than normal so far, the northeast monsoon is also expected to be good. Hence we are confident of exceeding last year's paddy coverage of 19.95 lakh hectares," he said.

Positive deviation of two per cent

From June 1 to Sept 21 this year, the State recorded a rainfall of 285.7 mm against the normal 281 mm, a positive deviation of two per cent. (The normal rainfall up to September end is 319.2 mm.)

Of this, the rains were not uniform or copious till August 17. Thereafter, it had proved so bountiful that seven districts have recorded excess (20 per cent more than normal), 13 districts normal (plus or minus 19 per cent) and 12 districts deficit (minus 20 per cent to 59 per cent) rainfall. While the kuruvai coverage has shot up from 3.73 lakh hectares during 2010 to 4.71 lakh hectares, sugarcane has increased from 1.94 lakh hectares to 2.36 lakh hectares, cotton from 54,300 hectares to 57,200 hectares.

With regard to samba coverage, 35,000 hectares had been covered so far through direct sowing in districts such as Ramanthapuram, Sivaganga and Kanchipuram. Planting had been

completed in 1.34 lakh hectares. Nursery operations were in full swing in 26,000 hectares with which 2.5 lakh hectares could be covered.

Comfortable storage

The authorities are confident that supply from the Mettur Dam for samba crop in delta region could be continued up to the scheduled date of January 28, 2012, as the current level of Mettur Dam is 92 ft (total height 120ft) against last year's level of 74 ft. Thus it has 54.7 thousand million cubic ft (tmcft) against the total capacity of 93.4 tmcft. Besides, Karnataka reservoirs are also brimming. And hence it is an "extremely conducive situation" for samba crop.

Shortfall

However, it is crops like millets, pulses, oilseeds which had suffered considerably due to the late rainfall.

While the coverage of both millets and pulses have recorded shortfall of about 60,000 hectares against last year, oil seeds are the worst hit with a shortage of almost one lakh hectares.

Explaining the reason for the higher coverage of these three than last year, he said it was because of the excess rainfall throughout the south-west monsoon which recorded 383.7 mm, as much as 20 per cent in excess overall.

Published: September 24, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 24, 2011 04:21 IST
COIMBATORE, September 24, 2011

Agriculture Leadership Award for TNAU

For achieving high standard of academic development



Good: P. Murugesu Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (second from right), receiving the Agriculture Leadership Award from Balram Jakhar, former Union Minister for Agriculture (second from left), at New Delhi. Salman Khurshid, Union Minister for Law and Justice (left) and Harish Rawat, Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Parliamentary Affairs (third from left), are in the picture.

'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.

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KASARAGOD, September 24, 2011

Areca farmers at the receiving end

The prevailing areca nut prices ranging between Rs.170 and 180 a kg ought to have enthused farmers. But they are unable to cash in on the boom due to a drastic fall in production this season.

The farmers, grappling with acute shortage of labourers and a steady increase in production cost, had to be content with a price range of Rs.50 to 80 for over a decade. Now, the fall in yield has scuppered their chance of making good returns from the increase in market price. Areca farmers in the district, which is known for its high quality areca nut, attributed the spurt in price to the fall in production of the commodity last year due to 'mahali', a disease leading to premature fall of nuts. They say the farmers face a worse situation this season.

“The fall in production this season is attributed to the inability of farmers to spray copper sulphate solution as prescribed by the Agriculture Department due to incessant rain,” says K.N. Krishna Bhat, an areca-grower at Kilinjar in Badiyadkka village.

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THANJAVUR, September 24, 2011

Kuruvai harvest in over 5,000 hectares complete

Crop has been raised on 40,283 hectares in Thanjavur



Bountiful: Farm workers filling up kuruvai paddy in sacks in Thanjavur on Friday. —

Photo:M.Srinath

Kuruvai harvest has picked up in Thanjavur district with the process going full throttle in Thiruvaidaimaruthur, Thirupanandal, Ammapettai and Kumbakonam blocks. According to V.Balasubramanian, Joint Director of Agriculture, Thanjavur district, harvest will touch its peak in the first week of October.

Kuruvai has been raised on 40,283 hectares in Thanjavur district. Of this, conventional method of cultivation has been followed on 14,714 hectares while System of Rice Intensification method has been adopted on 25,569 hectares.

Harvest has so far been completed on 5348 hectares—4520 hectares under conventional method and 828 hectares under SRI method. Average yield under conventional method has been 6520 kg per hectare and under SRI method it is 8356 kg per hectare.

Mechanical Harvesters are used by farmers at many places due to labour shortage, at an average hourly rent of Rs.1500.

The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) has opened 137 Direct Purchase Centres for procuring Kuruvai paddy. On an average the DPCs received 1500 to 2000 tonnes of paddy, TNCSC sources said. On Thursday, 1677 tonnes of paddy was procured they said.

In Tiruvarur district 263 DPCs have been opened, through which an average procurement of 3500 to 4000 tonnes are effected everyday. On Thursday the arrival was 3800 tonnes, TNCSC sources said.

Samba cultivation in Thanjavur:

Samba transplantation has begun in Thanjavur district. Transplantation has been completed on 18,469 hectares of which 11,826 hectares are under SRI method and 6643 hectares under conventional method. The plan is to raise samba on 1,35,000 hectares.

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VILLUPURAM, September 24, 2011

Villupuram, Cuddalore readying for flood management

Mock drill demonstrates Fire Department personnel's skill in rescue operations



Villupuram Collector C.T.Manimekalai having a feel of rescue operation in an inflated rubber boat being carried out by the Fire and Rescue Service personnel in Veedur dam — Special arrangement

The Fire Service and Rescue Department personnel held a mock drill in the water spread of the Veedur dam on Thursday, demonstrating their skills in utilising various kinds of floating materials in the rescue operation.

They deftly used an inflatable rubber boat to save the drowning men and safely brought them to the banks. These crafts could be quite handy even in the shallow water in marshy lands in bringing the marooned people to safety.

They demonstrated how the plastic water bottles and four-wheeler tubes could be used during emergency to keep the people in the flood-hit areas afloat till the rescue teams reach them.

Ropes would be quite useful to lead the people across overflowing roads or lanes. The personnel led by District Additional Fire Officer Ganesan also demonstrated how the life buoy could be used during critical flood situation.

District Collector C.T.Manimekalai, accompanied by Revenue Divisional Officers R.Priya (Villupuram) and Meena Priyadarshini (Tindivanam), had a ride in the inflatable rubber boat, along with fire service personnel, to have a feel of the rescue operation. The Collector said that the exercise would create awareness among the people.

Cuddalore

District Collector V.Amuthavalli held a meeting with officials to discuss the issues related to flood management during the northeast monsoon period. She said that the official machinery should be kept ready to deal with the exigencies arising out of the flood situation.

The Collector directed the officials to strengthen the bunds of the water bodies and keep sandbags and casuarinas poles ready to plug any breach in the bunds. She instructed the officials to repair the faulty doors of the sluices and also keep construction materials such as sand, cement and blue metal to attend to any minor cracks noticed in culverts and small bridges.

Ms Amuthavalli also stated that the cyclone centres, community halls, educational institutions and marriage halls in the flood-prone areas should be kept ready and provided with necessary amenities to accommodate the people who might temporarily get displaced by the floods.

She instructed the medical officers to keep adequate stock of medicines in the government hospitals and also keep ready a mobile medical team to be rushed to the places wherever warranted.

The Tamil Nadu Electricity Board should ensure uninterrupted power supply and the instruments such as electric saws should be kept ready to cut down the uprooted trees that would be blocking road traffic. The civic bodies should clean up the overhead tanks and kept them chlorinated and take care that sewage did not get mixed up with the drinking water pipeline, she said.

Published: September 24, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 24, 2011 04:03 IST
Chitradurga, September 24, 2011

Fodder banks to be set up in Chitradurga district

Procurement of fodder to begin within a week



DESPERATE SITUATION: Dearth of fodder has forced many farmers to sell their cattle in Chitradurga district.

In order to help farmers overcome the acute shortage of fodder owing to the drought-like situation, the district administration has decided to set up five fodder banks in Hiriyur, Challakere and Chitradurga taluks.

Steps will be taken to procure and store adequate fodder for distribution to farmers and cattle-owners based on their requirement.

According to official sources, the procurement will begin within a week and supply would start later. It has come to the notice of the district administration that several farmers were trying to sell their cattle because of shortage of fodder. Officials said that the fodder banks would be set up at the Babbur farm and Gayatri pura in Hiriyur taluk, Turuvanur in Chitradurga taluk, and Sanikere and Nandihalli in Challakere taluk. "Already the respective tahsildars and the Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry have been directed to start procuring the fodder," the sources said. In the first phase, about 100 tonnes of fodder will be procured for each bank within the next three to four days. Subsequently, the quantity of procurement will be increased based on the requirement, officials said. Officials had been asked to procure fodder from neighbouring districts as well as Andhra Pradesh. "At present, hay is available in abundance. Hence, we will

start procuring it now. After a fortnight, when the harvesting of maize commences, we will start procuring that,” said the officials. Besides procurement, a comprehensive plan had been drawn up to grow fodder with the help of farmers who have irrigated land. About 7,500 such farmers have been identified so far, sources said. Meanwhile, several farmers' associations have urged the Government to declare the district drought-hit, considering the scanty rainfall during the kharif season.

Loss

Earlier, the Agriculture Department had estimated a loss of over Rs. 400 crore on account of destruction of standing crops and non-cultivation.

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- *'Initially, about 100 tonnes will be procured for each bank in the next three to four days'*
 - *'Plans drawn up to grow fodder with the help of farmers with irrigated land'*
-

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KURNOOL, September 24, 2011

'Kurnool heading for worst farm crisis this year'

Raithu Sangham holds a rally, asks government to look into the matter immediately



problems continue: CPI affiliated Raithu Sangham district secretary K. Jagannatham protesting in front of the Collectorate with the destroyed crop in Kurnool on Friday. — Photo: U. Subramanyam

Leaders of CPI-affiliated Raithu Sangham said Kurnool district was heading for the worst farm crisis this year due to erratic rainfall.

CPI supporters and farmers held a huge rally at the Collectorate here on Friday urging the government and district administration to look into the matter immediately.

Crop destroyed

Raithu Sangham district secretary K. Jagannatham said crops on 9.50 lakh acres sown in dry land areas had withered due to scant rainfall.

At many places, groundnut farmers destroyed the withered groundnut crop in upland areas like Kodumur, Dhone, Pathikonda and other places.

No alternative

Also, they were unable to sow alternative crops due to dry spell.

He said that farmers spent nearly Rs.5,000 to Rs.15,000 as investment per acre, and on crops like cotton the investment went up to Rs.30,000 per acre.

CPI leaders urged the government in a memorandum presented to the district Collector to announce an exgratia of Rs.10,000 per acre, declare Kurnool as drought-affected, provide fodder supply and allow works in the fields under NREGS.

The CPI delegation urged the government to depute a central team to assess the damage so that the Central government could come to the rescue of the farmers, which can be done only at the initiative of the State government.

'Write to government'

The Collector should initiate the process by writing to the government.

Collector Ramsankar Naik asked CPI leaders to present the information collected by them to the district administration which was also on the job of assessing the damage. CPI leaders K. Ramanjaneyulu, Ramachandraiah, Bhimlingappa, Nabi Rasool, BG Madanna and others were present.

- *Crops on 9.50 lakh acres sown in dry land areas withered: CPI leader*
- *They ask Collector to announce an ex-gratia of Rs. 10,000 per acre*

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Saturday, Sep 24

Max Min
35.4° | 25°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 75%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:58

Sunset: 18:04

Barometer: 1006

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Sunday, Sep 25

Max Min
38° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday

Sep 26



31° | 26°

Tuesday

Sep 27



32° | 26°

Wednesday

Sep 28



33° | 26°

Thursday

Sep 29



33° | 26°

Friday

Sep 30



33° | 26°

23 Sep, 2011, 11.23PM IST, ET Bureau

PAU experts provide tips to manage brown plant hopper on paddy crop

AHMEDABAD: The scientists of Punjab Agriculture University-Ludhiana ,department of plant breeding and genetics, in a survey of different villages in Punjab have found the attack of brown plant hopper on paddy crop in villages Nihaluwal and Chauhanke Kalan (district Barnala), Boparai Kalan (district Ludhiana), Bela (district Ropar) and Chhajli (district Sangrur). This sucking pest attacks the standing crop and results in the yellowing of plants.

The crop may dry up in patches. The experts suggested that the plant hopper can be controlled by spraying 40 ml of Confidor 200 SL or 800 ml of Ekalux 25 EC or one litre Coroban/Dursban 20 EC in 100 litre of water per acre.

For better results, the spray should be directed toward the base of the plants, said the experts adding that the spray should also cover 3-4 meter area around the attacked pocket as the pests shift to these area.

Business Standard

Saturday, Sep 24, 2011

Lower acreage may increase groundnut oil prices

Vimukt Dave / Rajkot September 24, 2011, 0:20 IST

A fall in the acreage in the kharif season has raised concerns of a possible dip in the groundnut production. This could make the availability of edible oil scarce. Miller sources hint at a possible rise in the oil prices after February.

Market participants in Gujarat fear a drop in the production by 15 per cent to 1.2-1.3 million tonnes, against the last year's 1.6 million tonnes. Lesser availability of groundnut for crushing may cause an escalation of the oil prices.

"The production is likely to come down by 10-15 per cent, as sowing has dropped. More, bad weather in the area may affect production," said Rajesh Bheda, president, Indian Oilseed and Produce Export Promotion Council (IOPEPC).

According to the data by the department of agriculture, Gujarat government, sowing was at 1.43 million hectares on September 12, lower from the 1.67 million hectares in the same period last year.

The sowing on September 15 stands at 4.32 million hectares, down six per cent from the 4.93 million hectares last year.

According to the industry estimates, about 40 per cent of the production is used for crushing. Last year, this volume was at 30-32 per cent, as most of the stock was used for consumption as peanuts and its products.

Meanwhile, the millers anticipate a rise in the oil prices due to a possible fall in the acreage.

"Lower acreage will translate into lower production and would affect oil prices in the long term. Prices may cross Rs 2,000 per 15 kg tin in the next oil year," said Samir Shah, managing director of Rajmoti Oil Industry Rajkot.

The oil prices are already high and ruling in the range of Rs 1,665-1,670 per tin.

It is to be mentioned that oil prices had touched an all-time high of Rs 1,720 per 15 kg tin in August due to the shortage of groundnut.

"Last year, groundnut production had increased in both the kharif and rabi seasons. But most of the stock was consumed for peanuts and its processed products, hence oil millers had to face a shortage of groundnut for crushing," Shah informed.

Demand from the exports and peanut consumption is believed to decide the future price trend of the groundnut oil in India. "The oil price trend will depend on the export of the groundnut and the

demand for peanuts. If exports increase, then the price of groundnut will rise," said Suresh Kaneriya of Kaneriya Oil Mills.

Adding further, he said, "The oil prices will start increasing after February. At present, the new crop is about to come, so it will hold back the oil prices."

The data provided by IOPEPC suggests the exports of groundnuts during April-March increased to 418,000 from 340,000 tonnes recorded in 2009-10, showing a growth of 23.02 per cent.

In value terms, the exports recorded an impressive growth of 47.26 per cent, reaching a level of Rs 2,099 crores during April-March from Rs 1,425.93 crore during the previous year.

However, experts anticipate the yield to improve in groundnut, reducing the chances of a fall in the production. "Acreage has declined, but the yield may be higher due to early sowing in kharif season at some parts. The production may remain same as last year," said B V Mehta, executive director, Solvent Extractor of India (SEA).

Echoing similar sentiments, Govind Patel, former president of SEA, and edible oil expert, informed that due to early sowing and good weather during the kharif season, the production would be almost the same as last year. "This year about 35 to 40 per cent of the total sowing was early sowing."

Extended monsoon in Guj delays Cotton arrivals

BS Reporter / Ahmedabad September 23, 2011, 21:13 IST

Longer monsoon this season in cotton cultivation regions of Gujarat has caused a delay in arrival of cotton crop by about a month. Industry experts anticipate the fresh arrival of kharif crop to start only by November 2011 against the normal arrival which starts from September-end or October.

Farmers in Saurashtra and North Gujarat are believed to have a stock of about 100,000 bales (a bale = 170 kg) of cotton stored with them. Experts maintained that it was due to this carryover stock that scanty arrivals have already started hitting markets. Currently the arrivals hover at around 2,000 bales per day, which is believed to be a mix of fresh crop as well as old stock. "The arrival has delayed by about a month due to continued rainfall in the cotton cultivation

regions of the state. This caused a delay in flowering thereby leading to a further delay in harvest. The arrivals would get delayed by over a month and can start only by November," said N M Sharma, managing director, Gujarat State Cooperative Cotton Federation (Gujcot).

"Gujarat saw heavy rains in August and mid-September after the flowering on cotton plants. This has delayed the arrivals of cotton. Currently, around 2000 bales of cotton are arriving in the market, of which new crop accounts for only 500 bales," said Arun Dalal, owner of Arun Dalal & Co, an Ahmedabad-based leading cotton trading firm.

Cotton sowing in the state has increased by over 300,000 hectares at 2.98 million hectares in the current kharif season. According to industry estimates, state's cotton production would rise by about 1-1.2 million bales in the current year. As per the estimates released by Cotton Association of India (CAI), one of the leading cotton associations in India, cotton production in Gujarat is expected to rise by around 7 per cent to 11.3 million bales in 2011-12 as against 10.5 million bales in 2010-11. The state is believed to hold about 30-33 per cent share in the country's total cotton production.

The shift from crops like pulses and groundnut cultivation to cotton has increased cotton acreage in the state. Last year, cotton farmers benefited by high price volatility in cotton, which prompted others to join the trend.

At present the prices of Shankar-6 variety of cotton are hovering around Rs 39,000 per candy. "The arrivals are expected to increase in October, which is likely to pressurise the price. A dip of Rs 3000 to Rs 4000 per candy is expected in prices of cotton as the arrivals pick up in October," he added.

Crude palm oil recovers on pick-up in demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 23, 2011, 14:01 IST

Crude palm oil futures recovered by Rs 2.10 to Rs 506.50 per 10 kg in futures trade today, as speculators created fresh positions on expectations of a rise in demand in the spot market.

Firming trend in overseas market also influenced the crude palm oil prices at futures market.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, September crude palm oil rose by Rs 2.10, or 0.41%, to Rs 506.50 per 10 kg, with trading volume of 73 lots.

The November contract moved up by Rs 2, or 0.40%, to Rs 506.60 per 10 kg, with business volume of 41 lots, while prices for October contract inched up by Rs 1.20, or 0.23%, to Rs 507.20 per 10 kg, with an open interest of 260 lots.

Analysts said fresh buying by speculators on hopes of pick up in demand in the spot market, mainly led to the rise in crude palm oil prices at futures market.

Coriander declines on profit-booking

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 23, 2011, 13:56 IST

Coriander futures prices fell by Rs 24 to Rs 5,560 per quintal today, as speculators booked profits on the back of sluggish demand in domestic markets.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, the November contract fell by Rs 23, or 0.43%, to Rs 5,560 per quintal, with an open interest of 11,900 lots, while October coriander declined by Rs 20, or 0.36 per cent, to Rs 5,461 per quintal, with open interest of 19,600 lots.

Market analysts said in addition to profit-booking by speculators at existing higher levels, subdued demand in the spot market led to the decline in Coriander futures prices.

Chana down on profit-booking

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 23, 2011, 13:46 IST

Chana futures prices fell by Rs 16 to Rs 3,569 per 100 kg today, as speculators booked profits, triggered by subdued demand in the spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, October chana fell by Rs 16, or 0.45%, to Rs 3,569 per 100 kg, with an open interest of 3,11,930 lots.

The November contract eased by Rs 11, or 0.30%, to Rs 3,661 per 100 kg, with an open interest of 1,46,050 lots.

Market analysts said subdued demand against adequate supplies in the physical market mainly led to the fall in chana futures prices.

Cardamom extends losses on profit-booking

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 23, 2011, 13:38 IST



Cardamom futures prices fell further by Rs 23.20 to Rs 818.10 per kg today, due to profit booking by speculators on the back of sluggish demand in the local markets. Increased arrivals from the producing regions also put pressure on the cardamom prices in futures trade. At the Multi Commodity Exchange, December cardamom declined by Rs 23.20, or 2.75%, to Rs 818.10 per kg, with a business turnover of 56 lots. The October contract fell by Rs 20.20, or 2.68%, to Rs 733.30 per kg, with a trading volume of 1,142 lots, while November contract eased by Rs 19.40, or 2.42%, to Rs 781 per kg, in 299 lots. Market analysts said, besides profit taking by speculators at existing prices, fall in demand in spot market also put pressure on cardamom prices at futures market.

THE HINDU Business Line

Onions rule firm on local, export demand

RULING STEADY*				
Date	Arrivals	Price		
		Min	Max	Modal
Sept 18	1,317.5	600	1,400	1,000
Sept 20	1,348.8	500	1,300	900
Sept 21	735.3	500	1,300	900
Sept 22	692.8	700	1,400	1,100
Sept 23	1,040.6	750	1,400	1,100

* Arrivals in tonnes at Pune APMC in Maharashtra and price in Rs/quintal
Source: NHRDF

Chennai, Sept. 23:

With shipments picking up as soon as the ban on onion exports was lifted on Tuesday, onion prices ruled firm in markets around growing areas in Maharashtra.

“Exports have picked up after the ban was lifted. Buyers from Dubai, Oman, Qatar, Malaysia and Singapore have all purchased,” said Mr Rupesh Jaju, Director of Nashik-based United Pacific Agro

Pvt Ltd.

On Friday, onion was quoted between Rs 900 and Rs 1,200 a quintal in various Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) yards.

Arrivals flooded markets but domestic and export demand kept prices from falling.

Arrivals in Nashik and Ahmednagar districts in Maharashtra were over 1,000 tonnes in each market. Arrivals in Umrane in Nashik district was 1,850 tonnes on Friday, while the National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation reported 2,250 tonnes of arrivals in Pimpalgaon, also in Nashik. Inflows in nearby markets was reported at over 1,000 tonnes each.

At Pune APMC, over 1,000 tonnes arrived and prices ruled at Rs 750-1,400 a tonne. The modal price or the rate at which most trades took place was Rs 1,100.

“Prices could surge a bit in the next week or so,” said Mr Jaju.

The Centre has fixed the minimum export floor price at \$475 a tonne. Though exports are taking place, traders said it was a little higher compared to overseas buyers' capacity. “It is bit on the higher side,” said a trading source.

This is forcing some buyers to purchase onion from Pakistan but lack of ample quantity was a hurdle.

The early kharif onion crop has begun to arrive but the quality has been affected by rain.

“Only rabi onions that were stored are currently arriving in markets. Late kharif onion is expected only around mid-December,” Mr Jaju said.

After banning onion exports a fortnight ago, the Centre lifted it on Tuesday after farmers in parts of the country resorted to agitation against the move. Most APMCs, particularly in Maharashtra, were shut for over 10 days as farmers refused to bring the produce to markets.

While lifting the ban, the Centre fixed a floor export price of \$475 a tonne that will be reviewed every fortnight.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 24, 2011)

Cotton tumbles ahead of new crop arrivals



Rajkot, Sept. 23:

Cotton prices crashed by about Rs 4,000 a candy of 356 kg as demand from mills and exporters dropped ahead of new crop arrivals.

The Sankar-6 variety declined to Rs 38,500-39,000 a candy, a drop of almost Rs 4,000 during the past week. Raw cotton or *kapas* also shaved off Rs 50-70 at Rs 850-925 for a maund of 20 kg. *While 6,000-6,500 bales arrived in Gujarat, 10,000-11,000 bales arrived in the rest of the country.*

The Kalyan variety sold at Rs 23,000-25,000 a candy.

The new crop has started to come in some areas of Saurashtra and it was traded between Rs 300 and Rs 700 for a maund of 20 kg. However, according to traders, quality of that crop is bad. Regular arrivals will start after Navaratri.

While weak global markets pull down export demand, high prices have dampened local demand, said a Rajkot-based broker.

Exporters, though, see shipments rising by 17 per cent or 1.4 million tonnes over official forecast in the year to September 2012, spurred by a record harvest, a weaker domestic currency and a freer trade policy.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 24, 2011)

Weak inflows drive chana higher



Indore, Sept. 23:

Improved demand and weak arrivals perked up chana and masoor, while poor demand dragged down urad and its dal.

Chana (kanta) gained Rs 25-50 at Rs 3,625-3,650 a quintal on improved demand, while chana (desi) ruled firm at Rs 3,550 a quintal. Following spot chana, its dal also gained. Chana dal (bold) quoted Rs 25 up at Rs 4,925-4,950, chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,825-4,850 and chana dal (average) at Rs 4,725-4,250 a quintal.

Masoor gained on rise in buying, with masoor (bold) being quoted Rs 25 up at Rs 3,175 a quintal, while masoor (medium) ruled at Rs 2,950. Masoor dal, however, remained flat with masoor dal (bold) ruling at Rs 3,925-3,950, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 3,800-3,825 and masoor dal (average) at Rs 3,700-3,725.

Tur remained firm despite subdued demand, with tur (Maharashtra) being quoted at Rs 3,550 a quintal and tur (Nimari) at Rs 2,800-2,900. Tur dal declined on poor buying. Tur dal (full) quoted at Rs 5,900-5,950, tur dal (*sawa* no.) at Rs 5,000-5,050 a quintal and tur (marka) at Rs 6,600. Moong and its dal ruled flat at Rs 4,200-4,500 a quintal, while moong (old) ruled at Rs 3,500-4,000.

Arrivals of new moong in local mandis was recorded at 800-1,000 bags. Moong dal ruled steady, with moong (mongar) ruling stable at Rs 5,900-6,000, moong dal (bold) at Rs 5,850-5,900 and

moong dal (medium) was quoted at Rs 5,400-5,450 a quintal. Urad declined by Rs 100 on weak demand at Rs 3,100-4,100 a quintal, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,800-3,900. Local mandis on Friday witnessed arrival of 50 bags of new urad which sold at Rs 4,200.

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Rice likely to remain steady



Karnal, Sept. 23:

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

Mr Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that the commodity is unlikely to see any major alteration in prices in the near future as aromatic varieties are already trading at their lowest levels while good buying is keeping non-basmati and brokens firm at current levels.

Pusa-1121 (steam) was quoted at Rs 4,900-5,000 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) was around Rs 3,950. Basmati (raw) was ruling at Rs 5,700-5,750 a quintal while basmati (sela) sold between Rs 3,900 and Rs 3,970 a quintal. For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Tibar ruled at Rs 3,300-3,600, Dubar at Rs 2,600-2,925 and Mongra at Rs 1,900-2,330 a quintal.

Non-basmati varieties were ruling almost unchanged. Sharbati (steam) ruled at Rs 2,900-3,050 and Sharbati (sela) at Rs 2,870 a quintal. PR-11 (Sela) sold at Rs 2,150-2,420 a quintal, while PR-11 (raw) was quoted at Rs 2,000-2,340 a quintal. Permal (sela) was sold at Rs 1,800-2,080 a quintal while Permal (raw) was at Rs 1,900-2,100 a quintal.

Around 15,000 bags of paddy varieties arrived. PR arrived with a stock of around 9,000 bags and sold at Rs 1,080-1,170. Around 2,000 bags of Sugandha-999 arrived and were lifted at Rs 1,510-1,620 a quintal. About 2,500 bags of Sharbati variety arrived and were quoted at Rs 1,600-1,650. RS-10 variety came with a stock of 1,000 bags and went for Rs 1,300-1,350 while paddy of old Pusa1121 was at Rs 2,280 a quintal.

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Sugar turns bitter on lower offtake



Mumbai, Sept. 23:

Sugar prices ruled weak on the Vashi wholesale market on Friday.

Spot prices declined by Rs 5-8 in fair quality sugar, while good quality ruled unchanged. Mills came forward with selling offer as demand from local stockiest was routine and buying from neighbouring States absent.

Mill tender rates declined by Rs 10-12, weighing on sentiment. Naka rates ruled steady. No big movement was seen in the spot and naka rates this week. The sentiment was slightly weak and traders are waiting for the announcement of new the month's quota said, traders.

A wholesaler said in the absence of inventory buying, volumes were stagnant. Ample supply from producing centres-mills kept sentiment under pressure. Buyers from East India were not actively purchasing and demand varied. Since there was no buying from neighbouring States in the last two-three days, Maharashtra mills were forced to sell in local markets.

Mills have sold sugars in the range of Rs 2,640-2,700 (Rs 2,650-2,725) for S-grade and Rs 2,745-

2,830 (Rs 2,750-2,820) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 2,763-2,851 (Rs 2,766-2,851) and M-grade Rs 2,838-2,981 (Rs 2,846- 2,981).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 2,720-2,770 (Rs 2720-2,770) and M-grade was Rs 2,800-2,910 (Rs 2,800-2,910).

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Festival buying boosts turmeric



Erode, Sept. 23:

Spot turmeric prices increased for the third consecutive day on Friday as North Indian traders continued to place orders for the upcoming festivals.

“The price of the spot turmeric has increased slightly for the third day in succession in Erode markets, as traders have received fresh orders. The North Indian traders are placing orders for Durga Puja, but the prices in the Regulated Marketing Committee decreased by Rs 190 a quintal, due to quality,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

The price quoted in the turmeric futures were further 4 per cent lower than Thursday. North Indian traders are placing orders for Erode crop and so the bulk buyers quoting higher price. Further, even after the increase, arrivals are moderate at 7,200 bags. Of this, around 65 per cent were sold. Traders said: “If the arrival increases on Monday, prices will decrease; otherwise they will rule statically.”

Farmers said that they will bring reasonable stocks from Monday to the market, so that they may get reasonable price for their produce. Because of the low quality, the price of the hybrid Salem crop decreased by Rs 300 a quintal on Friday.

Salem crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 4,269 to Rs 5,629, the root variety Rs 4,111 to Rs 4,619. Of the 1,387 bags that arrived, 498 were sold.

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Dual crop farming



Sunflower cultivation: Workers on a field in Nashik, Maharashtra, where farmers grow sunflower along with soyabean. Sunflower seeds fetch Rs 25-30 a kg in the market. — Paul Noronha
(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 24, 2011)

Avesthagen gets US patent for drought tolerant rice

Bangalore, Sept. 23:

Avesthagen, a Bangalore-based company working on preventive and personalised healthcare, has got a patent registered in the US for its technology to make rice crops resistant to environmental stresses such as drought, salinity and temperature extremes.

The company's breakthrough was targeting the manganese super-oxidase dismutase (MnSOD) gene, the site of photosynthesis in plants.

According to Ms Viloo Morawala Patell, the founder, and chairman and managing director of Avesthagen, "We constantly aim to provide breakthrough solutions that are advantageous to the farmers and consumers. I acknowledge the Rockefeller Foundation, NCBS-TIFR and VIB for their help and support."

"This gives the company significant freedom to operate in the global agricultural biotech industry," she added.

Invention

The way to increase productivity in the face of declining water availability, cultivable area and climate change is the use of biotech techniques that would allow rice and other crops to grow and provide satisfactory yields under stressed conditions.

At 450 million tonnes, rice is one of the most important cereal crops globally, especially in the densely populated Asian region. Rice normally requires heavy irrigation. By 2050, the global cereal supplies need to increase by 70 per cent from 2,250 million tonnes currently to about 4,000 million tonnes to feed a 9-billion population.

"Biotech traits/techniques normally take seven to eight years to be incorporated into commercial varieties and offer an effective method to mitigate specific problems," explained Ms Patell.

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India needs to curb food wastage to tackle inflation: World Bank

Input subsidy expenses not contributing to boost productivity

Chennai, Sept 23:

The World Bank has said that South Asia's foodgrain stock management, especially in India, needs to improve to tackle inflation.

In its focus on food inflation in South Asia, the bank said that high stocks have led to high wastage due to inadequate storage capacity and technology. According to World Bank's estimates, the Food Corporation of India lost 10-16 million tonnes of grains in 2000.

"The FCI's inefficiencies not only lead to high losses of the grains it handles, they also drive up the costs of food handling. Comparisons show that the FCI's handling and storage costs are significantly higher than those of the private sector. The increase in procurement has led to a significant increase in the fiscal costs of the system," the report said.

The FCI procures nearly one-third of wheat, rice produced in the country, besides coarse grains at the minimum support price fixed by the Government. The stocks are then transported to deficit States and sold through the public distribution system at a subsidised rate.

It said demand for food is undergoing structural shifts as incomes rise. Growth in consumption of pulses, fruits, meat, eggs, and dairy items is more than double the consumption growth in cereals. Inflation in these items has been higher than in cereals.

"Public intervention in agricultural marketing in India and Pakistan has high fiscal costs and narrowly supports cereal production, while high food inflation and continuing high rates of food insecurity are linked to an inadequate supply response in non-cereal food products," the report said.

Input subsidies contributed to the overuse of water resources, high losses of electricity utilities, and deteriorating soil conditions because of skewed application of fertiliser.

It said expenses on these were not contributing to productivity and they could instead be used as investments in agricultural research, education, and rural roads are amongst the most effective public spending items in promoting agricultural growth and reducing poverty.

Food and fertiliser subsidies have increased to over 1.5 per cent of the GDP since 2008-09 from around one per cent in the 1990s.

Annals of public procurement

Outlays on food subsidies are far higher than public investment in agriculture and outlays for extension services, which could increase agricultural production and lead to lower prices over time.

In India and to a lesser degree in Pakistan, large-scale public procurement hampered the private sector not only by pre-emption, but also by taxes and rules for moving grains across state borders, and caps on storage of grains designed to facilitate public procurement.

The bank found fault with mandatory Jute Packaging Act, frequent changes in the Essential Commodities Act, low private investment in grain marketing, insufficient investment in supply chain and marketing rules.

The bank proposed five policy options to tackle inflation including in foodgrain storage management. It called for demand management policies in South Asia earlier than in advanced countries because of the high share of food items in consumer baskets with priority for fiscal consolidation.

Over the longer term, it called for policies aimed at increasing agricultural output and productivity to alleviate pressures on food prices, including focus on technology, improved water management, rural infrastructure, agricultural diversification, and private sector investment in marketing and the agro industry.

It said governments should exploit the efficiency gains they could achieve (in terms of protecting and improving nutritional status) through provision of more nutritious foods (e.g. foods fortified with essential vitamins and minerals) and by increasing beneficiary knowledge on how to maximise household resources for nutritional impact.

It asked governments to explore developments of market-based tools and assistance for managing risks, particularly those that affect the government's budget.

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Poultry sector in South unfazed by avian flu incidents in Bengal

Chennai, Sept. 23:

Although West Bengal has confirmed incidents of avian flu and ordered culling of lakhs of chicken, South India, particularly Namakkal, remains unruffled.

The National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal zone, has in fact increased the egg prices by five paise and has ruled out chances of the disease spreading to the South.

“We have bio-security. We are carrying out regular checks and vaccinations to prevent outbreak of bird flu. Moreover, the climate here is not conducive for the avian flu virus to breed,” Mr P. Selvaraj, Zonal Chairman, NECC, told *Business Line*.

After remaining flat for almost three weeks at Rs 2.52 a piece, egg prices are now ruling at Rs 2.57. This, despite the fact that the ensuing Navaratri season will dent consumption.

“For the first time, we have hiked the egg prices in austere month of Purattasi. This is mainly because of growing demand in Kerala although off take in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh will be hit,” said an NECC spokesperson.

Meanwhile, the prices of layer and cull birds have been trimmed to Rs 36 (Rs 40/kg) and Rs 55 (Rs 60/kg) respectively due to reduced off take in Karnataka and Andhra.

But poultry traders in Namakkal, despite being unaffected by avian flu, are not all that elated since the incident in the far-east tells on their exports. “Around 800 poultry farms are located in and around Namakkal where nearly three crore chickens are reared. Every time avian flu hits any part of the country, Namakkal poultry farmers are affected. Already, the Gulf nations have totally shunned eggs from India. We have been clamouring for 'zoning' of the poultry hubs in the country so that areas unaffected by bird flu do not face import curbs. But the government has not done anything so far,” lamented Mr Selvaraj. Egg exports, which have dwindled in the recent days, stood at 357.78 lakh (till August) against 559.70 lakh reported during the same period last year. But the trade, instead of tapping newer markets, is focussing more on the ever-increasing demand on home turf.

'We are carrying out regular checks and vaccinations to prevent outbreak of bird flu.'

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Spot rubber turns weak

Kottayam, Sept. 23:

Domestic rubber prices turned weak on Friday. In spot, the prices remained under pressure following the sharp declines on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

A favourable change in weather during the past couple of days which might enhance production and the long holidays in the trendsetting Japanese markets gave enough room for speculation during the day. The physical market lost ground mainly on buyer resistance but the losses were limited owing to low supplies.

Sheet rubber declined to Rs 214.50 (216.50) a kg, according to trades. The grade dropped to Rs 215 (217) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board. The October series nosedived to Rs 210.64 (215.60), November to Rs 207.70 (213.61), December to Rs 208.50 (214.50), January to Rs 210.50 (215.70), February to Rs 210.77 (216.25) and March to Rs 218.50 (218.60) a kg for RSS 4 on the NMCE. RSS 3 (spot) increased to Rs 224.17 (221.88) a kg at Bangkok. The Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM) remained closed on account of the 'Autumnal Equinox Day'. Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 214.50 (216.50); RSS-5: 208 (210); ungraded: 200 (205); ISNR 20: 209 (210) and latex 60 per cent: 134 (134.50).

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