THE HINDU

Published: April 27, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: April 27, 2012 04:46 IST

Rain uproots banana, betel vine and farmers hope

L.Renganathan

The sudden summer showers accompanied by gale, lightning and thunder wrought havoc in some areas of the district over the past two days. Sun came out shining by Thursday but by then quite a few farmers who had raised banana and betel vine had suffered enough due to the gale that uprooted groves and betel vine yards.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, strong gales suddenly brought down the mercury levels in Karur district taking the public and farmers by surprise. Even as they were basking in the coolness came the showers that drenched several parts of the district including Kulithalai, Krishnarayapuram, Thogamalai, Mayanur, Karur, Velayuthampalayam, Aravakurichi and Pallappatti.

Gale uprooted banana trees in parts of Velayuthampalayam area affecting the livelihood of scores of farmers. ``Many fields on which banana crop have been raised were affected in the gale and rain. The gale has felled banana crop ripe and ready for harvest in another month and almost a year's effort has been lost ,'' say a worried farmer T.Palanisamy of Velayuthampalayam reflecting the plight of others like him in the area abutting the Cauvery.

Depending on the size and variety, a banana bunch would fetch Rs.200 to Rs. 300 and there was every opportunity that the price might go up in the near future. The rain over the past two days has dashed our hopes, observes S.Chinnu Gounder of Nanaparappu village.

Similarly, farmers who had raised betel vine yards too are feeling the pinch of the gale and winds. “Even those that survived the gale may not last long as scorching summer interspersed with rain will induce fungus and pest attack besides there is a possibility of root rotting in the betel vine crop,'' notes N.Rathinam Pillai of Thalavapalayam.

The farmers have urged the administration and State government to depute officials to survey crop loss and award just compensation.

Published: April 27, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: April 27, 2012 04:33 IST

Food Safety and Quality Control office inaugurated in Krishnagiri

Staff Reporter

A new office of Food Safety and Quality Control was inaugurated near the Old Collector Bungalow on the Old Bengaluru Road in Krishnagiri on Thursday.

C.N. Maheshwaran, Collector, inaugurated the office in the building hitherto allocated to the KRISHMA Society established during the tenure of Collector Santhosh Babu.

On the occasion of the inauguration, Mr. Maheshwaran gave away the first license for the Akaash Dairy Private Limited in Kaveripattinam near Krishnagiri.

The Office of the Food Safety and Quality Control was established by the Tamil Nadu Food Safety Department.

To ensure Food Safety and Quality, an Act came into operation in 2006.

As per the Act, Food Safety Officers were appointed in all the panchayat unions with a district level official.

The officials attached to this office can gather samples from the food outlets and test them for quality, issue licenses and carry out some formalities.

Provision stores, hotels, tea shops, bakeries, roadside shops, fruit shops, mutton stalls, industrial canteens should obtain license from the authorities.

If anybody is found violating the norms, they can be penalized upto Rs. 2 lakh. If found not having license, a fine of up to Rs. 5 lakh can be slapped on the violators, Mr. Maheshwaran said.

Dr. T. Kalaivani was appointed as district level official for the Food Safety and Quality Control Office. She can be contacted at 99439-84071.

Other officials appointed in each panchayat union and their contact numbers are as follows:

Krishnagiri - P. Rajasekar – 98945-64644; Bargur - T. Elangovan – 90033-16144; Kaveripattinam – K. Thulasiraman – 97864-36656; Veppanahalli – S. Sivasandiran – 96295-67896; Shoolagiri –N. Gunasekar – 97886-57502; Mathur – T. Stalin Rajarathinam – 98949-25271; Uthangarai – K. Lingavel – 98942-79688; Hosur Union and Hosur Munnicipality – V.

Sekar – 96880-04969; Kelamangalam Union and Krishnagiri Municipality – P. Saminathan – 94895-56859 and Thalli – C. Sundaramoorthy – 94430-00849, a release adds.

Published: April 27, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: April 27, 2012 04:32 IST

Maize growers register robust yield this season

Special Correspondent

yellow pearls:A farmer drying maize on the Pudukottai - Mazhaiyur Highway on Wednesday.— PHOTO:M.SRINATH

Maize growers have registered an attractive yield this season and the harvest has been brisk in several villages in and around Adhanakottai, Gandarvakottai and in the cluster of fields bordering Pudukottai and Thanjavur district.

With the demand for cattle field on the rise, the produce is immediately marketed and a number of poultry managers directly purchase the produce and move it by lorries to their poultry farms in Namakkal and Salem district.

A section of maize cultivators in B. Mathur village near Mazhaiyur says that they have registered a good yield this season. N.M. Ramaiah, who raised the crop in the middle of December last year in his two acres, says that he had harvested about 60 bags, at the rate of 30 bags an acre, each bag weighing 100 kg.

The poultry managers reach the village and pay off the money for the produce, he says. The price per bag this season is Rs.1,200 as against Rs.1,000 last year.

The yield too was not so bountiful last year, he says adding that he harvested only 45 to 50 bags last season from his fields.

It takes about two days to dry the maize. In the absence of any drying yard in the fields, the farmers use part of the rural highway for the purpose. “We set up logs of wood at either end of the maize to warn the motor riders and bus drivers,” the farmers say.

A total of 7,396 hectares had been brought under maize cultivation particularly in Karambakudi, Gandarvakottai and Pudukottai blocks. Of it, harvest had been completed on about 4,664 hectares.

The average per hectare yield is 8,500 kg. A majority of farmers raised hi-breed variety developed by private sector though some farmers have gone in for Co H (M) seeds supplied by the Agriculture Department this season.

Published: April 27, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: April 27, 2012 04:34 IST

Farmers demand minimum support price for sugarcane

Staff Reporter

Suggestions for improving the operations at Tirupur South *uzhavar sandhai* and demands for attractive support price for sugarcane were among other issues that came up in the special grievances redressal meeting organised by the District Administration for farmers here on Friday.

M. Rajamani, farmer and state secretary of Kongunadu Pothuthozhilalar Peravai, asked the district administration to change the load shedding hours at Tirupur South *uzhavar sandhai* .

“The main business takes place between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. every day and hence, the load shedding in place between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. is causing hardships to both the farmers who sell their produces and to the customers,” he pointed out.

He alleged that despite many representations to the authorities concerned, some anti-social elements were still forcefully extorting ‘toll' from the customers purchasing vegetables and fruits at the uzhavar sandhai as soon as they come out of the premises into the road.

Labour costs

Citing steep escalation in operational and labour costs in the recent times, the sugarcane farmers suggested for a higher minimum support price for the crop.

“We wanted the price to be raised from the present Rs. 2,100 per tonne to at least Rs. 3,000 per tonne,” they said.

Proposal

District Revenue Officer R. Gajalakshmi assured the farmers that a proposal based on their demand would soon be forwarded to the State Government for appropriate action. A major complaint of onion farmers from various parts of the district had been that the quality of the crop was poor this season. They blamed the seeds sold to them by private companies for the ‘poor output'.

The agriculture department officials clarified to the onion farmers that unless the situation was studied in a holistic manner, reasons could not be ascertained.

Soil test

“We will have to study the soil and seed qualities as well as the time of sowing before making any conclusions,” they said.

Farmers from Vellakoil area sought the intervention of district administration to cancel the operations of some mineral water bottling units in the area that were causing environmental pollution.

Published: April 27, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: April 27, 2012 04:46 IST

Farmers rat on growing menace

Delta Bureau

Urge Collector to supply poison free of cost to kill the rodents

face-to-face:Collector S.Natarajan at the farmers' grievances day meeting in Tiruvarur on Thursday.

Expressing concern over rampant rat menace in the district, farmers have appealed to Collector S.Natarajan to take steps to put an end to the menace. They suggested that poison to kill rats be supplied free of cost to the farmers.

Mr. Natarajan, who presided over the meeting, said rat eradication camp would be held all over the district on a single day. Farmers also complained that clearing of silt has not been taken up in the district and it should be done before June 12, when water will be released from Mettur dam.

Other demands of the farmers included payment of crop insurance and supply of three-phase power for six hours to agriculture pump sets. Mr. Natarajan appealed to the farmers to take to sericulture as an alternative for agriculture. Mulberry could be cultivated for rearing silk worms. Demonstration of mulberry cultivation has been done in Kodavasal taluk. He said farmers' festival started in April 13 and would continue till May 17. N.Jeevakani, District Revenue Officer, participated.

Perambalur

The seven direct purchase centres functioning in the district have been rendering good service to the farming community, said Collector Darez Ahmed on Thursday. At the monthly grievances day meeting, Mr. Ahmed said the DPCs are functioning at Nannai, Thunapuram, Egmore, Kaikalathur, Arumbavur, Inam Agaram, and Okalur. He said the farmers' festivals in progress in various parts of the district have created awareness of the schemes and programmes being implemented by the 18 agriculture-based departments.

The government has provided tractors along with farm equipment to all the 47 primary agricultural cooperative societies. They should be maintained properly with the assistance of women self help groups.

Mr. Ahmed gave away sprayers to a couple of farmers. Subramaniam, joint director of agriculture (in-charge), Ramamoorthy, joint registrar of cooperative societies, and Soundararajan, deputy director of horticulture, participated.

Published: April 27, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: April 27, 2012 04:46 IST

Paddy farmers await Rs.300-crore dues

Staff Reporter

More than 76,000 farmers who had supplied paddy to the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco) are yet to get the Rs. 300 crore due to them for their produce.

Under the procurement scheme of the State government, five lakh tonnes of paddy was procured till March after the first and second crops were harvested.

Since procurement will continue till June, nearly six lakh tonnes is expected to reach the granaries this year, sources in the corporation say. The procurement was 3.9 lakh tonnes in the previous year.

M.P. Mohandas, Assistant Manager (Paddy) of Supplyco, says the government is releasing the dues to the farmers in instalments. A sum of Rs. 75 crore was allocated in March, and steps are being taken to clear the dues.

Procurement continues

In Palakkad, the dues total Rs.93.93 crore. In the district, Supplyco has procured 1,079,15 tonnes of paddy during this harvest season as against the 88,598 tonnes in the previous season.

The procurement is continuing, Supplyco officials here say.

As many as 28,964 farmers in the district have registered their names with Supplyco as against 19,100 in the previous season.

The latest figures of Supplyco say Rs. 69.34 crore had been paid to the farmers till March 19 in Palakkad.

Published: April 27, 2012 00:53 IST | Updated: April 27, 2012 00:53 IST

Wheat aplenty but gunny scarce in M.P.

Staff Reporter

Madhya Pradesh has had a bumper wheat harvest this rabi season, so much so the State does not have enough gunny sacks to pack the procured produce.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan on Wednesday called on Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution K.V. Thomas in New Delhi and complained of the shortage. Mr. Thomas assured him that the matter would be taken up with the Textiles Ministry.

According to Mr. Chauhan, “Procurement is being disturbed due to non-supply of the requisite number of gunny bags by the Union government.”

Briefing Mr. Thomas on the successful wheat harvest — 36 lakh tonnes till date and a total estimated procurement of 80 lakh tonnes by May 20 — Mr. Chauhan requested him to “ask the Food Corporation of India to lift the quota of one lakh tonnes per week from the State.”

Alleging that Madhya Pradesh suffered injustice at the hands of the Centre, the Chief Minister said the FCI was avoiding lifting its quota from Madhya Pradesh even as it moved much larger quantities of wheat from other States.

The process of lifting wheat needed to be completed by May 20 before the onset of monsoon, Mr. Chauhan said.

Madhya Pradesh relies on a completely computerised “e-procurement” system — from registration of farmers to depositing payments in their bank accounts — and has been offering a bonus of Rs.100 over and above the minimum support price of Rs.1,285 per quintal for wheat.

Published: April 26, 2012 11:21 IST | Updated: April 26, 2012 11:21 IST

CAMPCO may come out with a solution for ‘kole roga'

Special Correspondent

CAMPCO president Konkodi Padmanabha and M. Tamil Selvan, Director, Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development, Kozhikode, at a seminar in Mangalore on Wednesday. Photo: H.S. Manjunath

Farmers were unsure if they could use the products available in the market

President of the Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (CAMPCO) Ltd. Konkodi Padmanabha said here on Wednesday that the cooperative will examine if it can market a chemical solution which can be used as an alternative to the traditional copper sulphate-cum-limestone mixture to control “kole roga” (fruit rot disease) in areca palms.

If the cooperative was to market the solution having potassium phosphonate, a registered branded company should have manufactured it by following all norms, he said.

Mr. Padmanabha was addressing farmers, scientists and officials at a seminar on ‘use of plant protection chemicals and fertilizers in areca plantations'. The CAMPCO and Arecnaut Research and Development Foundation had organised the seminar.

The president said that many chemical solutions were now available in the market under different brand names and each company claimed that its product controls “kole roga” effectively as an alternative to the traditional chemical solution. Many companies did not display the batch number, customer care number, or details of ingredients in their products. Hence farmers were unsure if they could purchase them.

H. Narayanaswamy, professor, plant pathology, arecanut research project, College of Agriculture, Navile, Shimoga, said he was yet to study the chemical components in such new products. He said that a study conducted by him revealed that for farmers spraying some of the new brand chemical solutions was costly when compared with the traditional solution.

Mr. Narayanaswamy said that potassium phosphonate contained nutrient and fungicide properties. Chemical solutions containing them could be used in areas that received less rainfall. Ignatius D'Souza of Bejai said that information obtained by him from the Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage under the Union Department of Agriculture and Cooperation under the RTI Act revealed that use of potassium phosphonate in the country was not allowed as per Insecticides Act, 1968.

He gave a copy of the information obtained on April 3, 2012 to Mr. Padmanabha. It read: “It is informed that product potassium phosphonate is included in the list of insecticides under Section 3 (e) under the Schedule as per GSR 672 (E) dated 28-9-1999, but still not registered under Insecticides Act, 1968. Hence its use in agriculture and horticulture is not permitted in India without registration.”

An official from the Department of Agriculture said that many such new brand solutions in the market did not have batch numbers and details of ingredients.

Raj Kumar, a scientist of the University of Agriculture Sciences, Dharwad, said that the university had developed a kit which farmers could use for soil testing on their own.

hindustantimes
Fri,27 Apr 2012

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Partly Cloudy

Friday, Apr 27

Max	Min
35.8º	27.6º

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs
Humidity: 79%
Wind: Normal
Sunrise: 6:35
Sunset: 18:03
Barometer: 1009

Tomorrow's Forecast

Rainy

Saturday, Apr 28

Max	Min
32º	26º

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Apr 29	Apr 30	May 1	May 2	May 3
30º | 26º	33º | 25º	36º | 27º	38º | 28º	38º | 28º
Rainy	Rainy	Partly Cloudy	Rainy	Rainy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

26 APR, 2012, 02.32PM IST, PTI

FMC imposes 20 pc margin on barley to curb speculative buying

NEW DELHI: Commodity market regulator FMC has decided to impose a special cash margin of 20 per cent on all pending contracts of barley to curb its volatility in the futures trade.

Barley, which is traded in large volumes on the NCDEX, is primarily used as a major animal fodder.

It is also a ingredient for beer, certain distilled beverages and various health foods,

In an order, Forward Markets Commission (FMC) said: "In view of excessive volatility in the prices of barley, special cash margins at 20 per cent on the long side are being imposed with effect from the beginning of trading day ie April 27, 2012, on all contracts".

The special margin would also be applicable on contracts in barley that are yet to be launched on the exchanges, it said.

Margin is a deposit that is required to be given by traders before entering into a pact to buy or sell the commodity at future date.

During the month, prices of barley have risen by nearly 12 per cent mainly due to speculative buying in view of strong demand from beer making industries in spot markets.

The futures prices of barley were quoted at 1,520 per quintal early this month.

The May contract for barley was trading at Rs 1,674.5 per quintal today as against yesterday close of Rs 1,708.5 per quintal.

The June contract stood at Rs 1,710 per quintal against last close of Rs 1,744 per quintal on the NCDEX. Spot prices of barley, however, were ruling at about Rs 1,587 per quintal today.

The regulator also asked the exchanges not to accept fixed deposits and other collaterals against cash margins for barley contracts.

FMC has already imposed higher margins on other farm commodities such as soyabean, rape/mustard seed, chana and refined soya oil contracts to curb volatility in prices.

Business Standard

Friday, Apr 27, 2012

Natural rubber imports at record high in 2011-12

George Joseph / Kochi April 27, 2012, 0:22 IST

Natural rubber (NR) imports reached an all-time high of 205,050 tonnes in 2011-12, up nine per cent over the previous financial year.

As domestic truck and bus tyre production was badly hit due to a serious shortage of quality sheet rubber (RSS-4) in the market, producers were left with no option but to import quality block rubber, to meet the demand, leading to an increase in imports.

According to experts, there was a shortage of 100,000 tonnes that affected the sector badly. The country needs 550,000 tonnes of RSS-4 grade sheet rubber annually, but the actual production was between 350,000 and 400,000 tonnes last year. Sheet rubber is essential for manufacturing radial tyres. The demand for quality sheet rubber increases by eight per cent per annum on an average, as the non-tyre sector is also shifting to higher grades of rubber to ensure quality. According to experts, there is less wastage of the raw material in case of quality sheet rubber and the quality of the finished product is superior, too.

Though radialisation is almost 100 per cent in the passenger car segment, it is only 17 per cent in the case of truck or bus radials. The main reason behind this slower shift is the poor supply of RSS-4 grade in the domestic market.

According to estimates by the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (Atma), a jump in production is estimated in the truck/bus radial tyres in 2012-13. It is expected to almost double to 4.8 million tyres (24 per cent of the total truck/bus tyres), compared to the actual production of 2.67 million tyres in 2011-12. So, the requirement of quality grade rubber will obviously be high.

But Indian NR growers are far behind the pace of the industry and which may lead to further rise in imports in the years ahead.

According to Rajiv Budhraja, director general, Atma, as the transportation sector needs good quality radial tyres with durability and long life, there is a huge deficit in supply, leading to imports.

FMC increasingly using special margin rule

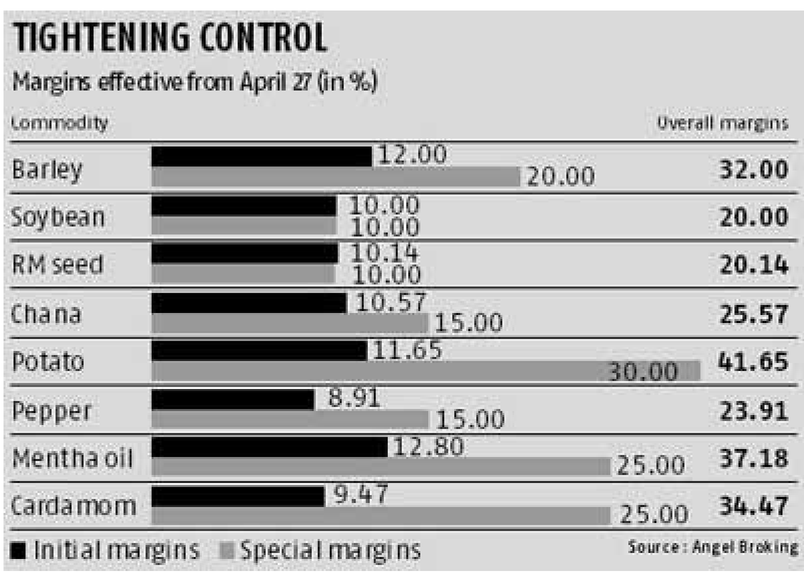
Finds it a useful tool to curb excessive speculation in agri products also curbs turnover on exchanges

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai April 27, 2012, 0:10 IST

In a major hit to agri-centric futures commodity exchanges, the commodity derivatives market regulator, the Forward Markets Commission (FMC), has frequently levied special margins on a number of farm products.

The latest is on barley, on which the Commis-sion levied 20 per cent special margins effective April 27 to control the volatility in prices.

Over recent months the regulator has used this tool (special margins) as a major instrument to restrict traders from excessive price speculation in farm commodities.



The action, however, has resulted in a sharp reduction in turnover at agri-centric commodity exchanges, including the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) and Ace Derivatives & Commodity Exchange (ACE).

The special margins are levied by the regulator through the respective exchanges on which the commodity remains active. This is over and above the initial margins — an amount of money required to be kept with the exchange before buying and selling positions on a futures contract, as protection to compensate in case of default by traders.

“The special margins levy has, however, created more problems for commodity exchanges, through restricting traders from taking wide positions. Since the margin money is blocked with the exchange, traders get no exposure with that money which results into lower exchange business,” said an analyst.

The turnover of NCDEX, for example, has declined from a record high of Rs 11,290 crore on January 3 to Rs 5,485 crore on April 26 in the morning session. Its turnover before the special margins phenomena started was between Rs 8,000-8,500 crore till the beginning of this year. Similarly, the daily turnover has witnessed a decline of around 15 per cent on ACE from the level of Rs 650 crore until the beginning of this year to Rs 550 crore now.

The special margins, however, have helped reduce the volatility in some commodities. According to Dilip Bhatia, CEO, ACE, “The special margins reduces traders’ position limits, which, if they want to maintain, would require infusion of fresh capital. This means traders require proportionately additional capital for the same position limit. Sometimes, it helps at least temporarily to control volatility in the futures market.”

According to a study by city-based commodity broking firm, Angel Broking, mentha oil price has plunged to trade currently at Rs 1,693 a kg from Rs 2005.7 a kg on March 1, the day FMC levied a special margin of 10 per cent.

Similarly, pepper price today plunged to trade at Rs 38,350 a quintal as against Rs 39,070 a quintal on April 3, the day FMC levied a 15 per cent special margins on all long- side contracts.

A report by SMC Research said barley prices have shot up to a record of Rs 1,793.50 a quintal yesterday, a rise of a little over 50 per cent in the past two months.

Naveen Mathur, associate director, Angel Broking, said, “The special margins, though reducing volatility temporarily in the commodity, comes back to move according to fundamentals after a couple of days of knee-jerk reactions.”

THE HINDU Business Line

Haryana eases curbs on wheat import from U.P.

Nitish Sharma

Karnal, April 26:

Over 1.75 lakh bags of wheat arrived at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal on Thursday. Increase in arrivals and slow lifting has slowed the pace of wheat procurement, said market sources.

New wheat was quoted at Rs 1,285 a quintal, which is also the minimum support price. The quality of the stock is good and 343 and 117 were the main varieties that arrived at the market.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for May delivery decreased by Rs 5 to Rs 1,180 a quintal after touching a low at Rs 1,177 a quintal earlier on Thursday. On the MCX, spot wheat prices decreased by Rs 1.20 to Rs 1,316.7 a quintal.

Flour Prices

Flour was quoted at Rs 160 for a 10-kg bag. Branded flour such as Shakti Bhog and Ashirwad were quoted at Rs 200 and Rs 215 for a 10-kg bag, respectively. On the other hand, Chokar prices remained unchanged and sold at Rs 600 for a 49-kg bag.

Farmers' Protest

Meanwhile, wheat growers from Uttar Pradesh blocked the Karnal-Meerut road near the Yamuna bridge on the Haryana-Uttar Pradesh boundary for over 30 hours. They were demanding that they be allowed to sell wheat in Haryana and were angry at the the ban imposed by the Haryana Government on the import of wheat from neighbouring States, said Mr Sewa Singh Arya, State president, BKU.

Farmers withdrew the blockade after an agreement was signed with the State officials, he said. The blockade began at 8 am on Wednesday and was lifted around 3 pm on Thursday.

According to the agreement, 19,800 quintals of wheat a day from Uttar Pradesh would be procured by the Haryana State Government, for one and a half month, at Prabudh Nagar. Earlier, the State Government had made it clear that only wheat produced by the local farmers would be purchased as they don't have enough storage space.

Spot rubber rules steady

Our Correspondent
Kottayam, April 26:

Physical rubber prices ruled steady on Thursday. There were no fresh factors to set a definite trend as domestic futures remained steady on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE). Meanwhile, resumption of tapping following intensified summer rain might put further pressure on the market in the days ahead. Volumes continued to be dull.

Sheet rubber finished flat at Rs 193.50 a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

The May series closed at Rs 190.20 (190.40), June at Rs 196.90 (197.07), July at Rs 200.70 (200.97), August at Rs 200.50 (201) and September at Rs 200 (198) a kg for RSS 4 on the NMCE.

Tokyo rubber futures rose for a second day but despite the current rebound, dealers expected the market to trade in a tight range because of persistent worries on the debt crisis in Europe, which might in fact restrain the demand for commodities.

RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs 200.89 (201.49) a kg at Bangkok. The May futures increased from ¥290.6 to ¥295.1 (Rs 191.94) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 193.50 (193.50); RSS-5: 192 (192); ungraded: 189 (189); ISNR 20: 192.50 (192.50) and latex 60 per cent: 122 (122).

Egg hardens as consumption rises

Our Correspondent

Chennai, April 26:

Buoyed by a rise in consumption owing to soft prices, the Namakkal-based National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) has increased the price of an egg by 15 paise to Rs 2.40 a piece.

The NECC had been trimming prices since the beginning of this month to encourage domestic consumption and normalise an overflow of stock resulting from a ban imposed by Oman on the import of Indian poultry products. Oman imports one-third of India's poultry exports.

The industry had resorted to slashing price to avoid building up inventories during summer. This, in turn, has boosted the domestic offtake. Namakkal accounts for nearly 95 per cent of India's egg exports.

According to Mr P. Selvaraj, Chairman of the NECC's Namakkal zone, the drop in egg prices this summer was expected and it was effected to put prices in line with those in other NECC zones across the country. This is because consumption tends to sag as the temperature rises.

“Moreover, we wanted to clear the backlog of this persihable produce. Now that schools are also on vacation, there is no chance for us to supply to the noon-meal programme (that procures around 70 lakh eggs). Hence, we slashed the rates to lift consumption,” he said.

Consumption in Tamil Nadu and other States such as Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, Kerala — major markets for Tamil Nadu's shell egg and broiler trade — has started to pick up with the holiday season and increased tourist inflow.

Meanwhile, the price of layer birds ruled flat at Rs 35/kg and that of cull birds at Rs 58/kg.

Mustard seed, oil rule flat on sluggish offtake

Our Correspondent

Indore, April 26:

Mustard oil prices remained uncharged across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat *mandis* on Thursday even as demand in mustard oil remained sluggish.

In Indore, mustard oil ruled flat at Rs 747 for 10 kg. Similarly, in neighbouring States of Rajasthan and Gujarat it was quoted flat. It was quoted at Rs 740 at Neemuch; Rs 747 at Morena (both Madhya Pradesh); Rs 755 at Kota; Rs 755 at Ganganagar, Rs 770 in Jaipur (all in Rajasthan), while in Gujarat it ruled at Rs 740 for 10 kg.

Compared with prices a week ago, mustard oil has gained Rs 5-7/10 kg in Madhya Pradesh following a decline in arrivals, while it ruled more or less the same in Rajasthan and Gujarat *mandis*, barring Ganganagar where it declined by Rs 5.

Mustardseed ruled flat on slack buying support. In Indore *mandis*, it was quoted at Rs 3,650-3,700 a quintal (up Rs 50-100 from last week); in Morena it ruled at Rs 3,550-3,600 , while it was quoted at Rs 3,500-3,550 at Neemuch*mandi* (up Rs 300).

Plant deliveries in mustard seeds were made at Rs 3,910-3,950. In the futures market, mustardseed, however, declined on profit booking. May and June mustardseed contracts on the NCDEX closed lower at Rs 3,934 (down Rs 11) and Rs 3,997 (down Rs 16) a quintal.

Arrival of mustardseed in the country was recorded at 1.90 lakh bags including one lakh bags in Rajasthan, 20,000 bags each in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh respectively on Thursday.

According to Mr Vinod Choudhary, an Indore-based trader, the outlook for mustard seed is bullish and its prices may cross the Rs 4,000 level in the coming days due to lower arrivals.

Turmeric arrivals up, but fewer orders drag prices

Our Correspondent

Erode, April 26:

The arrival of turmeric bags to the four markets in Erode has improved, but prices of the commodity have gone down.

“On Thursday, 13,500 and odd bags arrived for sales but only 60 per cent of the stocks were sold, due to want of demand from North Indian towns. As usual, local traders have purchased the turmeric for their committed order supply. The prices of turmeric fell by Rs 200 a quintal and the stockists and few traders at the market quoted prices. Some farmers were reluctant to sell as they said the quoted prices were not feasible”, said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said minimum prices at Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard is decreasing every day and now it has touched Rs 2,300 a quintal, due to arrival of poor quality turmeric for sale.

Further, north Indian merchants have started buying from other centres, resulting in fewer orders for Erode traders. This has reduced prices.

The prices of turmeric have decreased below Rs 3,500 a quintal, which is not feasible for the farmers.

While some traders say they have stocked up in anticipation of better prices, exporters are keeping away from buying for the fear of prices slipping further. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 2,203-3,377 a quintal, root variety Rs 2,219-3,165 a quintal.

Salem Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 2,706-4,309 a quintal, root variety at Rs 2,411-3,826 a quintal. Out of a total arrival of 2,748 bags of turmeric, 1617 bags were sold. At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at

Rs 3,122-3,519 a quintal, root variety at Rs 3,083-3,327 a quintal. Out of arrival of 1,638 bags of turmeric, 1,617 bags were sold.

At Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, Rs 2,569-3,539 a quintal, root variety at Rs 2,369-3,269 a quintal.

All the 350 bags of turmeric arrived for sales were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 2,969-3,599 a quintal, root variety at Rs 2,819-3,339 a quintal. All the 999 bags of turmeric arrived for sales were sold.

Profit booking drags jeera futures

Our Correspondent

Rajkot, Apri 26:

Spot jeera prices increased on slower arrivals and rising demand on Thursday. However, prices on the futures market dropped following profit-booking.

According to Kedia Commodity, jeera prices could witness some jump as local demand is expected to remain firm in the short term due to the wedding season.

Jeera prices overall could trade in the range of Rs 12,000 to Rs 12,800 a q quintal.

The demand for export is improving at current prices, especially from Bangladesh.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, the May contract dropped by Rs 42.50 to Rs 12,312.50 a quintal with an open interest of 13,080 lots. The June contract declined by Rs 50 to Rs 12,640, with an open interest of 11,394 lots.

In the spot market, jeera price moved up by Rs 25-30 to Rs 1,925-2,025 for a *maund* of 20 kg. NCDEX quality raw quoted at Rs 2,325-2,425 a *maund* at Unjha market in Gujarat. Arrivals stood at 15,000-16,000 bags.

In Rajkot, jeera was quoted Rs 20-25 higher at Rs 2,050-2,350 a *maund* and arrivals were 2,000-2,500 bags.

However, supplies have come down to 17,000-20,000 bags in last one week. They are still higher than the arrivals 8,000-10,000 bags a year ago.

Mixed trend in pepper market

G. K. Nair

Kochi, April 26:

The pepper market on Thursday witnessed mixed trend with limited activities. May and June declined marginally and June moved up with a moderate increase.

Market opened on a firm note and traded with high volatility and May touched the highest price of Rs 39,000 a quintal in the beginning of the forenoon session while June hit the highest price of Rs 39,540 a quintal in the afternoon.

Then they slid with high volatility and touched the lowest price. May dropped to Rs 38,270 a quintal with a fall of Rs 730 a quintal from the highest price and June dropped by Rs 680 from the highest to Rs 38,860 a quintal.

There was some selling pressure as 18 to 19 tonnes of pepper was traded at Rs 373 a kg for ordinary 500 GL, Rs 380 a kg for 550 GL and Rs 385 a kg for 600 GL grades.

Dealers who were supplying to inter-State dealers based in Tamil Nadu were also showing interest to sell here. Leading pepper exporters were said to be wanting to cover it for mixing, market sources told *Business Line*.

There was some additional purchase and very little switching over as was evident from the total open interest.

Arrivals from the primary markets remained thin. Buyers were there for high bulk density pepper but its availability was limited.

May contract on the NCDEX dropped by Rs 60 to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 38,350 a quintal. June prices increased by Rs 270 to the LTP of Rs 39,030 a quintal while July declined by Rs 10 to the LTP of Rs 39,350 a quintal.

Turnover

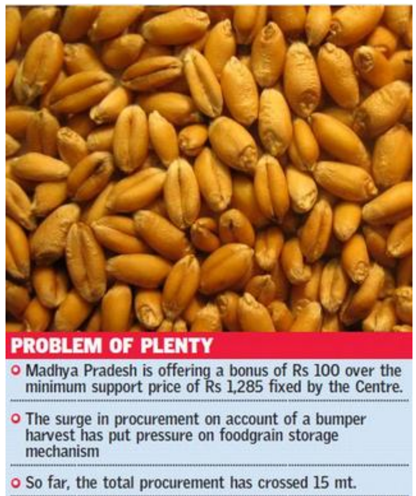
Total turnover decreased by 180 tonnes to close 3,300 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 99 tonnes to 5,884 tonnes.

May open interest dropped by 19 tonnes to 4,759 tonnes while June increased by 118 tonnes to 996 tonnes. July open interest remained unchanged at 99 tonnes.

Spot prices remained steady at matching demand and supply at Rs 37,300 (ungarbled) and Rs 38,800 (MG 1) a quintal.Indian parity on the international market was at $7,550 a tonne (c&f) for Europe and $7,850 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

Farmers' rush forces M.P. to raise wheat purchase target

Our Bureau



New Delhi, April 26:

Madhya Pradesh has raised its wheat procurement target to a record of 8 million tonnes (mt) in the current rabi marketing season, up from the earlier 6.5 million tonnes.

Such an ambitious procurement target is driven by higher wheat output in the State and the rush by farmers to sell their produce to Government agencies. Madhya Pradesh is offering a bonus of Rs 100 over the minimum support price of Rs 1,285 fixed by the Centre, attracting farmers' interest.

“Initially they (MP) wanted to procure 6.5 million tonnes, but now they have raised the target to 8 million tonnes,” said the Union Food Secretary, Mr B.C. Gupta. He was talking to reporters on the sidelines of the International Sugar Organisation event.

The surge in procurement on account of a bumper harvest has put pressure on foodgrain storage mechanism in the country. “We are making temporary arrangements to handle the increase in procurement,” Mr Gupta said.

Madhya Pradesh has, so far, procured 3.6 mt, up from 2.49 mt, procured last year. Procurement in Punjab and Haryana, the key States, has crossed 5.4 mt each so far as arrivals have picked up after a delayed harvest due to prolonged winter and inclement weather.

So far, the total procurement has crossed 15 mt, up from 13 mt in the corresponding period a year ago. Arrivals are over 16 mt.

The Food Corporation of India has, so far, procured 1.8 mt, while the State Government's procurement has crossed 6 mt.

SUGAR DE-CONTROL

Mr Gupta said the expert committee on sugar decontrol, headed by Dr C. Rangarajan, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, will hold its next meeting on May 3. “They want to hear all the stakeholders' view on issues relating to decontrol of the sugar industry, before they submit the report,” Mr Gupta said.

In its last meeting in February, the Committee had said it would submit the report on sugar de-control within six months.

Expressing his views on decontrol, ISO Executive Director, Mr Peter Baron said there is a uniform view that it would be a big advantage if the cane price is linked to the prices of sugar.

Sugar surplus

The ISO expects India to be a net sugar exporter in the 2012-13 season, said Executive Director, Mr Peter Baron. “It would be an advantage to all stakeholders if India stabilises its production at current level,” he added.

Sugar production in India is expected to cross 26 mt in the 2011-12 season. ISO has predicted that there would be a marginal dip in the country's 2012-13 output at 24.5 million tonne.